

“CARPE DIEM (OR THE HOUR OR MINUTE) AND WRETCHED EXCESS”: SOME CONCEPTUAL NOTES ON TEMPORAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURE, DEVIANCE COMPRESSION, AND BINGEING BEHAVIOR

Clifton D. Bryant, Virginia Tech University, and
Craig J. Forsyth, University of Louisiana, Lafayette

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the bingeing process and posits three conceptual paradigms that articulate various elements, dynamics, distinctions and nuance attendant to the bingeing process: the potentiality of temporal opportunity structure, the intention of deviance compression, and the operationalization of this intention through three types of bingeing behavior. The three types of bingeing behaviors offered are: the relief, addictive, and occasional binge.

In recent years, there has been much media coverage addressing binge drinking on college campuses. Such behavior is problematic, but binge behavior is not restricted to individuals at college campuses, nor even to excessive drinking. Rather bingeing behavior occurs across a wide range of behaviors, conventional and deviant. Conventional bingeing behavior is generally benign, such as a person with “shopaholic” tendencies going on an expensive shopping spree, or a student pulling an “all nighter”, cramming for an exam. Deviant bingeing behavior is far more problematic with serious dysfunctional import for both the individual offender and society.

Binge deviance is behavior that violates social norms to an excessive extreme, and which usually occurs within a very limited time frame. The social dynamics of the deviant bingeing process include three major components, the potentiality of temporal opportunity structure, the intention of deviance compression, and the operationalization of this intention through bingeing behavior. This paper examines this process and posits three conceptual paradigms that articulate various elements, dynamics, distinctions and nuance attendant to deviant bingeing (see Figure 1).

TEMPORAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES

It has been observed (Adams 2001 266) that, “deviance requires individuals and opportunities.” Adams goes on to elaborate on the opportunities portion of the equation by explaining that

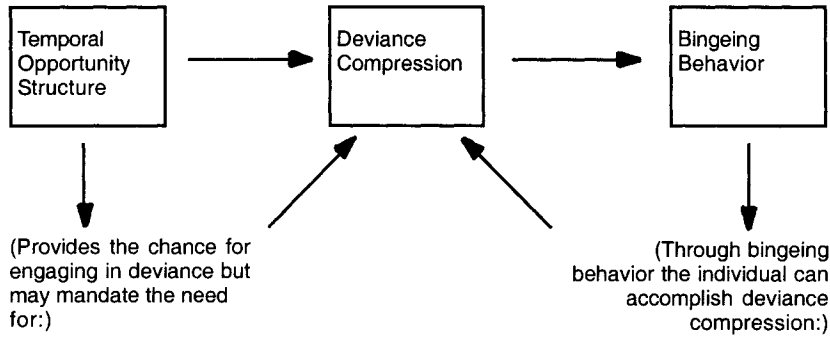
...social situations...provide the opportunity for deviance to occur. These social (and

physical) situations have come to be known to behavioral scientists as opportunity structures.”

The concept of opportunity structure is a venerable notion and has proved to be a very durable and productive perspective in the examination of crime and deviant behavior. Opportunity structure is widely employed in the literature, although curiously, many textbooks now and in the past have no specific discussion of this notion. For example, see Sagarin (1975), McCaghy (1985), Pfohl (1994), and Clinard and Meier (2004). Other sources (Adams 2001 266-268; Bryant 1979) contain elaborate expositions on the concept of opportunity structure. Yet other authors discuss related concepts. Thio (1995 84-86), for example, discusses *deviant opportunities* and Siegel (1998 319) posits the notion of *situational inducements*.

The concept of opportunity structure implicitly incorporates either or both temporal as well as physical and spatial elements, but traditionally, it has most often been used with an emphasis on the physical or spatial parameters of such opportunities. Examples of a physical opportunity structure might include such situations as the evolution of the “serve yourself” store with all merchandise on tables and/or shelves and totally accessible to customers. In an earlier time many, if not most, stores including clothing stores, drug stores, variety stores and even grocery stores kept much of their merchandise behind counters or in glass cases (even racks of clothing). Clerks usually stood behind the counters and could hand merchandise to customers to examine, and also closely monitor the merchandise as long as it was

Figure 1: The Bingeing Process



in the hands of the customer. In the earlier situation, shoplifting was difficult, if not impossible, and was very infrequently encountered. In more recent times, the "serve yourself", merchandise accessible store arrangement has proven to be a very convenient arrangement for customers, but has been a facilitative context for theft and shoplifting as an ongoing retail merchandizing problem because of the physical opportunity structure.

