

A GEOGRAPHY OF THE AMERICAN
COLLEGE FRATERNITY

By

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PREFACE

At a party my first day as a graduate student at OSU, Steve Tweedie suggested to me I do a thesis on the geography of the college fraternity. Thinking it was merely polite conversation, and also with the fear the topic lacked "relevance", I pondered the idea briefly, but then put it out of my mind.

Over time however, a thesis has indeed been completed entitled The Geography of the American College Fraternity. Without Dr. Tweedie's guidance, patience, and utmost tact in telling me when parts were rotten, the final study would have been impossible. I am most grateful for his time and help.

The contributions of Dr. John F. Rooney, Jr. and of Dr. Keith D. Harries, members of the committee, are likewise appreciated. Their input was most helpful. I'd also like to thank Mrs. John Ross, National Panhellenic Delegate for Zeta Tau Alpha. Her early encouragement and provision of needed statistics assured me I was not alone in feeling the research was of value.

Last, but certainly not least, I'd like to thank my family. Thanks to my mother, Bette Lorenzen, for always encouraging me to strive for excellence, and to my sister Dale - just for being a good sister. Bob, thank you for your encouragement and a "gentle push" when it was needed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There are young men whom we might name, of the most dangerous character, who coil an influence through these organizations at which many a parent has reason to weep and tremble. There are artful seducers whom we could name who are this day through these societies standing not only between faculty and student, but between the parent and the deluded victim (Ferguson, 1937, p. 38).

Since this conclusion was first reached in 1850 by a committee of professors at the University of Michigan, over two and one half million deluded victims have been initiated into the ranks of the fraternity system, at over six hundred of the more than two thousand academic institutions in the United States and Canada (Ward, 1973; Shreck, 1976, p. 9). The fraternity concept has appealed to individuals since the American Revolution and continues to do so today.

Fraternities have not, however, been free from attack. Their relevance has been debated from their inception and continues to draw comments today. Since the fraternity system began there were those who saw it as evil and those who saw it as good. The discussion continues with many of the same arguments.

Fraternities have witnessed a series of attitudes. They have been seen as threats to the academic system and as objects of distrust. They have been tolerated, ignored, more or less endorsed, or supported. Fraternities have been criticized for their elitist appearances, minority discrimination, and social emphasis while, at the other end

of the spectrum they have been praised as wholesome extracurricular activities contributing to their members as well as their communities (Johnson, 1972, p. 4).

Acceptance, and even purpose of the organization, have varied over time but it cannot be denied that the fraternity has had a major impact on the American college. Fraternities have become an integral part of American colleges and universities and serve as a common thread running through the entire system of higher education (Johnson, 1972, p. 79). As such, the fraternity is a prime candidate for academic investigation.

Human geographers are concerned with phenomena forming or reflecting areal differences in culture. Basic to geographical research is the question: How do men distribute themselves and their activities over space and how do these distributions change? In recent years there has been increased interest among social scientists, including geographers, in the study of popular cultural activities such as crime, religion, sport, housing, music, art, and many others. There is a growing interest in the study of the cultural process.

Following the same line of inquiry the Greek letter system is equally acceptable for geographic study. The fraternity must be viewed as a reflection of the cultural milieu. Johnson (1972, p. 33) points out that the fraternity is "rooted in the culture, prospering as society allows and following the trends and mores of the communities." Questions regarding spatial organization, location, regionalization, and diffusion can readily be applied to the fraternity. Such analysis provides a broader understanding of the system as a whole.

Changes within the fraternity are occurring, changes over time and space. In 1900 higher education touched no more than five percent

of the population, today it reaches over fifty percent (Robson, 1968, p. 27). The student population and college explosion have had a major effect on the fraternity system.

The fact that criticism and rapid growth are occurring simultaneously underscores the need for research (Finegan and Hines, 1971, p. 3). The Commission of Fraternity Research of the National Interfraternity Conference (Finegan and Hines) published "An Agenda of Needed Research" in 1971. It indicated a general need for research dealing with the history and development of the fraternity system. Specifically included as topics for study were:

- (1) the growth of fraternity membership . . . in relation to general student growth, not only as a whole but in geographic regions, type of institutions, etc.; and,
- (2) the expansion of chapters from East to West. Is there a sectional pattern of growth and sometimes decline? Where and under what circumstances has expansion come rapidly, less rapidly? (p. 5).

The need for academic research dealing with the fraternity is all too clear when one attempts to review existing literature. While literature does exist, it is severely limited in number and in scope. This lack of literature is disturbing when one considers the number of people touched by the fraternity and the amount of money involved with the fraternity.

Fraternities have become big business. It is not unusual for a single chapter to operate on a yearly budget in excess of \$150,000. Consider the impact on a campus where thirty, fifty, or even seventy fraternity chapters have individual budgets of this magnitude. Fraternities provide financial, management, and civic experience to the members, but perhaps more importantly they provide employment

opportunities and business revenue to their communities (Johnson, 1972, p. 12).

Literature Review

In early years fraternities were classified according to their place of origin, such as Eastern, Western, and Southern (Baird, 1905, p. 11). The classification was due primarily to the fact that fraternities had not yet begun to spread outside of their respective areas. Therefore an Eastern fraternity referred to one founded at an Eastern institution and whose chapters were located primarily in that area. By 1900 sectional lines were beginning to disappear, primarily due to the rapid expansion of the Southern and Western groups (Sheldon, 1901, pp. 217-218). After 1900 the only classification based on the geographical distribution of fraternity chapters which could be made was to divide the fraternities into national fraternities or sectional fraternities (Baird, 1905, p. 11).

Fraternity folklore suggests that the Midwest, especially Indiana, is the heartland of the fraternity system; that more and bigger chapters may be found in Southwestern states, particularly Texas and Arizona; that the fraternity is declining in Ivy League New England; and that the South, and its culture, promote a strong fraternity system (Johnson, 1972, p. 91). This study will attempt to evaluate these assumptions.

Recent years have witnessed a gradually increasing interest in fraternities on the part of academicians, but the work done to date has been fragmentary, widely dispersed, and extremely difficult to locate (Finegan and Hines, 1971, p. 3). Geographic literature dealing with

the American college fraternity is non-existent. In the Cultural Geography of the United States Wilbur Zelinsky (1973) draws attention to the lack of geographic literature in all areas dealing with social institutions, behavior, and folklore. He cites a distinct need for work to be done on the origin, spread, and geographical significance of such phenomena as fraternal organizations (p. 107).

The literature most valuable to the present study was that dealing with the total fraternity, its development, history, purpose, and scope. The standard reference in this area is Baird's Manual of American College Fraternities, first published in 1879. This volume is perhaps the most complete descriptive work of fraternities available and serves as the first and only continued attempt to keep a record of fraternity growth.

Of equal importance in providing a complete overview of fraternity operations was Clyde Johnson's Fraternities in Our Colleges (1972). The book provides a thorough analysis of all aspects of the phenomenon of collegiate fraternalism. The early chapters are of greatest importance to the present study in that they devote discussion to origin, growth, development, and history of the Greek letter organizations.

Various academic studies have dealt with the fraternity system. Disciplines such as sociology, psychology, administration and management, and student personnel and guidance have devoted some attention to this area. Research is relatively well documented regarding the characteristics of the college fraternity and its members and the impact of the college fraternity on its members (Longino and Kart, 1973). Few extensive bibliographies can be found; two of the more thorough were compiled by Johnson (1972) and Finegan and Hines (1971). Both point

to the lack of geographical literature.

A handful of existing studies have geographic implications. An analysis of scholarship report data gathered by the National Interfraternity's Reporting service for the years 1958 through 1968 shows an increase in total membership, but the increase was offset by the decrease in proportional membership (relative to the rest of the college). Regional differences were marked. The study found that "the Middle States and Southern Association institutions kept abreast of enrollments reasonably well; New England did not; and in the Western (area) . . . proportional declines were almost universal" (Johnson, 1972, pp. 90-91).

In other studies, Keenan and Emmet (1963) identified the number and membership of Greek letter societies on Catholic college campuses both currently and in the past. Shreck (1976) reports numerous positive predictions for the fraternity by the year 2000 based on a year long study by the eighty member Bicentennial Commission on the American college fraternity. Finally, from a review of the literature Longino and Kart (1973, p. 32) conclude "there is no convincing evidence that a decline is being experienced on all campuses," but rather the stability and strength of the campus' individual fraternity system is dependent on a number of factors, including geographic region.

Limitations and Terminology

There are a myriad of fraternal organizations in the United States. This study however is limited to social or general fraternities that are members of the National Interfraternity Council (NIC), the

Association of College Fraternities (ACF), or the National Panhellenic Council (NPC). These fraternities, for the most part, limit their chartering to accredited, senior, degree-granting institutions (Johnson, 1972, p. 88). Professional and honorary fraternities and/or societies will not be examined; these are considered to be of a completely different realm than the social fraternities.

The NIC, ACF, and NPC are organizations whose member groups have chapters nation-wide. Those organizations known as "local" fraternities or sororities will not receive attention. Social organizations that have no national affiliation appear on many campuses. These groups are normally confined to one chapter on one campus. At some institutions both national and local fraternities are present. In such a case campuses with less than two national fraternities and a number of local fraternities were omitted. The interest is only in those campuses which contain a representative sampling of the national fraternity system. Those groups recognized as Black fraternities will be ignored.

The study area is limited to the United States. The vast majority of fraternity chapters are found within the continental United States, although Canada contains a part of the fraternity system, with its first chapter established in 1879 at the University of Toronto (Johnson, 1972, p. 41). Hawaii and Alaska have no campuses with national fraternities, probably due to the costs that would be necessary to sustain them.

Henceforth in the study, fraternity will generally refer to both fraternities and sororities unless otherwise specified. Most women's groups were originally chartered as fraternities, the term sororities coined later to distinguish the men's groups from the women's. Greeks,

Greek letter societies, and fraternity system are also interchangeable.

The primary data sources for this study were: Baird's Manual of American College Fraternities, Nineteenth Edition (Robson, 1977), which lists all colleges and universities, the fraternities existing on those campuses, and the dates of chartering; and, Cass and Birnbaum's Comparative Guide to American Colleges, Seventh Edition (1975), found to be the most complete source of the school characteristics necessary in this analysis.

Fraternity chapters were chosen as the most appropriate measure of fraternity expansion and strength. Although membership statistics might have been more revealing, they are cumulative through time and are not an accurate indicator of a fraternity's strength in a specific year. Individual chapter membership statistics for a given year at a given institution are not readily available.

Purpose

The purpose of the thesis is to trace the changing spatial distribution of the American college fraternity since its beginnings at Union College in 1825. The identification of regional variations in strength and variables contributing to chapter success will be examined. This study is also an attempt to document the existing statements regarding fraternity strength and growth. Questions arising in this examination include:

- (1) Where was the cradle area, or culture hearth, or the fraternity?
- (2) What was the pattern of diffusion from the original hearth?
- (3) Do regions of varying fraternity intensity, or strength,

exist? Where is the fraternity strongest?

- (4) What are some factors that contribute to individual campus strength? What type of school has a strong fraternity system?
- (5) What are the spatial characteristics of the national fraternity hierarchy?

This thesis will answer these questions and in so doing will examine the geographical aspects of the fraternity in the United States.

Chapter II examines the academic setting that contributed to fraternity development and other processes at work during the early development of the fraternity.

Chapter III briefly examines the spatial and administrative hierarchy on a national scale.

Chapter IV traces the geographic spread of fraternities by decade. Factors effecting this process are discussed and comments on changing expansion policies are made.

Regional strongholds are identified in Chapter V. Various measures of fraternity stability and strength are employed to indicate areal differences.

Chapter VI examines school characteristics in terms of fraternity strength as measured by change in the number of chapters per campus between the years 1970 and 1978 and percentage male participation.

Summary and conclusions are made in Chapter VII. Suggestions for further research are also offered.

It is hoped that this geographic analysis will provide insight into the fraternity system and its relationship to cultural patterns in the United States.

ENDNOTES

¹For further information regarding the pros and cons of fraternity membership see: Johnson, 1972, pp. 3, 21, 24, 76; Sheldon, 1901, pp. 178-180, 183, 184, 187, 222; Beach, 1973, p. 112; Brubacher and Rudy, 1968, p. 126; Robson, 1968, p. 25; Fraser, 1937, pp. 388-392; Letchworth, 1969; Feldman and Newcomb, 1970, pp. 214-215; Gerlach, 1977; Jones, 1977, p. 49; Robson, 1966, pp. 11, 88; Shreck, 1976.

CHAPTER II

FRATERNITY BEGINNINGS

Men have organized into groups since the beginning of time. In prehistoric days they came together for protection and survival. Later they gathered into various guilds for emotional and real support. Evidence points to the existence of voluntary associations in England in the early Sixteenth Century. Guilds, fraternities, and unions were formed as trade organizations and as religious associations (Ross, 1974, p. 31; Vondracek, 1972, p. 26). Perhaps always, as a pervasive reason, men organized for fellowship.

Most influential in modern fraternal orders was Freemasonry. In England in 1717 this organization changed from a group exclusively serving as a trade union for stonemasons to an organization of non-stonemasons devoted to building character and group fellowship. Masonry spread to the United States in its new form in 1730.

The American college fraternity was influenced, no doubt, by fraternal organizations operating outside the collegiate domain, especially Freemasonry. Likewise the reasons for existence - social integration, social prestige, benevolency, and religion - transferred to the ranks of the early college fraternities (Schmidt and Babchuk, 1972).

The fraternity in America was spawned during a time when American roots were first beginning to grow and the philosophy of the nation was

just developing. Phi Beta Kappa, generally agreed to be the first fraternal organization, was founded by five students on December 5, 1776, at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia (Johnson, 1972, p. 3; Stone and DeNevi, 1971, pp. 293-295). It is not a coincidence that this coincides with the nation's founding. The fraternity was a reflection of the new social movement sweeping the country (Sheldon, 1901, p. 134).

Few colleges and universities existed at the time of Phi Beta Kappa's founding. As new institutions formed, the fraternity soon followed (Robson, 1966, p. 12). In order to understand fraternity origins, it is necessary to understand the philosophy of these early schools.

Fraternities were founded, in a sense, as a rebellious answer to the strict supervisory conditions of the early American educational system, a system which had its antecedents in European culture (Johnson, 1972, p. 9; Jones, 1977, p. 49). As early as the Thirteenth Century students took an active part in university control, particularly at Mediterranean universities such as the University of Bologna in Northern Italy (Johnson, 1972, p. 6). In later centuries however, especially as one traveled further north, a complete reversal of these earlier student controlled universities occurred.

Northern European universities, following a prototype set by the University of Paris, began to emerge with the teachers holding the authority rather than the students. It was in schools such as these that American universities found their earliest roots. Perhaps most influential in establishing the pattern were the English schools such as Oxford and Cambridge (Johnson, 1972, pp. 8-9). These schools

enlisted rigid patterns of discipline and their ideals were brought with early settlers as they traveled to the New World.

To fully understand the atmosphere of early American colleges, one must realize that student life was narrowly restricted. Little self-expression or self government was allowed and all student initiative was strictly subdued. In an early history of the educational system, Sheldon (1901) makes these observations:

At the schools, which often leaned heavily toward religious influence, prayers were read twice daily, usually at unreasonable hours. As a literary exercise students were compelled to summarize the previous Sunday's sermon . . . The ecclesiastical and theological element were pervasive . . . Most amusements were forebidden, including hunting and sailing without permission. Theatrical performances, billiards, cards, and dice were on the black list. A student might not lie down on his own bed in the daytime without first securing the consent of the authorities . . . The teaching force of the college did police and detective service in discovering and punishing all violations of this code (p. 87-89).

With these restrictions in mind, it is understandable that the early fraternities were formed in rebellion.

The immediate predecessor to the fraternity was the debating society. The exact origin of these societies is difficult to document, although Sheldon (1901, p. 89) notes that "the debating society was (perhaps) an outgrowth of the Aufklärung in Germany, the movement to submit all problems to the test of reason." Societies similar to fraternities exist in many European nations today, although no historical link has been made between any of these organizations and the American debating society or fraternity (Johnson, 1972, p. 8). The first recorded debating society in the United States appears to have been started at Harvard in 1703. Others followed at Yale, Princeton, and William and Mary (Johnson, 1972, p. 10; Harding, 1971).

Educators realized some outlet for student activities was necessary, thereby sanctioning the debating societies. The organizations, supervised by the professors, were used primarily for literary and oratory purposes (Johnson, 1972, p. 10). Normally the student body was divided between at least two of these societies at a school, with fierce rivalries developing between the groups (Robson, 1968, p. 6). These organizations were of great importance to students, primarily because they were one of the few activities permitted by the university masters.

The debating society did not remain at the forefront of student interests. Although statesmen, alumni, and faculty strongly supported the groups, a new organization - the fraternity - entered the field. Fraternities appealed more directly to the interests and sentiments of youth, and the debating society lost ground (Sheldon, 1901, p. 133). The evolution from debating societies to fraternal organizations was further strengthened by the aspect of student control, inherent in the latter, as opposed to the faculty controlled debating societies.

Other reasons for the emergence of fraternities in America are varied. Basically these organizations developed in order to satisfy a social need (Robson, 1966, p. 89; Rudolph, 1962, p. 146; Brubacher and Rudy, 1968, p. 127). They furnished an outlet for student discussion that was unsupervised and could therefore take form as students wished. Furthermore these organizations provided a means of forming friendships and allowed for student self-government. It is also likely they served as a method of fighting boredom since very little of a social or recreational nature was offered at the schools (Johnson, 1972, p. 20).

The origin of the word fraternity comes from the Latin word "frater", meaning brother, and the Greek word "phratry" meaning a group

of related families whose members were not necessarily of common descent (Robson, 1970, p. 11). Student admiration for the governmental forms of classical Athens seems to be the primary reason for the "Greek" influence (Johnson, 1972, p. 13). Gould points out that one of the most striking aspects of the American Republic's early years was the Classic Revival, a notion that the new democracy of Washington and Jefferson represented the ideals and visions of ancient Greece and Rome. This idea is evidenced not only by the fraternity, but also by the architectural style of the time and by the frequency of classical place names (Gould, 1969, p. 58).

As noted, Phi Beta Kappa was the first Greek letter organization. Although it was founded as a social fraternal organization, Phi Beta Kappa has evolved into a scholastic and leadership honorary of the highest rank and no longer holds any similarity to the general or social fraternities. Nonetheless, it was the first of many organizations directed primarily at the needs of the students.

Phi Beta Kappa emerged as a result of social trends of the day (Johnson, 1972, p. 12). The society allowed for open discussion of topics the students were unable to discuss in the classroom, some that were politically volatile such as the Revolutionary War (Johnson, 1972, p. 13; Beach, 1973, p. 111). The organization served as representative of the

. . . revolt against the authoritarianism of the college and the assertion by the students of their right to assemble, to choose those they wished to associate in their enterprise, to be free to speak their minds, and to make decisions affecting their own welfare . . . (Johnson, 1972, p. 12).

The need for complete secrecy was due primarily to the disapproval of the societies by the teaching masters who saw the organizations as a

threat to their authority and discipline (Johnson, 1972, p. 4). Secret rituals developed because of the need to protect any knowledge of the organization from others, but also because there was little else to do in the early schools and the development of symbols provided a recreational outlet. Fraternities offered an escape from the dreariness of the early college (Rudolph, 1962, p. 146).

The expansion rationale of Phi Beta Kappa was twofold. The Founders believed that by starting chapters on other campuses they could draw the states of the yet to be established Union together. Secondly, their charter proposed the notion that the ideals of the organization should be extended to others. It is possible that the idea to expand was imitative of Masonic practices. This early expansion allowed for the continuation of the organization after the interruption caused by the Revolutionary War (Johnson, 1972, pp. 15-16).

Phi Beta Kappa must therefore be considered the proto-type for fraternity development (Sheldon, 1901, p. 144). Although early expansion occurred within the organization, its greatest influence on the formation of the American fraternity was not fully felt until 1817. In this year a chapter was established at Union College in Schenectady, New York, which in turn influenced the founding of Kappa Alpha in 1825 (Robson, 1966, p. 23).

