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# GETTING AWAY WITH MURDER: HAZING, HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY, AND VICTIMIZATION

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GETTING AWAY WITH MURDER: HAZING, HEGEMONIC  
MASCULINITY, AND VICTIMIZATION

by

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Bachelor of Arts  
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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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College of Arts and Sciences

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2014

Accepted by:

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## DEDICATION

In dedication to the sorority women and fraternity men who continue to uphold the values of their founders.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. John Burrow for his wisdom, guidance, and support, and for never letting me give up. Also, thank you to Dr. Tia Stevens for helping me sort out my data and for being another voice of encouragement and guidance. Additionally, I would like to acknowledge my mother for being my biggest fan throughout my entire academic career. Finally, I would like to thank my classmates, as well as my coworkers for always being motivational and supportive.

## ABSTRACT

Robert Champion, a drum major in the Florida A&M University marching band was beaten to death on, November 19, 2011. He was 26 years old. Champion is the latest victim of a FAMU band hazing incident known infamously as “Crossing Bus C.” The incident at FAMU represents one of the countless hazing rituals that occur each year. On college campuses, it is believed that as many as 55% of students on various teams or members of student organizations experience some form of hazing. This study highlights the complexity of hazing as it relates to its operationalization, its history, and its legal consequences. Additionally, it will posit that the criminal justice system largely ignores this issue because many scholars do not see it as an issue that can be resolved by the criminal justice system. Using crosstabs and Chi-Square tests, this study examines the prevalence of hazing across college campuses. Additionally, this study delves deeper into the demographics of student populations that may indicate their propensity to experience hazing incidents.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Robert Champion, a drum major in the Florida A&M University marching band was beaten to death on, November 19, 2011. He was 26 years old. Champion is the latest victim of a FAMU band hazing incident known infamously as “Crossing Bus C.” The autopsy report released by Orange County Sheriff Office revealed that Robert Champion died of “hemorrhagic shock due to soft tissue hemorrhage incurred by blunt force trauma sustained during a hazing incident” (Winter, 2011). After the annual rivalry football game against Bethune-Cookman University, an estimated fifteen band members participated in this well-known hazing ritual. “Crossing bus C” requires pledges to run from the front of a charter bus to the back of it while taking hits, kicks, and other physical blows the body. Those that make it successfully are accepted into various band cliques and respected among their peers (Hausmann, 2013; Schneider, 2012).

In the aftermath of this incident, the FAMU band director, Julian White, was fired for failing to adequately address earlier hazing allegations. FAMU president, James Ammons, was forced to resign. The charter bus company who owned the bus where this, and countless other hazing incidents, took place was sued for their prior knowledge of the hazing tradition and failure to act. The bus driver on the night of the incident is under suspicion for possibly aiding and abetting in the hazing. FAMU Office of Institution Research reported a drop in student enrollment since the incident. Fall 2011 enrollment,

just before the incident, was 13,207 students; fall 2012 saw a drop of almost 1200 students with an enrollment of 12,051. The decrease has led to a 60 million dollar loss for the university. The once renowned Marching 100 has a tarnished reputation; and the twelve band members charged with the hazing may face felony hazing charges (Hausmann, 2013; Schneider, 2012).

The incident at FAMU represents one of the countless hazing rituals that occur each year. On college campuses, it is believed that as many as 55% of students on various teams or members of student organizations experience some form of hazing (hazingprevention.org). The Fraternity Executives Association (FEA) defines hazing as, “any action taken or situation created intentionally, whether on or off fraternity premises to produce mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule” (Nuwer, 1999). This definition fails to emphasize the role of a perceived level of power of initiated members over those that are new to the organization. Also, this definition suggests that hazing can take place with or without the consent of the victim, which is illogical due the fact that fraternal organizations and universities do not acknowledge consent to hazing because one cannot consent to an illegal act.

Nuwer (1999) suggests that hazing may be commonplace due to the desensitization to violence by those responsible for these illegal yet unreported acts. This desensitization to violence can be characterized in the following ways. First, hazing may highlight people’s predisposition for violence. Second, hazing provides an opportunity to release pent up frustrations. Third, hazing may provide opportunities for the violent tendencies of psychologically ill members to manifest (p. 31-32). These three factors

create an atmosphere for violent displays of superiority and inferiority and foster an environment conducive to severe injury and death.

College students and people in general, have an innate desire to belong to “something.” Maslow (1943) addresses this need in his well-known hierarchy of needs, acknowledging that individuals need love and belonging, as well as, the respect of others. Specifically, young people seek acceptance and belonging amongst their peers through various social groups, such as sports teams, social clubs, or most notably, fraternities and sororities. Regardless of how dangerous, humiliating, or ludicrous tasks may be, young people will often subject themselves to such behavior in the name of nobility and exclusivity. Hazing rituals are all too often seen as tests of worthiness (Nuwer, 1999).

Hazing can be classified as criminal and non-criminal. On the one hand, criminal hazing typically refers to incidents in which “an individual or individuals who hurt, harm, or terrorize another individual through actions forbidden by a hazing statute.” On the other hand, non-criminal hazing involves actions that are not as dangerous but still violate statutes established by the organization or institution (Nuwer, 1999). For example, verbal abuse may be unlawful at the university level; however, to be unlawful at the state level, there must be evidence of physical harm. This point is integral to determining the true effects of hazing because various psychological studies have long supported the long and short term effects of emotional, mental, and verbal abuse on the human psyche. So, to imply that non-criminal hazing is not harmful is completely untrue.

Some state legislatures, such as Colorado, have tried to apply hazing legislation through pre-existing laws about underage drinking, assault, and manslaughter (Nuwer,

1999). While these crimes may be results and actions associated with hazing, they fail to incorporate the presence of force, coercion, threat of violence, psychological harm, and other hazing implications. However, Colorado now acknowledges that “hazing sometimes degenerates into a dangerous form of intimidation and degradation...although certain criminal statutes cover the more egregious hazing activities, other activities that may not be covered by existing criminal statutes may threaten the health of students” (Colorado Code § 18-9-124 (2003)). Even still, the revised statutes only explicitly address *prolonged* sleep, food, or drink deprivation, and physical activity, as well as *forced* physical activity and consumption of food, medication, controlled substances, beverages, etc. in *excess* of *usual* amounts (Colorado Code § 18-9-124 (2003)). This definition emphasizes the ambiguity associated with hazing legislation as the language used in this particular statute is overtly subjective to individual interpretation (i.e. forced, prolonged, excess, and usual).

While hazing exists at multiple levels, this research will focus exclusively on the practices of collegiate members of Greek-letter fraternities and sororities. These groups are significant because of their presence in the media. Unfortunately, Greek-letter organizations have become synonymous with heinous, brutal, and deadly hazing incidents. Some of the most shocking being the death of Walter Dean Jennings III in 2003, Matthew Carrington’s death in 2005, the 2009 death of Donnie Wade Jr., and the more recent “alcohol enema” suffered by Alexander Broughton in 2012. In addition to these cases over the last decade, the prominence of hazing in the media is largely attributed to the fact that since 1970, there has been at least one death per year due to hazing on college campuses across the United States (Nuwer, 1999). It is important to

acknowledge that fraternities and sororities are not the sole culprits perpetuating undergraduate hazing culture. These behaviors exist in other social groups, such as, student clubs, honor societies, and sports teams.

Given its acceptance among many college students and social groups, it is important to gain an understanding of this phenomenon for several reasons. First, severe hazing often results in death. Thus, it is important to understand the dynamics that drive these traditions and sustains them within student groups and other social organizations. Second, hazing is a crime punishable by law in 44 of the 50 states; however, it has not received much attention by criminal justice scholars. Without empirical research on hazing, there may be little incentive to stem the incidence of this practice. Moreover, as the harm caused by hazing continues to increase, the criminal justice system will increasingly be called upon to address this issue thus; there is a need to understand the depth of the hazing phenomenon.

