



PART V

Deviance, Crime, and Social Control

READING 20

Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia

The Development of Deviant Identities

Penelope A. McLorg and Diane E. Taub

Sociologists have a long-standing interest in the study of social deviance, which is explored in the next three readings. Deviance is the recognized violation of social norms. Because norms cover a wide range of human behavior, deviant acts are plentiful in any given society. Moreover, as illustrated in Reading 6 by David Rosenhan on the labeling of mental illness, whether a person is labeled deviant depends on how others perceive, define, and respond to that person's behavior. This reading by Penelope A. McLorg and Diane E. Taub further illustrates this process of deviance identification. In the reading, originally published in 1987, McLorg and Taub employ labeling theory to explain how eating disorders have become defined as deviant behaviors and how some young women acquire deviant identities by modifying their self-concepts to conform to the societal labels of a person with an eating disorder. Penelope A. McLorg is director of the Gerontology Program, and Diane E. Taub is a professor of sociology at Indiana University–Purdue University, Fort Wayne.

Introduction

Current appearance norms stipulate thinness for women and muscularity for men; these expectations, like any norms, entail rewards for compliance and negative sanctions for violations. Fear of being overweight—of being visually deviant—has led to a striving for thinness, especially among women. In the extreme, this avoidance of overweight engenders eating disorders, which themselves constitute deviance. Anorexia nervosa, or purposeful starvation, embodies visual as well as behavioral deviation; bulimia, binge-eating followed by vomiting and/or laxative abuse, is primarily behaviorally deviant.

Besides a fear of fatness, anorexics and bulimics exhibit distorted body images. In anorexia nervosa, a 20–25 percent loss of initial body weight occurs, resulting from self-starvation alone or in combination with excessive exercising, occasional binge-eating, vomiting and/or laxative abuse. Bulimia denotes cyclical (daily, weekly, for example) binge-eating followed by vomiting or laxative abuse; weight is normal or close to normal (Humphries, Wrobel, and Weigert 1982). Common physical manifestations of these eating disorders include menstrual cessation or irregularities and electrolyte imbalances; among behavioral traits are depression, obsessions/compulsions, and anxiety (Russell 1979; Thompson and Schwartz 1982).

Increasingly prevalent in the past two decades, anorexia nervosa and bulimia have emerged as major health and social problems. Termed an epidemic on college campuses (Brody, as quoted in Schur 1984:76), bulimia affects 13 percent of college students (Halmi, Falk, and Schwartz 1981). Less prevalent, anorexia nervosa was diagnosed in 0.6 percent of students utilizing a university health center (Stangler and Printz 1980). However, the overall mortality rate of anorexia nervosa is 6 percent (Schwartz and Thompson 1981) to 20 percent (Humphries et al. 1982); bulimia appears to be less life-threatening (Russell 1979).

Particularly affecting certain demographic groups, eating disorders are most prevalent among young, white, affluent (upper-middle to upper class) women in modern, industrialized countries (Crisp 1977; Willi and Grossman 1983). Combining all of these risk factors (female sex, youth, high socioeconomic status, and residence in an industrialized country), prevalence of anorexia nervosa in upper-class English girls' schools is reported at 1 in 100 (Crisp, Palmer, and Kalucy 1976). The age of onset for anorexia nervosa is bimodal at 14.5 and 18 years (Humphries et al. 1982); the most frequent age of onset for bulimia is 18 (Russell 1979).

Eating disorders have primarily been studied from psychological and medical perspectives.¹ Theories of etiology have generally fallen into three categories: the ego psychological (involving an impaired child–maternal environment); the family systems (implicating enmeshed, rigid families); and the endocrinological (involving a precipitating hormonal defect). Although relatively ignored in previous studies, the sociocultural components of anorexia nervosa and bulimia (the slimness norm and its agents of reinforcement, such as role models) have been postulated as accounting for the recent, dramatic increases in these disorders (Boskind-White 1985; Schwartz, Thompson, and Johnson 1982).²

Medical and psychological approaches to anorexia nervosa and bulimia obscure the social facets of the disorders and neglect the individuals' own definitions of their situations.

Among the social processes involved in the development of an eating disorder is the sequence of conforming behavior, primary deviance, and secondary deviance. Societal reaction is the critical mediator affecting the movement through the deviant career (Becker 1973). Within a framework of labeling theory, this study focuses on the emergence of anorexic and bulimic identities, as well as on the consequences of being career deviants.

Methodology

Sampling and Procedures

Most research on eating disorders has utilized clinical subjects or nonclinical respondents completing questionnaires. Such studies can be criticized for simply counting and describing behaviors and/or neglecting the social construction of the disorders. Moreover, the work of clinicians is often limited by therapeutic orientation. Previous research may also have included individuals who were not in therapy on their own volition and who resisted admitting that they had an eating disorder.

Past studies thus disregard the intersubjective meanings respondents attach to their behavior and emphasize researchers' criteria for definition as anorexic or bulimic. In order to supplement these sampling and procedural designs, the present study utilizes participant observation of a group of self-defined anorexics and bulimics.³ As the individuals had acknowledged their eating disorders, frank discussion and disclosure were facilitated.

Data are derived from a self-help group, BANISH, Bulimics/Anorexics in Self-Help, which met at a university in an urban center of the mid-South. Founded by one of the researchers (D.E.T.), BANISH was advertised in local newspapers as offering a group experience for individuals who were anorexic or bulimic. Despite the local advertisements, the campus location of the meeting may have selectively encouraged university students to attend. Nonetheless, in view of the modal age of onset and socioeconomic status of individuals with eating disorders, college students have been considered target populations (Crisp et al. 1976; Halmi et al. 1981).

The group's weekly two-hour meetings were observed for two years. During the course of this study, 30 individuals attended at least one of the meetings. Attendance at meetings was varied: Ten individuals came nearly every Sunday; five attended approximately twice a month; and the remaining 15 participated once a month or less frequently, often when their eating problems were "more severe" or "bizarre." The modal number of members at meetings was 12. The diversity in attendance was to be expected in self-help groups of anorexics and bulimics:

Most people's involvement will not be forever or even a long time. Most people get the support they need and drop out. Some take the time to help others after they themselves have been helped but even they may withdraw after a time. It is a natural and in many cases *necessary* process. (emphasis in original; American Anorexia and Bulimia Association 1983)

Modeled after Alcoholics Anonymous, BANISH allowed participants to discuss their backgrounds and experiences with others who empathized. For many members, the group constituted their only source of help; these respondents were reluctant to contact health professionals because of shame, embarrassment, or financial difficulties.

In addition to field notes from group meetings, records of other encounters with all members were maintained. Participants visited the office of one of the researchers (D.E.T.), called both researchers by phone, and invited them to their homes or out for a cup of coffee. Such interaction facilitated genuine communication and mutual trust. Even among the 15 individuals who did not attend the meetings regularly, contact was maintained with 10 members on a monthly basis.

Supplementing field notes were informal interviews with 15 group members, lasting from two to four hours. Because they appeared to represent more extensive experience with eating disorders, these interviewees were chosen to amplify their comments about the labeling process, made during group meetings. Conducted near the end of the two-year observation period, the interviews focused on what the respondents thought antecedent and maintained their eating disorders. In addition, participants described others' reactions to their behaviors as well as their own interpretations of these reactions. To protect the confidentiality of individuals quoted in the study, pseudonyms are employed.

Description of Members

The demographic composite of the sample typifies what has been found in other studies (Crisp 1977; Fox and James 1976; Herzog 1982; Schlesier-Stropp 1984). Group members' ages ranged from 19 to 36, with the modal age being 21. The respondents were white, and all but one were female. The sole male and three of the females were anorexic; the remaining females were bulimic.⁴

Primarily composed of college students, the group included four nonstudents, three of whom had college degrees. Nearly all members derived from upper-middle- or lower-upper-class households. Eighteen students and two nonstudents were never married and uninvolved in serious relationships; two nonstudents were married (one with two children); two students were divorced (one with two children); and six students were involved in serious relationships. The duration of eating disorders ranged from 3 to 15 years.

Conforming Behavior

In the backgrounds of most anorexics and bulimics, dieting figures prominently, beginning in the teen years (Crisp 1977; Johnson, Stuckey, Lewis, and Schwartz 1982; Lacey, Coker, and Birtchnell 1986). As dieters, these individuals are conformist in their adherence to the cultural norms emphasizing thinness (Garner, Garfinkel, Schwartz, and Thompson 1980; Schwartz, Thompson, and Johnson 1982). In our society, slim bodies are regarded as the most worthy and attractive; overweight is viewed as physically and morally unhealthy—"obscene," "lazy," "slothful," and "gluttonous" (DeJong 1980; Ritenbaugh 1982; Schwartz et al. 1982).

Among the agents of socialization promoting the slimness norm is advertising. Female models in newspaper, magazine, and television advertisements are uniformly slender. In addition, product names and slogans exploit the thin orientation; examples include "Ultra Slim Lipstick," "Miller Lite," and "Virginia Slims." While retaining pressures toward thinness, an Ayds commercial attempts a compromise for those wanting to savor food: "Ayds . . . so you can taste, chew, and enjoy, while you lose weight." Appealing particularly to women, a nationwide fast-food restaurant chain offers low-calorie selections, so individuals can have a "license to eat." In the latter two examples, the notion of enjoying food is combined with the message to be slim. Food and restaurant advertisements overall convey the pleasures of eating, whereas advertisements for other products, such as fashions and diet aids, reinforce the idea that fatness is undesirable.

Emphasis on being slim affects everyone in our culture, but it influences women especially because of society's traditional emphasis on women's appearance. The slimness norm and its concomitant narrow beauty standards exacerbate the objectification of women (Schur 1984). Women view themselves as visual entities and recognize that conforming to appearance expectations and "becoming attractive object[s] [are] role obligation[s]" (Laws, as quoted in Schur 1984:66). Demonstrating the beauty motivation behind dieting, a Nielson survey indicated that of the 56 percent of all women aged 24 to 54 who dieted during the previous year, 76 percent did so for cosmetic, rather than health, reasons (Schwartz et al. 1982). For most female group members, dieting was viewed as a means of gaining attractiveness and appeal to the opposite sex. The male respondent, as well, indicated that *when I was fat, girls didn't look at me, but when I got thinner, I was suddenly popular.*

In addition to responding to the specter of obesity, individuals who develop anorexia nervosa and bulimia are conformist in their strong commitment to other conventional norms and goals. They consistently excel at school and work (Bruch 1981; Humphries et al. 1982; Russell 1979), maintaining high aspirations in both areas (Lacey et al. 1986; Theander 1970). Group members generally completed college-preparatory courses in high school, aware from an early age that they would strive for a college degree. Also, in college as well as high school, respondents joined honor societies and academic clubs.

Moreover, pre-anorexics and -bulimics display notable conventionality as "model children" (Humphries et al. 1982:199), "the pride and joy" of their parents (Bruch 1981:215), accommodating themselves to the wishes of others. Parents of these individuals emphasize conformity and value achievement (Bruch 1981). Respondents felt that perfect or near-perfect grades were expected of them; however, good grades were not rewarded by parents, because "A's" were common for these children. In addition, their parents suppressed conflicts, to preserve the image of the "all-American family" (Humphries et al. 1982). Group members reported that they seldom, if ever, heard their parents argue or raise their voices.