The founding of Kappa Alpha marked the beginning of the social fraternity system that exists today (Potts, 1971, p. 500; Brubacher and Rudy, 1968, p. 126). Kappa Alpha was followed at Union by Sigma Phi and Delta Phi. These three, known as the Union Triad, had a profound effect on the establishment of the fraternity and were the foundation of the present system (Thwing, 1906, p. 37; Robson, 1966, p. 23). The Alpha

chapters¹ of six intercollegiate fraternities that are still functioning began at Union, thus contributing to the description of Union College as the "Mother of Fraternities". Their outward expansion stimulated the development of many others (Johnson, 1972, p. 23). A second important triad was formed at the University of Miami at Oxford, Ohio, during the 1840's and consisted of Beta Theta Pi, Phi Delta Theta, and Sigma Chi. Both of these early fraternity campuses were instrumental in the spread and continuation of the Greek letter system (Robson, 1968, p. 7).

Various factors spurred the formation of new fraternities. Frequently, as in the case at Union and Miami, young men were dissatisfied with the other groups on campus and decided to begin their own organization. Difficulty in obtaining a charter from an existing fraternity often caused the formation of a separate organization, and internal problems sometimes prompted the division of one group into two (Johnson, 1972, p. 19).

Of the 180 fraternities originating between 1812 and 1967, only eighty-nine remain today. Although this may appear to be a drastic drop, it can be explained primarily by the merger, or consolidation, of fraternities. There were a few, however, that were unable to survive and died.²

Approximately one out of six fraternities began on campuses which previously had no national fraternal organizations. Of the ninety-four campuses where fraternities were founded, thirty-seven percent served as the point of origin for more than one Greek letter group. Several had as many as four, five, or six. Union College had eight.

Figure 1 illustrates that eighty percent of all national fraternities founded from 1812 to 1967 began in cities east of the Mississippi



• 1 Chapter

● More than One Chapter

Figure 1. Location of Founding Chapters

River and north of Tennessee and North Carolina. The period during which various fraternities were founded spanned over one hundred fifty years, so it is difficult to infer much from this pattern. One can only conclude that it is representative of the population distribution and of the nation's earliest developed area. The larger population would facilitate the development of more schools and thus more fraternal organizations. The most noticeable variation from this development area is the University of California at Berkeley where six fraternities were formed, all after 1900.

The growth of the fraternities in the late 1800's and early 1900's was further strengthened by the changing philosophy in American education. It was during this time that the German philosophy regarding higher education came to be admired. This notion held that a university's purpose was the advancement of knowledge. Schools became more research oriented, with the classroom situation changing from recitation to lecture, seminar, and laboratory work. The social welfare of the students ceased to be a major concern (Johnson, 1972, pp. 29-32). Although there continued to be opposition to fraternal organizations, this new concept in education could not help but alter the structure of American schools and in so doing enhance the fraternity's opportunity for survival.

As men's groups began to stabilize and as more women began to enter colleges, fraternal organizations exclusively for women were formed. Sororities began as imitative of men's organizations, and developed naturally as single sex units due both to the men's prejudice and the women's preference (Johnson, 1972, p. 59). The first of the women's groups dates back to 1851, although their strength developed more fully

later in the century (Robson, 1968, p. 7).

Johnson's (1972, pp. 80-87) time-growth analysis readily demonstrates fraternity growth (Tables I and II). He notes that although total number of fraternities has fallen, the total number of chapters has increased. Chapter increase serves as the better indicator of fraternity growth since the decrease in number of fraternities is due primarily to mergers of various groups.

Fraternity development in its earliest years can best be seen as totally enveloped in the social, political, and educational structure of the time. As the nation grew and its philosophy changed, likewise the fraternity grew.

TABLE I
DEGREES CONFERRED BY U.S. INSTITUTIONS AND NUMBERS,
COLLEGIATE CHAPTERS, AND MEMBERSHIPS (CUMULATIVE)
OF INTERCOLLEGIATE GENERAL FRATERNITIES FOR
MEN, BY DECADES, 1869-70 TO 1969-70

Academic Year Ending	Degrees Conferred*	Men's General Fraternities		
		Number	Chapters	Memberships**
1870	7,993	37	380	n/a
1880	10,411	34	467	55,230
1890	12,857	32	638	92,279
1900	22,173	39	818	140,600
1910	28,762	56	1,250	238,940
1920	31,980	79	1,756	370,350
1930	73,615	94	2,619	611,274
1940	109,546	85	2,747	896,163
1950	328,841	77	3,287	1,376,531
1960	255,504	77	4,091	2,046,959
1970	427,000	75	4,921	2,783,215

* Bachelor's and first professional earned by men at U.S. institutions.

** Cumulative, for all initiates reported to year indicated; data not available for 1869-70.

(Source: Johnson, 1972, Table D, p. 82)

TABLE II
DEGREES CONFERRED BY U.S. INSTITUTIONS AND NUMBERS,
COLLEGIATE CHAPTERS, AND MEMBERSHIPS (CUMULATIVE)
OF INTERCOLLEGIATE GENERAL FRATERNITIES FOR
WOMEN, BY DECADES, 1869-70 TO 1969-70

Academic Year Ending	Degrees Conferred*	Women's General Fraternities		
		Number	Chapters	Membership**
1870	1,378	5	8	n/a
1880	2,485	9	37	814
1890	2,682	12	93	5,803
1900	5,237	21	170	13,858
1910	8,457	30	315	35,320
1920	16,662	40	589	77,758
1930	48,869	42	1,297	157,313
1940	76,954	40	1,574	397,086
1950	103,217	37	1,773	627,515
1960	139,385	36	2,246	1,079,629
1970	309,000	35	2,845	1,519,145

* Bachelor's and first professional earned by women at U.S. institutions.

** Cumulative, for all initiates reported to year indicated; data not available for 1869-70.

(Source: Johnson, 1972, Table C, p. 80)

ENDNOTES

¹Alpha chapter refers to the first chapter of any fraternity.

²Statistics are based on fraternities listed in Baird's Manual of American College Fraternities, 19th Edition. It is acknowledged that there were many other social fraternities founded during this period, but none that gained enough prominence to be listed in the manual.

CHAPTER III

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

Although the primary thrust of the thesis will be to examine the spatial distribution of the American college fraternity and to determine if distinctive fraternity regions appear, a few brief comments should be made regarding the spatial and administrative hierarchy on a national scale. Baird's Manual lists eighty-nine national men's and women's general fraternities with 6561 chapters (Robson, 1977). A system as extensive as this has, by necessity, a variety of governing and administrative agents.

Inter-Fraternity Organization

The National Fraternity Conference (1909), the Association of College Fraternities (1972), and the National Panhellenic Conference (1902) are coordinating bodies for the overall integration of fraternities and sororities, and are composed of representatives from each of the national organizations. These bodies are mechanisms to serve national fraternities, which in turn are mechanisms to serve undergraduates. The National Interfraternity Conference includes representatives from men's fraternities and the National Panhellenic Conference consists of women's fraternity representatives. The Association of College Fraternities is a splinter group of NIC and currently consists of men's fraternity representatives, although it has not excluded women. These

organizations are primarily forums for an exchange of information, ideas, and discussion.¹

Intra-Fraternity Organization

Each of the eighty-nine fraternal organizations is an autonomous unit. Regarding individual fraternities and their method of self-governance, Sheldon (1901) notes that:

As early as 1871 a movement toward the centralization of the various societies was inaugurated. The old system of control by central or parent chapters when the convention was not in session gave way to central governing boards, usually known as executive councils, composed of alumni . . . (p. 215).

Various committee appointments and executive decisions necessary to the continuance of fraternity operations are made by the executive council, however major decisions are normally made by the fraternity convention. The convention also serves as a means of drawing the various chapters of a given fraternity together and providing a sense of national unity.

Spatially the fraternities usually divide the college territory into areas, districts, divisions, provinces, or regions with executives known as chiefs, governors, or presidents for each (Robson, 1977, p. 12). Fraternities vary in their method of regional division, but nearly all have a hierarchy of administrative units broken into geographic territories.

The increase of total chapters and membership has not only necessitated the areal division of fraternities, but has produced the need for central offices. Nearly all national and international fraternities maintain some type of national headquarters or central office. These offices handle numerous business activities connected with running the fraternity. They maintain membership records and mailing

lists, issue fraternity publications, newsletters, and periodicals, preserve historical material, check the financial records of undergraduate chapters, arrange for conventions and conferences, issue reports of national officers, direct the field staff, promote the establishment of new chapters or alumni groups, provide advice to individual chapters, take care of correspondence, and participate in interfraternity activities. They also administer scholarship funds, coordinate awards and loan money, and gather data on local chapters to monitor their activities and identify trouble spots (Robson, 1977, p. 13; Beach, 1971, p. 96).

The only distinct pattern that appears in the location of fraternity headquarters is that the majority are found in large urban areas (Figure 2). Those cities with five or more fraternity headquarters are St. Louis, Atlanta, Evanston (Illinois), and Indianapolis. Of the eighty-three fraternities maintaining national headquarters thirty-seven percent are located in these four cities. When Pittsburg, Denver, New York City, and Oxford and Columbus, Ohio, are added the percentage rises to fifty-three percent. It is difficult to speculate as to what causes this clustering effect, other than the desire of the national organizations to locate together for communication purposes.

Explanations as to the choice of location for central offices are varied. Some are located at the site of their birthplace as monuments to history and tradition. Oxford, Ohio, home of the Miami Triad, hosts the national headquarters for three of the eight fraternities founded there. Others chose centrally located cities for mobility, accessibility, and availability of services. Still others may be located central to the majority of their chapters (Robson, 1977, p. 13).

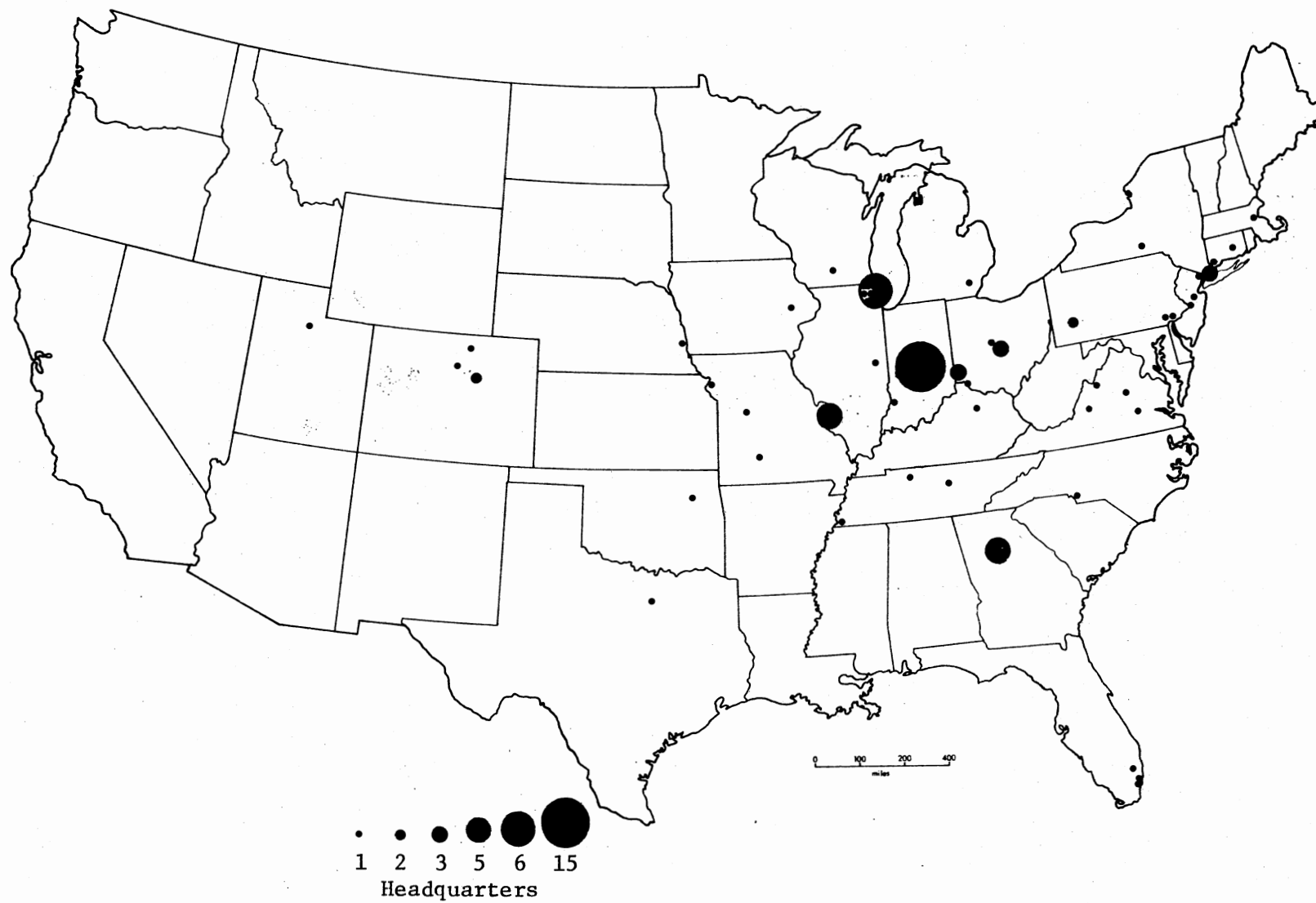


Figure 2. Distribution of Fraternity Headquarters in 1978

Indianapolis, with fifteen, is a special case. In the past decade fraternities have come to Indianapolis because of an appealing realty tax exemption. The city has zoned an area on its north edge exclusively for the headquarters of collegiate organizations (Robson, 1977, p. 367). According to Mrs. James O. Shearer, immediate past international president, Zeta Tau Alpha chose Indianapolis for its low cost of living, favorable pay scale, good labor force, accessibility, weather, and developing Greek center. Central offices of several fraternity groups are moving from Evanston, Illinois, the previous center, because of high property and building costs and poor site location possibilities.

National coordination is necessary to unify the individual chapter units throughout the nation. Each national fraternity has goals, ideals, and traditions of which the chapters are representative. Consequently, the individual chapters in a given area prove the truest measure as to the extent of the fraternity system in the United States.

ENDNOTES

¹See Baird's Manual, Robson, 1977, for further information regarding the National Interfraternity Conference, the Association of College Fraternities, and the National Panhellenic Council.

CHAPTER IV

FRATERNITY DIFFUSION

In 1866 there crept onto the (University of Georgia) campus unobserved an organization to dispute with Phi Kappa and Demosthenian (Literary societies) the affections of the students. All that was known about it was the fact that it displayed the three Greek letters, Sigma Alpha Epsilon; the next year it was followed by another intrusion bearing the letters Chi Phi. Then in 1869 Kappa Alpha appeared, and in 1871 Phi Delta Theta . . . In 1870 an outraged student declared that the campus was now divided into three classes: first, Secret Societies; who meet at night in some dark alley or out house . . . ; and whose object is known only to themselves. Second, Boot lickers, who are supposed to be hugging and squeezing the Secret Society men for admission into their organizations. Third, Anti-Secret Society who oppose Secret Societies . . . (for all their evils) (Coulter, 1928, pp. 352-353).

The fraternity has come full cycle in regard to expansion procedure. In early days fraternities avidly colonized campuses whenever possible. Then came an era of campus groups eagerly seeking a charter from the fraternities. Today, once again fraternities have taken the initiative and begun to actively colonize new chapters.

As fraternities attempted to gain a foothold in the American educational system, every attempt was made to further their cause. Chapters that formed on various campuses soon attempted to branch out to other colleges and universities. Competition was strong, not only between individual fraternities, but also between fraternities and literary societies. This competition aided in the spread of the fraternity. New chapters were formed by mutual agreement; the original members were anxious to strengthen their organization and students on

other campuses were hungry for an organization that could meet their social and emotional needs. Often new chapters were formed without the knowledge of the entire fraternity.

As fraternities began to stabilize and become a more accepted part of the American college, the fraternity oriented expansion began to decline. The fraternities were now finding individuals on college campuses coming to them in hopes of securing a charter, and interest in establishing a new chapter became campus initiated.

In the early years of the Twentieth Century fraternity extension was generally conservative, the national fraternities waiting for locals to aggressively seek charters (Robson, 1968, p. 25). Growth continued steadily, but it was usually campus initiated. The lean years of the Thirties and Forties, a result of the Depression and World War II, may have contributed to a change in policy. Increasing enrollments certainly had a major effect on increased expansion.

Aggressive fraternity initiated expansion began in the 1950's and continues today. As enrollments increased, the fraternity leadership wanted to insure the continued strength of the entire system and to maintain a balance between Greeks and independents (Robson, 1977, p. 12). Variations in extension policies are evident among college fraternities. As John Robson (1966, p. 95) points out, "Some nationals are committed to rapid and efficient growth patterns, while others go about expansion in an extremely conservative, but sometimes effective manner."

Several factors influenced the switch in expansion from locally initiated to fraternity initiated. In early years, as pointed out in Chapter II, the fraternity wanted to expand for philosophical reasons, i.e., to join the states of the Union together, or to provide other

men with the ideals of fraternity membership.

Today, although various philosophical reasons are referred to as justification for expansion, a practical need for expansion is also recognized. Four primary factors have influenced the need to expand in recent years.

Economic aspects must be acknowledged as having a major influence. The costs of running a national fraternity system are tremendous; they involve operating costs, mailing costs, travelling expenses, staff salaries, office maintenance, etc. Many fraternity leaders feel that these costs necessitate expansion. As expenses rise, there is a need for more chapters and more members to help meet the expenses.

A second practical explanation for expansion is a result of new opportunities. Growing enrollments on established fraternity campuses allow for the colonization of new chapters at those schools. As more students show an interest in the fraternity, there is a need for more chapters. Likewise, schools previously closed to national fraternities are now allowing them on campus, thereby providing further new opportunities. Texas A & M is an excellent example of this phenomenon. In 1973 the school administration decided to allow fraternities and sororities on campus; within four years thirteen groups had established chapters there. In short, opportunities to establish new chapters are provided when: (1) the number of students going through rush indicates the need for a new group; or, (2) the administration admits national fraternities to the campus. Other opportunities evolve when a new campus receives full accreditation.¹ An important consideration in extension is the pervading attitude of the campus and the time (Helms, 1975).

The change to fraternity initiated expansion was somewhat spurred by the attitude of the locals themselves. Some schools have allowed national fraternities on campus, but the students themselves prefer to remain local. The desire of local groups to be a part of a national fraternity has slowed since early years. Many strong locals are now content to stay unaffiliated unless contact is made by the national. They see limited benefits from national fraternity membership, or perhaps do not wish to adhere to all of the rules and policies of a national organization. Regardless, the fraternity must often do a "hard-sell job" to convince a given local to affiliate with the national organization.

Finally, competition plays an important role in fraternity expansion. Competition is an age-old phenomenon in any area of social activity whether it be sports, scholastics, business, or pleasure. American society is based on it. Competition plays an important role in stimulating fraternity expansion - the desire to be the biggest and the best, to get the jump on the other groups, to be among the first on a new campus. The psychological need to compete makes this factor an important contributor to fraternity expansion.

Today, two methods are employed to acquire new chapters:

(1) absorption of an already organized local group; and, (2) the building of a new chapter by colonization initiated by the national fraternity. Both are acceptable ways to further fraternity development.

As one examines the fraternity, its method of obtaining new chapters, and its present distribution the question arises: How did it get this way? In order for the fraternity to become a nation-wide occurrence diffusion had to take place.

It is not enough that the invention must occur, even though this in itself is difficult. Once made, the invention must be adopted by the immediately surrounding groups; if the invention is really to survive, it must spread to others - there must be diffusion (Carter, 1975, p. 36).

This chapter is primarily concerned with the diffusion, or expansion, of the fraternity from its inception in 1825. This diffusion is measured most easily by determining the year of establishment of new fraternity chapters on campuses throughout the nation, and by mapping the number of chapters by campus for selected years.

A secondary function of Chapter IV is to examine the phenomenon of chapter losses. Whereas membership statistics would undoubtedly be the best measure of the decline in fraternity strength in a given area, these statistics are virtually impossible to gather. Therefore chapter loss is used as a surrogate with the assumption that a chapter will close when its membership declines to a point where continued operation is not feasible. The loss of a chapter is assumed to indicate that the campus where the chapter is located is experiencing problems in total Greek membership.

Early Growth

Like so many other socio/cultural innovations, the Greek letter system was spawned in the East. In 1825 a single chapter appeared at Union College in Schenectady, New York. Kappa Alpha Society was not the first of such student social organizations by any means, others had come and gone since the founding of Phi Beta Kappa in 1776; but it was the first of what has evolved into the present day fraternity system. In 1827 Kappa Alpha was joined at Union by Sigma Phi and Delta Phi. These three, known as the Union Triad, had a profound influence on the

development of the fraternity system.