Opportunity structure for crime or deviant behavior would appear to be particularly prevalent and even endemic in work and occupational contexts. As Bryant (1974 167) has observed:

Persistent patterns of deviant behavior in the form of varied, clandestine and often elaborate, illegal practices are found within the social organization of many legal occupational pursuits. Because of a unique opportunity structure and work-related subculture, these illegal activities are often endemic or distinctive to a specific occupational specialty and are therefore characteristic of given work systems. The relationship between work and a particular variety of deviant behavior is not always immediately apparent because the deviant behavioral configurations are frequently buried beneath the surface of occupational structure.

Bryant (1979 83) has also pointed out that in the military, and especially in wartime, there are inordinate opportunity structures for theft of government property because equipment and supplies are available in great abundance, frequently concentrated in specific locations such as supply dumps or

depots, often with minimal security, control, or monitoring, and thus relatively easy to steal.

Opportunity structures of the spatial, physical, or structured variety may result from such factors as structural role ambiguity as in the case of some prescription violations among retail pharmacists (Quinney 1963), or strategic location within the work system such as the police officer, who may be in charge of the Evidence Room in a police station and may, thus, be able to surreptitiously abscond with some narcotics. Another example might be the skilled accountant, who, by virtue of his strategic location within the organization and having access to the financial records of the company, has an ideal opportunity structure that makes possible and even facilitates embezzlement (Bryant 1979 64).

Crime and deviance, however, also occur within the context of temporal opportunities. Examples here might be the teenager, who, upon encountering an automobile with the keys in the ignition, might seize the opportunity to take the auto for a joy ride. Other instances of temporal opportunity structure might be that police officers sent to investigate a burglarized store helping themselves to merchandise while in the store at night when no employees are present (Stoddard 1968).

Temporal opportunity structures have not received as much theoretical or investigative attention by scholars as have spatial or physical opportunity structures, the exception to this is routine activities theory (Cohen & Felson 1979). This is unfortunate, inasmuch as the former type of opportunities have some very distinctive characteristics as do the modes of deviant behavior that occur within

the context of such situations. Our understanding of the dynamics of deviant behavior might well be enhanced through a closer research scrutiny and analysis of such temporal opportunity structures. Toward this end, a preliminary conceptual paradigm of temporal opportunity structure is proposed to facilitate the analysis of such contexts.

The distinctive characteristics of the temporal opportunity structure include:

1. Temporal Opportunity Structures may be *Extended* or *Ephemeral*. Extended temporal opportunities might be illustrated by the home left unattended for a period (perhaps several weeks) as evidenced by uncut lawn grass, a stack of newspapers on the front porch and no car parked in the driveway while a family takes a lengthy vacation, that becomes a tempting target for burglars while the family is away. Other opportunity structures are of a much more abbreviated or ephemeral time frame. Which is to say that there is only a fleeting window of opportunity within which to carry out the deviant act. The window of opportunity is often very brief, indeed, perhaps only a matter of seconds or minutes or at most, a few hours or days. Examples here might be the airline passenger waiting for his (or her) flight in an airport terminal, going to the restroom and briefly leaving his (or her) carry-on luggage unattended, and thereby, subject to theft. The temporal opportunity for theft here is quite brief - perhaps only 5 minutes or so. Nevertheless a thief might well take advantage of even such a brief window of opportunity. Other examples might be that of the briefly unattended automobile with keys in the ignition, and even the motor on and idling, as mentioned earlier, that is an inviting target for thieves in spite of the extremely short window of opportunity. Would-be muggers or rapists recognize that the very brief time period that elapses between a female employee leaving her place of work and walking to her automobile in the parking lot, and starting the car and driving away is an extremely vulnerable situation for the victim and an inviting window of opportunity for the perpetrator. Accordingly, some employers now arrange for female employees to be escorted to their automobiles when they leave work, especially if after dark, as a means of thwarting assaults, robbery, or rapes.

2. Temporal Opportunity Structures for Deviance are of two varieties, *Serendipitous*

and *Scheduled*. Serendipitous Temporal Opportunity Structures occur randomly and as a result of happenstance. They are unplanned and unintentional and result from a convergence of situational factors. Examples of such structures would be that of an individual stealing a package from an unlocked and briefly unattended automobile where there were no witnesses to the theft. It was simply a set of random elements- the package left in the unlocked automobile, the unattended automobile, and the absence of any witnesses-that sets up the Serendipitous Opportunity Structure that facilitates the theft of the package. Another illustration of this type of opportunity structure would be that of a stroller passing a house and noticing a bathroom window with the shade up and a woman undressing. If the stroller was of voyeuristic inclination, he might take advantage of this serendipitous opportunity and sneak up to the window for a more extended but unobtrusive view of the naked female.