In the wake of the death of Robert Champion, the Florida Agricultural & Manufacturing University drum major, there has been increased media coverage of hazing and the importance of legal accountability. To date, twelve members of the FAMU marching band have faced criminal charges, many with manslaughter accusations (Hausmann, 2013). Notwithstanding this fact, very few hazers are ever criminally charged, and of those that are, only a small number will serve more than three months in jail. Most hazing cases, at the collegiate level, are heard and decided by undergraduate judicial boards not courts of the criminal justice system (Nuwer, 1999).

Hazing is not a new phenomenon, though it remains largely taboo or secretive among organizations that utilize such practices in their initiation rituals. Thus, since July 2006, in the United States, forty-four states have acknowledged hazing as a serious issue and passed legislation prohibiting it. However, each jurisdiction varies in its definition of hazing. Consider the following illustrative examples from Florida, South Carolina, Michigan, and California.

In Florida hazing is defined as:

any action or situation which recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation or admission into or affiliation with any organization operating under the sanction of a postsecondary institution. Such term includes, but is not limited to, any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the elements, forced consumption of any food, liquor, drug, or other substance, or other forced physical activity which could adversely affect the physical health or safety of the student, and also includes any activity which would subject the student to extreme mental stress, such as sleep deprivation, forced exclusion from social contact, forced conduct which could result in extreme embarrassment, or other forced activity which could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the student (Florida Education Code § 1006.135 (2005)).

South Carolina's hazing law applies the term to:

the wrongful striking, laying open hand upon, threatening with violence, or offering to do bodily harm by a superior student to a subordinate student with intent

to punish or injure the subordinate student, or other unauthorized treatment by the superior student of a subordinate student of a tyrannical, abusive, shameful, insulting, or humiliating nature (South Carolina Code § 59-101-200).

Michigan's law adds another dimension to our understanding of hazing. For example, Michigan defines hazing as:

intentional, knowing, or reckless act by a person acting alone or acting with others that is directed against an individual and that the person knew or should have known endangers the physical health or safety of the individual, and that is done for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, participating in, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization (Michigan Code § 750.411 (2004)).

The law goes on to list physical brutality, sleep deprivation, forced physical activity, forced consumption of food, alcohol, drugs, etc., and forced commission of criminal acts. Noteworthy is that the Michigan statute does not apply to activities that are *normal* and *customary* within a program such as athletics; though there have been documented hazing cases within athletic programs. Also, under Michigan laws, a hazing violation that results in a death is subject to punishment of \$10,000 fine or imprisonment not to exceed fifteen years (Michigan Code § 750.411 (2004)).

Lastly, California anti-hazing laws state that hazing is:

any method of initiation or pre-initiation into a student organization or any pastime or amusement engaged in with respect to such an organization which causes, or is likely to cause, bodily danger, physical harm, or personal degradation or disgrace

resulting in physical or mental harm, to any student or other person attending any school, community college, college, university or other educational institution in this state; but the term "hazing" does not include customary athletic events or other similar contests or competitions. (California Education Code § 32050-32051 (2006))

Similar to Michigan statute, California specifically exempts athletic programs.

Ambiguity at the state level makes it difficult for schools and other institutions to adequately govern and sanction organizations. Therefore, due to inadequacy of these definitions many instances go unreported. Confusing terms make it difficult for participants to identify particular actions as hazing. This research will propose a new standard for defining and identifying hazing.

Hazing manifests itself within a particular culture of exclusivity and elitism. As shown in the fraternal Greek system, hazing develops as a response to a need to establish hierarchy and control within a group hosting new members (pledges) and older, veteran members (Nuwer, 1999). Similar hierarchical expectations exist within college athletics (Hoover, 1999). Hazing has also been reported in high school settings. Alfred University conducted a study of high school hazing and found that this behavior in high school was “fun and exciting” to the students. Many of the students surveyed related the hazing to popularity, belonging, and group cohesion (Hoover, 2000). According to the Alfred University surveys, hazing continues from high school into college athletics and Greek systems because students come to expect it more as “way of life than a rite of passage” (Hoover, 2000).



Hazing is a severe problem and it often has tragic results. Using data collected from college students across the country, this research will 1) propose a new definition of hazing, 2) uncover predictors of hazing on college campuses, 3) provide a framework for understanding this phenomenon among men versus women, and 4) propose possible solutions to reduce hazing and increase awareness.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The review that follows will highlight the complexity of hazing as it relates to its operationalization, its history, and its legal consequences. Additionally, this chapter will posit that the criminal justice system largely ignores this issue because many scholars do not see it as an issue that can be resolved by the criminal justice system.

The literature on hazing is, for the most part, quite limited in its approach to how hazing should be operationalized. This section will point out some of the limitations of existing literature with regards to how hazing is defined and also how hazing has been viewed over time. As emphasized previously, the research that exists on hazing is sparse. This could be for numerous reasons. First, the primary reason, the definition of hazing is so vague many students and administrators do not recognize their experiences as hazing. One study found that 90% of students who identified an experience included in hazing behaviors did not identify as having ever been hazed (2011). Secondly, even with anonymity of studies, school policy along with organization standards and some loosely applied legal statutes intimidate students from openly discussing their experiences with hazing. For fear of administrative sanction or other peer driven sanctions, 60 percent of university athletes reported that they would not report hazing (Campo et al, 2005).

## **History of Hazing**

Hazing can be viewed from several distinct time periods. The first time period can be described as “pennalism” and it covers a time period dating to Plato, circa 387 B.C. Plato was the first to document that young men playing practical jokes and harming anyone who got in the way these behaviors. He compared these actions of unruly men to the actions of wild animals (Nuwer, 1999). While Plato criticized the behavior; it was commonplace in academia being both accepted and encouraged by upper-class students and teachers (Sterner, 2008). The pennalism suffered by young boys of Plato’s academy generally involved taunting and bullying and served the purpose of establishing ranks and hierarchy among students (Nuwer, 1999). As the times progressed, student to student hazing activities continued to flourish in the education system.

The second time period situates hazing within the English education system of the Middle Ages. University students in the Middle Ages saw hazing as normal within the culture. These students viewed themselves as having a position and culture of honor. Within the universities of Western Europe at the time, students were viewed as guild apprentices who had to be granted the honor to have trade knowledge bestowed upon them. Thus, the students were subordinates to the superior scholars. Hazing was used to teach and establish precedence and seniority among newcomers and upper-class students and master scholars. These hazing practices included humiliating submissive acts and actions that can be likened to present-day paddling. Initiating practices satisfied the

desire in older students to bully, be social beings, and justify reasons for drinking and partying (Nuwer, 1999).

Beyond the university culture of drinking and partying, hazing rituals extended to the professional world during the Middle Ages as well. Teachers were not exempt from the trials of testing worthiness, including food and sleep deprivation. In order to receive a license to teach, scholars had tests of their own to prove their worth for employment. This process was seen as a way to keep the education pool pure by keeping “charlatans from passing themselves off as scholars.” As academics moved from institution to institution they influenced the spread of pennialism and fagging across Europe and overseas to America (Stern, 2008). Then, by the early to mid-1800s, the movement of scholars had led to yet another distinct period of hazing. During this time, hazing had infiltrated the American college system as an initiation of lowerclassmen students, freshmen and sophomores, into the university (Solberg, 1998). Such rivalries were often institutionalized through a set of rules deemed “Freshmen Laws.” These laws subjected freshmen students to a state of servitude to sophomores and other upper-class students (Barber, 2012). As “freshmen laws” began to fade out towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the status of freshmen as mere errand runners corroded into a system of physical abuse and mistreatment (Solberg, 1998; Barber, 2012). The ensuing initiations often turned into class rivalries and fights in which upper-class students would attack freshmen students. The attacks were intended to force freshmen to prove their strength and ability to handle the pressures of a university education (Solberg, 1998).