A second Sigma Phi chapter appeared in 1831 at Hamilton College in Clinton, New York. The effect that Union and Hamilton Colleges had on the early establishment of the fraternity system contributes to their general recognition as the "culture hearth" of the American college fraternity (Thwing, 1906, p. 377; Rudolph, 1962, p. 142).

By 1840 the fraternity system had taken root, spreading from a single chapter at Union to fifteen additional campuses. Diffusion was confined primarily to New York and New England, although chapters appeared at three widely spaced campuses in Ohio: Marietta College in Marietta; Miami University in Oxford; and Case Western Reserve in Cleveland. The two chapters founded at Miami, along with a third begun in 1848, became known as the Miami Triad which was to be the stimulus for the South and West as the Union Triad had been for the East (Robson, 1977, p. 7).

The influence of the Union-Hamilton situation and of the Miami Triad was tremendous.

Alpha Delta Phi, founded at Hamilton in 1832, sponsored within a decade the first fraternity chapters at Amherst, Bowdoin, Brown, Columbia, Harvard, Yale, Western Reserve and Miami. Beta Theta Pi, founded at Miami in 1839, introduced the Greek letter society into Michigan, Princeton, Wabash, Washington and Jefferson, and Centre College of Kentucky before 1850 (Rudolph, 1962, p. 144).

The fraternity had to battle the Literary Societies for its place on campus in these early years. There was a continual struggle between secret and anti-secret societies for the most outstanding students. This problem was almost secondary however to the problem of acceptance not only in the university but by the general public as well. A feeling of antagonism toward these new organizations existed, spurred

primarily by their secrecy and elitism (Sheldon, 1901).

By 1850 a few fraternity campuses began appearing in the southern states of Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, South Carolina, Mississippi, and Virginia. The hearth area in New York and New England continued to grow and began extending into New Jersey, forming the primary fraternity area. A secondary center began emerging in the Indiana-Ohio-western Pennsylvania-southern Michigan region. Growth during this decade (1840 to 1850) was relatively even in terms of the number of fraternity chapters per campus, with all campuses experiencing nearly the same growth rate.

Recognizable results of the initial expansion attempts were evident by 1860 (Figure 3). Fraternities began appearing in clusters of a sort, the result of contagion diffusion. New fraternity campuses were springing up in the East, Midwest, and South. Fraternities appeared west of the Mississippi River for the first time at two campuses in Louisiana and one in Texas.

The first chapter losses also occurred in the decade of the 1850's.² New York University lost its only fraternity chapter, the system starting again at NYU in 1900. Burlington College in New Jersey also lost its only chapter. Nashville University in Tennessee lost and gained chapters for almost three decades, before the system finally gave out completely, never to return.

Decline

Steady, although not rapid, growth had occurred until 1860, but in the years between 1860 and 1870 the fraternity system encountered its first major challenge. The Civil War had a significant effect on fraternity growth. The fraternity system in the South was nearly

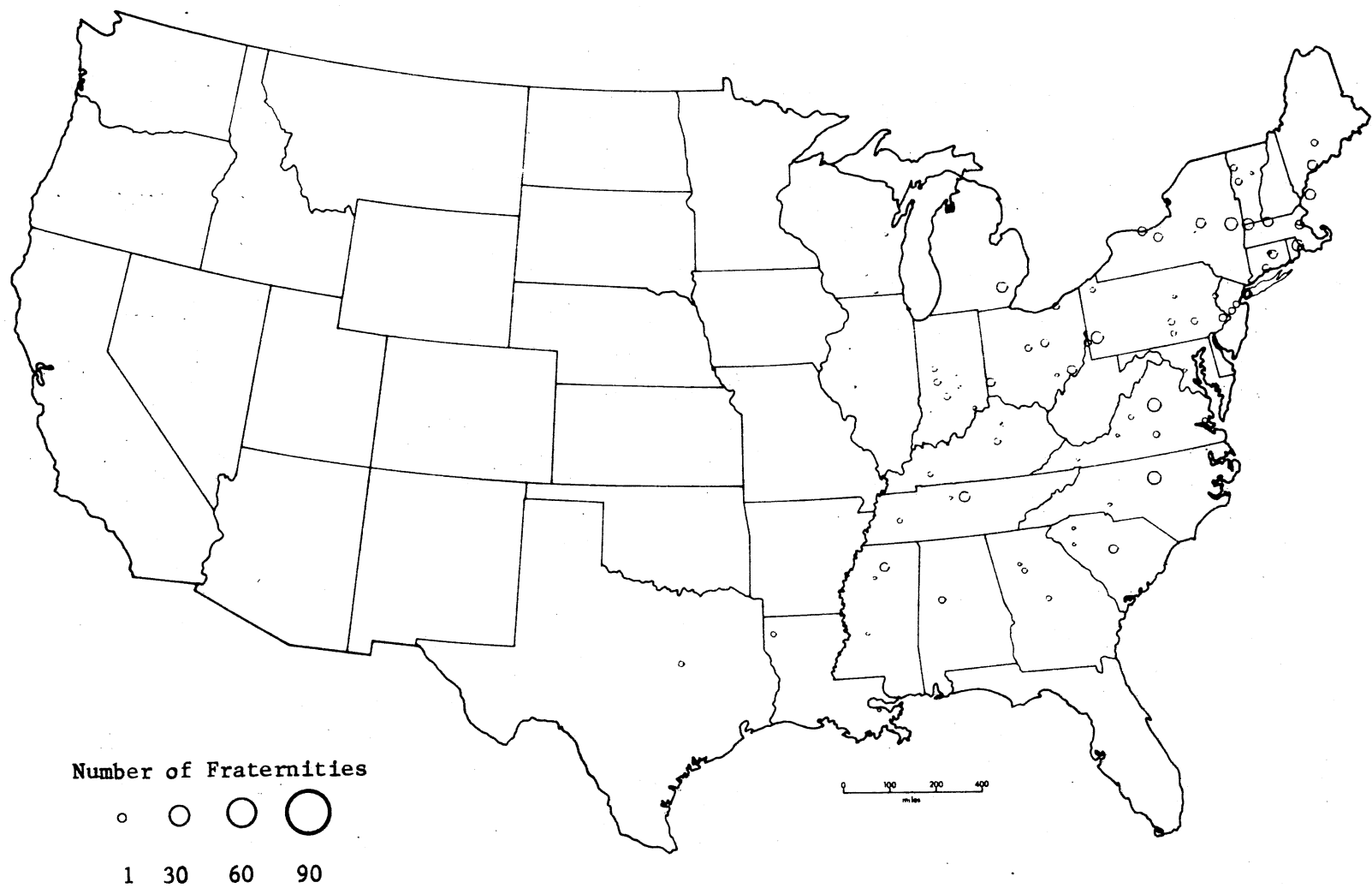


Figure 3. Distribution of Fraternity Chapters in 1860

destroyed, along with the colleges. Of the eighteen campuses incurring losses during the Civil War decade, twelve were located in the South (Figure 4). Excluding Virginia, the South had as many campuses with losses as with gains. Of nine fraternities founded in the South prior to the Civil War only two survived to be included as a part of today's national fraternity membership and nearly one-quarter of the chapters existing in the South prior to the War were lost (Johnson, 1972, pp. 21-23; 37).

The primary chapter gains during this period occurred in the Midwest, the East, and the New York-Pennsylvania-Virginia area. It is likely the growth that did occur was in the latter part of the decade.

Thus the national expansion of the fraternity system was curtailed during this period, although it did manage to achieve a net gain in number of chapters.

National Diffusion Period

Beginning in 1870 the next sixty years saw the fraternity system thrive. Aside from a slight slow down from 1890 to 1900, the fraternity grew steadily until 1930, gaining nationwide representation and acceptance. This epoch saw the fraternity prosper, attaining a strength not previously known by student organizations. Extracurricular activities emerged in other areas as well, including sports, student organizations, student government, etc. (Sheldon, 1901, p. 226; Johnson, 1972, pp. 26-27). Changes in higher education (particularly school discipline and faculty acceptance) and in social conditions had a major effect on fraternities.

Perhaps most important was a changing administrative philosophy.

University officials became less antagonistic toward fraternities and in some cases even saw them as beneficial to the campus. This changing philosophy was often spurred by generous alumni contributors who had been fraternity men themselves. Furthermore the disappearing clandestine nature of the fraternity made it more acceptable to the general public and therefore to the administration.

A second factor closely tied to the change in administrative philosophy was the German "philosophy of education" influence on the faculty. The German philosophy promoted a "non-concern" with the students outside of the classroom. This caused the university to appear cold, impersonal, and indifferent, thus making fraternity objectives and ideals more attractive. An individual counted for something in the fraternity, while he didn't in the classroom. Thus the fraternity gained strength from this attitude.

Furthermore, this attitude contributed to an abandonment of certain university services, such as housing, meals, etc. Much of the growth beginning in this period, particularly from 1890 and continuing to the 1920's, was largely related to the need for living accommodations, a result of the colleges' decision to relinquish their former concern with housing, feeding, and strict supervision of students (Johnson, 1972, p. 27; Beach, 1973, p. 113).

Changing social conditions further contributed to enhanced fraternity development. National population growth continued, resulting in the establishment of new colleges. As new colleges appeared, the fraternities had open opportunities for further expansion. New chapters began, often closely following the opening date of the institution.

Finally the proportion of people attending college grew. Increased

enrollments meant increased fraternity membership.

The period from 1870 to 1930 saw the fraternity take root, develop, and firmly establish itself. The era of "National Fraternity Expansion" is best subdivided into two periods: Early Diffusion, 1870 to 1900; and, Rapid Diffusion, 1900 to 1930.

Early Diffusion

Fraternity historians generally classify the time period from 1870 to 1900 as one in which the criticisms of the former periods were fading, and the fraternity was entering a new stage of development (Sheldon, 1901, p. 215). Fraternity growth persisted during this time, spreading to various new areas of the nation.

Zeta Psi established the first fraternity chapter on the West Coast at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1870. By 1890 the fraternity system had spread to three additional West Coast campuses, a total of seven campuses by 1900.

The fraternity system in the South, which had been nearly destroyed by the Civil War, began re-establishing itself in this era. The years from 1870 to 1900 were a building and rebuilding time for Southern fraternity life. New chapters were beginning to appear and the losses of the 1860's were being recovered.

Expansion continued in the East and Midwest (Figure 5). The fraternity also began spreading into Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, and somewhat later into Colorado, Arkansas, and Florida. New chapters also appeared in Washington and Oregon for the first time. As these areas became settled, new schools opened thus providing opportunities for new fraternity chapters.



Figure 5. Distribution of Fraternity Chapters in 1900

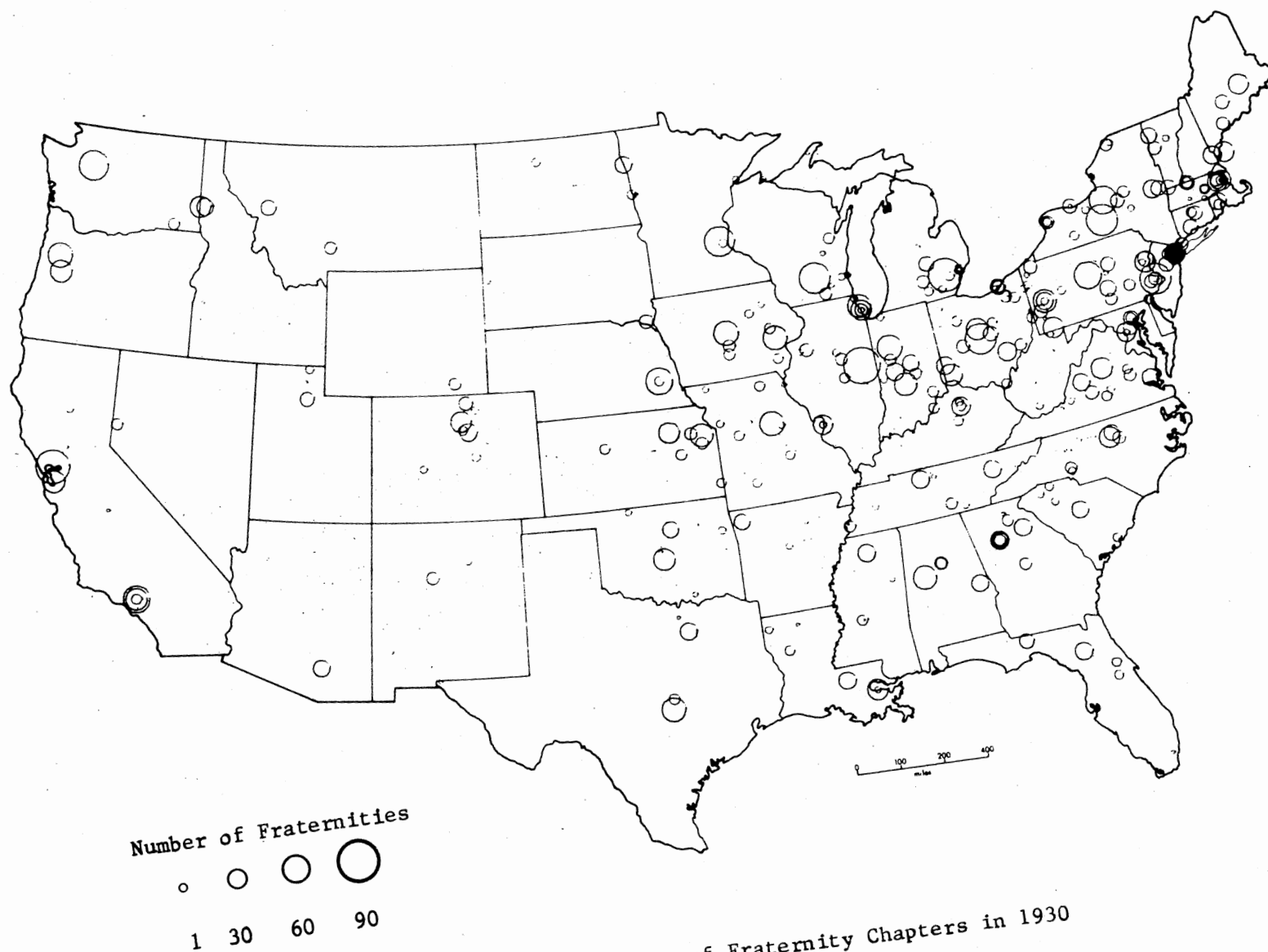
Rapid Diffusion

Growth had occurred in previous decades, but from 1900 to 1930 it seemed to mushroom. Total chapters rose from 988 in 1900, to 3916 in 1930 - nearly quadrupling in thirty years.

The Westward spread continued and by 1910 fraternities were emerging in the Northwest Rockies. A Colorado cluster appeared and new chapters were started in Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Growth continued in the Great Plains states. The first fraternity chapters in Oklahoma were established and Missouri saw a significant increase in the number of campuses hosting fraternity chapters.

The pattern of expansion had changed little by 1920 in the East, South, and Midwest. Growth on previously established fraternity campuses was occurring, but few new campuses were added. Campuses with large numbers of chapters had begun emerging in the previous decade and continued to do so - especially in New York, Pennsylvania, the Midwest Corridor, the West Coast, and to a lesser degree the South and Great Plains. Diffusion in the western states persisted and that area began filling in. Fraternities appeared on campuses for the first time in Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico. By 1920 the fraternity had reached all regions of the nation and from this point diffusion was a matter of "filling in".

The distribution of fraternities in 1930 did not yet show the effects of the Crash of 1929, but rather highlighted the heydays of the "Roaring Twenties" and the positive effect those years had on fraternity growth (Figure 6). The filling in tendency had continued through



the Twenties; in addition, established fraternity campuses had enlarged in terms of total number of chapters. Growth had occurred at new campuses and on old ones.

During the six decades from 1870 to 1930 scattered losses occurred as a result of a number of factors, including: (1) errors in expansion decisions; (2) schools closing; and, (3) legislative influences as was the case in South Carolina, Mississippi, and Arkansas where the courts banned fraternities for a period.³ The South encountered losses on more campuses during these years than either of the other two principal regions. The New York-Pennsylvania-New England area had the least, with the Midwest in between.

Decline

The second significant loss period came soon after the Crash of 1929 (Figure 7). Major losses were evident in the years from 1930 to 1940 throughout the East and Midwest, the area with the greatest concentration of fraternity campuses. Ironically the South, which had previously been the major loss area, was effected to a much lesser degree. This is probably a result of fewer campuses and less industrialization. Although some growth was occurring on established campuses, it had slowed noticeably.

By 1940 the effect of the Depression was clear - there was virtually nothing new. Scattered new campuses appeared with two or three fraternities, but additions were generally minimal. Most of the regions experienced some growth, but it was extremely limited.

Not only did the fraternity experience a rocky period in terms of chapter continuity during this period (and into the early Forties), it



Figure 7. Loss of Fraternity Chapters from 1930 to 1940

also underwent a significant reorganization of the national fraternity units.⁴ Faltering enrollments and economy forced many smaller national fraternities to merge with larger ones. Twenty four men's fraternities and ten women's fraternities were involved in mergers, or consolidations (Robson, 1977, p. 23).

Growth in Place

The decline caused by the Depression continued into the early Forties, largely a result of World War II. The widespread losses of the earlier decade had slowed, although losses were still occurring and in generally the same pattern. The Depression and War had a negative effect on fraternities, especially the men's groups, but recovery was starting to take place. A fraternity revival began in the late Forties with California, the West, Southwest, South Central, Florida, and Midwest exhibiting the strongest come-back. Society was recovering from the previous years and the fraternity reflected this restitution. By 1950 expansion was once again in full swing.

In the twenty years prior to the campus unrest which began in 1964 the fraternity system witnesses its greatest growth in its history in terms of expansion onto new campuses, formation of new chapters on existing campuses, and recruitment of new members (Robson, 1968, p. 23; also refer to Tables I and II, pages 21 and 22). The country as a whole was enjoying a period of relative tranquility and affluence. World War II was over, and the Vietnam War, campus unrest, urban riots, and other problems of the Sixties had not yet come to the forefront of American attention.

The most significant growth in the 1950's occurred in Texas.

Fraternity expansion seemed to virtually explode during this period. In 1950 there were only four campuses in the state with fraternities, by 1960 there were thirteen (Figure 8). Expansion continued throughout the Sixties. Extension was also strong in North Carolina, with the number of fraternity campuses growing from eight in 1950, to thirteen in 1960. Scattered new chapters appeared in other areas of the country as well.

Loss of chapters during the 1950's, although spread throughout the nation, was most evident along the Eastern Seaboard and Midwest. The effect of population distribution on this loss pattern must be considered. Naturally in an area with more chapters, the opportunity for chapter losses is greater than in a place with fewer chapters. But while population must be considered, by no means is it completely explanatory. Social and cultural changes also effect the pattern.

The last decade of this period, the Sixties, is an era generally perceived as unproductive for the fraternity. The statistics do not completely support this assumption; in the 1960's fraternity increases occurred on over 370 campuses. Likewise membership growth continued strong. Losses were also rising, however. It is very possible that the growth occurred in the early Sixties, offsetting the decline in the latter part of the decade. The fraternity was not however, experiencing the same strength as in some earlier decades.