Also conformist in their affective ties, individuals who develop anorexia nervosa and bulimia are strongly, even excessively, attached to their parents. Respondents' families appeared close-knit, demonstrating palpable emotional ties. Several group members, for example, reported habitually calling home at prescribed times, whether or not they

had any news. Such families have been termed "enmeshed" and "overprotective," displaying intense interaction and concern for members' welfare (Minuchin, Rosman, and Baker 1978; Selvini-Palazzoli 1978). These qualities could be viewed as marked conformity to the norm of familial closeness.⁵

Another element of notable conformity in the family milieu of pre-anorexics and -bulimics concerns eating, body weight and shape, and exercising (Humphries et al. 1982; Kalucy, Crisp, and Harding 1977). Respondents reported their fathers' preoccupation with exercising and their mothers' engrossment in food preparation. When group members dieted and lost weight, they received an extraordinary amount of approval. Among the family, body size became a matter of "friendly rivalry." One bulimic informant recalled that she, her mother, and her coed sister all strived to wear a size 5, regardless of their heights and body frames. Subsequent to this study, the researchers learned that both the mother and sister had become bulimic.

As pre-anorexics and -bulimics, group members thus exhibited marked conformity to cultural norms of thinness, achievement, compliance, and parental attachment. Their families reinforced their conformity by adherence to norms of family closeness and weight and body shape consciousness.

Primary Deviance

Even with familial encouragement, respondents, like nearly all dieters (Chernin 1981), failed to maintain their lowered weights. Many cited their lack of willpower to eat only restricted foods. For the emerging anorexics and bulimics, extremes such as purposeful starvation or bingeing accompanied by vomiting and/or laxative abuse appeared as "obvious solutions" to the problem of retaining weight loss. Associated with these behaviors was a regained feeling of control in lives that had been disrupted by a major crisis. Group members' extreme weight-loss efforts operated as coping mechanisms for entering college, leaving home, or feeling rejected by the opposite sex.

The primary inducement for both eating adaptations was the drive for slimness: With slimness came more self-respect and a feeling of superiority over "unsuccessful dieters." Brian, for example, experienced a "power trip" upon consistent weight loss through starvation. Binges allowed the purging respondents to cope with stress through eating while maintaining a slim appearance. As former strict dieters, Teresa and Jennifer used bingeing and purging as an alternative to the constant self-denial of starvation. Acknowledging their parents' desires for them to be slim, most respondents still felt it was a conscious choice on their part to continue extreme weight-loss efforts. Being thin became the "most important thing" in their lives—their "greatest ambition."

In explaining the development of an anorexic or bulimic identity, Lemert's (1951, 1967) concept of primary deviance is salient. Primary deviance refers to a transitory period of norm violations which do not affect an individual's self-concept or performance of social roles. Although respondents were exhibiting anorexic or bulimic behavior, they did not consider themselves to be anorexic or bulimic.

At first, anorexics' significant others complimented their weight loss, expounding on their new "sleekness" and "good looks." Branch and Eurman (1980) also found anorexics' families and friends describing them as "well groomed," "neat," "fashionable," and "victorious" (p. 631). Not until the respondents approached emaciation did some parents or friends become concerned and withdraw their praise. Significant others also became increasingly aware of the anorexics' compulsive exercising, preoccupation with food preparation (but not consumption), and ritualistic eating patterns (such as cutting food into minute pieces and eating only certain foods at prescribed times).

For bulimics, friends or family members began to question how the respondents could eat such large amounts of food (often in excess of 10,000 calories a day) and stay slim. Significant others also noticed calluses across the bulimics' hands, which were caused by repeated inducement of vomiting. Several bulimics were "caught in the act," bent over commodes. Generally, friends and family required substantial evidence before believing that the respondents' bingeing or purging was no longer sporadic.

Secondary Deviance

Heightened awareness of group members' eating behavior ultimately led others to label the respondents "anorexic" or "bulimic." Respondents differed in their histories of being labeled and accepting the labels. Generally first termed anorexic by friends, family, or medical personnel, the anorexics initially vigorously denied the label. They felt they were not "anorexic enough," not skinny enough; Robin did not regard herself as having the "skeletal" appearance she associated with anorexia nervosa. These group members found it difficult to differentiate between socially approved modes of weight loss—eating less and exercising more—and the extremes of those behaviors. In fact, many of their activities—cheerleading, modeling, gymnastics, aerobics—reinforced their pursuit of thinness. Like other anorexics, Chris felt she was being "ultra-healthy," with "total control" over her body.

For several respondents, admitting they were anorexic followed the realization that their lives were disrupted by their eating disorder. Anorexics' inflexible eating patterns unsettled family meals and holiday gatherings. Their regimented lifestyle of compulsively scheduled activities—exercising, school, and meals—precluded any spontaneous social interactions. Realization of their adverse behaviors preceded the anorexics' acknowledgment of their subnormal body weight and size.

Contrasting with anorexics, the binge/purgers, when confronted, more readily admitted that they were bulimic and that their means of weight loss was "abnormal." Teresa, for example, knew "very well" that her bulimic behavior was "wrong and unhealthy," although "worth the physical risks." While the bulimics initially maintained that their purging was only a temporary weight-loss method, they eventually realized that their disorder represented a "loss of control." Although these respondents regretted the self-indulgence, "shame," and "wasted time," they acknowledged their growing dependence on bingeing and purging for weight management and stress regulation.

The application of anorexic or bulimic labels precipitated secondary deviance, wherein group members internalized these identities. Secondary deviance refers to norm violations which are a response to society's labeling: "Secondary deviation . . . becomes a means of social defense, attack or adaptation to the overt and covert problems created by the societal reaction to primary deviance" (Lemert 1967:17). In contrast to primary deviance, secondary deviance is generally prolonged, alters the individual's self-concept, and affects the performance of his or her social roles.

As secondary deviants, respondents felt that their disorders "gave a purpose" to their lives. Nicole resisted attaining a normal weight because it was not "her"—she accepted her anorexic weight as her "true" weight. For Teresa, bulimia became a "companion"; and Julie felt "every aspect of her life," including time management and social activities, was affected by her bulimia. Group members' eating disorders became the salient element of their self-concepts so that they related to familiar people and new acquaintances as anorexics or bulimics. For example, respondents regularly compared their body shapes and sizes with those of others. They also became sensitized to comments about their appearance, whether or not the remarks were made by someone aware of their eating disorder.

With their behavior increasingly attuned to their eating disorders, group members exhibited role engulfment (Schur 1971). Through accepting anorexic or bulimic identities, individuals centered activities around their deviant role, downgrading other social roles. Their obligations as students, family members, and friends became subordinate to their eating and exercising rituals. Socializing, for example, was gradually curtailed because it interfered with compulsive exercising, bingeing, or purging.

Labeled anorexic or bulimic, respondents were ascribed a new status with a different set of role expectations. Regardless of other positions the individuals occupied, their deviant status, or master status (Becker 1973; Hughes 1958), was identified before all others. Among group members, Nicole, who was known as the "school's brain," became known as the "school's anorexic." No longer viewed as conforming model individuals, some respondents were termed "starving waifs" or "pigs."

Because of their identities as deviants, anorexics' and bulimics' interactions with others were altered. Group members' eating habits were scrutinized by friends and family and used as a "catchall" for everything negative that happened to them. Respondents felt self-conscious around individuals who knew of their disorders; for example, Robin imagined people "watching and whispering" behind her. In addition, group members believed others expected them to "act" anorexic or bulimic. Friends of some anorexic group members never offered them food or drink, assuming continued disinterest on the respondents' part. While being hospitalized, Denise felt she had to prove to others she was not still vomiting, by keeping her bathroom door open. Other bulimics, who lived in dormitories, were hesitant to use the restroom for normal purposes lest several friends be huddling at the door, listening for vomiting. In general, individuals interacted with the respondents largely on the basis of their eating disorder; in doing so, they reinforced anorexic and bulimic behaviors.

Bulimic respondents, whose weight-loss behavior was not generally detectable from their appearance, tried earnestly to hide their bulimia by bingeing and purging in secret. Their main purpose in concealment was to avoid the negative consequences of being known as a bulimic. For these individuals, bulimia connoted a "cop-out": Like "weak anorexics," bulimics pursued thinness but yielded to urges to eat. Respondents felt other people regarded bulimia as "gross" and had little sympathy for the sufferer. To avoid these stigmas or "spoiled identities," the bulimics shrouded their behaviors.

Distinguishing types of stigma, Goffman (1963) describes discredited (visible) stigmas and discreditable (invisible) stigmas. Bulimics, whose weight was approximately normal or even slightly elevated, harbored discreditable stigmas. Anorexics, on the other hand, suffered both discreditable and discredited stigmas—the latter due to their emaciated appearance. Certain anorexics were more reconciled than the bulimics to their stigmas: For Brian, the "stigma of anorexia was better than being fat." Common to the stigmatized individuals was an inability to interact spontaneously with others. Respondents were constantly on guard against topics of eating and body size.

Both anorexics and bulimics were held responsible by others for their behavior and presumed able to "get out of it if they tried." Many anorexics reported being told to "just eat more," while bulimics were enjoined to simply "stop eating so much." Such appeals were made without regard for the complexities of the problem. Ostracized by certain friends and family members, anorexics and bulimics felt increasingly isolated. For respondents, the self-help group presented a nonthreatening forum for discussing their disorders. Here, they found mutual understanding, empathy, and support. Many participants viewed BANISH as a haven from stigmatization by "others."

Group members, as secondary deviants, thus endured negative consequences, such as stigmatization, from being labeled. As they internalized the labels anorexic or bulimic, individuals' self-concepts were significantly influenced. When others interacted with the respondents on the basis of their eating disorders, anorexic or bulimic identities were encouraged. Moreover, group members' efforts to counteract the deviant labels were thwarted by their master status.

Discussion

Previous research on eating disorders has dwelt almost exclusively on medical and psychological facets. Although necessary for a comprehensive understanding of anorexia nervosa and bulimia, these approaches neglect the social processes involved. The phenomena of eating disorders transcend concrete disease entities and clinical diagnoses. Multifaceted and complex, anorexia nervosa and bulimia require a holistic research design, in which sociological insights must be included.

A limitation of medical and psychiatric studies, in particular, is researchers' use of *a priori* criteria in establishing salient variables. Rather than utilizing predetermined standards of inclusion, the present study allows respondents to construct their own reality. Concomitant to this innovative approach to eating disorders is the selection of a

sample of self-admitted anorexics and bulimics. Individuals' perceptions of what it means to become anorexic or bulimic are explored. Although based on a small sample, findings can be used to guide researchers in other settings.

With only 5 to 10 percent of reported cases appearing in males (Crisp 1977; Stangler and Printz 1980), eating disorders are primarily a women's aberrance. The deviance of anorexia nervosa and bulimia is rooted in the visual objectification of women and attendant slimness norm. Indeed, purposeful starvation and bingeing and purging reinforce the notion that "a society gets the deviance it deserves" (Schur 1979:71). As noted (Schur 1984), the sociology of deviance has generally bypassed systematic studies of women's norm violations. Like male deviants, females endure label applications, internalizations, and fulfillments.

The social processes involved in developing anorexic or bulimic identities comprise the sequence of conforming behavior, primary deviance, and secondary deviance. With a background of exceptional adherence to conventional norms, especially the striving for thinness, respondents subsequently exhibit the primary deviance of starving or bingeing and purging. Societal reaction to these behaviors leads to secondary deviance, wherein respondents' self-concepts and master statuses become anorexic or bulimic. Within this framework of labeling theory, the persistence of eating disorders, as well as the effects of stigmatization, are elucidated.

Although during the course of this research some respondents alleviated their symptoms through psychiatric help or hospital treatment programs, no one was labeled "cured." An anorexic is considered recovered when weight is normal for two years; a bulimic is termed recovered after being symptom-free for one and one-half years (American Anorexia and Bulimia Association Newsletter 1985). Thus deviance disavowal (Schur 1971), or efforts after normalization to counteract deviant labels, remains a topic for future exploration.