Some Temporal Opportunity Structures are planned or scheduled. The would-be deviant in effect, anticipates the opportunity structure and prepares to indulge in some form of deviance during the temporary set of circumstances. Examples here might be that of the American soldier who, after months of combat duty in Viet Nam, would receive a three day "R & R trip" to Bangkok, where he could party, drink to excess, and have multiple sexual encounters with Thai prostitutes. As another illustration, the sailor who received an overnight shore leave after weeks at sea might anticipate, plan, and intend to indulge his hedonistic inclinations to the fullest extent during his brief freedom from ship-board duty.

Both novels and movies contain vivid depictions of wartime soldiers indulging in intense deviance (drunken behavior, fighting and brawling, and "whoring") in an intense fashion while on a brief over-night pass from their unit after payday when they had money to pay for alcohol and prostitutes. The college fraternity "beer bust" may be eagerly anticipated as a brief opportunity for drinking as much free beer as they can within a very short time frame (likely resulting in drunken and disorderly behavior). Each year, across the nation, tens of thousands of college students enthusiastically look forward to Spring break when they can travel to beach resorts (especially in Florida) where they can engage

Figure 2: A Paradigm of "Binge Behaviors"

Specificity of Behavior	Longevity of Temporal Structure	
	Ephemeral	Extended
Improvisational	<p>(Serendipitous)</p> <p>A teen-ager sees key left in an automobile and takes it for a "joyride."</p>	<p>(Serendipitous)</p> <p>A salesman who completes his business call in Southern California 4 or 5 days sooner than expected, and decides to spend the time "partying" in Tijuana in order to "unwind."</p>
	<p>A group of Army recruits are assigned by "their" Drill Sergeant to go on "patrol" on Saturday night to "scrounge" (steal) as much equipment from other units as possible (as a device for instilling "survival skills" and innovativeness).</p> <p>(Scheduled)</p>	<p>A couple who had once had a sexual affair, but ultimately each marries someone else and years later encounter each other at a convention on a chance basis, discover that they still have erotic feelings for each other, and spend 7 days at the convention, engaging in sex.</p> <p>(Scheduled)</p>
Scripted	<p>(Serendipitous)</p> <p>A female goes to a Mardi Gras parade to try & catch some beads thrown from floats; seeing other females "flashing" their breasts, she does the same.</p>	<p>(Serendipitous)</p> <p>Several college students (of either gender) as is their custom, head to the Florida beaches looking for some "action" and to "raise hell", during Spring break week.</p>
	<p>A group of janitors meet each week at a different building and go to a high level floor in order to use telescopes to spy on women and couples having sex in surrounding buildings (Forsyth 1996).</p> <p>(Scheduled)</p>	<p>A G.I. in Vietnam got a 3 day "R&R" pass, and went to Bangkok to engage in excessive drinking and partying.</p> <p>(Scheduled)</p>

in improprieties (raunchy and raucous) behavior, including drunkenness, exposing themselves, sexual horseplay with members of the opposite sex, disorderliness, and, sometimes, fornication.

3. The deviant behavior that occurs within the context of temporal opportunity may also be *Impromptu* or *Scripted*. In the instance of impromptu behavior, the offender does not anticipate the opportunity structure, but when he (or she) encounters it, must act quickly to take advantage of it, and, accordingly, must improvise his (or her) behavior to appropriately interface with the situation. As an example, an individual of felonious bent is driving down a road and encounters an abandoned automobile. The automobile and its components are available for the taking and the perpetrator determines to steal something of value from the vehicle. Quickly sizing up the situation, the individual concludes that it would require too much time and effort to remove the tires or radio, and instead, quickly opens the hood and expeditiously steals the battery.

Another illustration is provided by Terry (1984 20) who reports an incident during the Vietnamese war. A U.S. army patrol is out on a combat "sweep" near Phu Cat. The patrol flushed out three black pajama clothed individuals from a woody area, and the figures start running away. Assuming them to be Viet Cong guerillas, the soldiers fired their weapons and knocked down all three. The soldiers then rushed over and discovered that they had killed two women and a man. One of the soldiers in the patrol then decided on the spur of the moment to take advantage of the fact that he had sexual access to the woman. As one of the unit members described what happened:

As I was watching, I noticed one of the white guys take his pants down and started having sex. That kind of freaked me out cause I thought the broad was dead. The brother was just standing guard watching, It kind of surprised him to see this guy get off. After about 20 minutes, I ended up saying, "Hey, man, Come on, Lets go."