The same pattern of gains and losses is maintained as in other decades of this period. All areas of the nation were filling in, although the addition of new chapters was most noticeable in the South and least evident in New York and the East Coast. More campuses with large losses began appearing, especially along the Eastern Seaboard and West Coast. Colorado schools also showed losses at the majority of the

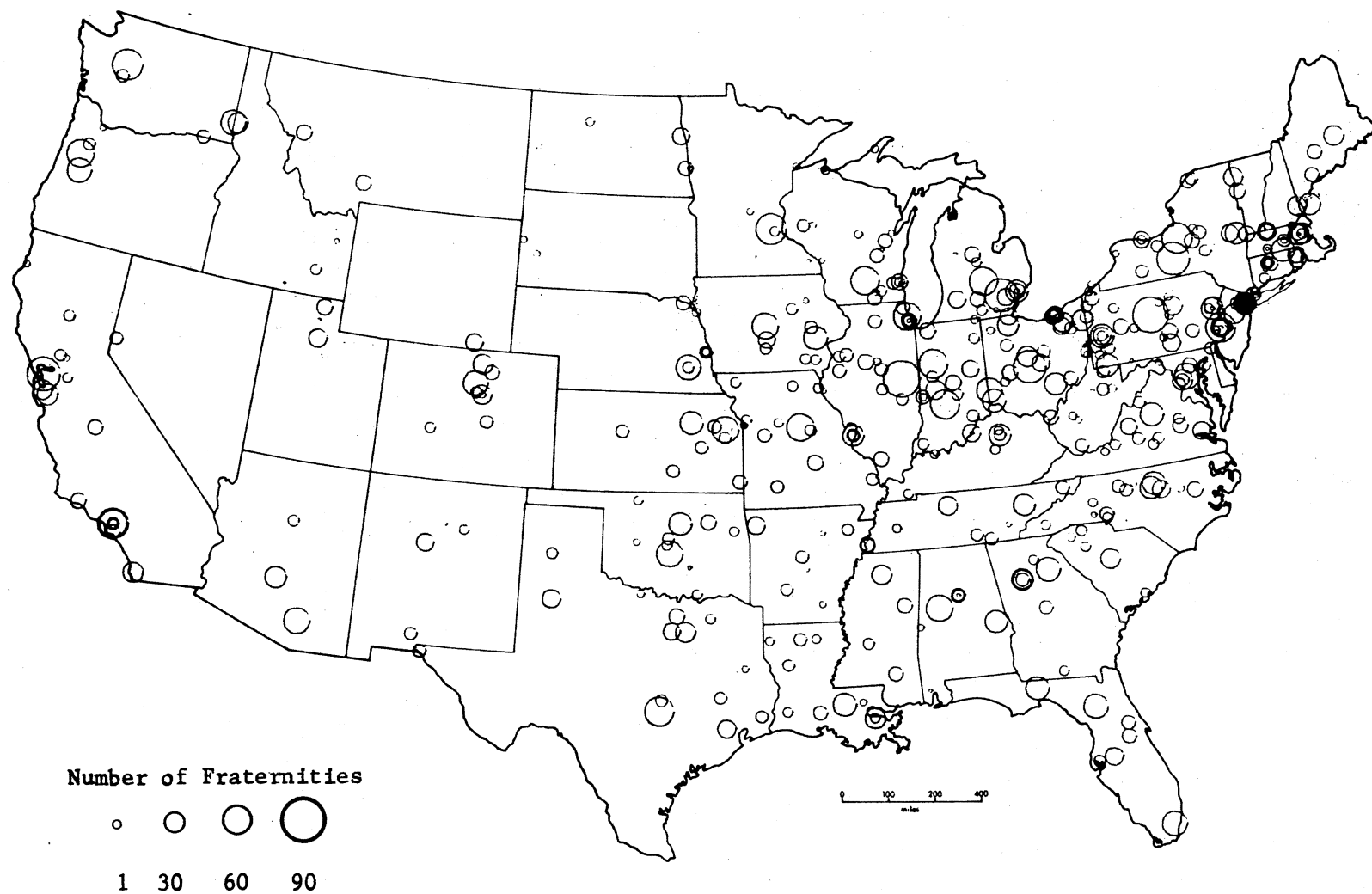


Figure 8. Distribution of Fraternity Chapters in 1960

state's campuses. Southern losses occurred, primarily in the Southern Atlantic States - Virginia and North Carolina particularly and South Carolina (1), Georgia (1), and Florida (2), to a limited degree. The previous decade had shown some losses in Louisiana and Alabama, but in the Sixties the Deep South was not seriously effected.

Fraternity Distribution Today

Figure 9 shows the distribution of fraternities in the United States according to the most recent data readily available. The fraternity is virtually everywhere. The large vacant areas west of the Great Plains should not be misinterpreted; there are not as many schools in this area.

Most of the nation shows limited expansion to new campuses compared to earlier years, even though there are more than 1800 campuses throughout the nation without national fraternity chapters. The number of new chapters however continues to rise, leading to the obvious conclusion that most of the expansion occurred on campuses already having some fraternity chapters. Apparently opportunities for development on new campuses are extremely limited. The South appears to be the only area with visibly more new campuses open to the fraternity.

The period from 1970 to 1978 shows by far the most extensive losses (Figure 10). This could be a result of several factors. Although the Sixties are thought of as "bad for the fraternity", the total effect of the period may not have been felt until the early Seventies. A chapter could have gone through a prolonged decline before closing. A second factor in explaining increased losses is the rapid expansion of the previous twenty years may have been in some cases unwise and the chapter

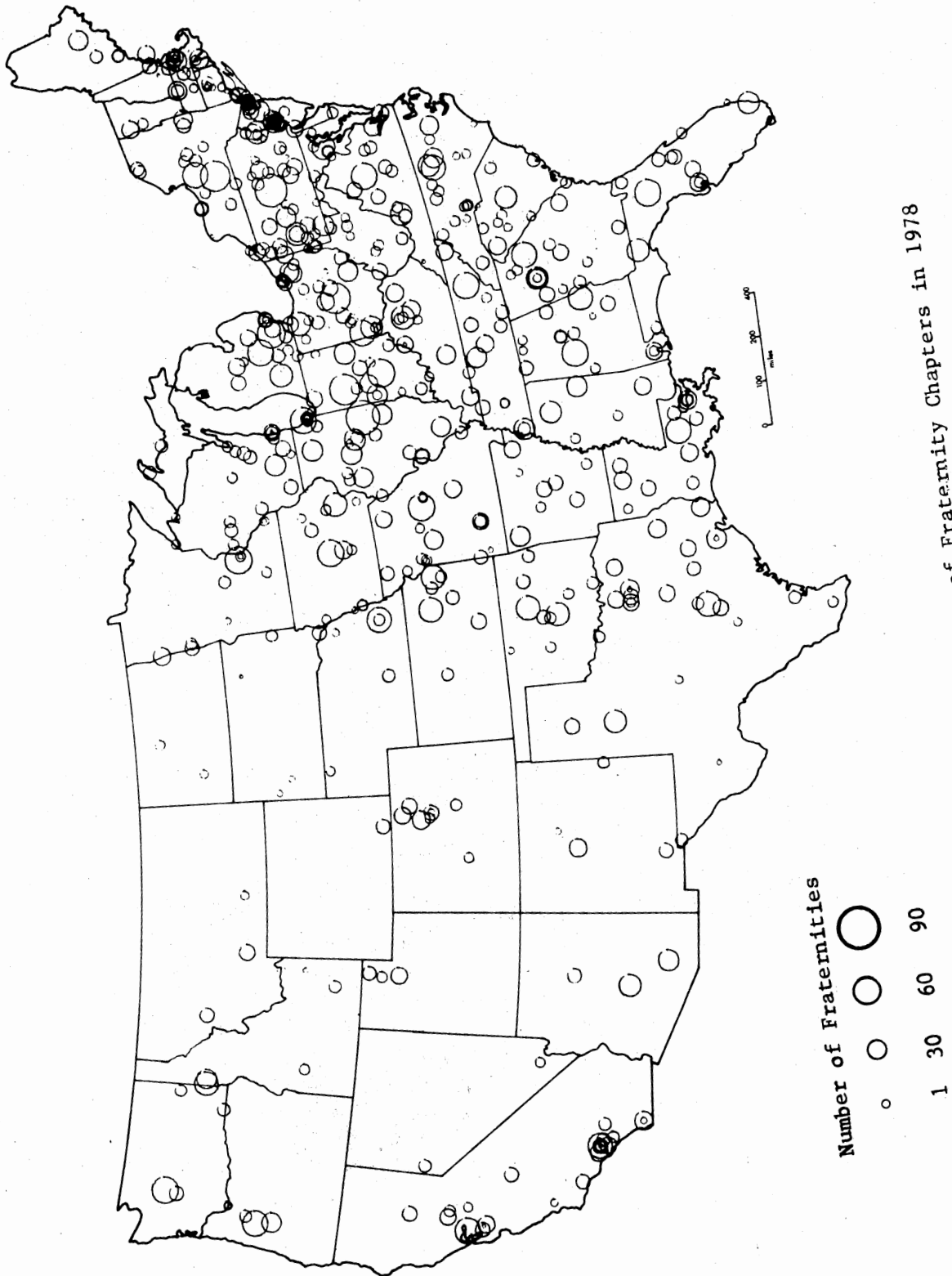


Figure 9. Distribution of Fraternity Chapters in 1978

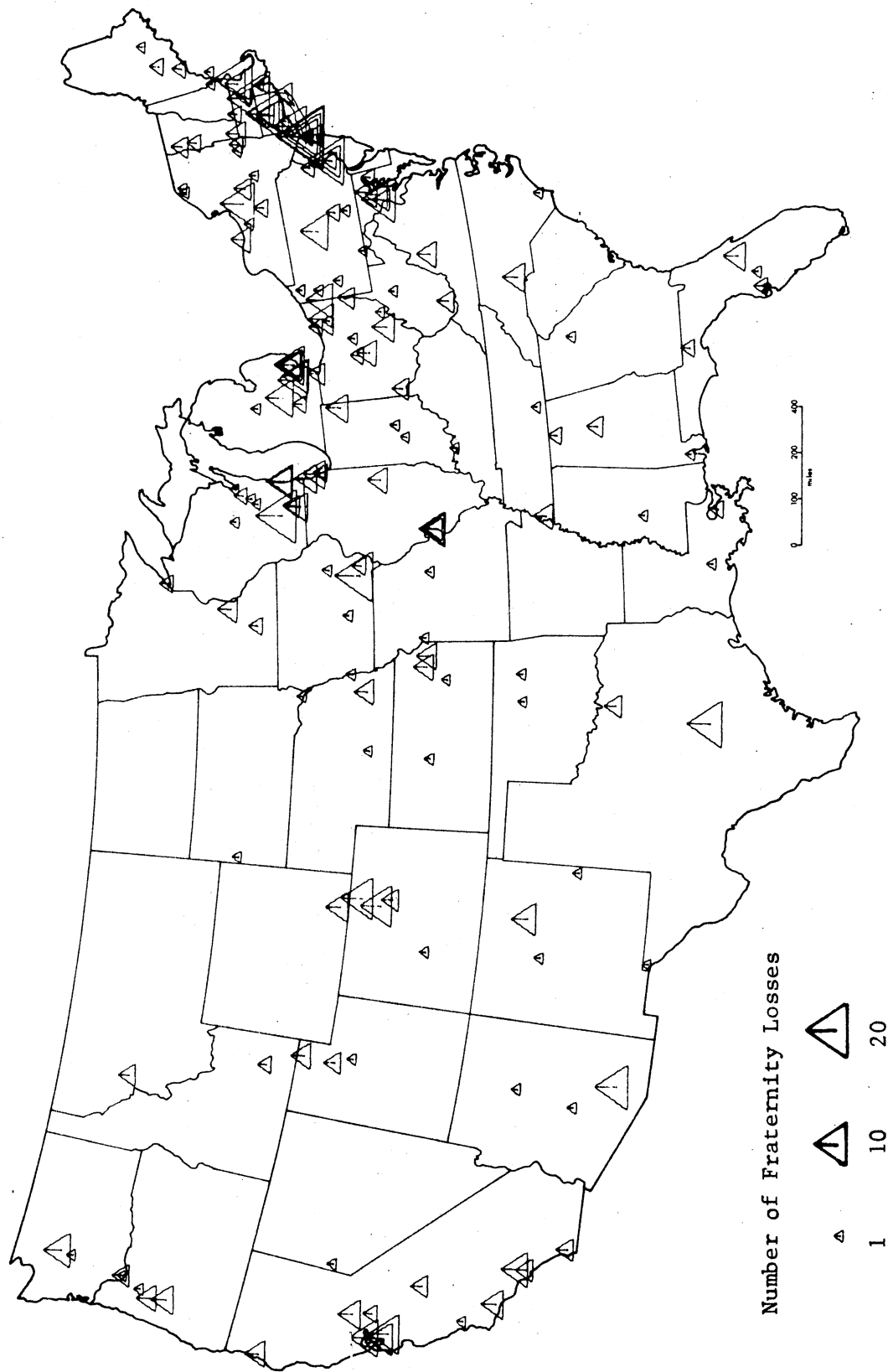


Figure 10. Loss of Fraternity Chapters from 1970 to 1978

lived a short life cycle, now failing.

Every area of the country displays losses in this period, although some are more severe than others. Most noticeable are the large losses on the Eastern Seaboard throughout the Megalopolis. Other major losses appear along the Great Lakes shoreline and into the Midwest. The Great Plains experienced its first noticeable regional loss. Previous losses in this area had been confined to a few campuses per decade.

Although the losses in the Rocky Mountain states appear scattered, when compared to the distribution of schools in this area, they are significant. Arizona and Wyoming show losses at every fraternity campus in the state, and Colorado, Utah, and New Mexico have a high percentage of campuses with losses. The West Coast also saw heavy losses, as in Washington where every campus experienced losses.

The only area not significantly effected was the South, where most campuses lost only a few chapters. In fact the South was the only region that had any major form of growth at all during this period.

Why Did Chapters Close?

During an approximately ten year period beginning in 1964 the fraternity system suffered from the influence of student activism and campus unrest. The system experienced a decline in this period, not only in numbers, but in prestige and influence (Prichard and Buxton, 1972, p. 218). Much of the decline expressed itself in relative terms, i.e. the percentage of individuals affiliating with Greek letter societies dropped, while the total number of individuals pledging fraternities continued to rise, although not at the rapid rate of the previous twenty years.

In previous eras, chapter loss was a result of conflict and war,

the national economy, and legislative decisions. These factors and others also contributed to the major losses beginning in the mid-Sixties. The Vietnam conflict, as well as unrest on college campuses and in the cities, were just beginning their emergence as full scale social problems. A recession beginning in the early Seventies further contributed to the sober state of civil affairs.

Several more subtle influences on the fraternity slump in the late Sixties and early Seventies should be mentioned. These factors relate to the decline in strength due to the changing nature of schools and society. Students successfully challenged the university's right to govern their private lives in this period and previous rules regarding curfew, requirements to live in university housing, etc. were overturned. Housing that was more abundant, the increasing number of urban schools, the changing make-up of the student body, all contributed to a reduction in fraternity importance.

One very plausible explanation of the decline in fraternity strength was the emergence of other extra-curricular activities. Whereas at one time the fraternity provided the major extra-curricular outlet for students, today's college students have a much wider range of activities from which to chose.

Social, recreational, and cultural programs offered by the Student Union, residence halls, religious foundations, intramurals, and the metropolis itself have developed to satisfy needs which, at other campuses or in earlier decades, were more or less exclusively fulfilled through fraternities (Johnson, 1972, p. 90).

Likewise more housing alternatives are readily available to college students than at one time, thereby ending the "prime housing" monopoly fraternities once held.

The student body of the universities and colleges is changing. In 1900 only five percent of the population received a college education, while today higher education reaches over fifty percent of the people (Robson, 1968, p. 27). Not only are more people going to school, but the life style of those going to school varies tremendously. Commuter students, part time students, and older students returning to school have little interest in fraternity activities. Further, a new generation emerged in the period from 1964 to 1974, a generation of students who held materialism and traditional values in contempt and looked for relevance in their lives. They were more interested in the social problems of the world than the frivolities of fraternity membership. Their influence can still be felt.

A third major influence in the decline of the national fraternity system, particularly in the Northeast and New England, is directly related to the Civil Rights movement. In 1953 the trustees of the State University of New York, a system comprised of twenty one educational institutions, ordered all fraternities on their campuses to give up their national affiliations, due to the bias clause regarding membership selection⁵ (Henderson, 1960, p. 94; Robson, 1968, p. 817). Without doubt this decision had a resounding effect throughout the area. Chapters at some schools voluntarily surrendered their charters as the desire to admit minority students was stronger than the desire to remain a part of an institution they saw as hypocritical. Those chapters surrendering their national charters normally remained on campus as

active local fraternities, but because of this change in status would not be included in Figure 9. Many of the schools forfeiting their national affiliation in the Sixties retain a strong local fraternity system. These groups, no doubt, influence the distribution maps of the national fraternity system, but there is no practical means by which to measure their influence or extent. In 1976 SUNY reversed its earlier decision. As yet, it is too early to see the results of this reversal.

Finally the effect of "Little Sister" organizations has recently been a concern of the National Panhellenic Council. "Little Sister" groups are male fraternity auxiliaries whose purpose varies; in some areas they are composed primarily of sorority members. The concern, however has been that on many campuses these groups are replacing national sororities, i.e. the women are joining these groups as opposed to sororities. The phenomena most definitely has spatial implications and influences the regional strength of the entire system.

By 1974 the problems of the prior ten years were beginning to fade. The fraternity has begun renewed expansion since that time, although it appears the rejuvenation is stronger in some regions than in others. Chapter V will examine some of the methods of measuring regional fraternity strength and will examine some maps showing this variation.

ENDNOTES

¹Most national fraternities establish chapters only on fully accredited four year colleges and universities.

²Chapter losses had occurred before this time, but not to any of the fraternities existing today or fraternities that merged with existing national fraternities.

³For further information regarding legislative influences on the fraternity see Robson, 1968, p. 813, and Robson, 1977, p. 833.

⁴National fraternity unit refers to the overall group of fraternity chapters bearing the same name. As an example, in 1942 Beta Kappa merged with the larger group Theta Chi. The majority of the former's chapters assumed the name, traditions, and ritual of Theta Chi.

⁵Bias Clause refers to the restrictive clause most fraternities had regarding pledging members of a racial or religious minority group. This clause has been dropped.

CHAPTER V

MEASURES OF FRATERNITY STRENGTH

In a nation as diverse as the United States, the acceptance, approval, and enjoyment of any social activity can vary tremendously. Food preferences, religious denomination, language distinctions (such as accents and slang terms), sporting activities, folkways, and life styles in general each have distinctive regional configurations. These differences are the result of a myriad of factors including population distribution, heritage, tradition, customs, migration, economic status, racial composition, and others.

The fraternity, as a social activity and phenomenon, must certainly have regional characteristics. Those involved within the fraternity have little question that spatial differences exist. Johnson summed it up quite nicely, as noted in Chapter I, specifically referring to the Midwest, Southwest, and South as strong and to New England as declining. But is it this simple? How does one determine regional strength?

Without a doubt some areas have had continued prosperity while others have faded. At the same time previously weak areas have emerged as strongholds. Discussion in Chapter IV illustrated the case of the South which has experienced growing success, while the culture hearth area in the Northeast, once strong, has weakened.

This chapter will address the question of fraternity strength in the Seventies. There are several ways to measure regional variation in

fraternity intensity. The most obvious of course is to measure the amount of participation, or the geographical distribution of members. The problem of attaining membership statistics has been mentioned in earlier chapters. Fraternity membership records are generally cumulative, listing all members, dead or alive, collegiates or alumni. Collegiate memberships for a given college in a given year are available from the college in most cases. Likewise chapter membership for a given chapter in a given year are available from the fraternity. Neither, however are compiled in a readily available cumulative source. To gather these statistics it would be necessary to write to every college and university, or to every fraternity and then hope for accurate and complete responses.

Two other means of evaluating strength are monetary support and facilities. Undoubtedly both of these factors contribute to the success and strength of a fraternity system on a college campus. At institutions such as Syracuse, Penn State, the University of Texas, the University of California at Berkeley, and the University of Alabama, the fraternity facilities (houses) are incredible. The operation of such structures is at no small cost. Large memberships are generally imperative to maintain these houses. This is not to imply however that strong fraternity systems do not exist where facilities are not quite so impressive, but rather simply to illustrate one means of measuring strength. Likewise monetary support of fraternity chapters on a given campus contributes to success. Alumni contributions, collegiate budget, and money generated by and within the chapter all contribute to the success of a fraternity system and can be used as a measure of strength. Although these factors are measureable, again considerable difficulty

would be incurred in attempting to gather the necessary information.

The distribution of fraternity chapters in 1978 and the extent of chapter losses from 1970 to 1978 can be used as measures of fraternity strength and stability (Figures 9 and 10). The 1978 distribution map leads one to the obvious conclusion that chapter distribution closely represents population distribution. The problem with this map is that although generalizations can be made, it is difficult to distinguish less obvious regional differences. Secondly the map shows Arizona with three large fraternity campuses, but no basis for comparison in relative terms is provided. Is the fraternity system in Arizona strong in relation to other states? Is participation high? Does the fraternity exist at the majority of universities and colleges in Arizona?

The map of chapter losses shows, as expected, that the most frequent losses are in the heavier populated areas. The clue however that the fraternity is weakening in these areas is not the number of losses as much as the size of the losses. As an example, the South, already shown to be an area of growth in this period, not only has fewer losses, but also smaller ones. This would indicate the South is a more stable region, as opposed for instance, to the East Coast where a number of large losses are occurring. A map indicating the percentage of institutions in each area with losses might be even more revealing.