Endnotes

1. Although instructive, an integration of the medical, psychological, and sociocultural perspectives on eating disorders is beyond the scope of this paper.
2. Exceptions to the neglect of sociocultural factors are discussions of sex-role socialization in the development of eating disorders. Anorexics' girlish appearance has been interpreted as a rejection of femininity and womanhood (Bruch 1981; Orbach 1979, 1985). In contrast, bulimics have been characterized as overconforming to traditional female sex roles (Boskind-Lodahl 1976).
3. Although a group experience for self-defined bulimics has been reported (Boskind-Lodahl 1976), the researcher, from the outset, focused on Gestalt and behaviorist techniques within a feminist orientation.
4. One explanation for fewer anorexics than bulimics in the sample is that, in the general population, anorexics are outnumbered by bulimics at 8 or 10 to 1 (Lawson, as reprinted in American Anorexia and Bulimia Association Newsletter 1985:1). The proportion of bulimics to anorexics in the sample is 6.5.

anorexics may be less likely to attend a self-help group as they have a greater tendency to deny the existence of an eating problem (Humphries et al. 1982). However, the four anorexics in the present study were among the members who attended the meetings most often.

5. Interactions in the families of anorexics and bulimics might seem deviant in being inordinately close. However, in the larger societal context, the family members epitomize the norms of family cohesiveness. Perhaps unusual in their occurrence, these families are still within the realm of conformity. Humphries and colleagues (1982) refer to the "highly enmeshed and protective" family as part of the "idealized family myth" (p. 202).

References

- American Anorexia and Bulimia Association. 1983, April. Correspondence.
- American Anorexia and Bulimia Association Newsletter. 1985. 8(3).
- Becker, Howard S. 1973. *Outsiders*. New York: Free Press.
- Boskind-Lodahl, Marlene. 1976. "Cinderella's Stepsisters: A Feminist Perspective on Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 2:342-56.
- Boskind-White, Marlene. 1985. "Bulimarexia: A Sociocultural Perspective." Pp. 113-26 in *Theory and Treatment of Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia: Biomedical, Sociocultural and Psychological Perspectives*, edited by S. W. Emmett. New York: Brunner/Mazel.
- Branch, C. H. Hardin and Linda J. Eurman. 1980. "Social Attitudes toward Patients with Anorexia Nervosa." *American Journal of Psychiatry* 137:631-32.
- Bruch, Hilda. 1981. "Developmental Considerations of Anorexia Nervosa and Obesity." *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* 26:212-16.
- Chernin, Kim. 1981. *The Obsession: Reflections on the Tyranny of Slenderness*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Crisp, A. H. 1977. "The Prevalence of Anorexia Nervosa and Some of Its Associations in the General Population." *Advances in Psychosomatic Medicine* 9:38-47.
- Crisp, A. H., R. L. Palmer, and R. S. Kalucy. 1976. "How Common Is Anorexia Nervosa? A Prevalence Study." *British Journal of Psychiatry* 128:549-54.
- DeJong, William. 1980. "The Stigma of Obesity: The Consequences of Naive Assumptions Concerning the Causes of Physical Deviance." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 21:75-87.
- Fox, K. C. and N. McL. James. 1976. "Anorexia Nervosa: A Study of 44 Strictly Defined Cases." *New Zealand Medical Journal* 84:309-12.
- Garner, David M., Paul E. Garfinkel, Donald Schwartz, and Michael Thompson. 1980. "Cultural Expectations of Thinness in Women." *Psychological Reports* 47:483-91.
- Goffman, Erving. 1963. *Stigma*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Halmi, Katherine A., James R. Falk, and Estelle Schwartz. 1981. "Binge-Eating and Vomiting: A Survey of a College Population." *Psychological Medicine* 11:697-706.
- Herzog, David B. 1982. "Bulimia: The Secretive Syndrome." *Psychosomatics* 23:481-83.
- Hughes, Everett C. 1958. *Men and Their Work*. New York: Free Press.
- Humphries, Laurie L., Sylvia Wrobel, and H. Thomas Wiegert. 1982. "Anorexia Nervosa." *American Family Physician* 26:199-204.
- Johnson, Craig L., Marilyn K. Stuckey, Linda D. Lewis, and Donald M. Schwartz. 1982. "Bulimia: A Descriptive Survey of 316 Cases." *International Journal of Eating Disorders* 2(1):3-16.

- Kalucy, R. S., A. H. Crisp, and Britta Harding. 1977. "A Study of 56 Families with Anorexia Nervosa." *British Journal of Medical Psychology* 50:381-95.
- Lacey, Hubert J., Sian Coker, and S. A. Birtchnell. 1986. "Bulimia: Factors Associated with Its Etiology and Maintenance." *International Journal of Eating Disorders* 5:475-87.
- Lemert, Edwin M. 1951. *Social Pathology*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- . 1967. *Human Deviance, Social Problems, and Social Control*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Minuchin, Salvador, Bernice L. Rosman, and Lester Baker. 1978. *Psychosomatic Families: Anorexia Nervosa in Context*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Orbach, Susie. 1979. *Fat Is a Feminist Issue*. New York: Berkeley.
- . 1985. "Visibility/Invisibility: Social Considerations in Anorexia Nervosa—a Feminist Perspective." Pp. 127-38 in *Theory and Treatment of Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia: Biomedical, Sociocultural, and Psychological Perspectives*, edited by S. W. Emmett. New York: Brunner/Mazel.
- Ritenbaugh, Cheryl. 1982. "Obesity as a Culture-Bound Syndrome." *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry* 6:347-61.
- Russell, Gerald. 1979. "Bulimia Nervosa: An Ominous Variant of Anorexia Nervosa." *Psychological Medicine* 9:429-48.
- Schlesier-Stropp, Barbara. 1984. "Bulimia: A Review of the Literature." *Psychological Bulletin* 95:247-57.
- Schur, Edwin M. 1971. *Labeling Deviant Behavior*. New York: Harper & Row.
- . 1979. *Interpreting Deviance: A Sociological Introduction*. New York: Harper & Row.
- . 1984. *Labeling Women Deviant: Gender, Stigma, and Social Control*. New York: Random House.
- Schwartz, Donald M. and Michael G. Thompson. 1981. "Do Anorectics Get Well? Current Research and Future Needs." *American Journal of Psychiatry* 138:319-23.
- Schwartz, Donald M., Michael G. Thompson, and Craig L. Johnson. 1982. "Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia: The Socio-Cultural Context." *International Journal of Eating Disorders* 1(3):20-36.
- Selvini-Palazzoli, Mara. 1978. *Self-Starvation: From Individual to Family Therapy in the Treatment of Anorexia Nervosa*. New York: Jason Aronson.
- Stangler, Ronnie S. and Adolph M. Printz. 1980. "DSM-III: Psychiatric Diagnosis in a University Population." *American Journal of Psychiatry* 137:937-40.
- Theander, Sten. 1970. "Anorexia Nervosa." *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica Supplement* 214:24-31.
- Thompson, Michael G. and Donald M. Schwartz. 1982. "Life Adjustment of Women with Anorexia Nervosa and Anorexic-like Behavior." *International Journal of Eating Disorders* 1(2):47-60.
- Willi, Jurg and Samuel Grossman. 1983. "Epidemiology of Anorexia Nervosa in a Defined Region of Switzerland." *American Journal of Psychiatry* 140:564-67.

Fraternities and Collegiate Rape Culture

Why Are Some Fraternities More Dangerous Places for Women?

A. Ayres Boswell and Joan Z. Spade

Conflict theory suggests that, in our society, who and what the label “deviant” is placed on is based primarily on relative power. Those who have more authority and control define what is “normal” and what is deviant. Moreover, conflict theorists argue that social norms, including laws, generally reflect the interests of the rich and powerful. Thus, historically, we have property laws to protect against the theft of property of the landowning classes and domestic laws that protect the status of men, as patriarchs, within the family. This reading by A. Ayres Boswell and Joan Z. Spade, originally published in 1996, exemplifies this process, in which the privileged attempt to socially construct deviance and crime to their advantage. In particular, Boswell and Spade analyze the social contexts of and gendered relations in male fraternities that contribute to the high incidence of violence against women on many college campuses. Joan Z. Spade is professor emerita of sociology at the College of Brockport, State University of New York. Ayres Boswell is a supervisor at a foster care agency in New York City, where she works with abused and neglected children.

Date rape and acquaintance rape on college campuses are topics of concern to both researchers and college administrators. Some estimate that 60 to 80 percent of rapes are date or acquaintance rape (Koss, Dinero, Seibel, and Cox 1988). Further, 1 out of 4 college women say they were raped or experienced an

A. Ayres Boswell and Joan Z. Spade, “Fraternities and Collegiate Rape Culture: Why Are Some Fraternities More Dangerous Places for Women?” from *Gender & Society* 10, no. 2 (1996): 133–47. Copyright © 1996 by Sociologists for Women in Society. Reprinted with the permission of SAGE Publications, Inc.

attempted rape, and 1 out of 12 college men say they forced a woman to have sexual intercourse against her will (Koss, Gidycz, and Wisniewski 1985).

Although considerable attention focuses on the incidence of rape, we know relatively little about the context or the *rape culture* surrounding date and acquaintance rape. Rape culture is a set of values and beliefs that provide an environment conducive to rape (Buchwald, Fletcher, and Roth 1993; Herman 1984). The term applies to a generic culture surrounding and promoting rape, not the specific settings in which rape is likely to occur. We believe that the specific settings also are important in defining relationships between men and women.

Some have argued that fraternities are places where rape is likely to occur on college campuses (Martin and Hummer 1989; O'Sullivan 1993; Sanday 1990) and that the students most likely to accept rape myths and be more sexually aggressive are more likely to live in fraternities and sororities, consume higher doses of alcohol and drugs, and place a higher value on social life at college (Gwartney-Gibbs and Stockard 1989; Kalof and Cargill 1991). Others suggest that sexual aggression is learned in settings such as fraternities and is not part of predispositions or preexisting attitudes (Boeringer, Shehan, and Akers 1991). To prevent further incidences of rape on college campuses, we need to understand what it is about fraternities in particular and college life in general that may contribute to the maintenance of a rape culture on college campuses.

Our approach is to identify the social contexts that link fraternities to campus rape and promote a rape culture. Instead of assuming that all fraternities provide an environment conducive to rape, we compare the interactions of men and women at fraternities identified on campus as being especially *dangerous* places for women, where the likelihood of rape is high, to those seen as *safer* places, where the perceived probability of rape occurring is lower. Prior to collecting data for our study, we found that most women students identified some fraternities as having more sexually aggressive members and a higher probability of rape. These women also considered other fraternities as relatively safe houses, where a woman could go and get drunk if she wanted to and feel secure that the fraternity men would not take advantage of her.

We compared parties at houses identified as high-risk and low-risk houses as well as at two local bars frequented by college students. Our analysis provides an opportunity to examine situations and contexts that hinder or facilitate positive social relations between undergraduate men and women.

The abusive attitudes toward women that some fraternities perpetuate exist within a general culture where rape is intertwined in traditional gender scripts. Men are viewed as initiators of sex and women as either passive partners or active resisters, preventing men from touching their bodies (LaPlante, McCormick, and Brannigan 1980). Rape culture is based on the assumptions that men are aggressive and dominant whereas women are passive and acquiescent (Buchwald, Fletcher, and Roth 1993; Herman 1984). What occurs on college campuses is an extension of the portrayal of domination and aggression of men over women that exemplifies the double standard of sexual behavior in U.S. society (Barthel 1988; Kimmel 1993).

Sexually active men are positively reinforced by being referred to as "studs," whereas women who are sexually active or report enjoying sex are derogatorily

labeled as "sluts" (Herman 1984; O'Sullivan 1993). These gender scripts are embodied in rape myths and stereotypes such as "She really wanted it; she just said no because she didn't want me to think she was a bad girl" (Burke, Stets, and Pirog-Good 1989; Jenkins and Dambrot 1987; Lisak and Roth 1988; Malamuth 1986; Muehlenhard and Linton 1987; Peterson and Franzese 1987). Because men's sexuality is seen as more natural, acceptable, and uncontrollable than women's sexuality, many men and women excuse acquaintance rape by affirming that men cannot control their natural urges (Miller and Marshall 1987).