Temporal opportunity structure, however, may in some instances, result in *Scripted Behavior*. Here the offender responds to the opportunity by engaging in deviant behavior in a planned, structured fashion. The behav-

ior may even be coordinated or collective. In effect, the individual reacts to the opportunity in a programmed fashion. As an example, individuals who work in a traveling carnival or circus sometimes encounter hostility from the local population. One patron who feels that he (or she) was cheated in some game of chance, or deceived by some side show exhibit may become angry or argumentative, and even combative. A carnie may be threatened with violence or even be assaulted. Alternatively, a carnival female (employee or the wife of a carnie) is sexually harassed. Any time a carnie or circus employee is threatened with danger from an outsider, they may shout, "Hey Rube." At the sound of this cry, all of the carnies or circus members are obligated to immediately come to the rescue (Bryant 1972 189-194). Fights between carnies or circus members and patrons from the local communities often result. Sometimes these fights or brawls grow into near riots as additional individuals from both constituencies join in. Serious injuries sometimes occur. Such behavior is obviously programmed or scripted.

As another illustration, professional pickpockets may go for a time without encountering a prime would-be victim. When they do encounter someone who is in a vulnerable situation crammed into a crowded subway or who may have been seen by the pickpocket putting their wallet or money into a particular readily accessible pocket, the perpetrator may spring into action with a well rehearsed (sometime relatively complex) routine that is followed to the letter thereby facilitating the theft. Two of the dimensions of temporal opportunity that have been discussed can be juxtaposed in a perpendicular fashion to conceptualize a paradigm of temporal opportunity structure that consists of a two by two matrix with four cells. One axis represents the variable of *Longevity of Temporal Opportunity* which incorporates the categories of *Extended* and *Ephemeral*. The second perpendicular axis is that of *Specificity of Behavior* and incorporates the categories of *Improvisational* and *Scripted*. Within each cell, there is a further bifurcation of behavior into *Serendipitous* and *Scheduled*. Temporal opportunity structure can, accordingly, be conceptualized in this manner as shown in Figure 2.

Deviance Compression

In everyday life, we frequently have to crowd or compress our activities into small units of time. Examples here might be the need to compact a variety of activities such as bathing, shaving, grooming, dressing, eating breakfast, etc. into a very short span of time before going to work or school. If one does not hear the alarm clock and oversleeps, then the pre-work activities necessarily must be even more compressed. Students often try to compress their studying into a short period of time just before taking an exam "cramming", as it were. A college student who had a steady girl friend living in another town whom he only sees a few weekends a semester must attempt to crowd a lot of courting into very short weekend visits. The very concept of the fast food restaurant is, in fact, designed to accommodate the need of customers to compress their meal behavior into very limited time frames.

Deviant behavior as with conventional behavior, is also subject to compression, often due to the exigencies of time and other factors, as an example, and as previously mentioned, the soldier who after traumatizing combat duty, received a 3-day "R & R" leave, must necessarily cram a lot of deviant activity into a very short time period. Ephemeral Opportunity Structures obviously mandates the need for deviance compression.

Perhaps a better example of compression would be that of the employee who works in a building where smoking is not permitted. The individual must use his coffee or restroom breaks to go outside the building to smoke a cigarette. Inasmuch as it may be a matter of several hours before he (or she) can enjoy another smoke break, the individual may feel the need to smoke several cigarettes, one after another (chain smoking) as a means of "packing" nicotine into their lungs in the hopes that the effect of the nicotine will persist until the next smoke break.

In cities with factories and workers who may commute significant distances, a frequently seen phenomenon is the drinking commuter. An individual who works in one of the plants may have a commute home of an hour or more. Not infrequently he may commute with others in a carpool. It is not uncommon to see such persons purchase a half pint (sometimes a pint) of whiskey and get a large paper cup of ice and a mixer-type drink. The worker will then drink all of his