Both maps provide insight into regional variations. Nonetheless, there are additional methods of examining regional differences in the fraternity system. Five which will be examined in this chapter are:

- (1) total number of chapters per state;
- (2) percentage of fraternity campuses per state;
- (3) fraternity growth from 1970 to 1978;
- (4) per capita fraternity involvement by state; and,
- (5) percentage of

students involved in the fraternity system.

Total Number of Chapters Per State

Not surprisingly the map showing total number of chapters per state closely resembles the distribution of population and the number of colleges and universities per state (Figure 11). Basically an east to west pattern of fraternity strength emerges. The Midwestern and Southern states have more total chapters, weakening in the Great Plains to a low in the Rockies. The West Coast, most noticeably California, shows more fraternity activity.

The Midwest Corridor easily stands out as having the greatest concentration of chapters. A belt starting in New York and Pennsylvania stretches through the Midwest to Missouri. California, Texas, and Georgia also exhibit a large number of total chapters. The South and Wisconsin show the second heaviest intensity of fraternity chapters. The central Great Plains is the nucleus of an area with a relatively low number of chapters, joined by scattered states throughout the nation.

New England, the North Central, and Rocky Mountain states have very few chapters. This is understandable in the Western states considering Montana has only three schools with fraternities, Wyoming only one, Nevada two, and so on. But in New England, where college campuses are abundant, it is more difficult to explain. The University of Illinois has more chapters than the states of New Hampshire and Vermont combined - each state having thirteen college campuses. The traditional residential college was never completely erased in New England; Johnson (1970, p. 82) speculates that because of this the need for

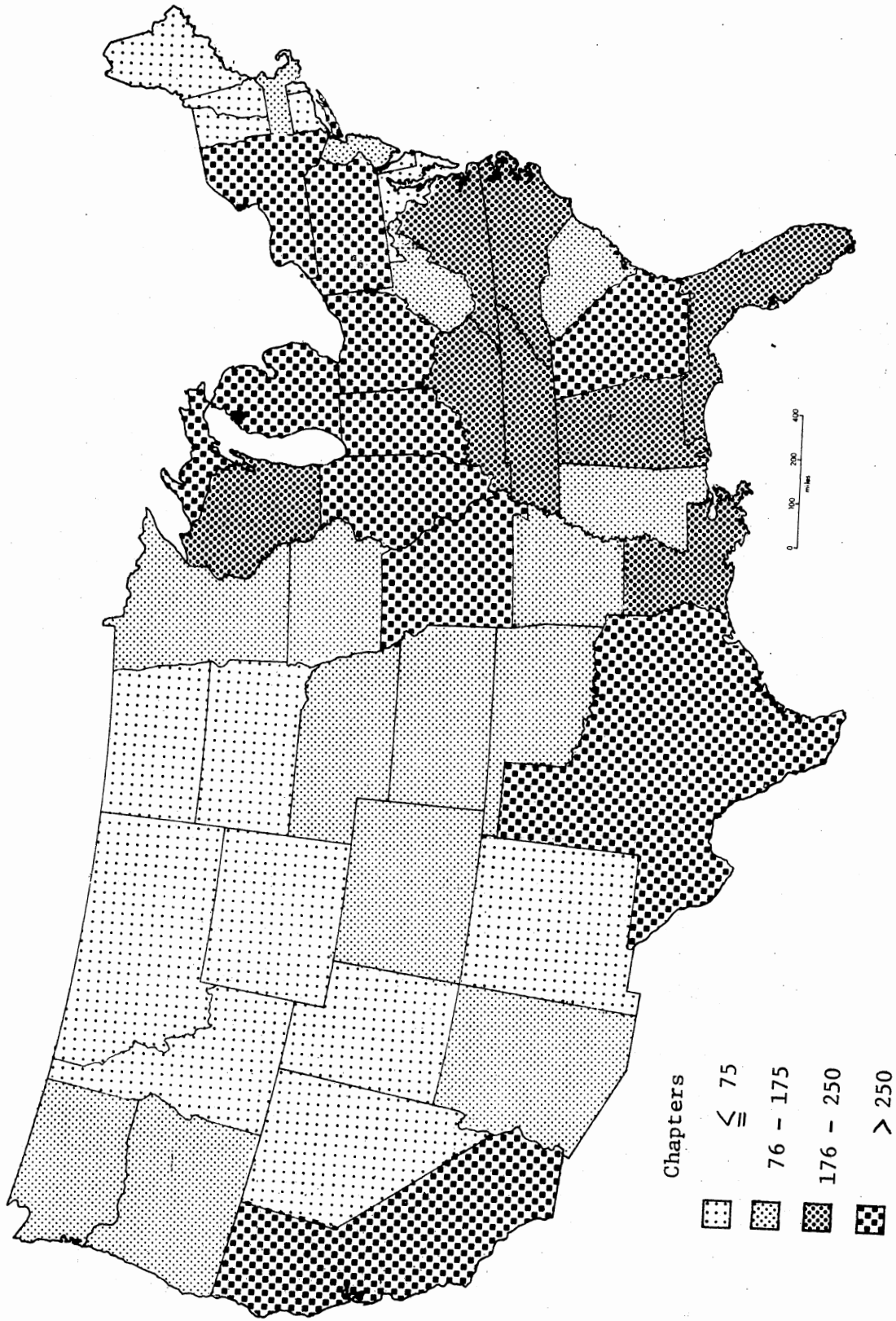


Figure 11. Total Number of Chapters Per State

fraternity housing never developed as it did on other campuses, a need that strengthened the system significantly.

Percentage of Fraternity Campuses Per State

One of the questions raised in the discussion of the Arizona situation was: Does the fraternity exist at the majority or minority of universities and colleges in a given state? The percentage of campuses per state where the Greek system is present is illustrated in Figure 12. This map was generated by simply dividing the number of fraternity campuses per state by all four year accredited institutions per state and multiplying by 100. For example, of Missouri's forty one campuses, twenty have fraternities, or forty nine percent.

Certainly this system of measuring regional importance has its drawbacks. States such as Nevada and Wyoming have only one or two total campuses; the one school in Wyoming has fraternities, therefore 100% of Wyoming schools have fraternities. In fact the majority of Great Plains and western states have less than twenty accredited four year schools per state. Nonetheless this measurement provides some interesting information. Primarily it indicates the extent of the fraternity system in each state.

Possibly this map would be helpful in determining fraternity expansion policy. Dependent upon one's point of view, it could be concluded that expansion is advisable on the West Coast or in New England where the system is weak; or conversely, expansion might be profitable in West Virginia or in the South where the fraternity is more generally accepted. Certainly this map alone could not be the sole indicator for expansion attempts. Other maps and other factors

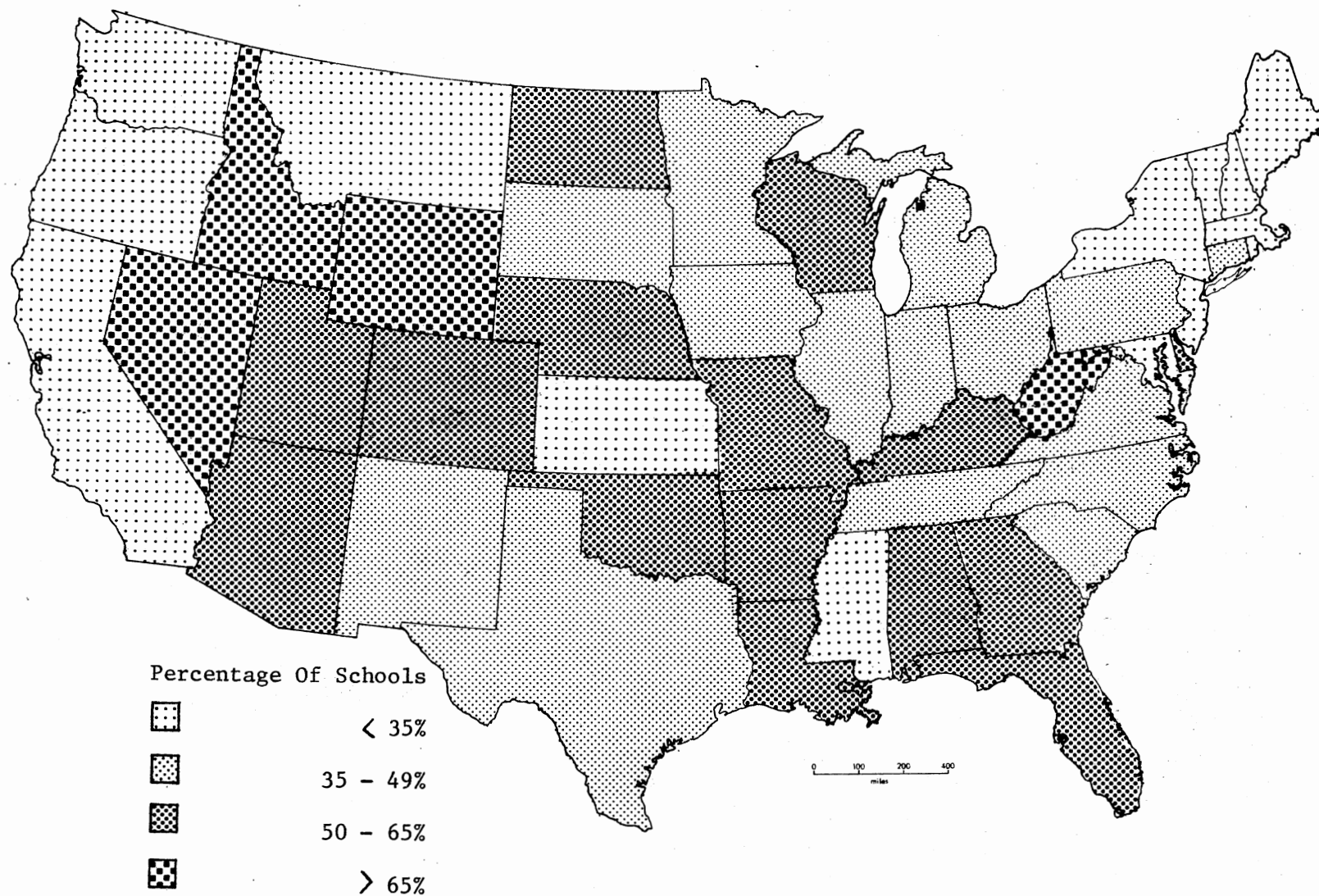


Figure 12. Percentage of Institutions Per State with Fraternities on Campus

would have to be considered. Social conditions, administrative attitude at the schools, success in extension attempts at other schools in the state, and regional character are more important measures, not to mention factors directly relating to the school itself such as enrollment, number of chapters already there, need for new chapters, etc. But it does raise some questions. Why does Mississippi, in the midst of the Southern stronghold, have such a low percentage of fraternity schools? Why is Kansas so weak in comparison to the states surrounding it?

The percentage of fraternity campuses per state is an indication of fraternity acceptance in an area. The West Coast, New York, and New England have a low percentage of campuses with fraternities. These are the same areas that have experienced major losses in recent years. The South, Central Plains, and Rocky Mountain states generally have a high percentage of fraternity campuses. These areas have accepted fraternities in recent years, or to put it another way, they have not yet reached the point as in the West Coast, New York, and New England where they are rejecting them. Acceptance, however does not necessarily imply strength, or even support, but it does contribute to it.

Fraternity Growth: 1970 to 1978

Growth in itself suggests success. Although the actual diffusion process was more or less completed by 1920, growth still continued and a "filling in" process began. During the sixty year period beginning in 1920 numerous changes in the form of additions and losses have occurred. Despite predictions of doom, fraternity growth continues strong today. Where the growth is occurring is another means of measuring fraternity strength.

The statement was made in Chapter IV that the South appeared to be the only area with visibly more new campuses open to the fraternity in the Seventies. By aggregating data regarding change to the state level, it is apparent the South does indeed stand out as the major area of fraternity development in the Seventies (Figure 13).

By determining the percentage of college and university campuses which had positive or negative change over the eight year period from 1970 to 1978 maps indicating areas of gains and losses were made. The measure included all campuses with fraternities in the state and determined which experienced a gain in chapters, a loss in chapters, or remained stable.¹ As an example, Pennsylvania had a total of forty five colleges and universities on which fraternities were present. Twenty five of these experienced no change at all in the years from 1970 to 1978 and six campuses lost chapters. Therefore of the forty five total, fourteen campuses had an increase resulting in a thirty one percent positive change. Fifty six percent of the campuses were stable and thirteen percent were losers.

As mentioned, there is a strong belt of positive change stretching throughout the South. Over half of the colleges in this area saw chapter gains. It would appear the conservative nature of the South caused it to be less effected by the campus problems surfacing elsewhere. The fraternities obviously saw this as a prime opportunity for expansion.

The adjacent Midwestern states to the north form a secondary region. These states also saw positive change in at least one third of the campuses in that area. Although the map of chapter losses in Chapter IV (Figure 9) indicates major losses in this area, in most cases they were offset by increases. There are great intra-state variations

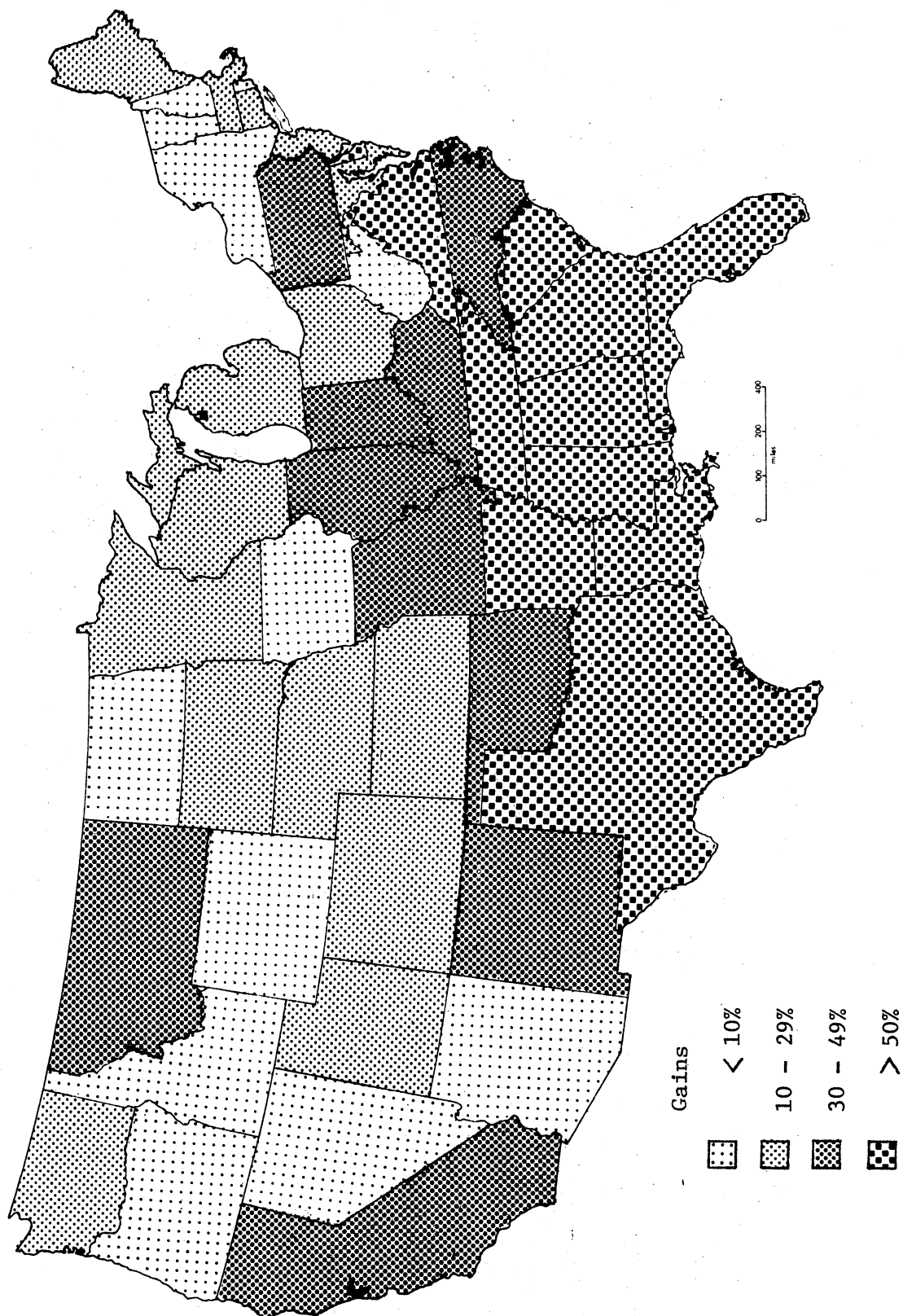


Figure 13. States with Campuses Incurring Chapter Gains 1970 to 1978

with some schools obviously experiencing major losses while many schools in the region saw increases.

Generally the western states, the Northeast, and the New England area experienced proportionately fewer gains and more losses (Figure 14). Once again a sign of the weakening of the once strong New England area and of a failure of the fraternity to ever really gain prominence in the West as it has in other areas.

Comparing the two maps of gains and losses, one can determine the states with high activity in this era and those with low activity. Naturally if a state had greater than fifty percent of its campuses experiencing change of one type or the other, it can be assumed that the area was effected during the period. Contrasting states, i.e. those with high positive growth and low negative change (or vice versa) such as the Southern states, indicate areas of major growth or major losses. Some other statements regarding fraternity change in an area can be made as well. For example, California campuses rated from thirty to forty nine percent in both categories, indicating change was occurring on most campuses. Few remained stable. North Dakota, on the other hand, rated low in both categories - the campuses were stable, little activity in the state. The fraternity system was, in essence, in limbo.

Although growth was occurring in this eight year period, one should not be misled. In comparison to earlier years the rate of positive growth dropped significantly. Nationally only thirty percent of campuses had gains. Comparing gains to losses a ratio emerged of only 1.3 campuses with gains to every one campus with chapter losses (Table III). This is a significant drop from earlier decades.