Whereas some researchers explain these attitudes toward sexuality and rape using an individual or a psychological interpretation, we argue that rape has a social basis, one in which both men and women create and re-create masculine and feminine identities and relations. Based on the assumption that rape is part of the social construction of gender, we examine how men and women "do gender" on a college campus (West and Zimmerman 1987). We focus on fraternities because they have been identified as settings that encourage rape (Sanday 1990). By comparing fraternities that are viewed by women as places where there is a high risk of rape to those where women believe there is a low risk of rape as well as two local commercial bars, we seek to identify characteristics that make some social settings more likely places for the occurrence of rape.

Results

The Settings

Fraternity Parties. We observed several differences in the quality of the interaction of men and women at parties at high-risk fraternities compared to those at low-risk houses. A typical party at a low-risk house included an equal number of women and men. The social atmosphere was friendly, with considerable interaction between women and men. Men and women danced in groups and in couples, with many of the couples kissing and displaying affection toward each other. Brothers explained that, because many of the men in these houses had girlfriends, it was normal to see couples kissing on the dance floor. Coed groups engaged in conversations at many of these houses, with women and men engaging in friendly exchanges, giving the impression that they knew each other well. Almost no cursing and yelling was observed at parties in low-risk houses; when pushing occurred, the participants apologized. Respect for women extended to the women's bathrooms, which were clean and well supplied.

At high-risk houses, parties typically had skewed gender ratios, sometimes involving more men and other times involving more women. Gender segregation also was evident at these parties, with the men on one side of a room or in the bar drinking while women gathered in another area. Men treated women differently in the high-risk houses. The women's bathrooms in the high-risk houses were filthy, including clogged toilets and vomit in the sinks. When a brother was told of the mess in the bathroom at a high-risk house, he replied: *Good, maybe some of these beer wenches will leave so there will be more beer for us.*

Men attending parties at high-risk houses treated women less respectfully, engaging in jokes, conversations, and behaviors that degraded women. Men made a display of assessing women's bodies and rated them with thumbs up or thumbs down for the other men in the sight of the women. One man attending a party at a high-risk fraternity said to another: *Did you know that this week is Women's Awareness Week? I guess that means we get to abuse them more this week.* Men behaved more crudely at parties at high-risk houses. At one party, a brother dropped his pants, including his underwear, while dancing in front of several women. Another brother slid across the dance floor completely naked.

The atmosphere at parties in high-risk fraternities was less friendly overall. With the exception of greetings, men and women rarely smiled or laughed and spoke to each other less often than was the case at parties in low-risk houses. The few one-on-one conversations between women and men appeared to be strictly flirtatious (lots of eye contact, touching, and very close talking). It was rare to see a group of men and women together talking. Men were openly hostile, which made the high-risk parties seem almost threatening at times. For example, there was a lot of touching, pushing, profanity, and name calling, some done by women.

Students at parties at the high-risk houses seemed self-conscious and aware of the presence of members of the opposite sex, an awareness that was sexually charged. Dancing early in the evening was usually between women. Close to midnight, the sex ratio began to balance out with the arrival of more men or more women. Couples began to dance together but in a sexual way (close dancing with lots of pelvic thrusts). Men tried to pick up women using lines such as *Want to see my fish tank?* and *Let's go upstairs so that we can talk; I can't hear what you're saying in here.*

Although many of the same people who attended high-risk parties also attended low-risk parties, their behavior changed as they moved from setting to setting. Group norms differed across contexts as well. At a party that was held jointly at a low-risk house with a high-risk fraternity, the ambience was that of a party at a high-risk fraternity with heavier drinking, less dancing, and fewer conversations between women and men. The men from both high- and low-risk fraternities were very aggressive; a fight broke out, and there was pushing and shoving on the dance floor and in general.

As others have found, fraternity brothers at high-risk houses on this campus told about routinely discussing their sexual exploits at breakfast the morning after parties and sometimes at house meetings (cf. Martin and Hummer 1989; O'Sullivan 1993; Sanday 1990). During these sessions, the brothers we interviewed said that men bragged about what they did the night before with stories of sexual conquests often told by the same men, usually sophomores. The women involved in these exploits were women they did not know or knew but did not respect, or *faceless victims*. Men usually treated girlfriends with respect and did not talk about them in these storytelling sessions. Men from low-risk houses, however, did not describe similar sessions in their houses.

The Bar Scene. The bar atmosphere and social context differed from those of fraternity parties. The music was not as loud, and both bars had places to sit and have conversations. At all fraternity parties, it was difficult to maintain conversations with loud music

playing and no place to sit. The volume of music at parties at high-risk fraternities was even louder than it was at low-risk houses, making it virtually impossible to have conversations. In general, students in the local bars behaved in the same way that students did at parties in low-risk houses with conversations typical, most occurring between men and women.

The first bar, frequented by older students, had live entertainment every night of the week. Some nights were more crowded than others, and the atmosphere was friendly, relaxed, and conducive to conversation. People laughed and smiled and behaved politely toward each other. The ratio of men to women was fairly equal, with students congregating in mostly coed groups. Conversation flowed freely and people listened to each other.

Although the women and men at the first bar also were at parties at low- and high-risk fraternities, their behavior at the bar included none of the blatant sexual or intoxicated behaviors observed at some of these parties. As the evenings wore on, the number of one-on-one conversations between men and women increased and conversations shifted from small talk to topics such as war and AIDS. Conversations did not revolve around picking up another person, and most people left the bar with same-sex friends or in coed groups.

The second bar was less popular with older students. Younger students, often under the legal drinking age, went there to drink, sometimes after leaving campus parties. This bar was much smaller and usually not as crowded as the first bar. The atmosphere was more mellow and relaxed than it was at the fraternity parties. People went there to hang out and talk to each other.

On a couple of occasions, however, the atmosphere at the second bar became similar to that of a party at a high-risk fraternity. As the number of people in the bar increased, they removed chairs and tables, leaving no place to sit and talk. The music also was turned up louder, drowning out conversation. With no place to dance or sit, most people stood around but could not maintain conversations because of the noise and crowds. Interactions between women and men consisted mostly of flirting. Alcohol consumption also was greater than it was on the less crowded nights, and the number of visibly drunk people increased. The more people drank, the more conversation and socializing broke down. The only differences between this setting and that of a party at a high-risk house were that brothers no longer controlled the territory and bedrooms were not available upstairs.

Gender Relations

Relations between women and men are shaped by the contexts in which they meet and interact. As is the case on other college campuses, *hooking up* has replaced dating on this campus, and fraternities are places where many students hook up. Hooking up is a loosely applied term on college campuses that had different meanings for men and women on this campus.

Most men defined hooking up similarly. One man said it was something that happens

when you're really drunk and meet up with a woman you sort of know, or possibly don't know at all and don't care about. You go home with her with the intention of getting as much sexual, physical pleasure as she'll give you, which can range anywhere from kissing to intercourse, without any strings attached.

The exception to this rule is when men hook up with women they admire. Men said they are less likely to press for sexual activity with someone they know and like because they want the relationship to continue and be based on respect.

Women's version of hooking up differed. Women said they hook up only with men they cared about and described hooking up as kissing and petting but not sexual intercourse. Many women said that hooking up was disappointing because they wanted longer-term relationships. First-year women students realized quickly that hook-ups were usually one-night stands with no strings attached, but many continued to hook up because they had few opportunities to develop relationships with men on campus. One first-year woman said: *70 percent of hook-ups never talk again and try to avoid one another; 26 percent may actually hear from them or talk to them again, and 4 percent may actually go on a date, which can lead to a relationship.* Another first-year woman said: *It was fun in the beginning. You get a lot of attention and kiss a lot of boys and think this is what college is about, but it gets tiresome fast.*

Whereas first-year women get tired of the hook-up scene early on, many men do not become bored with it until their junior or senior year. As one upperclassman said: *The whole game of hooking up became really meaningless and tiresome for me during my second semester of my sophomore year, but most of my friends didn't get bored with it until the following year.*

In contrast to hooking up, students also described monogamous relationships with steady partners. Some type of commitment was expected, but most people did not anticipate marriage. The term *seeing each other* was applied when people were sexually involved but free to date other people. This type of relationship involved less commitment than did one of boyfriend/girlfriend but was not considered to be a hook-up.

The general consensus of women and men interviewed on this campus was that the Greek system, called "the hill," set the scene for gender relations. The predominance of Greek membership and subsequent living arrangements segregated men and women. During the week, little interaction occurred between women and men after their first year in college because students in fraternities or sororities live and dine in separate quarters. In addition, many non-Greek upper-class students move off campus into apartments. Therefore, students see each other in classes or in the library, but there is no place where students can just hang out together.

Both men and women said that fraternities dominate campus social life, a situation that everyone felt limited opportunities for meaningful interactions. One senior Greek man said:

This environment is horrible and so unhealthy for good male and female relationships and interactions to occur. It is so segregated and male dominated. . . . It is our party, with our rules and our beer. We are allowing these women and other men to come to our party. Men can feel superior in their domain.

Comments from a senior woman reinforced his views: *Men are dominant; they are the kings of the campus. It is their environment that they allow us to enter; therefore, we have to abide by their rules.* A junior woman described fraternity parties as

good for meeting acquaintances but almost impossible to really get to know anyone. The environment is so superficial, probably because there are so many social cliques due to the Greek system. Also, the music is too loud and the people are too drunk to attempt to have a real conversation, anyway.

Some students claim that fraternities even control the dating relationships of their members. One senior woman said: *Guys dictate how dating occurs on this campus, whether it's cool, who it's with, how much time can be spent with the girlfriend and with the brothers.* Couples either left campus for an evening or hung out separately with their own same-gender friends at fraternity parties, finally getting together with each other at about 2 A.M. Couples rarely went together to fraternity parties. Some men felt that a girlfriend was just a replacement for a hook-up. According to one junior man: *Basically a girlfriend is someone you go to at 2 A.M. after you've hung out with the guys. She is the sexual outlet that the guys can't provide you with.*

Some fraternity brothers pressure each other to limit their time with and commitment to their girlfriends. One senior man said: *The hill [fraternities] and girlfriends don't mix.* A brother described a constant battle between girlfriends and brothers over who the guy is going out with for the night, with the brothers usually winning. Brothers teased men with girlfriends with remarks such as "whipped" or "where's the ball and chain?" A brother from a high-risk house said that few brothers at his house had girlfriends; some did, but it was uncommon. One man said that from the minute he was a pledge he knew he would probably never have a girlfriend on this campus because *it was just not the norm in my house. No one has girlfriends; the guys have too much fun with [each other].*

The pressure on men to limit their commitment to girlfriends, however, was not true of all fraternities or of all men on campus. Couples attended low-risk fraternity parties together, and men in the low-risk houses went out on dates more often. A man in one low-risk house said that about 70 percent of the members of his house were involved in relationships with women, including the pledges (who were sophomores).

Treatment of Women

Not all men held negative attitudes toward women that are typical of a rape culture, and not all social contexts promoted the negative treatment of women. When men were asked whether they treated the women on campus with respect, the most common response was "On an individual basis, yes, but when you have a group of men together, no." Men said that, when together in groups with other men, they sensed a pressure to be disrespectful toward women. A first-year man's perception of the treatment of women was that *they are treated with more respect to their faces, but behind closed doors,*

with a group of men present, respect for women is not an issue. One senior man stated: *In general, college-aged men don't treat women their age with respect because 90 percent of them think of women as merely a means to sex.* Women reinforced this perception. A first-year woman stated: *Men here are more interested in hooking up and drinking beer than they are in getting to know women as real people.* Another woman said: *Men here use and abuse women.*

Characteristic of rape culture, a double standard of sexual behavior for men versus women was prevalent on this campus. As one Greek senior man stated: *Women who sleep around are sluts and get bad reputations; men who do are champions and get a pat on the back from their brothers.* Women also supported a double standard for sexual behavior by criticizing sexually active women. A first-year woman spoke out against women who are sexually active: *I think some girls here make it difficult for the men to respect women as a whole.*

One concrete example of demeaning sexually active women on this campus is the "walk of shame." Fraternity brothers come out on the porches of their houses the morning after parties and heckle women walking by. It is assumed that these women spent the night at fraternity houses and that the men they were with did not care enough about them to drive them home. Although sororities now reside in former fraternity houses, this practice continues and sometimes the victims of hecklings are sorority women on their way to study in the library.