Hazing as we recognize it today, according to Johnson and Holman (2004) has been largely attributed to the assimilation of soldiers into college settings after the Civil

War. Men returning from war had a heightened appreciation for the brotherhood bonds they had formed during the war. However, those bonds were viewed as a direct result of extreme and brutal war conditions. Thus, these attitudes spilled over into the new friendships they formed and the warlike experiences had to be relived in order to become true brothers (Johnson and Holman, 2004).

There was a notable drop in college populations and fraternity membership in the early 1930s through the mid-1940s, due to the Great Depression and World War II. However, after World War II, many veterans were able to return and pursue a college education thanks to the newly instituted G.I. Bill. In fact, according to the Department of Veteran Affairs, returning veterans accounted for forty-nine percent of college admissions in 1947 ([gibill.va.gov](http://gibill.va.gov)). This surge in “war-exposed” men essentially renewed the romantic infatuation with hazing in fraternities. In order to revive the camaraderie felt during the war, veterans flooded the fraternity system in record numbers. Though, they were not willing to undergo hazing practices at the hands of younger students, the returning veterans introduced a quasi-militaristic way of hazing; this militaristic turn in hazing lead to intense physical calisthenics for new and future members (Sterner, 2008).

Pennalism, “fagging,” and other hazing practices have evolved since the Platonic era and have, in some cases, increased in severity. Nuwer (1999) believes that the first recorded hazing incident in the United States took place at Harvard University in 1657 resulting in the expulsion of Joseph Webb for “hitting first year students and requiring them to perform acts of servitude” (Nuwer, 1999). At the time of the Harvard incident, many school administrators were clergymen and believed in forgiveness by God. Thus, a public confession of wrongdoing and petition to return were satisfactory prerequisites for

re-enrollment of Joseph Webb after only two months of punishment. In turn, “the cycle of hazing, punishment, repentance, and re-admittance continued throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century” leading up to the first recorded hazing death of Mortimer Legget at Cornell University in 1877. Legget was blindfolded and abandoned in the wilderness where he fell into a gorge to his death (Sternner, 2008, 5; Adams, 2012).

An especially distinct aspect of hazing is its presence in Black Greek Letter Organizations (also called BGLOs). In the early 1900s during a time of racial tension and inequality in the United States, African American fraternities and sororities began to form on college campuses. Black students at predominantly white institutions sought to establish clubs and societies of their own as they were excluded from white organizations. According to Sternner, Black students are more likely to be subject to ritualistic beatings than their white counterparts when seeking Greek membership (2008, p. 13). The tradition of beatings and brandings is attributed to the threats Blacks faced from Whites when BGLOs were beginning to form. The students needed to be able to withstand the abuse they would receive from whites, as well as protect each other if such violence were to erupt (Sternner, 2008). Thus, at the time of BGLO growth, hazing was not viewed as an ungodly act but a type of training and conditioning in preparation for the scrutiny the members would endure.

It was not until approximately twenty-five men and women died from hazing incidents throughout the 1970s did the media begin to pay more attention to this issue (Nuwer, 2000). Before the mid-1970s, hazing deaths were so infrequent they could easily be attributed to isolated incidents of initiation rites gone wrong. However, in the mid-1970s hazing deaths began to rise exponentially—in 1972 a Sigma Alpha Mu pledge

died from excessive calisthenics, at Grove City College in Pennsylvania four pledges died in 1974 when one driving the car they were in fell asleep at the wheel, in 1975 there were multiple alcohol-related deaths across the country, and in 1979 two pledges from Virginia State College drowned in a river during a “cleansing ceremony” (hanknuwer.com).

Throughout the 1980s hazing began to metastasize to other areas of society, including high schools and professional athletics. Hazing incidents at the high school level are often hard to decipher because they are usually classified as “harmless horseplay” by school officials and teachers (Nuwer, 2000). Such descriptions, which effectively hold the participants blameless, downplay the seriousness of hazing and it also suggests that high school administrators, for the most part, do not fully grasp the extent to which young students may engage in this activity. This includes teachers’ understanding of how students come to be involved in such activities. Most research on hazing is nostalgic in focus and tend to pay homage to hazing and its role in building group cohesion, increasing respect for the organization, imposing discipline on members, and requiring loyalty to the group (Campo, Poulos, and Sipple, 2005). While the positive team building components of new member processes (i.e. community service and academic standards) do seem to influence the respect and loyalty required of new members, these activities are usually a supplement to and not a replacement for hazing. For some college students, an intense initiation process is appealing (Campo et al., 2005). However, the more brutal aspects of hazing are hidden or downplayed.

Though mostly attributed to the behaviors of students, hazing has found a place in other sorts of organizations. The variety of organizations spans from fraternities and sororities, athletic teams, groupings of students, and even religious groups.

### **Hazing and Cult Mentality**

Hazing manifests itself within a particular culture of exclusivity and elitism. Some have likened the culture of hazing to that of a cult, including higher education administrators and fraternity executives (Nuwer, 2000). Margaret Thaler Singer (2003), for example, identifies similar ideologies that exist between cults and fraternal organizations that engage in hazing rituals, specifically focusing on the phenomena of *brainwashing*. Singer's research focuses on coercive persuasion and the act of manipulating and controlling subjects. First, both cults and fraternal organizations advertise their abilities to solve problems and bring exclusive perks to membership. Both groups justify the abuse for these perks as only understandable from within the organization. For example, popularity and exclusive networking opportunities are common perks of fraternal membership. However, one has to earn access to the networking circles and be deemed worthy of popular status; thus, the physical and mental abuse as tests of worthiness. Second, both groups create a necessity to exclude individuals outside the group by forbidding the adherence to social norms. This aspect highlights the importance of groupthink within the group and clearly segregating from out group norms and mores. Third, fraternal organizations and cults both demand a heightened level of control. Four, until successful completion of all initiation activities, new members of cults and fraternities remain to be considered the out-group. Five, these groups both engage in the emphasis of a pseudo-family to capture and maintain the



loyalty of members. This process may play on people's tendency to protect their family or put "family first" in certain situations. Six, there is a system in both organizations that rests on manipulation and exploitation. Seven, as seen with many other societies or organizations, the secrecy of ritual and knowledge makes fraternities and sororities very cult-like and stress the importance of the only way to gain membership and access to knowledge is through absolute compliance (Singer, 2003).

Hazing mirrors cult-like behaviors in the two additional ways. First, hazing can be used to degrade new members to the point that they want to quit. Second, hazing subjects the desirable new members to tests of merit and worthiness; after which, they will be accepted fully into the group (Nuwer, 2000). Similarly to cult organizations, these tests are aimed at separating the member from their other ties and shifting all loyalty to the group. This separation can be compared to abusive relationships where the aggressor creates an environment where the victim is solely dependent upon the attacker. Furthermore, the older members often try to bring high-achieving new members down to the lower level of lower achieving members. Ultimately, the desired result is complete conformity of the new members (Nuwer, 2000; Singer 2003; Schein, 1983). This conformity is prominent in not only post-secondary and professional organizations, but also within high school settings when adolescents are already actively seeking purpose and identity.

### **Hazing in High School**

On its face, high school hazing could easily be construed as horseplay, a mutual exchange of childish shenanigans among peers. However, at its most basic tenet hazing

is an exertion of power of one individual over another, thus willingness of the subordinate student to participate is irrelevant during most hazing interactions. The misconception held by many administrators is that students knowingly and willingly participate in these activities, but such a view ignores the reality of peer influence and other social pressures to conform in school settings. Such a nonchalant approach to hazing has also been seen in bullying instances. Adults and administrators too far removed from the pressures of young peers frequently dismiss seemingly trivial claims of peer-to-peer wrongdoings.

Beginning in the 1970s and 80s, as middle school students sought validation entering high school; adolescents participated in various rites of passage that signified their transition into adulthood. Some of these initiation rituals ranged from shoplifting, beatings and paddling, to simulated or actual sex acts. Some behaviors even involved alcohol (Nuwer, 2000). A report published by Alfred University found that 25% of teenagers who reported being hazed admitted to first being hazed at the age of 13 (Hoover, 2000; Taylor, 2001).