whiskey on the way home with his (or her) fellow car poolers (sometimes even the driver). Thus, the worker drinks an excessive amount of liquor within a relatively short time, thus compressing his drinking. There are several reasons for such behavior. The worker may have a spouse that disapproves of drinking or at least of drinking at home around the children. Individuals lacking the deferred gratification pattern value may not keep a supply of liquor around the house. To have a large bottle, (or a number of bottles) of liquor at home would be a temptation that could not be resisted. Accordingly, drinking must take place away from home and preferably when the spouse is not present. The commute home then becomes an ephemeral opportunity structure for drinking. The companionship of other drinking companions in the car serves to enhance the opportunity structure. Inasmuch as the individual cannot take the half-filled bottle home because of the disapproving wife, he (or she) has no choice but to drink the whole bottle. Even if the wife smells the alcohol on his breath, he can claim that he had only one or two drinks after work. With no partially filled bottle to determine the amount consumed, the individual can minimize the wife's scolding. Thus the worker uses an ephemeral opportunity structure and binge behavior to accomplish deviance compression. Such behavior is very common in industrial towns.

Similar behavior would be that of the college student drinking an excessive amount of beer (to the point of drunkenness) at the periodic beer bust which he (or she) attends. Yet another illustration of deviance compression might be that of the convention attendee who, away from the likely disapproving eye of spouse, children, neighbors, and critical superiors, may take advantage of the brief opportunity to relax and "let off some steam" by boisterous behavior, heavy drinking, attending erotic shows or even having sex with a prostitute.

There appears to be four social configurations that characterize deviance compression.

1. *There is a certain ceremonial or traditional aspect to some forms of deviance compression.* Examples here might be the Bachelor Party for the individual about to be married the next day. By tradition such a party calls for deviance within a brief timeframe. Other occasions that may tolerate or even

call for inappropriate or deviant behavior, and in an accelerated or compressed fashion would include the Oktoberfest in Bavaria, Mardi Gras (see Forsyth 1992), the Christmas Office Party, High School Graduation Night, the "rites of spring" on college campuses (streaking, party raids, protests, etc.), and Halloween vandalism, to mention but some. It is to be noted that most societies have a special word or phrase that calls for expedited or excessive alcohol consumption, often in ceremonial situations such as formal banquets. Examples here might be "Bottoms Up", "Down The Hatch", or "Chug-a-Lug" in English, "Gambei" in Chinese, "Na Zhdaroe" in Russian, and "Egiszsegedre" in Hungarian!

2. *Deviance compression often has an itinerary or a scenario.* It is not infrequently anticipated and there may be some degree of planning, even provisioning. A fraternity may lay in a supply of alcoholic beverages in anticipation of a big fraternity "bash" after the homecoming football game.

In some Scandinavian countries, such as Finland, there are extremely strict laws concerning driving while intoxicated. The price of alcoholic beverages is also very high. An informant who has lived in Finland, relates that it is not uncommon for a group of academics who enjoy parting together, to plan a drunken episode. They will pool their money and purchase a supply of alcoholic beverages, decide on a date and location for their drinking party, and hire one or more students as drivers and caretakers. The group assembles, drinks into the night, becoming intoxicated, even to the point of "falling down drunks," or even passing out. The student caretakers then, dutifully, transport the drunks home and put them to bed to sleep off their intoxication.

3. *Deviance compression often has an imitative or collective nature to it.* Some individuals do indulge in solitary deviance compression, but it is more often the case that such efforts are collective in nature. The stereotypical concept of the "sexual orgy", for example, is that of a group enterprise. Much, if not most, binge drinking takes place within a collective context-the fraternity beer bust, as an illustration. Sailors, engaging in riotous behavior while on shore leave, or soldiers on R & R furlough, drinking and whoring, often do so in groups. The collective context provides instructive insight into the com-

mission of deviance compression. The younger fraternity pledge may learn how to "chug a lug" from observing the older fraternity members do so. The group setting is also affirmation and reinforcement for deviance compression. "Everybody's doing it!" Finally, the collective enterprise produces a synergy that gives momentum and direction to the deviant behavior by generating a motivational milieu of irrational enthusiasm and energy.

4. *Deviance compression goes far beyond satiation.* It generally leads to superfluous gratification-"wretched excess", as it were! Binge drinking at a party seeks more than simply "feeling good." It seeks inebriation to the point of stupefaction and drunken oblivion. Even in the instances of killing, deviance compression may go far beyond the goal of exterminating one or more victims. Often the violence takes on an irrational, sometimes horrible, excess. The My Lai massacre in the Vietnamese War was such an example. The army platoon went in to attack and neutralize a village and capture or kill members of the Vietcong. Encountering only civilians-mostly women, children, and old men, rather than Vietcong military personnel, the soldiers killed the civilians anyway. In some instances, they were gathered up, pushed into a ditch in piles and murdered. Some of the younger women and girls were raped and then murdered. Many were beaten and brutalized before they were shot (Bryant 1979 218). The short attack resulted in the killing of 347 (italics ours) Vietnamese civilian men, women, and children (Hersh 1972 7). In July of 1966 another illustration of "wretched excess," even in murder can be seen in the crimes of Richard Speck. On the night of July 13 this individual broke into a dormitory for nursing students in Chicago, and over the period of an hour, he had seized and tied up 9 female nursing students. One by one, he carried them to another room and murdered them. Only one had been raped. Eight had been strangled or stabbed to death. One had escaped by rolling under the bed. The murders were senseless! The sheer number of victims was horrifying. He had simply killed 8 women in an irrational frenzy (see <http://www.prairieghosts.com/speck.html>).