A junior man in a high-risk fraternity described another ritual of disrespect toward women called "chatter." When an unknown woman sleeps over at the house, the brothers yell degrading remarks out the window at her as she leaves the next morning such as "Fuck that bitch" and "Who is that slut?" He said that sometimes brothers harass the brothers whose girlfriends stay over instead of heckling those women.

Fraternity men most often mistreated women they did not know personally. Men and women alike reported incidents in which brothers observed other brothers having sex with unknown women or women they knew only casually. A sophomore woman's experience exemplifies this anonymous state: *I don't mind if 10 guys were watching or it was videotaped. That's expected on this campus. It's the fact that he didn't apologize or even offer to drive me home that really upset me.* Descriptions of sexual encounters involved the satisfaction of men by nameless women. A brother in a high-risk fraternity described a similar occurrence:

A brother of mine was hooking up upstairs with an unattractive woman who had been pursuing him all night. He told some brothers to go outside the window and watch. Well, one thing led to another and they were almost completely naked when the woman noticed the brothers outside. She was then unwilling to go any further, so the brother went outside and yelled at the other brothers and then closed the shades. I don't know if he scored or not, because the woman was pretty upset. But he did win the award for hooking up with the ugliest chick that weekend.

Attitudes Toward Rape

The sexually charged environment of college campuses raises many questions about cultures that facilitate the rape of women. How women and men define their sexual behavior is important legally as well as interpersonally. We asked students how they defined rape and had them compare it to the following legal definition: the perpetration of an act of sexual intercourse with a female against her will and consent, whether her will is overcome by force or fear resulting from the threat of force, or by drugs or intoxicants; or when, because of mental deficiency, she is incapable of exercising rational judgment. (Brownmiller 1975:368)

When presented with this legal definition, most women interviewed recognized it as well as the complexities involved in applying it. A first-year woman said: *If a girl is drunk and the guy knows it and the girl says, "Yes, I want to have sex," and they do, that is still rape because the girl can't make a conscious, rational decision under the influence of alcohol.* Some women disagreed. Another first-year woman stated: *I don't think it is fair that the guy gets blamed when both people involved are drunk.*

The typical definition men gave for rape was "when a guy jumps out of the bushes and forces himself sexually onto a girl." When asked what date rape was, the most common answer was "when one person has sex with another person who did not consent." Many men said, however, that "date rape is when a woman wakes up the next morning and regrets having sex." Some men said that date rape was too gray an area to define. *Consent is a fine line*, said a Greek senior man student. For the most part, the men we spoke with argued that rape did not occur on this campus. One Greek sophomore man said: *I think it is ridiculous that someone here would rape someone.* A first-year man stated: *I have a problem with the word rape. It sounds so criminal, and we are not criminals; we are sane people.*

Whether aware of the legal definitions of rape, most men resisted the idea that a woman who is intoxicated is unable to consent to sex. A Greek junior man said: *Men should not be responsible for women's drunkenness.* One first-year man said: *If that is the legal definition of rape, then it happens all the time on this campus.* A senior man said: *I don't care whether alcohol is involved or not; that is not rape. Rapists are people that have something seriously wrong with them.* A first-year man even claimed that when women get drunk, they invite sex. He said: *Girls get so drunk here and then come on to us. What are we supposed to do? We are only human.*

Discussion and Conclusion

These findings describe the physical and normative aspects of one college campus as they relate to attitudes about and relations between men and women. Our findings suggest that an explanation emphasizing rape culture also must focus on those

characteristics of the social setting that play a role in defining heterosexual relationships on college campuses (Kalof and Cargill 1991). The degradation of women as portrayed in rape culture was not found in all fraternities on this campus. Both group norms and individual behavior changed as students went from one place to another. Although individual men are the ones who rape, we found that some settings are more likely places for rape than are others. Our findings suggest that rape cannot be seen only as an isolated act and blamed on individual behavior and proclivities, whether it be alcohol consumption or attitudes. We also must consider characteristics of the settings that promote the behaviors that reinforce a rape culture.

Relations between women and men at parties in low-risk fraternities varied considerably from those in high-risk houses. Peer pressure and situational norms influenced women as well as men. Although many men in high- and low-risk houses shared similar views and attitudes about the Greek system, women on this campus, and date rape, their behaviors at fraternity parties were quite different.

Women who are at highest risk of rape are women whom fraternity brothers did not know. These women are faceless victims, nameless acquaintances—not friends. Men said their responsibility to such persons and the level of guilt they feel later if the hook-ups end in sexual intercourse are much lower if they hook up with women they do not know. In high-risk houses, brothers treated women as subordinates and kept them at a distance. Men in high-risk houses actively discouraged ongoing heterosexual relationships, routinely degraded women, and participated more fully in the hook-up scene; thus, the probability that women would become faceless victims was higher in these houses. The flirtatious nature of the parties indicated that women go to these parties looking for available men, but finding boyfriends or relationships was difficult at parties in high-risk houses. However, in the low-risk houses, where more men had long-term relationships, the women were not strangers and were less likely to become faceless victims.

The social scene on this campus, and on most others, offers women and men few other options to socialize. Although there may be no such thing as a completely safe fraternity party for women, parties at low-risk houses and commercial bars encouraged men and women to get to know each other better and decreased the probability that women would become faceless victims. Although both men and women found the social scene on this campus demeaning, neither demanded different settings for socializing, and attendance at fraternity parties is a common form of entertainment.

These findings suggest that a more conducive environment for conversation can promote more positive interactions between men and women. Simple changes would provide the opportunity for men and women to interact in meaningful ways such as adding places to sit and lowering the volume of music at fraternity parties or having parties in neutral locations, where men are not in control. The typical party room in fraternity houses includes a place to dance but not to sit and talk. The music often is loud, making it difficult, if not impossible, to carry on conversations; however, there were more conversations at the low-risk parties, where there also was more respect

shown toward women. Although the number of brothers who had steady girlfriends in the low-risk houses as compared to those in the high-risk houses may explain the differences, we found that commercial bars also provided a context for interaction between men and women. At the bars, students sat and talked and conversations between men and women flowed freely, resulting in deep discussions and fewer hook-ups.

Alcohol consumption was a major focus of social events here and intensified attitudes and orientations of a rape culture. Although pressure to drink was evident at all fraternity parties and at both bars, drinking dominated high-risk fraternity parties, at which nonalcoholic beverages usually were not available and people chugged beers and became visibly drunk. A rape culture is strengthened by rules that permit alcohol only at fraternity parties. Under this system, men control the parties and dominate the men as well as the women who attend. As college administrators crack down on fraternities and alcohol on campus, however, the same behaviors and norms may transfer to other places such as parties in apartments or private homes where administrators have much less control. At commercial bars, interaction and socialization with others were as important as drinking, with the exception of the nights when the bar frequented by under-class students became crowded. Although one solution is to offer nonalcoholic social activities, such events receive little support on this campus. Either these alternative events lacked the prestige of the fraternity parties or the alcohol was seen as necessary to unwind, or both.

In many ways, the fraternities on this campus determined the settings in which men and women interacted. As others before us have found, pressures for conformity to the norms and values exist at both high-risk and low-risk houses (Kalof and Cargill 1991; Martin and Hummer 1989; Sanday 1990). The desire to be accepted is not unique to this campus or the Greek system (Holland and Eisenhart 1990; Horowitz 1988; Moffat 1989). The degree of conformity required by Greeks may be greater than that required in most social groups, with considerable pressure to adopt and maintain the image of their houses. The fraternity system intensifies the "groupthink syndrome" (Janis 1972) by solidifying the identity of the in-group and creating an us vs. them atmosphere. Within the fraternity culture, brothers are highly regarded and women are viewed as outsiders. For men in high-risk fraternities, women threatened their brotherhood; therefore, brothers discouraged relationships and harassed those who treated women as equals or with respect. The pressure to be one of the guys and hang out with the guys strengthens a rape culture on college campus by demeaning women and encouraging the segregation of men and women.

Students on this campus were aware of the contexts in which they operated and the choices available to them. They recognized that, in their interactions, they created differences between men and women that are not natural, essential, or biological (West and Zimmerman 1987). Not all men and women accepted the demeaning treatment of women, but they continued to participate in behaviors that supported aspects of a rape culture. Many women participated in the hook-up scene even after they had been humiliated and hurt because they had few other means of initiating contact with

men on campus. Men and women alike played out this scene, recognizing its injustices in many cases but being unable to change the course of their behaviors.

Although this research provides some clues to gender relations on college campuses, it raises many questions. Why do men and women participate in activities that support a rape culture when they see its injustices? What would happen if alcohol were not controlled by groups of men who admit that they disrespect women when they get together? What can be done to give men and women on college campuses more opportunities to interact responsibly and get to know each other better? These questions should be studied on other campuses with a focus on the social settings in which the incidence of rape and the attitudes that support a rape culture exist. Fraternities are social contexts that may or may not foster a rape culture.

Our findings indicate that a rape culture exists in some fraternities, especially those we identified as high-risk houses. College administrators are responding to this situation by providing counseling and educational programs that increase awareness of date rape, including campaigns such as "No means no." These strategies are important in changing attitudes, values, and behaviors; however, changing individuals is not enough. The structure of campus life and the impact of that structure on gender relations on campus are highly determinative. To eliminate campus rape culture, student leaders and administrators must examine the situations in which women and men meet and restructure these settings to provide opportunities for respectful interaction. Change may not require abolishing fraternities; rather, it may require promoting settings that facilitate positive gender relations.