The Alfred University study (Hoover, 2000) indicated that poor students and lower GPA is associated with higher risk of hazing. However, it is important to point out that hazing is not exclusive to low achieving students. Any time a hazing allegation arises, the parents, teachers, and peers of the victim or aggressor are always described as “good kids.” It is possible that they were. They make decent grades; they are leaders amongst their classmates, and well-mannered individuals. Thus, when a brutal beating comes to light and a “good kid” is involved, school administrators have a difficult time accepting facts and will try to minimize the behavior. Part of the problem of hazing in

high schools is the refusal of adults, parents and school officials, to believe that their students could participate in such activities. Nuwer (2000) defines this as the halo effect- the tendency of superiors to only see good in the individuals they are predisposed to like. As a result of the halo effect, coaches, principals, or other school administrators perpetuate the idea that hazing victims agreed to the acts because the hazers are “good kids” and would never engage in such devilry unless consent was given. Furthermore, the halo effect leaves the door open for more severe initiation rituals to flourish because low or moderate risk behaviors were left unchecked (Hoover, 2000).

Teachers, principals, and administrators play an even bigger role in the perpetuation of hazing than researchers often realize. First, students are uncomfortable telling adult administrators about their hazing experience. Importantly, 27 percent of students think the adults will not handle matter appropriately (Hoover, 2000). Second, the students’ concerns may be supported in the extant literature. Nuwer (2000), for example, discovered that some school boards subliminally allow mild forms of hazing in the form of moderate embarrassment. Administrators validate this behavior by succumbing to the students’ desire to maintain some traditions within the student body, either because they believe in the traditions and value their presence, or because they have given up on the task of completely eradicating the activity all together (Nuwer, 2000). This allowance of peer-to-peer aggression can also be seen prior to 1999, before bullying became a concern for school officials (Dixon, 2001).

Similar to high school hazing, is the growing awareness of bullying among young children and teenagers. Between 1999 and 2010, there have been 120 different bills enacted for the sake of introducing new or changing existing education and criminal laws

to address the growing severity of bullying and its effects. Forty-five states have laws mandating that school districts have some sort of anti-bullying policy in place (*Analysis of State Bullying Laws and Policies*). While some states have bullying laws independent of hazing laws, many of the same terminology can be applied to both behaviors, such as harassment and intimidation. In fact, very few differences exist between hazing behavior and bullying acts. The only true difference is the purpose of the harassment. Hazing is an individual earning their right to *inclusion* in a group; bullying serves to force or keep an individual *excluded* from the group (hazingprevention.org).

Defining bullying as practices that cause “humiliation, offence, and distress and that...cause an unpleasant environment” (Flanagan, 2007), it almost seamlessly aligns with varying definitions of hazing. According to a study by Flanagan (2007), law school professors have tended to ignore bullying for various reasons. First, professors may not pay attention to behaviors that do not directly interfere with lectures. Similarly, one could infer that high school teachers and administrators approach bullying and hazing the same way. If the antics do not disrupt the classroom, they are dismissed. Second, among law students there are traditionally, study groups that are isolated from the oversight of professors. High school students may also segregate themselves away from teachers and maintain a sense of secrecy within their cliques. Lastly, law school professionals expect students to fall into one of two categories; “competitive and cut-throat” or “depressed and anxious.” It is possible that at the awkward stage of teenage years, students usually fall somewhere on a similarly situated spectrum. Some students will be competitive, social, and outgoing; while others will be withdrawn, shy, or introverted. Therefore, potentially

tell-tale signs of bullying and hazing behaviors go unnoticed and fade into the background as “normal” behaviors.

Of those that do not accept these actions as normal, high school administrators define hazing within two distinct categories: physical and mental. Physical hazing involves activities that have the propensity to cause bodily harm or injury. Mental hazing refers to the harassment, embarrassment, and frightening of students. Given the parameters of this definition, the police are limited in their potential responses. Without some indication of physical harm, law enforcement officials are prohibited from acting in many “hazing” incidents. Additionally, the response of school administrators to hazing makes it difficult for students and classroom teachers to identify. While there is some disagreement in fields that examine hazing at different levels, Nuwer (2000) believes that hazing can be distinctly defined and identified. Put simply, hazing is any activity that mandates the subservience of newcomers to older members, and it also encompasses behaviors designed to intentionally lower the self-esteem of the new members.

A study conducted at Alfred University on hazing in high school found that as many as 48% of students involved in an organization reported being hazed in some form, including 24% of students involved in high school church groups. Further, 30% of students that reported some form of hazing stated that they performed illegal activities as part of their initiation rituals (2000). Hazing behaviors varied in severity including being given wedgies, being left alone in public space, consuming mixtures of spoiled milk and eggs, walking around naked, being stuffed into lockers, allowing older members to molest them, being forced to have sex with animals, gang rape, high speed car games, stealing from parents, vandalism, and other tasks ranging from “pranks” to dangerous

stunts. When asked about their hazing experiences, students justified their involvement in initiation rituals by indicating the “fun” and “excitement” of the activities (Hoover, 2000).

These behaviors are toxic to educational settings and detrimental to the cohesion of team-oriented groups. They create an environment of fear and hostility, in addition to fostering unbalanced scales of peer-to-peer “authority” and control. Furthermore, at a time where adolescents are seeking to establish an identity for themselves, hazing forces them to conform to a subcultural standard that may not be in line with the teens true understand of him or herself. Nuwer (2000) suggests that high school hazing is directly related to the infiltration of hazing at the college level. That is to say, students are not introduced to hazing when they transition into college. In fact, it can be argued, that college hazers and hazees bring such initiation rites to college with them. That claim is supported by literature which finds that 1 out of 4 college students that reported having ever been hazed experienced their first hazing incident before or at age thirteen. In fact, it has been found that dangerous hazing at the high school level is just as prominent as at the college level, with 22% and 21% of students, respectively, admit being involved in dangerous initiation activities (Hoover, 2000; Taylor, 2001). Nuwer also emphasizes that high school hazing carries over into professional sports, the military, various occupations, and secret adult societies. According to Nuwer, “hazing must be seen as a widespread problem that is not limited to, but born in secondary schools” (Nuwer, 2000).

## Hazing in College Athletics

Athletic teams have long stood as a representation of model team building and group cohesion. College athletics is no different. Heightened scrutiny of hazing within college athletics occurred largely as a result of the 1978 death of Chuck Stenzel who was killed pledging an athletic fraternity (Nuwer, 2000). Stenzel died pledging Klan Alpine, an athletic fraternity, at Alfred University. He, along with two other pledges, was locked in the trunk of a car. The cold outside of the car coupled with alcohol poisoning ultimately killed Stenzel. Alfred University, in conjunction with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) conducted a survey of over 325, 000 athletes to uncover the prevalence of hazing within athletic organizations on university campuses across the United States. Hazing, according to this research, was defined as

“any activity expected of someone joining a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses or endangers, regardless of the person’s willingness to participate. This does not include activities such as rookies carrying the balls, team parties with community games, or going out with your teammates, unless an atmosphere of humiliation, degradation, abuse or danger arises” (Hoover, 1999, p. 1).

Given this definition, only 12 percent of respondents admitted being hazed. However, the responses to subsequent questions showed that approximately 80 percent of athletes experienced hazing. Interestingly, one in five students participated in hazing that had a high propensity for injury or criminal charges such as beatings, kidnappings, destroying property, and simulated or actual sex acts. Even more, 50 percent of athletes acknowledged drinking contests as part of their team initiations and 40 percent admitted

to drinking on their recruitment visit to campus before they were enrolled students. This is particularly upsetting noting that many of the students, at the time of these behaviors, were under the drinking age of 21 years old (Hoover, 1999).