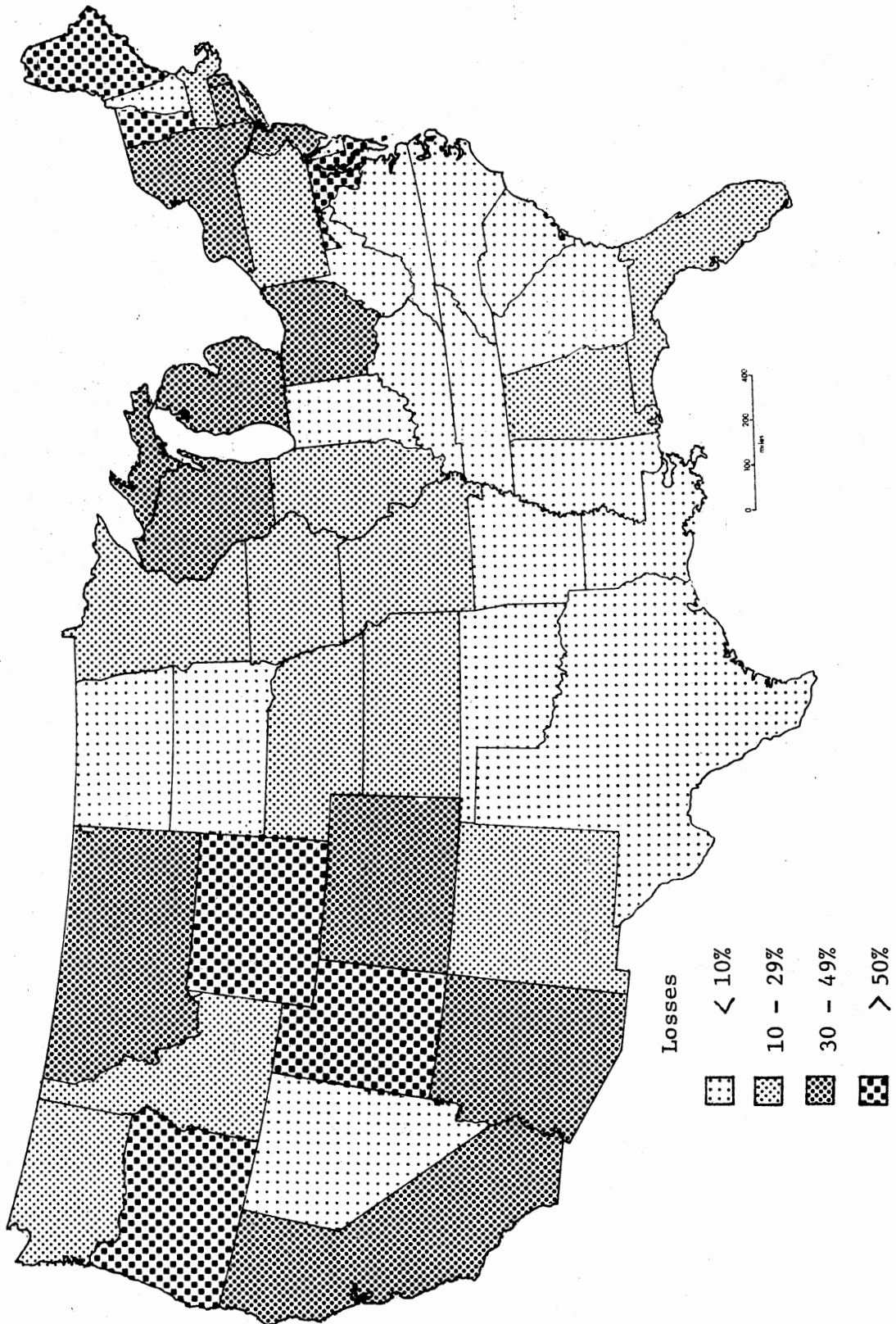


Figure 14. States with Campuses Incurring Chapter Losses 1970 to 1978

TABLE III
 NUMBER OF CAMPUSES ON WHICH GAINS OR LOSSES
 OF CHAPTERS OCCURRED, BY DECADES

Decade	Gains	Losses	Net	Ratio Gains/Losses
1830-40	16	0	16	16.0/0
1840-50	37	0	37	37.0/0
1850-60	72	3	69	24.0/1
1860-70	69	18	51	3.8/1
1870-80	101	18	83	5.6/1
1880-90	114	23	91	5.0/1
1890-1900	107	24	83	4.5/1
1900-10	167	10	157	16.7/1
1910-20	205	26	179	7.9/1
1920-30	264	16	248	16.5/1
1930-40	161	75	86	2.1/1
1940-50	252	41	211	6.1/1
1950-60	288	55	233	5.2/1
1960-70	374	88	286	4.2/1
1970-78	241	179	62	1.3/1

Fraternity Involvement

Number of chapters per state, percentage of fraternity campuses per state, and chapter growth all provide interesting measures of fraternity strength. Each has its advantages and drawbacks, each serving as a monitor of regional differences. None of these, however, address strength in terms of actual involvement.

Admittedly, a per capita measure of membership would provide perhaps the best measure of fraternity strength in an area. The difficulty in obtaining these statistics however has already been noted. In the absence of such information, there are other methods of measuring actual "people participation". Two which will be discussed here are a per capita involvement based on number of chapters, and a percentage of involvement based on percentage of male students involved in fraternity activities. These measures will hopefully provide a relative measure of the importance of the fraternity from state to state.

Per Capita Involvement

One method of measuring "people participation" is by determining per capita involvement, i.e. the number of chapters per 10,000 students. This indicator can be formulated by taking the map of total chapters one step further. Statistics for total student enrollment in four year accredited public and private institutions of higher education by state were taken from the Digest of Education Statistics, 1978. The number of chapters per state was then divided by the number of students per state and multiplied by 10,000 in order to obtain a per capita index. By establishing such an index, state to state comparisons can be made

more accurately (Figure 15).

California has a per capita index of three chapters per 10,000 students. The index in Georgia is nineteen per 10,000 students. This suggests that a school in California with an enrollment of 10,000 might have only three fraternity chapters on campus while a school of equal size in Georgia could have nineteen. In this context one would conclude that the fraternity system in Georgia is stronger than in California.

Of course this measure assumes all chapters throughout the country are of equal size. This is far from true. There is great variation in chapter size, ranging anywhere from less than ten to nearly 200 members. Nonetheless a per capita measure is still an informative means of evaluating fraternity strength.

No distinctive pattern of per capita fraternity involvement emerges. The West and Southwest generally have low involvement as does New England (with the exception of Maine). Other areas of the nation exhibit greater state to state variation. A corridor stretching from Pennsylvania and Virginia to Kansas and Nebraska and extending south from Missouri and Kentucky has generally a high per capita involvement. The Northwest, North Central, and Southern states show the greatest inter-regional variations.

This measure provides a comparative basis for number of chapters based on population. While Figure 11 showed exactly where the largest number of fraternity chapters were, Figure 15 shows where the number is greatest based on student population. California has a very large number of chapters, but when population is considered it falls short. Conversely North Dakota has fewer chapters, but based on its population it is well supplied indicating that fraternity interest is greater than

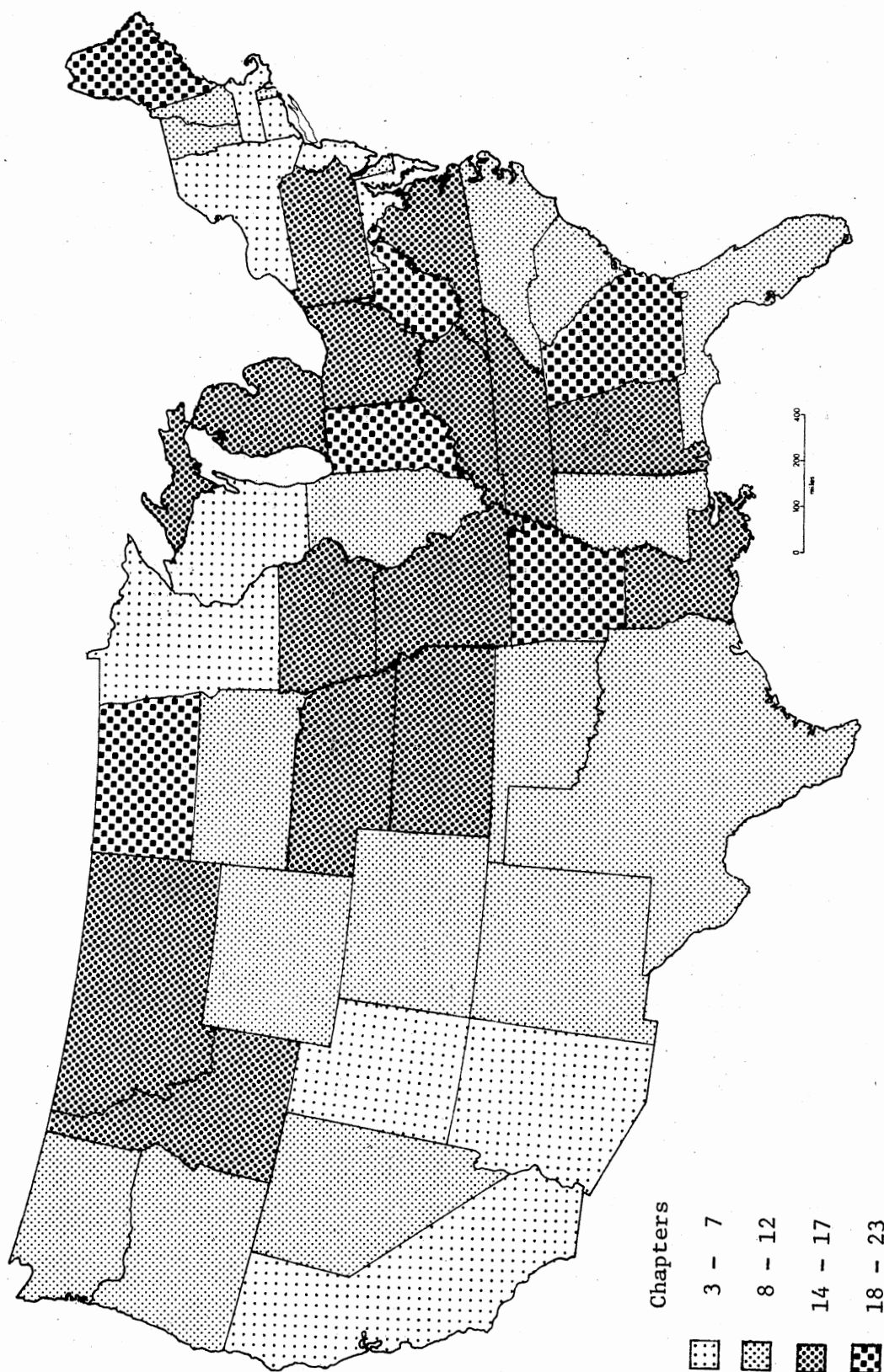


Figure 15. Number of Chapters Per 10,000 Student Population

in California. States such as Georgia and Indiana where both total number of chapters and chapters per 10,000 students are high would seem to indicate strength, with the reverse true for states such as Massachusetts, Utah, Mississippi, South Carolina, and others.

In lieu of membership statistics, it was argued a relative indicator would be the best measure of regional variation. As mentioned, the problem with the per capita measure is that it indicates strength in terms of number of chapters with no control for membership size. The percentage of students involved in fraternity activities is available, and serves perhaps as a better indication of student involvement.

Percentage of Students Involved in

Fraternities: 1978

A fraternity system composed of seventy five percent of the student body would be relatively more important than one containing five percent of the student body. In fact, in some cases this is more revealing than total membership. A large university may have 2000 students involved in fraternity activities, but this may be only five percent of the entire student population. A small college may have only 2500 total students but if 2000 of those students are involved in the fraternity, then that system represents eighty percent of the student body. In relative terms the influence of the fraternity at the small college is much stronger.

Percentage of students involved in fraternities was taken from Cass and Birnbaum's Comparative Guide to American Colleges, Seventh Edition, 1975. Statistics were given by percentage male and percentage female. Since these two variables were found to have a strong positive correlation coefficient ($r=0.88$), the percentage of male students

involved in fraternities by campus was used as a measure of relative strength.

A problem with this variable was the large amount of missing data. For many of the schools listed by Cass and Birnbaum, no student participation was listed, thus almost one third of the schools are not included. Figure 16 illustrates the percentage of males involved in the fraternity in 1978 at those schools for which data was available.

The Rocky Mountain and Pacific Coast states have a generally low participation rate. The only school standing out as having a high percentage is Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington. The school has eleven fraternity and sorority chapters in a school of 1102 students, of which forty four percent of the men and fifty percent of the women belong to fraternities. Approximately 500 students are involved. No other school in the region (for which data was available) had as high a percentage. It should be remembered that relative strength is being discussed here. Certainly there are numerous schools in this area where fraternity membership is larger, due to more students.

The relative strength increases as one travels east into the Great Plains. The central Plains area stands out as comparatively stronger than the rest of the region. Once past the Mississippi River the number of schools with high percentages increases dramatically. Surprisingly there are several schools in New York and New England with high percentages of student involvement.

There is great campus to campus variation in the percentage of student involvement in the fraternity system. The large number of chapters in the eastern half of the United States makes it difficult to distinguish any one area standing out as consistently strong in

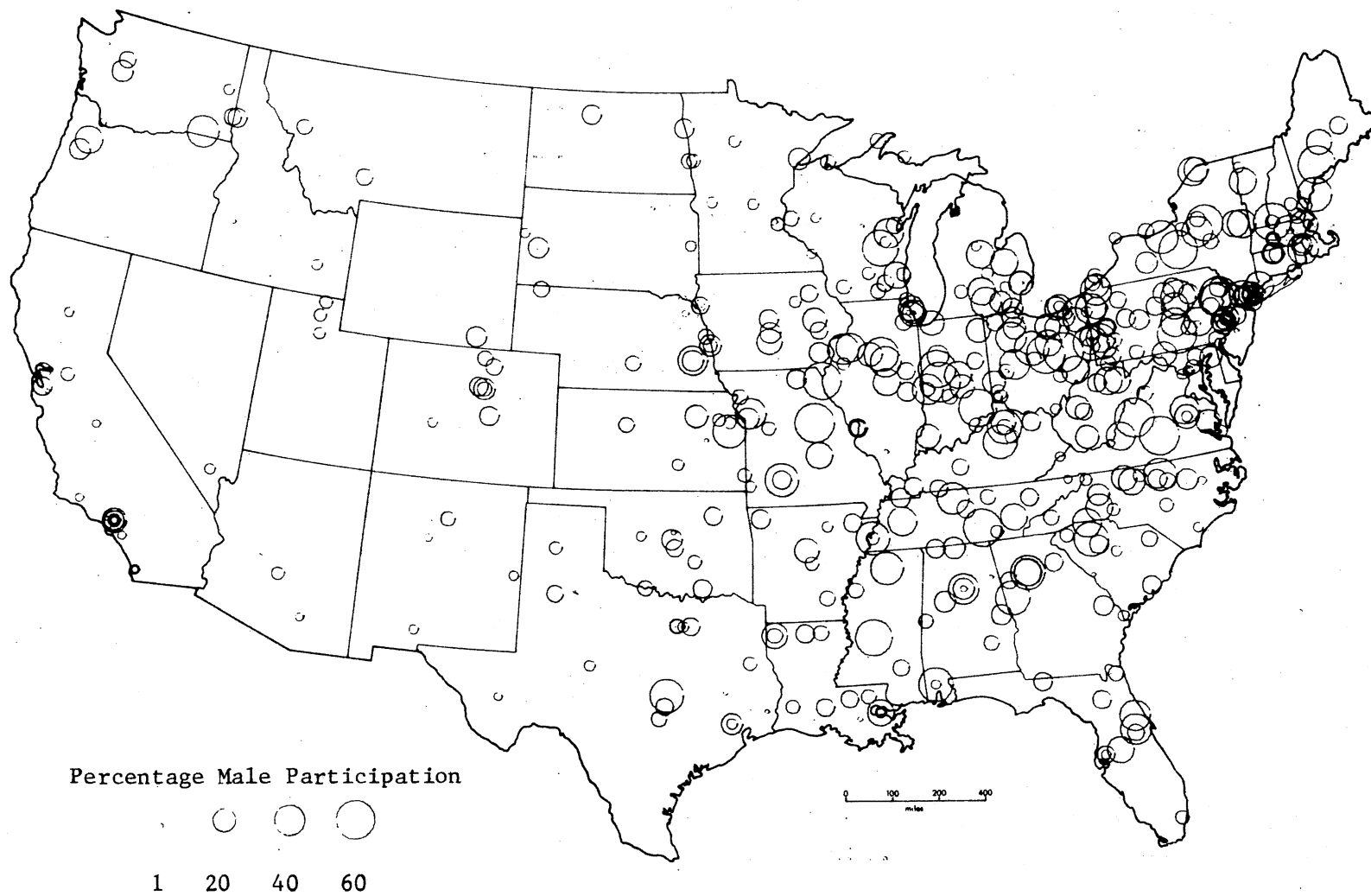


Figure 16. Percentage of Male Fraternity Members in 1978 by Campus

percentage participation, although there are areas that show up as consistently weak. The map of percentage of student involvement at the campus level has the same problem as did the 1978 chapter distribution map. Both give a good feeling for general patterns and trends, but provide only a slight comparative basis for state to state examination. By condensing the information, aggregating it into state units, regional differences are more evident.

Taking the campus percentages a step further provides a measure of fraternity participation by state. Regional distinctions can be made by determining the percentage of four year public and private institutions per state with male participation greater than twenty percent. For example, North Carolina had eighteen schools with fraternity chapters on campus in 1978, however the percentage male involvement was available for only fifteen. Of the sample fifteen schools, four had a percentage male involvement greater than twenty. Therefore twenty seven percent of the reporting fraternity campuses in North Carolina have greater than twenty percent male involvement.

Percentage participation by state enables comparisons to be made more easily. It is glaringly apparent that most schools west of the Mississippi River have a relatively low percentage of students participating in fraternities (Figure 17). Only the states of Oregon and Missouri show any strength at all. Eleven of the states have no campuses with greater than twenty percent male participation. The central Plains states (Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, and adjoining Colorado) fair slightly better. Their higher participation is perhaps influenced by the strength in the Midwest, directly to their East.

East of the Mississippi a different picture emerges; there is

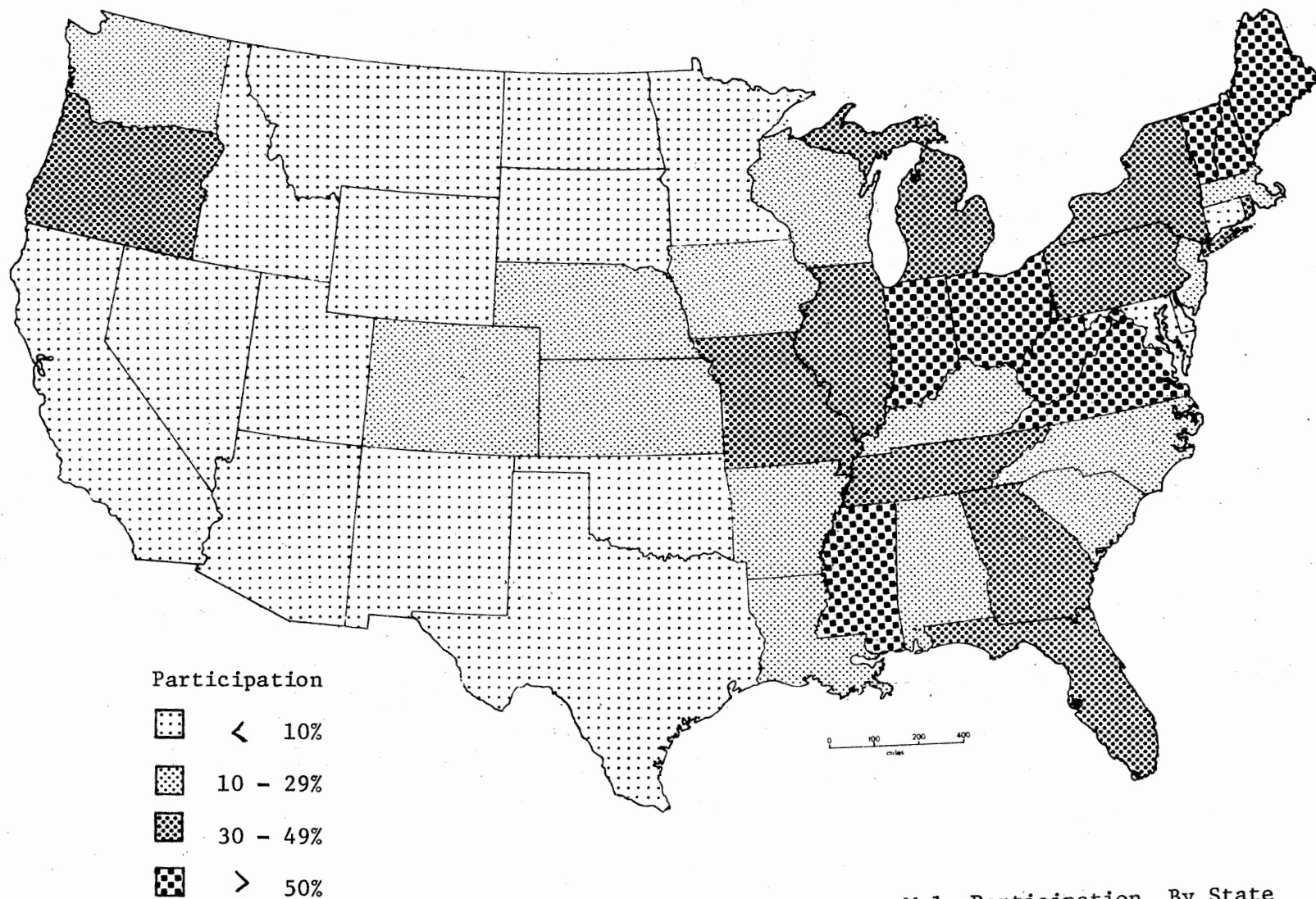


Figure 17. Fraternity Campuses Having Twenty Percent or More Male Participation, By State

noticeable state to state variation. The Southern states vary from an index of 16.6% to fifty percent, but moving north into the Midwest, one enters an area of definite strength. The Midwest Corridor has the highest percentage of schools with high percentage male involvement. When compared with the map of total number of chapters, the two lend credence to Johnson's statement (1972, p. 91) that the "Midwest is the heartland of Greekdom".