References

-
- Barthel, D. 1988. *Putting on Appearances: Gender and Advertising*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Boeringer, S. B., C. L. Shehan, and R. L. Akers. 1991. "Social Contexts and Social Learning in Sexual Coercion and Aggression: Assessing the Contribution of Fraternity Membership." *Family Relations* 40:58–64.
- Brownmiller, S. 1975. *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Buchwald, E., P. R. Fletcher, and M. Roth, eds. 1993. *Transforming a Rape Culture*. Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions.
- Burke, P., J. E. Stets, and M. A. Pirog-Good. 1988. "Gender Identity, Self-Esteem, Physical Abuse, and Sexual Abuse in Dating Relationships." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 51(3):272–85.
- Gwartney-Gibbs, P. and J. Stockard. 1989. "Courtship Aggression and Mixed-Sex Peer Groups." Pp. 185–204 in *Violence in Dating Relationships: Emerging Social Issues*, edited by M. A. Pirog-Good and J. E. Stets. New York: Praeger.
- Herman, D. 1984. "The Rape Culture." Pp. 45–53 in *Women: A Feminist Perspective*, edited by J. Freeman. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.
- Holland, D. C. and M. A. Eisenhart. 1990. *Educated in Romance: Women, Achievement, and College Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Horowitz, H. I. 1988. *Campus Life: Undergraduate Cultures from the End of the 18th Century to the Present*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Janis, I. L. 1972. *Victims of Groupthink*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Jenkins, M. J. and F. H. Dambrot. 1987. "The Attribution of Date Rape: Observer's Attitudes and Sexual Experiences and the Dating Situation." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 17:875-95.
- Kalof, I. and T. Cargill. 1991. "Fraternity and Sorority Membership and Gender Dominance Attitudes." *Sex Roles* 25:417-23.
- Kimmel, M. S. 1993. "Clarence, William, Iron Mike, Tailhook, Senator Packwood, Spur Posse, Magic . . . and Us." Pp. 119-38 in *Transforming a Rape Culture*, edited by E. Buchwald, P. R. Fletcher, and M. Roth. Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions.
- Koss, M. P., T. E. Dinero, C. A. Seibel, and S. L. Cox. 1988. "Stranger and Acquaintance Rape: Are There Differences in the Victim's Experience?" *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 12:1-24.
- Koss, M. P., C. A. Gidycz, and N. Wisniewski. 1985. "The Scope of Rape: Incidence and Prevalence of Sexual Aggression and Victimization in a National Sample of Higher Education Students." *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 55:162-70.
- LaPlante, M. N., N. McCormick, and G. G. Brannigan. 1980. "Living the Sexual Script: College Students' Views of Influence in Sexual Encounters." *Journal of Sex Research* 16:338-55.
- Lisak, D. and S. Roth. 1988. "Motivational Factors in Nonincarcerated Sexually Aggressive Men." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 55:795-802.
- Malamuth, N. 1986. "Predictors of Naturalistic Sexual Aggression." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 50:953-62.
- Martin, P. Y. and R. Hummer. 1989. "Fraternities and Rape on Campus." *Gender & Society* 3:457-73.
- Miller, B. and J. C. Marshall. 1987. "Coercive Sex on the University Campus." *Journal of College Student Personnel* 28:38-47.
- Moffat, M. 1989. *Coming of Age in New Jersey: College Life in American Culture*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Muehlenhard, C. L. and M. A. Linton. 1987. "Date Rape and Sexual Aggression in Dating Situations: Incidence and Risk Factors." *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 34:186-96.
- O'Sullivan, C. 1993. "Fraternities and the Rape Culture." In *Transforming a Rape Culture*, edited by E. Buchwald, P. R. Fletcher, and M. Roth. Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions.
- Peterson, S. A. and B. Franzese. 1987. "Correlates of College Men's Sexual Abuse of Women." *Journal of College Student Personnel* 28:223-28.
- Sanday, P. R. 1990. *Fraternity Gang Rape: Sex, Brotherhood, and Privilege on Campus*. New York: New York University Press.
- West, C. and D. Zimmerman. 1987. "Doing Gender." *Gender & Society* 1:125-51.

Descent Into Madness

The New Mexico State Prison Riot

Mark Colvin

*One type of social deviance, according to sociologists, is crime. If deviance is the violation of a social norm, then a crime is the violation of social norms that have been made into laws. One type of social sanction our society imposes on people found guilty of committing crimes is sentencing them to prison. The United States has a high proportion of its population in prison compared to other countries, and many prisons are overcrowded and plagued with problems of violence and sexual assault. Sociologists have long studied the social structure and subcultures of prisons. This selection by Mark Colvin, professor and chair of Justice Studies at Kent State University, is the introduction to the 1997 book *Descent Into Madness: An Inmate's Experience of the New Mexico State Prison Riot* by Mike Rolland. Colvin was hired by the New Mexico attorney general's office to help with the investigation into the events and causes of the 1980 riot at the Penitentiary of New Mexico. In the excerpt that follows, Colvin provides important insights into the history and social structure of the prison and how the breakdown in that social structure enabled violence and disorganization to occur.*

The riot at the Penitentiary of New Mexico (PNM) on February 2 and 3, 1980, is without parallel for its violence, destruction, and disorganization. During the 36 hours of the riot, 33 inmates were killed by other inmates; many of the victims were tortured and mutilated. (A 34th inmate died several months later from injuries he received during the riot.) As many as 200 inmates were severely injured from beatings, stabbings, and rapes. Many more suffered less serious injuries. In addition, scores of

Mark Colvin, Introduction to Mike Rolland, *Descent Into Madness: An Inmate's Experience of the New Mexico State Prison Riot*. Copyright © 1997 by Mark Colvin. Reprinted with the permission of the author.

inmates were treated for overdoses of drugs taken from the prison's pharmacy during the riot. That more inmates did not die can be attributed to the dedicated work of medical personnel and emergency crews who treated the injured and transported them to local hospitals. In fact, many inmates were later surprised to learn of riot survivors whom they thought had certainly died during the event.

Seven of the 12 correctional officers who were taken hostage were beaten, stabbed, or sodomized. None of the hostages were killed. Some of the guard hostages were protected by small groups of inmates during the riot. A few hostages were even assisted in leaving the prison during the riot by sympathetic inmates.

Correctional officers and many more inmates would have certainly died in the riot had it not been for heroic efforts of some prisoners who risked their lives to save others from harm. Indeed, this prison riot brought out not only the evil potential of human beings (upon which we tend to focus after such an event) but also the potential for virtue. We are quick to condemn the evil acts and use these as an excuse to label all prisoners as "animals." But to do so is to ignore the acts of kindness and courage displayed by many inmates; to ignore the fact that the overwhelming majority of inmates only wanted to escape the mayhem, the violence, and the fear; and to ignore the essential humanity of the great majority of the people we lock up in prisons. Focusing on the evil acts of those few prisoners who engaged in them also distracts us from the evil of a taxpayer-supported prison system that produces events like the New Mexico State Prison riot.

The riot caused \$20 million in physical damage to the institution. Fires were started throughout the prison, and water flooded the prison water mains. More than \$200 million in riot-related expenses were incurred by the state for medical, police, fire, and national guard response, lawsuits for injuries and wrongful death, transportation of inmates to federal and other state prison systems, prosecutions of crimes committed during the riot, and official investigations of the events and causes of the riot.

The official investigation of the riot was headed by then-Attorney General of New Mexico Jeff Bingaman. I was hired by the Attorney General as a principal researcher for the riot investigation. In that role, I, along with the riot investigation team, conducted more than 300 in-depth interviews with former and then-current prisoners, correctional officers, and corrections officials in an attempt to reconstruct the events of the riot and understand its long-term causes and effects. The riot investigation presented its findings and conclusions in a two-part report (Office of the Attorney General 1980a, 1980b). More recently, I published a book that presents a detailed social and organizational history of the Penitentiary of New Mexico State Prison leading up to this riot (Colvin 1992)....

In this introduction, I hope to provide the reader with a context for understanding... the New Mexico State Prison riot. It is important to understand the history of this prison, since it was not always a violent and disorderly institution. It was only in the three to four years preceding the riot that the prison had moved toward becoming the type of violent and disorganized organization that could produce an event as brutal as the 1980 riot....

Background of the Riot

The 1980 New Mexico State Prison riot stands in stark contrast to the 1971 Attica prison riot. At Attica, after a few hours of chaos and destruction in which three inmates were killed by other inmates, inmate leaders were able to take command of rioting inmates and turn the event into an organized protest about prison conditions; after that point, no other deaths occurred until state authorities violently retook the prison, killing 29 inmates and 10 guard hostages in the process (Wicker 1975). At New Mexico, inmate leaders, to the extent that there were any, were unable to organize inmates or stop the inmate-on-inmate violence. All inmates were killed by other inmates. No one was killed when state authorities retook the prison. The disorganization of the riot and the inmate-on-inmate killings, and the brutality of many of these killings, are what distinguish the New Mexico State Prison riot.

As stated, the Penitentiary of New Mexico (PNM) was not always a violent, disorganized prison. In fact, on July 14, 1976, inmates at this prison staged a well-organized, peaceful protest of prison conditions. In the previous six months, a new prison administration had begun dismantling prison programs and reducing inmate privileges. The curtailment of programs and special privileges soon led to an open confrontation between the new prison administration and inmates. Prisoners organized a massive sit-down strike in which nearly 800 of the prison's 912 inmates refused to leave their living quarters for work or meals. The level of participation in this 1976 strike demonstrated a high degree of solidarity and cooperation among inmates. There was no violence among inmates during this event. (In fact, no inmate had been killed by another inmate at this prison since before 1970.) The prison administration's response to this June 1976 inmate strike inaugurated a new era in staff and inmate relations and in relations among inmates. It was a new era characterized by coercion and violence.

The strike was broken by the staff with violence. Housing units were teargassed and many inmates were forced to run a gauntlet of prison staff members who were armed with ax handles (Colvin 1992; Office of the Attorney General 1980b). Leaders of the strike were identified and segregated or transferred out of state. The stable inmate leadership, which had been the impetus for inmate social cohesion, was thus systematically eliminated. The prison staff, after this point, began to rely increasingly on coercion to maintain control of the institution. The "hole," which had been closed since 1968, was reopened and used frequently; the number of inmates in disciplinary segregation grew substantially (from less than 5 percent of the inmate population before June 1976 to as much as 25 percent of the inmate population after June 1976).

As this crackdown on organized inmate activity continued at the prison, the corrections department was undergoing rapid and confusing organizational changes. Turnover in the state's top corrections post occurred repeatedly, with five different heads of the corrections department between 1975 and 1980. A similar turnover in the warden's position took place, with five penitentiary wardens between 1975 and 1980. This administrative confusion resulted in inconsistent policy directives from the top of the organization and in the emergence of a middle-level clique of administrators who were virtually unaccountable to anyone in authority. This clique of administrators, by the middle of 1978, had been left to run the prison in any fashion they saw fit.

Under this middle-level clique, there were growing inconsistencies in both security procedures and discipline of inmates. Some shift supervisors followed very closely the proper security procedures; others did not follow them at all. Lax security had long been a problem at PNM, but the tendency toward inconsistency in security operations worsened after 1978 when various shift supervisors ran the prison at their own discretion. Similar problems of inconsistency in discipline were also evident. Some shift captains would enforce rules, at times inappropriately placing inmates in the "hole" for minor violations, while other shift captains would fail to punish some major violations of rules. Consistency in operation and a set routine provides stability for an institution. At PNM, it was difficult for inmates to calculate which behaviors would be punished or when they would be punished. Inmates were thus kept off balance.

This inconsistency by the prison staff was often interpreted by inmates as blatant harassment. In some cases, correctional officers, including some lieutenants and captains, were caught up in a game of mutual harassment with inmates. The game proceeded through interactions in which an officer would verbally humiliate an inmate and the inmate would respond in kind. Often this led to confrontations in which the inmate was led off to disciplinary segregation. The minority of prison officers who engaged in these activities poisoned relations between the staff and inmates and created enormous hostility.

As the middle-level administrators gained dominance after 1978, a new coercive "snitch system" emerged. This system had its roots in the aftermath of the June 1976 inmate strike when staff members attempted to identify the strike leaders. Inmates were threatened with disciplinary lockup if they did not identify strike participants and leaders. By 1978, these tactics had become a key aspect of the institution's inmate control system. Since inmates were not forthcoming with voluntary information, many members of the correctional staff began soliciting information through threats and promises. Inmates were promised early parole consideration, protection, and transfer to minimum-security institutions. They were also threatened with being locked up in disciplinary segregation or, in other cases, were refused protective custody if they did not inform. Another coercive tactic was to intimidate an inmate by threatening to "hang a snitch jacket" on him. This tactic, which involved the threat of labeling an inmate a "snitch" (or informant) was used to solicit information, gain control over an inmate, and, in some instances, retaliate against an inmate.

This came to be known as the "snitch game." The "snitch game" had the effect of breaking apart any sense of inmate solidarity. . . .

Some inmates labeled as "snitches" may not have been informants at all. Correctional officers discussed with Attorney General investigators the labeling of inmates as "snitches" as a coercive tactic (quoted in Colvin 1992:154).