Perhaps most alarming, the study found that male, non-Greek swimmers, divers, soccer players, and lacrosse players attending eastern or southern universities were more likely to experience hazing (Hoover, 1999). The male dynamic is unsurprising given the societal expectation of male aggression, strength, and displays of hyper-masculinity. However, the non-Greek component calls into question the ratio of Greeks to athletes, and the number of athletes that are members of fraternities or sororities. Thus, the label of “Greek” may be misleading. It is noteworthy to mention that, according to the study, a Greek system on campus was a significant predictor of hazing (1999). Perhaps, assuming stereotypical understandings of hazing, the presence of fraternities and sororities on campus establishes a culture of hazing on the campus. In that respect, it is possible that hazing activities and acceptance is spread from the Greek system to athletic programs. Football players were more likely to engage in hazing behaviors deemed potentially illegal. Thus, the increased likelihood for swimmers, divers, and soccer and lacrosse players may be explained by the popularity of football, basketball, and baseball in United States athletics. It is possible that athletes that play “less popular” sports may feel more inclined to haze and be hazed to prove worth.

Intense initiations may coerce devotion of newer members to the team but hazing actually creates tension between teammates and initiates leading to counterproductive behavior. However, as with any peer pressure situation, student athletes are unlikely to speak up about their hazing experiences for various reasons. First, they may feel



intimidated by veteran team members or even the coaches. On the other hand, rookie hazing may be perceived as the norm and an unchallenged tradition. Finally, new members may believe that the unity and cohesion that results from the hazing is necessary to ensure a winning season (Nuwer, 2000).

Hazing in athletics is often hard to address because it is often ignored by coaches. Coaches, as products of similar hazing initiations, may let the behavior continue because they believe in the team unity it fosters. On one hand, some coaches may be completely aware of the behavior but have little concrete proof to act; either way, coaching stances on hazing among teammates fall somewhere on the spectrum of strict forbidding of the behavior and “boys will be boys” (Nuwer, 2000; Hoover, 1999). That broad array of approaches coupled with pressure from fans for successful seasons makes it difficult for coaching staff and administrators to identify and sanction hazing allegations. Additionally, there are the coaches who are completely oblivious and feel that the hazing problem is a fraternity and sorority problem, not an athletics issue.

### **Hazing in the Greek System**

*National Lampoon’s Animal House* (1978), Spike Lee’s *School Daze* (1988), and *Old School* starring Will Farrell (2003) have been the iconic “frat house” movies of the time. These movies have played a pivotal role in the way society views the Greek-system, specifically those that are not members of Greek-letter organizations. Not surprising, hazing has been labeled as a “fraternity/sorority problem” by some administrators, concerned parents, and other school officials at multiple levels.

Greek affiliated males that intermingle with friends who approve of hazing are more likely to participate in hazing activities (Campo et al, 2005). These activities, identified by new fraternity members, included physical punching, slapping, striking, kicking or beating. Also, males in the same study considered forced sex acts and being locked into a room against one's will as hazing (Knutson, Akers, Ellis, and Bradley, 2011). Females identified the same behaviors in addition to forced participation in drinking games and any humiliating or degrading behavior as hazing (Knutson et al, 2011). On the whole, binge drinking is possibly the most noted and alarming hazing practice among Greek-affiliated college students. Studies by Kuh and Arnold, 1992, and Wechester, et al., 2009, have found that affiliated members of fraternities drink heavier and more often than non-affiliated students and the "frat house" environment essentially condones these and other poor decisions and dangerous behaviors.

While the members may identify the behaviors as "team building" or other harmless pseudonyms implying some positive result, hazing been explained as having a place in fraternity and sorority life. Some researchers argue that the subculture of Greek-letter organizations has a set of shared cultural values from which hazing rituals stem; hence the reason new members are expected to endure such rituals. These rites of passage, essentially, form the foundation for the fraternal bond within the organization (Reese, 1993; McMinn, 1979). Also, implicitly present in male groups, toughness and masculinity also play a role in fraternity hazing activities where men are expected to portray hyper-masculine values and behaviors (DeSantis, 2007).

Interestingly, affiliated students believe that hazing of any sort does not benefit the group. Only a small minority felt it to be significant to initiation rituals (Gordon,

Hall, and Blackenship, 1979), yet the hazing cycle continues as a cultural norm with in Greek-letter organizations.

### **Hazing and the Criminal Justice System**

The ambiguity of state statutes makes it difficult to determine if anyone, especially minors, will see criminal hazing charges. In fact, some state courts refuse to hear hazing cases that take place in high schools and many university hazing cases are addressed within university conduct procedures. Thus, if a certain incident does not meet state definitions of hazing, it is thrown out of court. At best, horseplay that goes sour is handled as assault-and-battery (Nuwer, 2000). Examining four states' anti-hazing laws, this section will compare the varying hazing definitions and the legal parameters of statutes.

California's anti-hazing law, also known as Matt's Law, mandates federal prosecutions for death or serious injury resulting from hazing. Matt's Law expanded the reach of California's anti-hazing statute to reach nonstudents within the ambit of the law. However, after the death of 21 year old Matthew Carrington, the new law fell within the state's penal code (stophazing.org).

Matthew Carrington, Matt, was a junior at Chico State University when he began the pledge process for Chi Tau fraternity. On the night of his death, Matt, along with other pledges, was required to do extensive calisthenics, in a dark, sewer flooded basement wearing only jeans. Additionally, they were repeatedly doused with water while fans blew cold air into the room. The men were asked fraternity history and if they answered incorrectly, they were required to drink as much water as they could as quickly

as possible. After the brutal “Pledge Olympics,” Matt suffered from brain-swelling from water intoxication and cardiac dysrhythmia and hypothermia which ultimately contributed to his death. For their role in Matt’s death, four of the fraternity’s members were charged with felony involuntary manslaughter and misdemeanor hazing ([www.wemissyoumatt.com](http://www.wemissyoumatt.com)).

Under California law, hazing is defined as “any method of initiation or pre-initiation into a student organization...which causes bodily danger, physical harm, personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm” (California Education Code § 32050-32051, 2006). Violation of the listed parameters could result in either misdemeanor or felony penalties. This definition is generally all-encompassing. However, it can be circumvented when applied in the vaguest ways. Personal degradation and disgrace are subjective terms and may have varying levels of significance to different people. Those with “thick skin” may not feel degraded or in any way embarrassed. On the other hand, some students may feel highly degraded by the slightest aggressions.

Florida anti-hazing law, the Chad Meredith Act, is named after a Kappa Sigma pledge at the University of Miami drowned in Lake Osceola. The University of Miami had closed due to a hurricane warning in the area on the night of Chad’s death. The pledges were told to drink excessive amounts of beer before attempting to swim 437 feet across the lake fatigued and under the influence of alcohol. Chad drowned 34 feet from the shore ([tropicaldisturbanceum.wordpress.com](http://tropicaldisturbanceum.wordpress.com)).

Florida's hazing statute defines hazing as "any action or situation that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for purposes including initiation or affiliation with any organization operating under the sanction of a postsecondary institution" (Florida Education Code §1006.135, 2005). Under the statute, hazing in Florida is considered a third degree felony when the act results in death or serious bodily injury. The same law defines hazing as a first degree misdemeanor when the activity creates a *substantial* risk of death or physical injury.

Two unique characteristics of Florida's law are its inclusion of a hazing education course as a condition of any other sentences imposed and explicit limits which defenses will not be accepted in hazing charges: a) consent of the victim, b) the activity was not part of an official organization event, and c) the conduct was not done as a condition for membership (Florida Education Code § 1006.135, 2005).

South Carolina anti-hazing statutes deem it "unlawful to intentionally or recklessly engage in acts which have a foreseeable potential for causing physical harm to a person for the purpose of initiation or affiliation with an...organization" (South Carolina Code § 59-101-200). Similar to the Florida law, South Carolina identifies consent as an unacceptable defense. Additionally, the statute assigns the same penalties of hazing to those who assist with or fail to report the behaviors. South Carolina defines hazing as a misdemeanor (South Carolina Code § 59-101-200).