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this map however is the relative strength in parts of New England. This area has appeared low in all of the other measures. One must conclude then that in Northeastern and New England schools where the fraternity does endure it is often strong, although it does not exist at a lot of campuses. Therefore while the region as a whole may be weak, many of the fraternity campuses within it are strong. The effect of tradition in these schools may be a key. Conversely, although the fraternity exists at a high percentage of Western colleges and universities, the student involvement is low. It is possible that the size of the school has an influence on the percentage involvement, hypothesizing that large schools have low percentages and small schools have high percentages. Assuming most Western schools have large enrollments, the low percentages might be partially explained. This possibility will be discussed in further detail in Chapter VI.

Summary

In summary while regional variations are shown to exist, they generally tend to vary with the measure used. If all measures are considered however, certain areas fare consistently well, while others

seem to be consistently poor (Figure 18).

Combining all maps into one provides a cumulative picture of fraternity strength. For each of the five measures of fraternity strength one to four points were assigned according to the classes on each map. One point was assigned for the lowest category, four points for the highest. Measures of strength used were: total number of chapters per state, percentage of institutions per state with fraternities on campus, percentage of fraternity institutions per state with chapter gains from 1970 to 1978, number of chapters per 10,000 student population by state, and fraternity campuses with greater than twenty percent participation by state.

A pattern similar to the previous maps emerged. The West and New England, with the exception of Maine, were generally low and the Midwest and South generally high. The Midwest Corridor, stretching from Pennsylvania to Missouri, and the South appear to be the strongest regions in the nation. Indiana tied with Georgia as the two strongest fraternity states in America, each accumulating seventeen points out of a possible twenty. Maryland scored as the weakest state, barely mustering six points.

Examining each region by individual category indicates which areas are strongest by each measure of strength. In terms of total chapters the Midwest is definitely strongest, as it is in percentage male participation. Likewise per capita involvement is also high and it appears as a secondary region in terms of positive change in the Seventies.

The South is definitely strongest as measured by recent growth. There is noticeable state to state variation in terms of percentage of

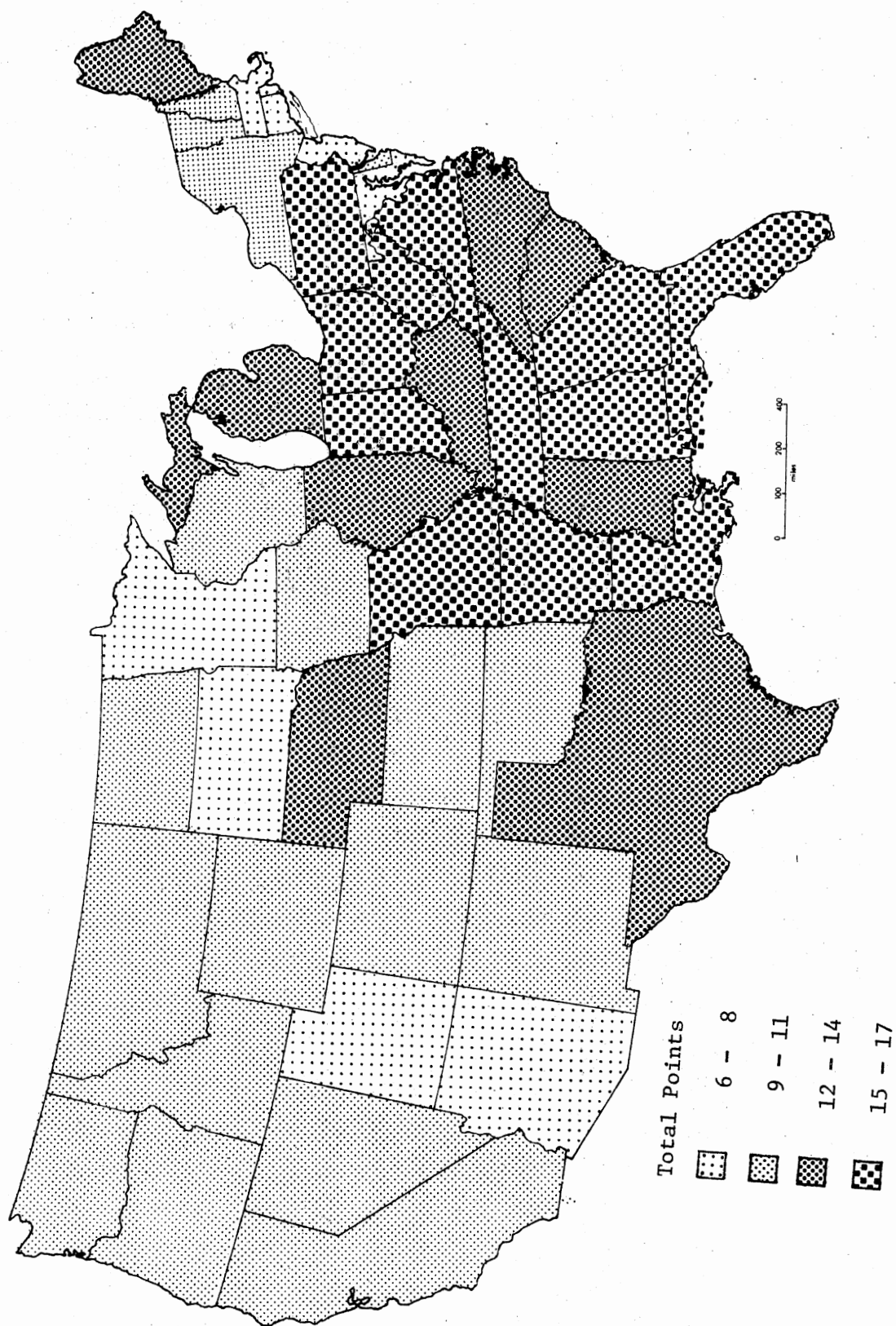


Figure 18. Summary of Measures of Fraternity Strength

institutions with fraternities on campus, total number of chapters, male participation, and per capita involvement, but overall the region is a healthy one for fraternities.

Perhaps most interesting are the conclusions drawn regarding New England and the Western states. New England as a region fared low in all measures (although there were occasional state deviations). It was found however that in many of the institutions where fraternities exist, a high percentage of the student body is involved in fraternity activities. It appears that although the region as a whole is weak, apparently the fraternities in parts of New England are very strong on the campuses where they do exist.

Western states fared low in all measures, except percentage of institutions per state that have fraternities on campus. The fraternity has obviously penetrated this area establishing chapters at a very high percentage of institutions, but it has been able to generate strong support in relatively few schools. The low number of total chapters is understandable due to fewer schools, but the rate of student involvement and growth remains low indicating little relative strength. Even in California, where a large number of chapters are present, the fraternity has so far not been able to rate high as gauged by other measures.

In concluding two points should be noted. The maps in this chapter show fraternity strength in terms of tangible measures; however measures of the mind, intangibles, contribute to the idea of fraternity strength as well. An individual may have the idea a certain area is strong because of specific schools in that area. Texas, as an example, is considered one of the stronger fraternity states by many. When one thinks of Texas, he thinks big, he thinks of the University of Texas,

of SMU, of Texas Tech, of the many campuses with "strong" fraternity systems. The state does not rank especially high nationally, but it does in one's mind.

National Awards also influence one's perception of a place as a strong fraternity area. Each national fraternity presents awards at their conventions to outstanding chapters. The awards vary from overall excellence to individual aspects of fraternity programming. For example, in 1978 the Alpha Gamma Rho chapter at Oklahoma State University received the award for the outstanding AGR chapter in the nation. The Sigma Alpha Epsilon and Pi Beta Phi chapters at OSU received the same awards from their respective nationals a few years earlier. Other chapters on the campus have received awards for pledge programming, chapter activities, service to the community, etc. In fact in the past ten years numerous national awards have been won by the thirty five various OSU fraternity chapters. If data were compiled with every national fraternity indicating recipients of all national awards for the past ten years another interesting indication of fraternity strength could be made.

This chapter has answered, and raised, some interesting questions regarding the regional strength of the fraternity. Although "regions" exist there are campus, as well as state deviations. Chapter VI will address the question of regional versus campus strength.

ENDNOTES

¹See Chapter VI, page 87, for breakdown of stable, gain, and losses.

CHAPTER VI

FRATERNITY STRENGTH AS MEASURED BY SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

Imagine a smooth even surface, void of any differences, any variation, any distinctiveness. There is no diversity, nothing to set one point apart from another. Everything is the same. For this plane little detailed description would be necessary for once the whole was understood, so would be the parts. There would be no variation.

Transposing this to the fraternity one would find all chapters the same size, growing at the same rate, balanced accordingly with school enrollments so as to be the same everywhere. No regional differences would exist, no one could say the Midwest is the heartland, the South the growing stronghold, the West indifferent.

But this is not the case. The fraternity in America has been shown to vary tremendously from one region to another. What causes this variation? Why does the fraternity not appear as a smooth even plane? The effect of population characteristics on these differences has been mentioned in earlier chapters, as has the effect of individual attitudes and their influence on fraternity strength. This chapter will discuss school characteristics and the role they play on regional fraternity differences.

If school characteristics were all the same, one might not find fraternity regional differences. With schools themselves not varying,

it would be logical to assume the organizations within those schools would not differ. School characteristics do, however, vary significantly by region and are strongly related to varying fraternity intensity.

There are numerous descriptive indicators that denote differences between schools. Characteristics such as enrollment, regional importance, and location quickly come to mind. Others include the type of school - is it sectarian or non-sectarian, public or private, Ivy League or agricultural? The size of the city in which it is located, the school's age, its budget, its student characteristics, its faculty reputation - the list is endless. All contribute to the character and mood of a school.

The question in the present context is what combination of these characteristics contribute to a strong fraternity system? As already mentioned school characteristics alone do not explain fraternity strength, but they do undoubtedly contribute. Four descriptive variables of school characteristics will be examined in this chapter. They are: school enrollment; size of city in which the institution is located; type of school, i.e. church related, private non-sectarian, or public; and age of the fraternity system on campus. These variables were chosen not only because they were thought to be closely related to fraternity strength but also because data for them was readily available.

The school characteristics will be examined against two measures of strength for each of nine regions. The measures, percentage male participation and change in the number of fraternity chapters from 1970 to 1978, were calculated on a per campus basis. For a class breakdown of the six variables see Table IV. The United States Census divisions were used for the nine geographic regions, and although not perfect, come

TABLE IV
DESCRIPTIVE INDICATORS FOR
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

<u>Region</u>			
New England ¹	1	South Atlantic	4
Middle Atlantic	2	East South Central	5
East North Central	3	West South Central	6
		West North Central	7
		Mountain	8
		Pacific	9

<u>Change in Number of Fraternity Chapters Per Campus, 1970-1978</u>		<u>Percent Male Participation</u>	
Losses	≤ -2	Low	≤ 5
Stable	≥ -1 and $\leq +1$	Average	6 - 20
Gain	$\geq +2$	High	≥ 21

<u>School Population</u>	<u>City Population</u>
$< 5,000$	$< 25,000$
5,000 - 10,000	25,000 - 50,000
10,001 - 20,000	50,001 - 200,000
$> 20,000$	$> 200,000$

<u>Type of School</u>	<u>Year Chapter Opened</u>
Church	1870 or Before
Private Non-Sectarian	1871 - 1930
Public	1931 or After

fairly close to regional differences as identified in Chapter V (Figure 19).

Initially it was thought that the effect of school characteristics on the number of chapters per campus would also be examined in this chapter. However after reviewing cross frequency tables it appeared regional variation in this variable was not as easily distinguished or significant as it was for the other two measures of strength. Only the Middle Atlantic and New England regions had noticeably different profiles, having a smaller proportion of schools with more than twenty chapters (Table V). Overall, a positive correlation coefficient of 0.70 indicated that there is a significant relationship between school size and number of chapters. It can be assumed, then, that school size is the major determinant of number of chapters.

Regional Profiles

It has already been established in Chapter V that regional differences in fraternity strength exist. The profiles of fraternity strength simply reinforce what the maps indicated in Chapter V (Table VI). The South was strongest in terms of recent growth and the East North Central strongest in terms of participation. In fact nearly one third of all schools with greater than twenty percent involvement were located in the East North Central region, and almost sixty percent of all growth occurred in the three Southern regions.

Profiles for the four school characteristics also show distinctive regional differences (Table VII). The Western regions have only two schools with fraternity systems founded prior to 1870; while the East North Central (Midwest) and the Atlantic states have a total of seventy,

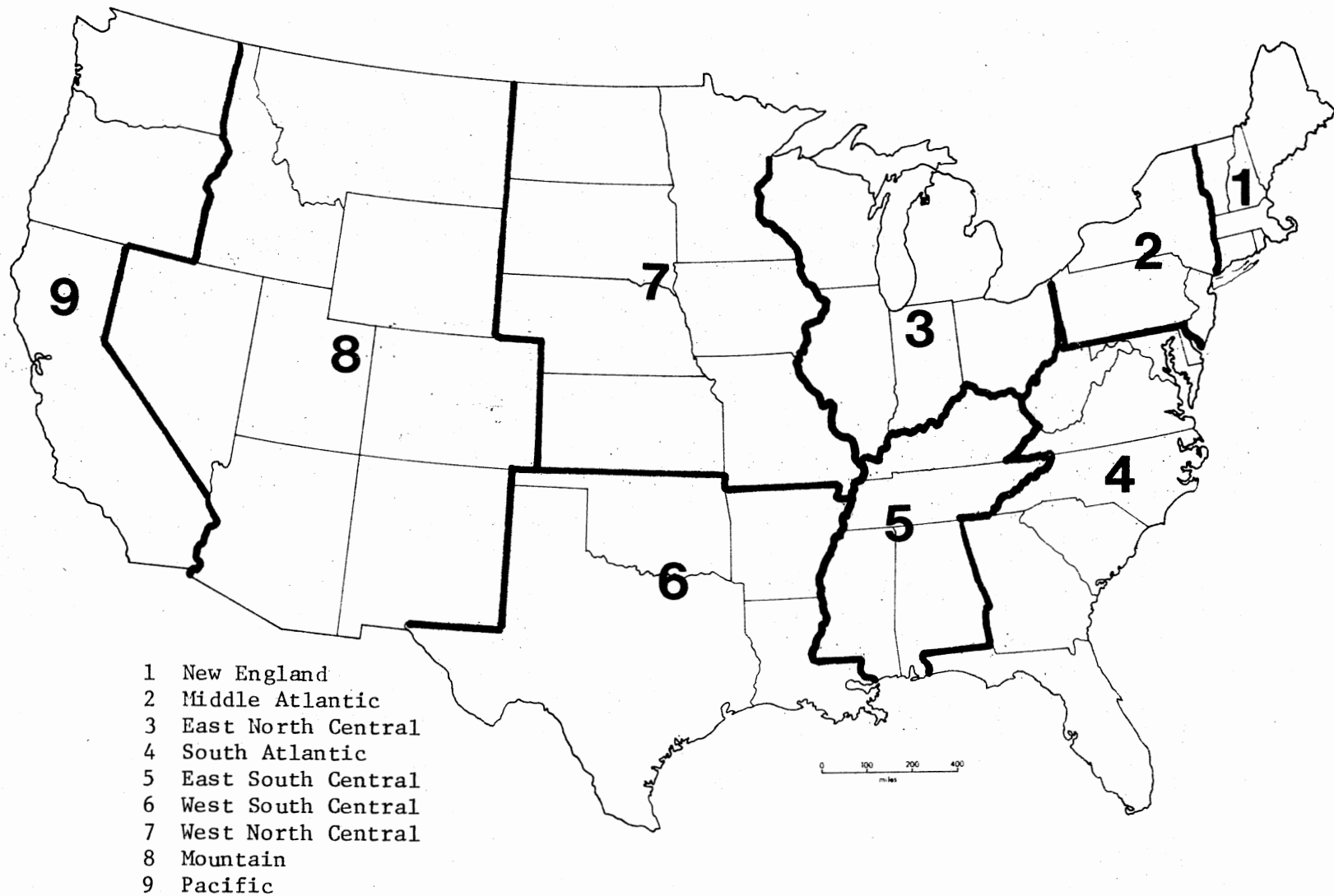


Figure 19. Regional Divisions According to the United States Census

TABLE V
REGIONAL PROFILE FOR NUMBER
OF FRATERNITY CHAPTERS

Region	1 - 5 Chapters	6 - 10 Chapters	11 - 20 Chapters	Greater than 20 Chapters
New England	19	8	9	5
Middle Atlantic	31	27	26	7
East North Central	20	31	31	26
South Atlantic	26	39	22	19
East South Central	8	16	12	14
West South Central	9	14	23	13
West North Central	19	24	14	11
Mountain	8	8	11	6
Pacific	8	7	12	9

TABLE VI
REGIONAL PROFILES FOR TWO MEASURES
OF FRATERNITY STRENGTH

Change in Number of Chapters Per Campus, 1970 to 1978			
Region	Loss	Stable	Gain
New England	14	22	5
Middle Atlantic	19	55	17
East North Central	28	54	26
South Atlantic	11	50	45
East South Central	3	21	26
West South Central	3	21	35
West North Central	10	45	13
Mountain	11	17	5
Pacific	15	12	9

Percentage Male Participation in Fraternities Per Campus*			
Region	Low	Average	High
New England	5	11	8
Middle Atlantic	3	36	23
East North Central	14	33	41
South Atlantic	13	34	25
East South Central	5	23	12
West South Central	12	26	4
West North Central	11	33	10
Mountain	8	15	0
Pacific	15	10	3

* The regional profile for percentage participation serves as a sample. Data was available for only 435 of the total 592 fraternity schools used in the study.

TABLE VII
REGIONAL PROFILES FOR FOUR
SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

Region	School Size			
	Less than 5,000	5,000 - 10,000	10,000 - 20,000	More than 20,000
New England	26	9	2	4
Middle Atlantic	52	23	9	7
East North Central	56	20	19	13
South Atlantic	69	17	14	6
East South Central	28	11	8	3
West South Central	25	17	12	5
West North Central	38	16	9	5
Mountain	14	10	4	5
Pacific	9	6	11	10

Region	City Size			
	Less than 25,000	25,000 - 50,000	50,000 - 200,000	More than 200,000
New England	14	4	19	4
Middle Atlantic	43	9	11	29
East North Central	45	16	24	23
South Atlantic	44	20	21	21
East South Central	21	8	12	9
West South Central	24	6	13	16
West North Central	27	16	12	13
Mountain	11	6	11	5
Pacific	4	5	12	15

TABLE VII (Continued)

Region	Type		
	Church	Private	Public
New England	2	29	10
Middle Atlantic	25	38	28
East North Central	39	23	46
South Atlantic	36	14	56
East South Central	19	2	29
West South Central	15	1	43
West North Central	21	4	43
Mountain	6	2	25
Pacific	8	5	23

Age of Fraternity System			
Region	Founded 1870 and Before	Founded 1871 - 1930	Founded After 1930
New England	15	13	13
Middle Atlantic	23	28	40
East North Central	25	43	40
South Atlantic	22	36	48
East South Central	7	15	28
West South Central	5	20	34
West North Central	6	34	28
Mountain	1	22	10
Pacific	1	13	22

illustrative of the later development in the West as described in the chapter on diffusion. School size is more evenly divided in the Pacific states, while in other areas of the country heavy concentrations of small schools appear. The Pacific and East North Central regions are the only areas with greater than ten large schools.

Public schools comprise the greatest concentration regarding type of schools in all regions but the Middle Atlantic and New England states. In these areas private non-sectarian schools are most common. The East North Central region also has a large number of this type of school.

The Pacific region deviates again from other areas in terms of the size of city in which schools are located. Unlike any other region, large cities have the greatest number of schools. This could account for some of the fraternity weakness in this area. Fraternity leaders generally advance the argument that major metropolitan areas are not conducive to fraternity systems. Individuals enrolled in such schools are often older, part-time and/or commuter students, normally not interested in fraternity activities. In other areas of the country there is a general tendency for schools to be found in cities with a population of less than 25,000.

The generalities are apparent from a quick examination of the tables. However they should not overshadow the distinct differences from region to region. There is considerable difference, for example, between a concentration of sixty nine small schools in the South Atlantic states and a concentration of twenty five in the West South Central region. And although there is little difference in the number of public schools in the East North Central and West South Central states, there is substantial difference in the number of church and private schools.

The same type of comparisons can be made regarding the age of the fraternity system and city size as well.

The tables could be further used by combining the stronger indicators for each region to imply what kind of school might be most common. A typical school in the West North Central might be a small public school located in a small city with a fraternity system founded sometime between 1870 and 1930. In New England while the school might still be small, it would be private non-sectarian, located in a city ranging from 50,000 to 200,000 people, with the fraternity system begun prior to 1870.