Correctional Officer: *If I was a guard and he was an inmate and I didn't like him, I'd punch him around and say, "Hey, man, let's put a snitch jacket on this guy." And another inmate come up behind me and I'd say, "Hey man, this dude dropped a dime on this guy over here." They'll put a "jacket" on you and life expectancy with a "jacket" on you isn't too long. . . .*

Interviewer: *What was the purpose of doing this?*

Correctional Officer: *To get even. . . . If I was to walk up to an inmate and just started kicking the hell out of him, I would have a lawsuit on me, but what goes on behind closed doors, only the inmates know.*

Whether an inmate had actually been an informant or not, the label of "snitch" could have deadly consequences, a fact that was used to intimidate inmates and create friction among prisoners. After inmate solidarity displayed during the June 1976 strike moved the prison administration to smash inmate organization and leadership, the inmate society became more fragmented and violent. From 1969 through July 1976 there were no killings at PNM, no prison officers were attacked, and inmate fights and sexual assaults were rare. From August 1976 to January 1980, six inmates were killed by other inmates, several attacks on prison officers occurred, and fighting among inmates became routine. And sexual assaults, by the late 1970s, had become so routine that there was "at least one reported case a day [and] 10 to 15 more nonreported cases daily" (*Albuquerque Journal* 9/16/79:B1).

The administration's tactics for breaking up inmate solidarity led to a series of changes within the inmate society that spawned violence and disorder. As inmate groups broke down into small, self-protective cliques, forces within the inmate society that formerly were capable of holding back disorder and violence among inmates diminished. The lack of inmate leaders in the late 1970s meant that new inmates entering PNM were no longer under the restraints of an established order among inmates. Inmates could no longer socialize new arrivals to the increasingly unstable environment. Some of the new inmates directly challenged the power and control exercised by older inmates who had not already been removed by the administration.

While many observers relate the growing inmate violence to newly arriving inmates, it does not appear that the violent behavior was being imported from outside. Rather, new inmates, as never before, were entering a disorganized social situation with undefined roles and lack of leadership. As they confronted, and were confronted by, this increasingly chaotic situation, many of the new inmates resorted to violence. . . .

Rather than importing the violence, inmates were becoming more violent in reaction to a prison social structure that elicited such a response. With a paucity of inmate leaders to guide and ease the transition to prison life for younger inmates, these new inmates were left to their own devices to deal with the fear of assault. By 1978, the fear of being assaulted, especially of being sexually attacked, had become a prevalent feature of inmate life, especially for younger inmates. These new inmates were faced with a deadly dilemma that increasingly set the tone of inmate relations in the late 1970s. The fear created by violent confrontations, or by the mere anticipation of them, produced inmates who either submitted to the exploitation of other inmates (became "punks"), sought protection from officials (became "snitches"), or fought (to prove themselves as "good people" to other inmates by developing a reputation as violent). Most inmates agreed that the only rational choice when faced with the irrational confrontation of a

sexual assault was to fight viciously and develop a reputation as someone who others "did not mess with." The other choices, submission or official protection, would lead to a prison experience of perpetual victimization.

In the late 1970s, confrontational situations among inmates sharply increased, forcing more inmates into the deadly dilemma of choosing a course of action against assaults. Some submitted and were marked as punks or homosexuals. This submission did not label them necessarily as sexual deviants but, more importantly, as "morally weak" individuals who would not stand up for themselves. Inmates who chose to seek protective custody, who in the inmates' vocabulary "pc'd up," were also seen as "weak" inmates who could not withstand the pressures of prison life. Added to being marked as weak was the stigma of being a snitch, since it was widely believed among inmates (though by no means always true) that protective custody was a payoff for informing. For "regular" inmates who were "on line" standing up for themselves in the daily battles with other inmates and the prison staff, an inmate who gives in to pressure from other inmates by not standing up for himself, and then gives in to pressure from the administration by informing, was truly a person of "weak moral character." A snitch label (whether deserved or not) thus implies the weakest of inmates who were so low as to sell out their fellow inmates because of fear and intimidation. These inmates were allowing both other inmates *and* the administration to humiliate them. Succumbing to other people's attempts at humiliation is the worst possible fate for a convict (Abbott 1981). Fear of humiliation drove much of the violence in the inmate society. Violent confrontations were events in which inmates' characters ("weak" or "strong") were being tested. They were also situations in which reputations for violence were being built.

Developing a reputation for violence became a full-time activity as a growing number of inmates were confronted by the prison's deadly dilemma. As inmates vied for violent reputations, the number of confrontational incidents between inmates increased. This competition for violent reputations accelerated the cycle of confrontations and produced a growing number of both violence-prone inmates and those who were perceived as weak. Under these circumstances, the struggle involved in relegating inmates to the roles of victims or victimizers became a monotonous, horrifying, daily occurrence.

The violence led to further fragmentation of the inmate society. Inmates increasingly formed into small cliques for self-protection. These cliques did not constitute the types of gang structures witnessed in other prisons (Irwin 1980; Jacobs 1977). For the most part, these cliques were very loosely organized groupings that provided inmates small, often temporary, "ecological niches" (Hagel-Seymour 1988) relatively free from the violence of the prison. Some inmate groups began to emerge as influential in 1978. The ACLU lawsuit against PNM (*Duran v. Apodaca*) gave a few Chicano inmates a limited leadership role within some inmate factions. . . .

Other inmate cliques gained power by 1978 because of their violent reputations. In 1976 and 1977, Anglo convicts were very disorganized and were regularly attacked by Chicano inmates. Then, some strong Anglo cliques began to surface in 1977. One of the more notorious cliques was associated with three Anglo inmates who, on April 16, 1978,

beat another Anglo inmate to death with a baseball bat for allegedly being a snitch. This clique emerged as an important power that struggled with other inmate cliques for dominance.

The inmates caught up in the competition for dominance and violent reputations composed PNM's hardcore cliques. While the total number of inmates involved in these hardcore cliques was about 150 of the more than 1,000 inmates in the prison, their behavior and disruptiveness set the tone for inmate social relations. In stark contrast to the early 1970s, when inmate leaders helped keep the lid on violence among inmates, inmate leadership, to the extent that it existed at all, fell by 1979 to these small, hardcore cliques of inmates who actively engaged in violence and disruption. These hardcore cliques, produced inadvertently by the administration's coercive tactics used to break up inmate solidarity, were leading the inmate society toward an implosion of violence. Inmate solidarity had indeed been eliminated by 1980. But the administration's control of the prison was now more precarious than ever. Their coercive tactics, including use of the "snitch game," produced a fragmented inmate society that promoted inmate-on-inmate violence. The riot that exploded at 1:40 A.M. on February 2, 1980, would reflect this fragmented inmate society and the coercive tactics of control that produced an inmate society.

Overview of the 1980 Riot at the Penitentiary of New Mexico

There were a number of forewarnings that a major disturbance was imminent, yet no decisive actions were taken. Forewarnings included a mix of rumors and intelligence, none of which could be confirmed. Officials had no way to distinguish reliable from unreliable information, a legacy of the coercive snitch system which often resulted in inmates telling officials anything (whether true or not) to escape punishment or receive protection. As it turned out, among the many rumors was one specific bit of information, concerning a possible hostage-taking, that was an accurate forewarning.

Shortly after midnight, on February 2, 1980, the evening and morning shifts completed a count of inmates in the institution, which held 1,157 inmates that night, including 34 in a modular unit outside the main penitentiary building. All inmates were accounted for at the time of the count. About 1 A.M., two groups composed of four correctional officers each began a routine check of all cellhouses and dormitories in the south wing of the prison. At 1:40 A.M., one group, which included the shift captain, entered Dorm E-2, the upstairs dormitory in the E-wing.

Inmates in Dorm E-2 had been drinking "home brew" made of yeast and raisins smuggled in from the prison's kitchen. The inmates, sometime between 12:30 A.M. and 1:15 A.M., had hastily agreed upon a plan to jump the guards during their routine check of the dorm. It was not clear whether the plan included an attempt to exit the dormitory. Hostages would be taken in the dormitory; and if the entry door could be successfully jumped, additional hostages would be taken in the south wing of the

prison. Beyond the plan to take some guards hostage, the inmates had no idea of what they would do next.

At 1:40 A.M., the dormitory door and the three officers who had just entered Dorm E-2 were jumped simultaneously. Inmates quickly overpowered the officer at the door and the other officers inside the dormitory. The guard at the door had the keys to other dormitories. Four hostages were then under the control of these inmates, who now had access to the main corridor.

At 1:45 A.M., inmates from Dorm E-2 jumped the officer outside Dorm F-2, seized the keys he held to other dormitories, and captured two other guards who were just entering Dorm F-2. A third guard, who had just entered the dorm, ran into the dayroom at the opposite end of the dorm; he was protected by some sympathetic Dorm F-2 inmates, who later helped him escape the prison. Total hostages were now eight, including the protected guard in the Dorm F-2 dayroom.

By 1:50 A.M., hundreds of inmates were milling around the main corridor in the south wing of the prison. At 1:57 A.M., two guards leaving the officers' mess hall, located in the central area of the institution, saw inmates beating and dragging a naked man (later identified as a hostage guard) up the south corridor toward the grill that separated the south wing from the central area of the prison. They also noticed that this corridor grill, contrary to prison policy, was open. Inmates were about to come through the opened grill. The two guards then raced north up the main corridor, passing the control center and entering the north wing of the prison, closing the corridor grill to the north wing behind them. Soon, scores of inmates were in front of the control center, which was separated from the rioters by what was supposed to be "shatterproof" glass. Inmates used a metal-canister fire extinguisher, pulled from the wall in the main corridor, to break the control center glass. The control center officers ran toward the front entrance of the prison and to the safety of the Tower 1 gatehouse. The inmates entered the control center through the smashed window and trashed its interior, sending keys flying in all directions from the key pegboards.

By 2:02 A.M., inmates had gained access to the north wing and to the administration wing, since the grills to these areas were opened electronically from the control center. It took the inmates time to find keys to specific cellblocks since keys were scattered by those inmates who first breached the control center, which indicates the unplanned nature of the takeover. But by 3 A.M., inmates had found the key to the disciplinary unit, Cellblock 3. Here they captured three more correctional officers, bringing the total to 11 hostages. (By this point, two guards had hidden themselves in the crawl space in the basement of Cellblock 5, where they remained undetected by rioters throughout the riot. And the hospital technician locked himself and seven inmate-patients into the upstairs floor of the Hospital Unit, where they also remained undetected until the riot was over.)

The first inmate killings during the riot occurred in Cellblock 3 at about 3:15 A.M. An inmate, shouting in Spanish, *No era yo. No lo hice.* (*It wasn't me. I didn't do it.*) was beaten, tortured, and mutilated. This inmate was assumed to have informed on other inmates who were also locked in the disciplinary unit. Another inmate, who was mentally disturbed and apparently had kept other Cellblock 3 inmates awake at night with

his screams, was shot in the head at close range with a canister fired from a teargas launcher taken from the control center.

At about the same time, another group of inmates had found keys to the prison pharmacy, located on the first floor of the Hospital Unit. The pharmacy contained narcotics, barbiturates, and sedatives, which were ingested in massive doses by inmates throughout the riot.

Other inmates in the early morning hours of the first day of the riot found keys to the basement area of the prison, below the kitchen. Here they retrieved an acetylene blowtorch that was used at about 3:15 A.M. to open the far south corridor grill, leading to the Educational Unit and Dorm D-1, which contained the twelfth (and last) guard to be taken hostage. This blowtorch was later taken to the other end of the prison to open the far north corridor grill and Cellblock 5. Cellblock 5 was vacant due to renovation. But construction crews had left in the Cellhouse 2 additional acetylene torches. Later, these blowtorches would be used to open Cellblock 4, the Protective Custody unit.

The period between 3 A.M. and 7 A.M. was characterized by chaos, infighting, and violence. There was no leadership throughout the riot. Inmates' actions were completely uncoordinated. Some inmates were setting fires in the administrative offices, others in the Psychological Unit. At certain points, inmates manning walkie-talkies radioed for firefighting crews to come into the prison; when firefighters approached the prison they were driven back by other inmates who threw debris at them. Other inmates were fighting, forming into groups for self-protection, or hiding in fear.