After the brutal hospitalization of a twelve year old boy named Garret Drogosch, Michigan enacted its anti-hazing statute known as Garret's Law. Michigan's law criminalized hazing for individuals that are volunteers of, employed by, or enrolled in an

educational institution. The law determines the severity of guilt in proportion to the severity of results. Physical injury is a misdemeanor; “serious impairment of a body function” and death as a result of hazing is felony. As other states have addressed, consent is not a defense for hazing charges (legislature.mi.gov; Michigan Penal Code § 750.411t, 2004).

### **Gendered Differences and Hegemonic Masculinity**

Hazing exists across all kinds of social groups. Males and females all participate in such rituals. However, male students are at the highest risk for dangerous hazing (Hoover, 2000). These gender stereotypes are magnified in hyper-masculine situations such as male sports teams. For example, in overtly masculine settings, males will tease, joke, or make otherwise inappropriate sexual comments towards each other. Homophobia and misogyny prevail in these environments. Thus, as older members seek, and often find, the approval of their coaches through taunting, younger, rookie members remain silent in the name of seeming manly (Nuwer, 2000).

Research by Campo et al (2005) which studied hazing among various demographics of college students, found that males, athletes, Greek affiliated students, and upperclassmen were the most likely to engage in hazing behaviors. At the same time, females, athletes, Greeks, student leaders, and upperclassmen were more likely to participate in what Campo called “positive team building and initiation activities” (2005). This finding uncovers the gendered participation of hazing. Where male students haze (i.e. sleep deprivation and drinking games), female students are most apt to engage in positive initiation behaviors such as community service (Campo et al, 2005).

Furthermore, when compared to males, female students believe hazing is more harmful and express a greater feeling of susceptibility to harm from hazing (Campo et al, 2005).

These differences in initiation practices lead to the assumption that hegemonic masculinity plays a role in how students incorporate new members into their groups. Masculinity, in its broadest sense, is defined alongside a feminine other. That spectrum is vast in that it applies to the masculine male versus the feminine female; or, the marginalized male versus the dominant male (Yeung, Stompler, and Wharton, 2006). Hegemonic masculinity explains the dominance of ideal masculinity and how men are “supposed” to act. In athletics, most teams are separated into men and women. Fraternities and sororities, for the most part, are also clearly segregated by gender. Sex segregation naturally reinforces masculinity via three characteristics: men are not feminine, men are heterosexual, and men are physically aggressive (Trujillo, 1991; Connell, 2005; Cohen, 2010).

First, the rejection of femininity in hegemonic masculinity may explain why hazing occurs in men’s groups and remains dominant among men. Simply stated, men cannot gain the exclusivity of said organization without some test of worthiness or test of manhood. In addition to the overall rejection of all things feminine, an extension of that is what some have noted to be an expansion of the “frontier thesis” (Turner, 1893). More recent scholars have taken the original frontier thesis and applied to the hegemonic male. So-called “frontiersmanship” places the emphasis on hegemony being symbolized by the cowboys of the past or the outdoors man of the present. This implies an additional characteristic noted by Trujillo, that men are deemed masculine based on occupational

success. With divisions of labor established along gender lines, masculinity is tested through the classification of work as “women’s work” or “men’s work” (1991).

Second, the hegemonic male is heterosexual (Trujillo, 1991; Connell, 2005). Heterosexuality is seen as ‘good,’ ‘normal,’ and ‘natural.’ Therefore, it is the highest in a scheme of sex hierarchies. Rubin (1985) emphasizes that men are expected to have sexual relationships with women and only social relationships with men. There is no secret that many organizations are homophobic and heterocentric thus creating hostile environments for gay aspirants or new members. However, when marginal men, such as those that identify as homosexual, are accepted into American fraternities, they often still embrace hegemonic masculinity in the way that they interact with other brothers. After all, hegemonic institutions, such as fraternities, accepting non-hegemonic members is not indicative of the group surrendering hegemonic authority. The marginal members must adopt behaviors and attitudes that serve to neutralize their current status. These behaviors often seek to maintain superiority over women (Yeung et al., 2006). It is noteworthy to mention that not all marginal men will accept the heterosexual male culture. In fact, some will completely repudiate the idea. Thus, the hegemonic culture within the group leads to a definition of how men include or exclude each other.

Lastly, the purest form of masculinity is associated with the physical aggression of men. The prevailing stereotypes of masculinity mandate that men be more aggressive than women. Trujillo (1991) expanded on Connell’s original theory involving the aggressive man as the ideal hegemonic male. Aggression expressed through the physical force and control of others. The male presence should be representative of speed, strength, domination, and toughness (Connell, 1983; Trujillo, 1991; Light and Kirk,



2000). This key issue is magnified in hazing reports. Studies show that male students are more likely to haze, identify fewer behaviors as harmful due to hazing, and are more accepting of traditional hazing behaviors (Campo et al, 2005 and Knutson et al, 2011). Finley and Finley (2007), Ruffins (1998), and Sweet (1999) have identified male hazing as a form of “somasochistic, homoerotic bonding.” This behavior is seen as the need for older members to exert masculine dominance over new, younger members. Sweet (1999) argues further that sadist hazing implies an inherent hostility towards the new members, yet hazers, generally care for the new members. However, Shaw and Morgan’s (1990) research found that hazing may stem from pent up hostility from hazing suffered by older members, thus explaining the perpetuation of hazing within the group. This acceptance of “traditional” hazing, such as paddling, being yelled or cursed at, or excessive physical activity, can be due to the expectations men have. That is, college males expect and accept an intense fraternal experience. Also, some behaviors such as being yelled at, cursed at, or forced to do excessive physical activity, may not be new to men due to their membership in athletics, military, or other physically demanding activities (Knutson, 2011).

Researchers have shown that hegemonic masculinity plays a role in the way fraternity men select new members. This selection process involves a set of values and practices that emphasizes patriarchy and valorizes men (Yeung, Stompler, and Wharton, 2006). The traditional make-up of the American fraternity is sustained by enforcing hegemonic masculinity ideals such as excluding women and non-hegemonic men. In fact, one of the tenets of hegemonic masculinity is the assertion of patriarchy. The ideal hegemonic male is a patriarch and will exert his dominance over women, children, and, at

times, other men (Trujillo, 1991). The non-hegemonic, or marginal, man is not masculine and is thus feminized and rejected (James, 1998; O’Conor, 1998; Yeung et al., 2006). It could even be argued that fraternities, themselves, are “part of a larger gender system defined by power and conflict between two binaries: men/women and masculinity/femininity” (Yeung et al., 2006). Also, hegemonic masculinity, itself, manifests along a binary: internal hegemony and external hegemony. Internal hegemony can be understood as a stratification of masculinities (Connell, 1995, Demetriou, 2001, Yeung et al., 2006). External hegemony does not acknowledge the spectrum of masculinity within women; instead women are viewed as objects to be dominated. Thus, hegemonic masculinity is a “structural and cultural consequence” of male to female or male to male interactions (Yeung et al., 2006).

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

The current study examines which factors are correlates, or predictors, of hazing on college campuses. The original study, *Drugs, Alcohol and Student Crime in the United States, April –May 1989* (Bausell, Maloy, and Sherrill, 1989), examined the relationships between crime among college campus and drug and alcohol use of students on that campus. The data were collected from college undergraduate students selected from the American Students List: College Students at Home or School Address. Though the data may be dated it is important to emphasize the scarcity of data on the topic of hazing. Outside of the Alfred University studies that focused on NCAA and high school attitudes and behaviors, this research is the only of its kind to explicitly acknowledge and examine hazing as a form of campus crime and victimization.

The original study conducted by Bausell et al. was used to examine students' involvement in one of three groups: victim, perpetrator, or no such experiences. The present research will examine whether the same group of students belong to one of two groups: hazing victim or no such experience. Additionally, the present research will examine which variables are correlated with the likelihood that a student will be subjected to hazing. Lastly, the data will be analyzed to compare the discrepancies, if any exist, between male and female hazing experiences

## **Sample**

The survey used for this study was originally conducted in April and May, 1989 from a cross-sectional, random sample of 6,000 undergraduate college students (Bausell et al., 1989). The sample size of 6,000 was selected to ensure the inclusion of at least 100 students that identified as perpetrators. 1,872 students completed the questionnaire.