The Nine Regions

While the profiles are useful in determining regional differences in school characteristics and allow for generalities, they do not relate these characteristics to the regions in terms of fraternity strength. A closer examination of individual regions would be useful. The profiles provide an inter-regional comparison of school and fraternity differences, but not an intra-regional picture. What is happening within the region to explain high male participation or strong positive change? The profiles show differences between them, a close examination will show differences within. The discussion of each of the nine regions which follows is based on cross frequency tables comparing each of the two measures of fraternity strength with the four school characteristics. General trends within each region will be highlighted.

New England

Most New England schools in the Seventies were stable, with a number of others leaning toward losses. In fact only five schools in the

states of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut saw gains; of these, four were at small schools. The Mountain Region was the only other area with so few gains.

While schools with an enrollment of up to 20,000 students were stable with a tendency to lose, large schools were definitely losing chapters. Schools in large cities were basically stable, while those in small cities were divided between losses and stable.

Although in other regions public schools were the big gainers, in New England there was no clear relationship between the public and private schools, and growth or decline. The newer the fraternity system, the more likely it was to grow. Fraternity systems begun prior to 1870 were divided between losing and stable. Those founded after 1870 were more concentrated in the stable category, with fraternity systems started after 1930 stable or tending to grow.

As noted, participation data was not available for all of the schools. Of those sampled in New England, almost half had average fraternity involvement, although there were several with high participation. Schools with fewer than 5,000 students were most conducive to high involvement. Larger schools tended to be stable.

Fraternities were very strong in small cities. Those with more than 25,000 people had average to low involvement.

Most schools in New England were private institutions, tending to have average or high involvement. The public and church schools were generally average. Fraternity systems begun prior to 1930 also had stronger participation than those begun after that time.

The Middle Atlantic States

In the Middle Atlantic States of New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, the area in which the modern college fraternity was born, the majority of schools were stable, with the remainder rather evenly divided between gains and losses. As in all but the Southern regions, large schools tended to lose chapters. Smaller schools were basically stable with most of the gains that did occur taking place in schools with from 5,000 to 10,000 students.

While systems in all cities were basically stable, large cities were most noticeable in explaining losses, with the gains coming at schools in the very small cities. Likewise all types of schools tended to be stable, with private schools accounting for more of the losses and public schools more of the gains.

Although all ages of fraternity systems were basically stable, those founded prior to 1930 had a tendency to lose and those founded after that time had a tendency to gain.

The Middle Atlantic States had only three schools reporting less than five percent participation. They were Drexel University in Philadelphia, New York University in New York City, and Millersville State College in Millersville, Pennsylvania. No other region in the country had so few. As in New England, most schools in this area had average involvement and several had high involvement.

Although small schools were split between average and high involvement, of those institutions registering greater than twenty percent participation, nearly all were at small colleges. Moderately sized schools tended to have average involvement and no tendency at all

emerged in very large schools.

There was a very slight tendency for schools in cities with populations of less than 200,000 to have high participation, but generally city size had little influence. Type of school seemed to be of more importance, with private and church schools in the Middle Atlantic States showing a stronger tendency towards high involvement than did public schools. Age of the system and participation were closely related, with almost all systems founded prior to 1870 having high involvement.

The East North Central States

Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio compose the East North Central region. In this area fifty percent of the schools were stable with the other half split between gains and losses. Small schools (those with less than 10,000 students) were generally stable. Schools from 10,000 to 20,000 were gaining chapters, and large schools were generally losers.

In large cities schools were split primarily between stable and losing, and in small cities they were stable. Schools in medium sized cities were evenly divided among the three classes.

Regarding type of school, public schools were generally gaining, church schools were stable and private schools stable with a tendency to lose. Older fraternity systems (founded before 1930) were stable and losing; new ones stable and gaining.

Participation is at its highest in the East North Central states with forty seven percent of the schools reporting having greater than twenty percent fraternity involvement and an additional thirty eight

percent having from six to twenty percent.

Small schools were once again the leaders in fraternity involvement. Larger schools generally had average involvement, although the tendency in schools with from 5,000 to 10,000 students was toward high participation. Schools with from 10,000 to 20,000 students had lower fraternity involvement.

City size showed great fluctuation. Small cities generally were inclined to have schools with high participation, as were cities with from 50,000 to 200,000 people. Cities with populations from 25,000 to 50,000 and over 200,000 were generally average with a tendency toward high participation.

Church and private schools had strong involvement in this area; public schools were average with an inclination to low involvement. As in the other regions participation was strongest at older schools and grew weaker as the age of the system declined.

The South Atlantic States

Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware are the South Atlantic states. Although not gaining at the same magnitude as the other Southern regions, this area still saw increases at greater than forty percent of its campuses and losses at only ten percent.

Gains were found at all sizes of schools, but were proportionately more concentrated at medium sized schools. The majority of small schools were stable. Large schools experienced gains on several campuses but lost on almost as many.

City size did not appear to be a factor. Type of school was

important, however. Church schools were stable and private schools, although split between the three categories, showed a slight tendency to lose chapters. Public schools were the big gainers. Unlike some other regions, fraternities begun prior to 1930 were basically stable or even gaining. Those begun after that time were primarily gainers.

The greatest number of South Atlantic schools had average to high fraternity participation. Once again students at small schools were the most strongly involved. Schools in small cities tended to have average or high participation. In moderately sized places the tendency was to be average, and in large cities no pattern emerged.

Church schools were strong in this area, private schools average to high, and although most public schools had average involvement they also accounted for most of the low interest schools. Once again older schools had high participation. Those begun after 1870 generally had average involvement.

The East South Central States

Only two regions saw the biggest concentration of their schools gaining. On fifty percent of the campuses in the East South Central states of Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, and Kentucky fraternities were adding new chapters.

While small schools were basically stable and tending to gain, at institutions larger than 5,000 there was a very strong tendency to add chapters. Cities with fewer than 200,000 people were also very conducive to fraternity growth. In larger places the schools were generally stable.

Public schools were the strong gainers in this region while church

schools were stable. The two private schools were split between stable and gaining. Older fraternity systems were generally stable, but as age of the system decreased the tendency to add chapters increased. Fraternities founded prior to 1870 were stable, from 1870 to 1930 were split between stable and gaining, and from 1930 showed a strong tendency to gain.

Like the South Atlantic states, the East South Central region experienced average involvement with a very strong tendency to high participation. In this area all schools with 10,000 students or more had average fraternity participation. Schools with fewer than 5,000 students were split between average and high, but these schools once again accounted for the majority of institutions with high interest. Schools with from 5,000 to 10,000 students were average and tending toward low involvement. In fact four of the five low interest schools were this size.

The influence of city size was most noticeable in large cities which were basically split between average and high interest. Others were generally average, although they too showed a tendency to high interest. Church and private schools were almost always strong interest schools and, although public schools generally had an involvement ranging from six to twenty percent, they also accounted for all five of the low interest institutions. Older systems were once again very strong, those founded between 1870 and 1930 average and strong, and those begun after 1930 generally average. The five low interest fraternity systems were all begun after 1930.

The West South Central States

The West South Central region is the other region in which gains outnumber each of the other two categories. In fact out of fifty-nine schools only three had losses: the University of Texas; North Texas State University at Denton; and Tulane University in New Orleans. Sixty percent of the change in Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana was positive.

Fraternities were increasing at all size schools. Likewise all sizes of cities showed gains, although those cities over 200,000 had a stronger tendency to remain stable.

Public schools were the big gainers. Church schools basically were split between stable and gaining, and the only private school with fraternities in the area lost chapters. Chapter age seemed to be less a factor in the West South Central states with all age systems stable or gaining, the most gains coming at new systems.

This area has a noticeably different participation pattern than other regions discussed so far. It is the first in which at least half of small schools were not high involvement institutions. All sizes of schools generally had average involvement tending to low. Likewise city size in this area does not appear to be a major influence. Even so, out of the four schools in the region with high participation, three of them are small institutions and all are located in very small or very large cities. They include Tulane University; Centenary College in Shreveport, Louisiana; the University of Central Arkansas at Conway; and Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas.

The West North Central States

The great majority of campuses in the states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, and Missouri were stable in the years from 1970 to 1978. Of the remainder, schools gaining chapters held only a slight edge over those losing chapters.

Neither school size nor city size were major factors in the West North Central region. The only noticeable influence from either of these variables was at large schools where fraternity chapters were inclined to close.

Church schools once again were stable, private schools tended to lose, and public schools were stable with a slight tendency to gain. The influence age played in strength of the system was similar to other regions with systems founded prior to 1930 stable or with a tendency to lose, and systems founded after that time stable with a tendency to gain.

Individuals at schools in the West North Central region generally demonstrated average interest in fraternities. Over sixty percent of the schools fell into this middle category, with the remainder almost evenly divided between low and high interest.

School size did not appear to be a factor in these states. Even at small schools, which accounted for nine out of the ten institutions with high involvement, the majority had average involvement. While participation in all classes of city size was generally average, tendencies did vary somewhat, particularly in medium sized cities. Cities with from 25,000 to 50,000 people tended to have low involvement, those with from 50,000 to 200,000 people tended towards high involvement.

Church schools had average to high participation, private schools

average, and public schools average to low. Age of the fraternity system was a minor influence in involvement, although there was a tendency in schools begun prior to 1930 to have high involvement and in schools begun after that time to have low participation.

The Mountain States

Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico comprise the Mountain states. In this area, while the majority of schools were stable, the tendency toward losses was strong, especially in schools with 5,000 to 10,000 students, or over 20,000 students. No gains at all occurred at schools with more than 20,000 people enrolled.

This region and New England were the only two areas where absolutely no increases occurred in very large or very small cities. In the Mountain states these were generally stable with a tendency to lose. Most cities ranging from 25,000 to 50,000 were split between losers and gainers, and cities ranging from 50,000 to 200,000 were stable tending to gain.

Three quarters of the schools in this region are public institutions; these were stable and leaning toward losses. The remaining quarter was basically stable. The fraternity systems in the region began at most schools in the years between 1870 and 1930, and are stable or losing chapters. Newer systems appear to be more stable.

Schools in the Mountain states had average, with a strong tendency toward low, involvement. None reported high fraternity interest. Reasons for the internal differences that did exist are hard to determine. Neither school size or city size was a major influence in this region.

although schools in cities from 50,000 to 200,000 did fare slightly better than schools in other cities. Likewise age of the fraternity system was only a minor influence.

All four church and private schools had average fraternity involvement and, while most public schools were average, they also accounted for all eight low interest schools. In essence, no patterns or generalizations emerged in this region. Apparently different combinations at different institutions produced a variety of results.

The Pacific States

In the Pacific states of California, Oregon, and Washington, fraternities lost chapters at nearly forty two percent of the schools, the highest proportion in the nation. Small schools (less than 10,000 enrollment) were stable, but anything larger was likely to see losses. Likewise schools in cities with a population greater than 50,000 also tended to show losses.

Church schools in the region were stable and private schools split between stable and losing. Public schools experienced losses, but they were also the schools where gains were occurring. The tendency in this region was for large public schools in large cities to lose, but this was only a tendency and did not always hold true. It was evident however at schools such as California State at Long Beach, the University of California at Los Angeles, San Diego State University, San Jose State College and in Seattle, the University of Washington.

Age of the system seemed to be of relatively little consequence since most fraternity systems in the region began after 1930 and were evenly divided between losses, stable, and gains. At schools where the

system began prior to 1930 the tendency was toward losses.

The Pacific region is the only area in the nation in which the majority of schools had low participation. In fact over half of the schools reporting in these states had less than five percent male participation. The general pattern for all sizes of schools was as the size of the school increased the percentage involvement decreased. City size showed greater diversity, especially in moderately sized cities.

Private schools seemed to fare best in the Pacific area. Church schools were split between low and average involvement. Public schools had a strong concentration of low interest schools. Schools founded prior to 1930 tended to have average involvement; those founded after that time had low participation.

Summary

While certain tendencies emerge in each of these regions, it is important to remember that numerous combinations of variables can be found in each region. Furthermore, the same combination of variables might work in the same region to produce opposite results.

This chapter has merely scratched the surface in its attempt to account for regional variations in fraternity strength. School characteristics combine to explain only a portion of the difference from one region to another. But even that part is important in understanding the differences and helping to comprehend what is happening within each separate region.

Previous chapters have mentioned the importance of an area's social and cultural characteristics in explaining fraternity prominence; yet, little is known about how such things as regional heritage and tradition,

socio-economic status, racial composition, population distribution, and others effect fraternity importance. There are those who believe fraternities in the South have seen a boom in the Seventies because of their virtual racial exclusion. They are a "safe" place for the sons and daughters of the Southern middle class. Others advance the notion that the northeastern Ivy League schools are weakening because the "country club elitism" of fraternities is no needed by students in these schools. They are already "elite" by virtue of where they go to school.

Individual attitudes have also been mentioned as an important contributor to explaining fraternity strength. It is possible much of the decline in the late Sixties and early Seventies was a result of student attitudes. Northeastern students very possibly saw fraternities as frivolous in light of world problems, whereas the Southern collegiates, perhaps, were more inclined to support traditional American values, which the fraternity represents. The attitudes of the faculty and administration and of the region as a whole are likewise important.

Other factors also contribute to fraternity strength. The cost of a college education may influence regional differences. With tuition higher at many of the northeastern schools, there might be less extra money for "frills" like fraternities. Lifestyle is possibly another important factor. Traditional Southern parents may prefer to have their children supervised by a group, rather than completely on their own in an apartment.

Student mobility may play a role that has yet to be recognized. It is very possible that many Northeastern students go elsewhere to college due to lower costs and lower entrance requirements. Their mobility could influence the demand for fraternities.

Fraternity need is another important consideration. Northeastern schools are very likely "fraternity-saturated" - they can hold no more. In addition, there is the possibility that fewer new schools are being added in this area, thereby providing no new opportunities. This assumption however is only speculation and is subject to test.

A second point emphasized in this chapter was the contrast in the two measures of fraternity strength. In many cases, growth is occurring at one kind of institution and high fraternity involvement is present at a completely different kind of school. This contrast is perhaps most noticeable in the type of school involved, i.e., whether it is public, private, or church related.

Public schools generally have a lower percentage of involvement in fraternities than do private and church schools, yet they account for a majority of the gains. Logically one would think the expansion attempts would be at private and church schools where fraternities have proven strong. When one considers that seventy eight percent of all institutions of higher education are private and church related schools, it is amazing that it has not. While public schools account for only twenty two percent of all schools, they account for fifty percent of fraternity schools.

A possible explanation for this contradiction might be the ease of colonizing on a public school campus. Restrictions often exist at private and church schools which hinder expansion attempts. Those schools without restrictions may have already been saturated with fraternities and have room for no more. It is also possible that many private schools prefer local organizations to national ones.

Regardless, it appears that private and church schools constitute

an untapped market. It would seem adviseable for fraternity leaders to examine such contradictions more closely, for if they exist in this one instance, they must certainly be present in others.

Perhaps most important in the examination of the differences in regional fraternity strength as influenced by school characteristics, is the realization that no stereotypes exist. It is tempting to generalize to the whole based on familiarity with a few cases. If nothing else, this examination points to the futility of such broad generalizations.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY

When five young men first gathered for fellowship at William and Mary College in 1776 it is doubtful they knew their small organization, Phi Beta Kappa, would serve as the catalyst for today's modern fraternity system. The fraternity, spawned by young men and women involved in the early American educational system, has now initiated over two and one half million members and has more than sixty-five hundred chapters. The American college fraternity truly is an engrained part of college and university campuses.

Very little research has dealt with the fraternity, none of it geographical. This study was a broadly based attempt to investigate some of the geographic aspects of the American college fraternity. It has examined the fraternity in terms of its historical origins within the American educational system and in terms of the changing spatial distribution of the system as it grew. The fraternity system of the Seventies was also examined, especially its regional configuration, variables contributing to its success on college campuses, and its national structure.

Origin and Diffusion

Once begun the fraternity was destined to gain prominence among college and university students. As an escape from the strict

disciplinary nature of the early colleges, students grouped together in fraternal units. Following the example of Phi Beta Kappa and Freemasonry, they developed secret symbols, traditions, and rituals.

The northeastern United States, particularly New York, was the culture hearth area of the fraternity system. Beginning at Union and Hamilton Colleges, the fraternity quickly spread to other areas of the nation. As the population moved outward, so did the fraternity. New states were settled, colleges begun, and chapters opened.

Although the fraternities were under severe attack in the years between 1840 and 1870, they managed to establish themselves on campuses throughout the eastern portion of the United States. As time passed, university administrations began withdrawing the pressure and in the sixty year period ending in 1930 the fraternity spread to virtually every area of the United States. The Depression of the Thirties caused a fraternity decline, but by the mid-1940's the system was growing once again and adding new chapters. Rapid growth continued until the mid-Sixties when fraternities once again entered a period of relative decline.

Today the fraternity system is undergoing a resurgence. Smaller, lesser known campuses have contributed significantly to recent fraternity strength. No longer do fraternities limit themselves to major regional institutions as they did prior to 1950. The fraternity is indeed represented at all kinds and sizes of colleges in the United States.

The Fraternity of the Seventies

Based on a number of indicators of strength it is obvious that today's premier fraternity regions are the Midwest and the South. The surge of fraternity growth from 1970 to 1978 in Southern states led many to believe the South was indeed the fraternity stronghold, but the Midwest has proved equally strong. By most measures, the fraternity system in the Western states, Great Plains, and New England is much weaker, although this generalization is not necessarily true for all schools within a region. The University of Nebraska, the University of California, Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, and Baker University in Baldwin City, Kansas, all ranked high in terms of fraternity strength despite their locations in relatively weak areas.

These schools attest to the fact that campus characteristics do indeed influence fraternity success. Regional values, traditions, heritage, and customs, and social factors such as socio-economic status, racial and ethnic composition, population distribution, and others undoubtedly influence fraternity success, as do the attitudes of the administration, the faculty, the students themselves, and the general public. In essence, no one factor causes the success or failure of a fraternity chapter in any given location, but rather a myriad of inter-related variables all make their contribution.

The fraternity, in growing to its present national stature, demanded that some form of hierarchial organization be formed. Each chapter is responsible to its national organization which in turn cooperates with other national organizations. Fraternity headquarters evolved which are scattered about the country, although many chose to locate in

a few major urban centers.

Future Research

This study suggests some directions for further academic research. The same basic procedures and methodology examining the origins, spread, regional strength, and school characteristics could be conducted for each of the eighty nine fraternities and sororities. This would provide a significant contribution to the library and records of each group. Likewise it could be applied to professional and honorary groups, individually or as a whole, to the Black fraternity system and individual Black fraternities, and to the Canadian system. Only limited geographic research has been conducted on any social organization or fraternity unit. The Elks, Masons, Moose, and others could each be investigated.

An indepth study of fraternity failures might provide useful information in establishing new chapters and in maintaining current ones. Knowing where the chapter losses occurred and why might prevent future losses.

On a historical basis, national fraternities that no longer exist and campuses where Greeks are no longer present could be examined. A study of where they were located, when they closed and why, would be of a geographical-historical interest. Also, a study of fraternities that existed in the years between Phi Beta Kappa's inception in 1776 and the establishment of Kappa Alpha in 1825 would be interesting.

From a practical standpoint, it is possible to use geographic principles to help locate new fraternity chapters, to pinpoint when and where to place a chapter, and to indicate how successful that chapter

might be. The variables used in this study were relatively rough, sometimes incomplete. Other variables that could have provided additional information are: the importance of the university within the community; the selectivity of the university; the percentage of students living on campus; the classification of the school, i.e., Ivy League, Big Eight, etc.; and others. More complete information regarding the fraternity itself would have been beneficial - information such as chapter size, rush statistics, budget, facilities, competition from non-fraternity groups, etc. These additional measures of fraternity strength, and variables relating to the community and social environment, could be used to predict where to place a new fraternity chapter.

It would be possible to develop a computerized program that would provide the most accurate extension program possible. By applying geographic principles such as location-allocation procedures, determining threshold populations, and utilizing location information, a fraternity could increase its success rate for extension attempts.

The study of social organizations is one aspect of the study of man's cultural and activity system as a whole. Geographers have been slow in showing interest in this type of popular culture phenomenon. Investigations such as this however, are important in understanding man's voluntary and leisure activities - activities which are beginning to take up a larger and larger portion of man's time.

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