While all these uncoordinated activities and fighting were going on during the early hours of the riot, a few inmates who had been released from Cellblock 3 and Cellhouse 6 discussed organizing the riot into a protest against the administration. These inmates included those involved in the ACLU lawsuit (*Duran v. Apodaca*). They managed in the early hours of the riot to get control of the three hostages captured in Cellblock 3. However, they were able to gain control of only one of the other nine hostages. The other hostages were being held by various groups in the south wing of the institution. A few were held by sympathetic inmates who protected them. The shift captain was moved frequently and may have been under the control of different groups throughout the riot, some of whom beat him mercilessly, others of whom tended to his wounds and protected him. Unlike the three hostages who were captured in Cellblock 3, who were treated relatively well for the remainder of the riot, many of the hostages held in the south wing of the prison were beaten, stabbed, and sodomized.

The Cellblock 3 and Cellhouse 6 inmates who were attempting to organize the riot into a protest had little influence on the behavior of the rioting inmates. One inmate, who identified himself as a leader in this attempt to turn the riot into a protest, said:

There were a few of us in here that were trying to freeze that [inmate-to-inmate violence] because it was wrong, it was dead wrong. Three hours after the riot started there was no stopping it. But there were a few of us that were saying, "Hey, if you want to burn it down, burn it down or tear it up or whatever you want, but quit

killing people and don't turn this thing against ourselves. If you got to fight somebody now, fight the Man, fight the administration." (Quoted in Colvin 1992:183-84)

But his and the other inmates' efforts to turn the riot into a protest were futile.

As fights began to break out in the south wing of the prison, injuries to inmates and killings began to increase. Many of the deaths that occurred in the south wing were the result of fights between small groups of inmates and between individuals. Fights over hostages held in the south wing occurred. Many inmates, perceived as weak or defenseless, were attacked and raped; those offering resistance were beaten severely, a few were killed. Some assaults in the south wing appeared to be random. Inmates suffered injuries when they were hacked with meat cleavers, stabbed, or hit with pipes for no reasons apparent to the victims. A few of the killings in the south wing also appear to have been random. Of the 33 killings during the riot, 17 occurred in the south wing, many in the early morning hours of the first day. Of the approximately 400 injuries and rapes, the vast majority also occurred in the south wing.

More inmates would have been killed had Dorm E-1 been entered by the rioters. This semi-protection unit's inmates successfully fought off attempts by rioters to enter this dorm. A sympathetic inmate, who had some friends in the unit, tossed a three-foot-long wrench through a hole in the wire mesh above the dorm entrance. This inmate was immediately jumped by other inmates in the main corridor who had observed this action; he was beaten to death. But because he had tossed them this heavy wrench the Dorm E-1 inmates were able to knock bars out of a window at the rear of the dormitory and make it to the perimeter fence and surrender to authorities for safety. Up to 80 inmates housed in the semi-protection unit were saved by this inmate's action.

The most horrific killings of the riot occurred in the north wing of the penitentiary, specifically in Cellblock 4, the Protective Custody unit. By 7 A.M., small groups of inmates entered Cellblock 4 after burning through its entrance grills with blowtorches. As these inmates entered the cellblock, they began shouting the names of intended victims. As rioting inmates operated the control panels that gang locked and unlocked cell doors, many Cellblock 4 inmates were able to leave their cells, blend in with the rioters, and escape the carnage. Other Cellblock 4 inmates were not so fortunate. On tiers where inmates had jammed the locks to their cell grills, the gang locking and unlocking mechanisms would not operate. These inmates were trapped in their cells. Using blowtorches, rioting inmates cut through the bars of entrance grills to the individual cells containing inmates. As the intended victims suffered through the agonizing wait while their cells were entered, they were taunted and told in vivid detail exactly how they would be tortured and killed.

These protective custody inmates were apparently killed by four or five small groups, containing three to five inmates each. The groups appeared to have acted independently in choosing victims. Inmates were tortured, stabbed, mutilated, burned, bludgeoned, hanged, and thrown off upper-tier catwalks into the basement. One Cellblock 4 inmate, a 36-year-old African American, was killed and decapitated. Whether this occurred in

the cellblock or elsewhere in the prison could not be established by investigators. His head was reportedly placed on a pole, paraded through the main corridor, and shown to the guards captured in Cellblock 3. This inmate's body was later deposited outside the prison's front entrance with the head stuffed between the legs. Another inmate, while reportedly still alive, had a steel rod hammered completely through his head. One inmate victim was drenched with glue and set on fire. Other atrocities were also reported to investigators. . . .

Most of the Cellblock 4 killings were apparently over by 10 A.M. on the first morning of the riot. More inmates would have undoubtedly died had they not been able to escape Cellblock 4. Besides those inmates who left their cells and escaped the protective custody unit when it was opened, other inmates living in this unit were rescued by sympathetic inmates. Some individual inmates entered Cellblock 4, found specific inmate friends, and sneaked them out of the unit. One contingent of about 20 African American inmates from Cellhouse 6 converged on Cellblock 4 about 7:30 A.M. to rescue one of their leaders, a Black Muslim minister, who had been locked in the protection unit. Upon his release, the Muslim minister told his followers to get as many protective custody inmates out of Cellblock 4 as possible. This group saved many of the intended victims (Anglo, Hispanic, and African American) from certain death. They brought these inmates to Cellhouse 6 where they combined forces for self-protection. At about noon, on the first day of the riot, they were able to fight their way to Dorm E-1 and leave the prison through the rear window that had been broken open earlier.

By noon on the first day, many inmates had managed to find routes from which to exit the prison and surrender to authorities who controlled the perimeter fence. By 5 P.M., more than 350 inmates had left the prison. They would continue to stream out of the prison for the rest of the riot. By 1 P.M. on the second (and final) day of the riot, only 100 of the prison's 1,157 inmates remained inside.

The final morning of the riot saw the setting of more fires, an increasingly larger stream of inmates leaving the prison to surrender to authorities, inmates being rushed to hospitals for injuries and pharmacy-drug overdoses, and bodies of inmates being deposited in the yard in front of the prison. Intermittent negotiations between state authorities and some prisoners continued and seemed to reach a climax by the final morning of the riot.

Throughout the riot, sporadic attempts at negotiating the release of hostages were made by state authorities. Negotiations were complicated by the fact that more than one group controlled hostages, and some of these groups had no interest in negotiating release. Three hostages were released at different times either in anticipation of or in response to talking to the news media. At one point, an NBC cameraman entered the prison's entrance lobby and recorded inmates' grievances. The lobby was filled with smoke as inmates presented their grievances about poor food, nepotism, harassment, overcrowding, idleness, inadequate recreation facilities, and arbitrary discipline practices by the administration. At another point, two inmates met with two news reporters just outside the entrance of the prison building. Beyond the release of these three

hostages, however, negotiations with inmates had very little to do with the release of hostages or ending the riot.

Two hostages managed, with the help of sympathetic inmates, to leave the prison disguised as inmates. Other hostages were released by inmates because these inmates feared these hostages might die from injuries, which they thought would provoke an immediate retaking of the prison. One other hostage was released after an apparent agreement emerged from negotiations.

At about 8:30 A.M. on February 3, the second (and last) day of the riot, three Hispanic inmates (Lonnie Duran, Vincent Candelaria, and Kendrick Duran), who were among the few inmates attempting, unsuccessfully, to organize the riot into a protest over prison conditions, ironed out an agreement for ending the riot with prison authorities during a meeting in the gatehouse beneath Tower 1. The agreement had five points: (1) no retaliation against rioting inmates; (2) segregation policies be reviewed; (3) inmates be permitted to meet with the press; (4) no double-bunking of inmates in Cellblock 3; and (5) inmates be given water hoses to douse fires inside the prison. The Durans and Candelaria returned to the prison to seek approval from other inmates. They re-emerged from the prison shortly before noon for continued negotiations. By noon, only two hostages remained in the prison.

The final hour of negotiations leading up to the end of the riot was witnessed by reporter Peter Katel who later, with co-author Michael Serrill, gave the following account:

The two Durans and Candelaria emerged from the prison and announced that they had approval from other inmates to sign the agreement negotiated [earlier that morning]. . . . Then negotiations became more complicated. Other inmates joined the Durans and Candelaria at the negotiating table. They haggled over exactly how the agreement was to be implemented by prison officials. . . . Officials were particularly worried about the presence of three new inmates, William Jack Stephens, Michael Colby and Michael Price, at the negotiations. Colby and Stephens escaped on Dec. 9 and were recaptured. . . . In 1978, they, together with Price, beat another inmate to death with baseball bats. . . . Their commitment to a peaceful resolution of the riot was considered dubious. Later, they were identified as prime suspects in some of the [riot] killings. . . . At about 12:30 P.M., Colby, Stephens and other inmates rejoined the talks and started making new demands. . . . [Deputy Corrections Director Felix] Rodriguez says that at this point he began to worry that the Durans and Candelaria were losing control. He also began to wonder whether the majority of inmates inside were really aware of and had agreed to the five rather mild demands. (Serrill and Katel 1980:21)

Rodriguez, fearing that Colby and Stephens were gaining control of the situation, made a deal with them. He promised to transport them immediately to another prison out of state and told them to go back inside the prison to get their belongings. As soon as Colby and Stephens left, Rodriguez ordered Vincent Candelaria and Lonnie and

Kendrick Duran (the inmates with whom he had been negotiating) to get the remaining two hostages, who were now seated blindfolded on the grass outside the main entrance. A few minutes later, at about 1:30 P.M., these last hostages were brought to Rodriguez. Immediately, police, National Guardsmen, and prison employees rushed the prison to retake it from the approximately 100 inmates still within. Authorities encountered no resistance from inmates during the retaking of the prison. No shots were fired. The riot was over.

Summary

The 1980 riot was a dramatic and explosive episode in a continuing pattern of disorder that had its roots several years earlier. Two things stand out as characteristics of the 1980 riot at PNM: the almost total lack of organization by inmates and the inmate-to-inmate violence that punctuated the event. The extreme violence was caused by a small number of inmates who belonged to some particularly violent inmate cliques. The emergence of these violent inmate cliques was largely an organizational phenomenon. They had their origin in the 1976 shift in tactics of inmate control, when measures, including the coercive snitch system, were used to undermine inmate solidarity. As inmate solidarity disintegrated, young prisoners began entering a social situation that elicited violence from a growing number of inmates. These social dynamics came together in the early morning hours of February 2, 1980, to produce the most horrific prison riot in history.

References

- Abbott, Jack Henry. 1981. *In the Belly of the Beast*. New York: Vintage.
- Albuquerque Journal. 1979. "Prison Sexual Brutality Changes Inmate." September 16, sec. B, p. 1.
- Colvin, Mark. 1992. *The Penitentiary in Crisis: From Accommodation to Riot in New Mexico*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Hagel-Seymour, John. 1988. "Environmental Sanctuaries for Susceptible Prisoners." Pp. 267-84 in *The Pains of Imprisonment*, edited by Robert Johnson and Hans Toch. Prospect Hills, IL: Wave-land Press.
- Irwin, John. 1980. *Prisons in Turmoil*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Jacobs, James B. 1977. *Stateville: The Penitentiary in Mass Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Office of the Attorney General. 1980a. *Report of the Attorney General on the February 2 and 3, 1980 Riot at the Penitentiary of New Mexico, Part I*. Santa Fe, NM: State of New Mexico.
- . 1980b. *Report of the Attorney General on the February 2 and 3 Riot at the Penitentiary of New Mexico, Part II*. Santa Fe, NM: State of New Mexico.
- Serrill, Michael S. and Peter Katel. 1980. "New Mexico: The Anatomy of a Riot." *Corrections Magazine* 6 (April):6-24.
- Wicker, Tom. 1975. *A Time to Die*. New York: Ballantine.