Additionally, three non-random samples were selected from Towson State University students for pilot studies. Of the four samples groups, there were a total of 2,207 cases to study. However, this research will use only the data collected from the random sample of 1,872 respondents. The unit of observation is the individual undergraduate respondent.

## **Variables**

The original study used 118 variables (Bausell et al., 1989). For the purpose of this present study, 21 variables were used. The independent variables used in the study are classified into five characteristic groups. The first grouping, general demographics, describes characteristics of the respondent. This section of variables includes the sex, ethnicity, the student's participation in collegiate athletics, and the student's participation in a fraternity or sorority. These background variables will assist in discerning if hazing behaviors are unique to a particular group or type of student, as well as if a specific individual's trait is a predictor of their likelihood to haze or be hazed. The second grouping of variables includes crimes the respondents were either victims or committed themselves. These variables include: rape, other sexual assault, physical assault, vandalism, armed robbery, theft, and fighting. These variables were examined alongside hazing incident experiences as either victim or perpetrator.

The 'hazing' variable was not present in the original study as an independent variable. Given the low response rate of students experiencing hazing, as either victims or perpetrators, one variable was created that combined all responses to hazing experiences. Thus, this change created an incident-level data set that condensed hazing victimization and hazing perpetration into one variable encompassing all hazing incidents. The dependent variable of interest is the experience of respondents with hazing. The participants' responses of 'yes' or 'no' to having ever been a victim of a hazing incident will be examined alongside each individual variable to determine which characteristics specifically correlate to hazing.

### **Procedure**

The current study uses cross tabulations to examine the dependent variables of experiencing any sort of hazing? And, the respondent's answer to his or her own gender identity as 'male' or female.' Those responding 'yes' to hazing experiences will be coded as 1 and 'no' will be coded as 0. Females will be coded 1 and males will be coded as 0. A total of 18 crosstabs will be used for this analysis. The variables apply to a single specific incident of campus violence experienced by the student respondent.

Tests of significance (Likelihood Ratio) will be used to determine which variables are significant predictors of hazing incidents. Also, Chi-Square tests will show if other crimes committed are significant to hazing experiences.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

Table 4.1 presents descriptive statistics including the frequencies of hazing incidents and demographic breakdown (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.2 illustrates a crosstab analysis of hazing and sex. The table shows the number of male and female respondents that answered ‘no’ (indicated with 0) or ‘yes’ (indicated with 1) to experiencing any hazing incidents, either as a victim or perpetrator. From that table it is shown that hazing is a male-dominated phenomenon, with 20 males experiencing hazing versus only 3 females.

Table 4.2 also presents the Chi-Square Tests for the relationship between sex and hazing experiences. The hegemonic masculinity literature may support this finding to the extent that males seem to be more willing and accepting of challenges and tasks that display hyper-masculine behaviors. Also, male students seem to generally participate in more risky behaviors than females (Hoover, 1999; 2000).

Table 4.3 presents the relationship between hazing experiences and membership on an intercollegiate athletics team. The data shows 8 respondents who are members of athletics teams have had hazing experiences, whereas 15 non-athletic members have experienced hazing.

The Chi-Square Tests in Table 4.3 show this to be a significant relationship. However, the relationship confirmed in the chi-square tests shows a contrary relationship than originally hypothesized. According to the data, hazing is not as prevalent among athletes as some would assume. This finding runs contrary to previous outlined literature, specifically the Alfred University study of NCAA athletes and their hazing experiences.

The next relationship examined was that between hazing experiences and membership in a fraternity or sorority. Table 4.4 shows 8 respondents that are both members of a fraternity/sorority and have had a hazing experience, as either a victim or perpetrator. Also, there are 15 non-members that have had a hazing experience.

The chi-square tests in Table 4.4 show this relationship to be not significant. Meaning, membership in a fraternity or sorority is not a significant predictor of one's propensity to haze or be hazed. Again, this finding runs afoul of many previously conducted studies and findings. This difference in results could be attributed to the varying definitions used in all studies to define hazing, or any other crime addressed. Also, the study used for this research was conducted in 1989, since then, hazing understanding on the part of students and administrators has shifted due to growing media presence and national fraternal organizations making public stands against hazing practices.

Chi-Square tests were done to examine the significance of relationships between hazing and other forms of victimization and perpetration. This was done to account for the possibility that some behaviors that may have been hazing were not reported as hazing, due to misunderstanding of terminology or being presented with vague

definitions. The other variables examined include victimization or perpetration of: rape, other forms of sexual assault, physical assault, vandalism, armed robbery, theft, and fighting. The only variables found to have a significant relationship with hazing were being a victim of armed robbery and being in a fight started by someone else (see Table 4.5). The significant relationship between hazing and being a victim of armed robbery could be an indicator of the applicability of opportunity theory to hazing behaviors. Just as armed robbery is a crime based on opportunity, so also could hazing practices. Also, hazing and its relationship with being a victim of a fight started by someone else could be another indicator of the presence of hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity literature states that the hegemonic male is violent and aggressive. Thus, fighting falls within that realm of violence, whether or not the respondent was the instigator.



**Table 4.1: Descriptive statistics for variables examined**

Variable	N	Frequency (%)
<b>Hazing</b>		
Yes	23	2.1
No	951	87.9
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	512	47.3
Female	566	52.3
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
White	999	92.3
Black	29	2.7
Asian	25	2.3
Hispanic	12	1.1
Other	8	.7
<b>Intercollegiate Athletics</b>		
<b>Member</b>		
Yes	153	14.1
No	928	85.8
<b>Member of Fraternity/Sorority</b>		
Yes	285	26.3
No	795	73.5

**Table 4.2: Crosstab of Hazing and Sex**

	<b>Hazing</b>			
	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>	
	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Male</b>	20	4.3	441	95.6
<b>Female</b>	3	0.5	506	99.4
<b>Likelihood Ratio Chi Square</b>	<b>16.162</b>		<b>&lt; .001</b>	

**Table 4.3: Crosstabs of Hazing and Collegiate Athletic Team Membership**

	<b>Hazing</b>			
	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>	
	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Athlete</b>	8	5.5	135	94.4
<b>Non-Athlete</b>	15	1.8	815	98.1
<b>Likelihood Ratio Chi Square</b>	<b>5.910</b>		<b>.015</b>	

**Table 4.4: Crosstabs of Hazing and Fraternity/Sorority Membership**

	<b>Hazing</b>			
	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>	
	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Greek</b>	8	3.0	252	96.9
<b>Non-Greek</b>	15	2.1	697	97.8
<b>Likelihood Ratio Chi Square</b>	<b>.735</b>		<b>.391</b>	

**Table 4.5: Chi Square Tests for Hazing and Other Victimization**

Form of Victimization	Likelihood Ratio Chi Square	
	Value	Asymp Sig. (2-sided)
<b>Rape</b>	<b>1.084</b>	<b>.298</b>
<b>Sexual Assault</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.988</b>
<b>Physical Assault</b>	<b>2.706</b>	<b>.100</b>
<b>Vandalism</b>	<b>.677</b>	<b>.411</b>
<b>Armed Robbery</b>	<b>3.516</b>	<b>.061</b>
<b>Theft</b>	<b>1.899</b>	<b>.168</b>
<b>Fight (started by someone else)</b>	<b>6.922</b>	<b>.009</b>

**Table 4.6: Chi Square Tests for Hazing and Other Perpetration**

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Crime Committed	Likelihood Ratio Chi Square	
	Value	Asymp Sig. (2-sided)
<b>Rape</b>	<b>.224</b>	<b>.636</b>
<b>Physical Assault</b>	<b>.228</b>	<b>.633</b>
<b>Vandalism</b>	<b>2.906</b>	<b>.088</b>
<b>Armed Robbery</b>	<b>.074</b>	<b>.785</b>
<b>Theft</b>	<b>3.969</b>	<b>.046</b>
<b>Fight (started a fight)</b>	<b>.325</b>	<b>.569</b>

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## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to provide insight into the understudied and often misunderstood phenomenon of hazing and its implications for the criminal justice system. Hazing in its myriad forms has largely been researched in education journals. However, the research appearing in those journals has rarely empirically examined the cause, prevalence, and demographics of hazing and “at-risk” student populations. Furthermore, and very important, few accounts of hazing rely on the same baseline for information that would enable researchers to fully understand the conditions that foster an environment conducive to hazing. Thus, our present understanding of hazing is inadequate, at best.

The data used for this study, *Drugs, Alcohol, and Student Crime in the United States, April-May 1989* (Bausell, Maloy, and Sherrill, 1989) was unique in its approach to college student victimization in that it included information on both hazing victimization and perpetrators. Apart from the 1999 Alfred University study that examined NCAA athletes’ behaviors and 2000 Alfred University study of high school students, there is little available data that addresses hazing issues among college students. Moreover, there are no studies that have explicitly investigated the hazing behaviors and attitudes of students. The present research was an attempt to fill this void but much more work needs to be done in order to more fully capture the dimensions of hazing.

The data used in this study, however, was limited for a variety of reasons. First, the survey instrument provided few explanations for what was meant by the term 'hazing' or any of the other crimes. The survey did not provide an appendix or list of terms that would help respondents accurately determine which crimes properly represented their experiences. Definitions of hazing, sexual assault, armed robbery, etc. were not provided. Therefore, the only basis for understanding these terms was the respondents' own previous knowledge and assumptions. The lack of definitions for may have resulted in each student using his or her own frame of reference throughout the entire survey, possibly skewing results. Thus, future research should be very clear with regards to the definition of hazing behaviors or other behaviors that may be associated with hazing incidents.

One study (Knutson et al., 2011) found that as much as 90% of students do not identify as being hazed, even after acknowledging their experience with hazing behaviors. Furthermore, even when provided a concise definition of hazing, the Alfred University study of NCAA athletes found that 80% of respondents had experienced hazing of some sort. However, only 12% had admitted to the experiences (Hoover, 1999). The present research also suggests that respondents will often fail to initially identify hazing behavior but when further questioned, they will later identify specific types of behaviors as hazing.

Further, hazing experiences may in fact be rare occurrences. There were twenty-three identifiable hazing incidents identified in this study. The rarity of this phenomenon may be problematic in terms of its generalizability to other student populations. For example, the extant research suggests that both hazing perpetrators and victims engage in



the behaviors for different reasons. That is, hazers and hazees have different perceptions of the purpose of the ritual. Not only is it inappropriate to suggest that the purposes for hazing is the same for all perpetrators, but it is equally inappropriate to suggest that the continuum of behaviors engaged in by the perpetrators is the same. Accordingly, there is a need for much better data collection efforts at the local and national level if we are to improve our understanding and knowledge of hazing.

Another shortcoming in this data is its applicability to contemporary college students. The data used in this study is somewhat dated and it may not be an accurate representation of current students' experiences with hazing. The survey used for this study was conducted in 1989. That was one year before the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC), the governing council for the nine historically Black Greek-letter organizations, banned pledging as the new member entry process for organizations. Also noteworthy, the data for this study was collected almost two decades before state legislatures began to acknowledge the need for hazing statutes. Thus, the understanding of hazing at the time of the original study has tremendously changed. While still taboo and largely underreported, hazing, and its very serious consequences, has been embraced by parents, students, teachers, and university administrators. Additionally, hazing education and our understanding of risk-taking behaviors among students and athletes have achieved a degree of prominence not only on college campuses but also in the media in light of the attention that is now being shown regarding hazing deaths and injuries that were not present at the time of the original study.

The present study runs contrary to other research that presents hazing as a problem prevalent only among athletes and fraternity and sorority members. This

research suggests that fraternity/sorority membership is not a significant predictor of hazing. Contrawise, Nuwer (1990, 1999, 2004), Campo et al. (2005), Wechester et al. (2009), Knutson et al. (2011), and others have all suggested that hazing is rampant among fraternities. Additionally, this study suggests that hazing is more prevalent among non-athletes. However, Hoover (1999, 2000), Nuwer (2000), and Campo et al. (2005), believe hazing behaviors have infiltrated athletic programs, especially at the collegiate level. Thus, in order to derive a more accurate account of hazing practices among Greek-affiliated students or student athletes, it is important to research this group of students independent of the “typical” college or high school student. Unaffiliated students, non-Greek or non-athletes, may not fully comprehend the context in which hazing occurs, especially as it relates to personal interactions within established hierarchies. As such, the responses of non-Greeks and non-athletes to question about hazing practices may skew the results and mask the presence of hazing behaviors.

Additionally, the present research suggests that hazing may be a distinct type of victimization that needs to be studied independent of other crimes that occur on college or high school campuses and the areas that immediately surround them. Though, various forms of assault, under-age drinking, and other crimes may be components of hazing, those crimes in and of themselves are not indicative of hazing. Therefore, future research should endeavor to study hazing behaviors in a manner akin to intimate partner violence wherein the history and terminology used to describe this phenomenon is specific to this type of victimization. Intimate partner violence (IPV) is very explicit in its definitions of terminology, as well as using the history of violence in either the aggressor or the relationship as a whole to determine course of action. IPV literature has been very

intentional with its definitions and categorizations. For example, IPV exists within four categories: physical violence, sexual violence, threats of physical or sexual violence, and psychological/emotional violence. Within those categories there are distinct indicators and behaviors that further clarify the action. Namely, the category that address the threat of physical or sexual violence includes “words, gestures, or weapons to communicate the intent to cause death, disability, injury, or physical harm” (Saltzman, Fanslow, McMahon, and Shelley, 2002). Hazing research should be equally as deliberate in defining and categorizing these heinous acts. Both the attempted, completed, and even threatened actions need to be accounted for and addressed.

Finally, the present study calls to question policy implications of hazing research. At present 44 of the 50 United States have hazing laws on the books; each state having its own definition of hazing and criteria for legal action. A universal hazing definition is needed in order to truly do away with this dangerous activity. Most states only acknowledge physical hazing, others only respond if there is death or serious injury, such as California and Florida. Comprehensive legislation would include a national definition that clearly outlines the behaviors, actions, and parameters that constitute as hazing. Also, this definition should explicitly state that the victim cannot consent to be subjected to these actions. Lastly, the federal approach to hazing should include sanctions and other courses of action for both victims and perpetrators. These sanctions should not be solely based on the resulting death or bodily injury, but should be enforced by simply posing the threat. Such a strict standard would hold students, administrators, and others involved to a higher standard of accountability and theoretically deter the behavior by knowing that

even creating an environment conducive to deadly activities, there will be legal ramifications.

The present study contributes to the extant literature in several ways. First, and arguably most importantly, it reinforces the idea that hazing is a problem that perhaps requires a criminal justice solution. Aside from loosely enforced state legislation, hazing goes virtually unnoticed in the criminal justice arena. This study is an initial attempt to close the gap in our knowledge about hazing by framing it in terms of a specific type of victimization that would benefit from insights gleaned from criminologists and criminal justice practitioners. Further, the present study has emphasized the consequences and dangers of hazing and how advancement of our criminological endeavors, with regards to this issue, are hampered by vague and amorphous definitions. Only after we have a better understanding of the dimensions of hazing, can we then begin to understand perpetrators, those at risk for victimization, and how to effectively deter this odious and dangerous behavior.

Finally, the present research provides a theoretical framework for understanding hazing among men and women. The review of hegemonic masculinity literature coupled with the findings of the research, confirm that hazing is a male dominated phenomenon. As such, this research may inspire the creation of male mentoring programs *before* and during college that may deter these young men from engaging such in risky and potentially fatal behaviors.

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