In the school shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, two students, Eric Harris and Dylan Kelbold senselessly killed 12 fellow students and one fac-

ulty member, and wounded another 23 students within a brief period of time; deviance compression of the most horrible variety! (see http://boulderclassifieds.com/shooting/423_weapon.html).

Temporal opportunity structure affords locus and the potential for deviance compression. But deviance compression must be operationalized if this aim is to be accomplished. Bingeing becomes the venue for doing so.

BINGEING BEHAVIOR

Individuals engage in bingeing for a number of reasons, and may even justify their actions with various rationales. We suggest three types of bingeing given differences in motivation: the relief, addictive and occasional binge.

The Relief Binge

The most frequent type of bingeing behavior and even perhaps the most replete general form of deviant behavior is the binge for relief. This behavior has become a cure-all for a post modern society satiated with stress. Mardi Gras is a celebration before beginning the abstinence of Lent. As such it fits into the category of bingeing as a form of release before deprivation. On Mardi Gras day in New Orleans many things normally forbidden are permitted. People walk around virtually nude; women expose themselves from balconies and the gay community gives new meaning to the term outrageous. Laws which attempt to legislate morality are informally suspended. Although masking is only allowed on Mardi Gras day, this idea of masking pervades the season. In a sense, the season becomes a mask and compartmentalizes any outrageous behavior. What one does during Mardi Gras does not count as a mark on one's character; it becomes a legitimate cover. As behavior became more offensive to some, other "family celebrations" spread into the suburbs. This had the effect of further heightening the lack of censors from the scene and both concentrating and attracting the "norm violators." Certain areas became bingeing meccas because they promoted compartmentalization and cover in a finite space (Forsyth 1992). As Redmon (2003 48) indicates these places become "themed environments" specially designed as areas to perform deviance for pleasure. Bingers compartmentalized their behavior at

these events and are not seen as accountable (Schur 1979; Forsyth 1992). Thus, it inflicts no disfavor upon the participants or if it does they successfully manage the stigma (Gramling & Forsyth 1987). It is analogous to what Goffman (1963 81) refers to as back places,

where persons of the individual's kind stand exposed and find they need not try to conceal their stigma, nor be overly concerned with cooperatively trying to disattend it.

Redmon (2003) and Presdee (2000) capture this sense of relief through pleasure with the notion of deviant behavior as carnival. Carnival is a site where the pleasure of playing at the boundaries is clearly catered to. Festive excess, transgression, irrational behavior and so on are temporarily legitimated in the moment of carnival. Breaking rules is a source of joy, of humor, of celebration. Many acts that might otherwise be considered criminal are momentarily tolerated.

Forsyth (1989 37-38) describes the pre-entrance binge of merchant seamen in which he engages in a celebration of self indulgence before he leaves on a voyage; a period of deprivation. The underlying support for the bingeing behavior is the assumption that there is a completely structured non-deviant social space on ship. Such a pre-entrance binge is likely common to persons who foresee prolonged deprivation, which for the seaman is a life-long, cyclical experience. It is a recurring personal rite of passage through which the seaman accepts his occupationally imposed exile from the routine lifestyles of those permanently on land. Virtually all seaman resort to varying degrees of some sort of self-indulgent ritual before going to sea.

The most hedonistic are the young and single with alcohol, sex, and drugs of interest. The pre-entrance binge of the married seaman may be more conservative, but both he and his family come to expect it. As time progresses, these seem to become a routine family crisis period, with both the seaman and his family experiencing a sense of relief when he is finally extricated from the home scene. Seaman compared the voyage to a stay in jail. It is not unusual to find a number of drunken men aboard ship at sailing and several men missing their first sea watches. There appears to be a positive cor-

relation between the length of the expected voyage and the number of drunken crew and the severity of the intoxication (Forsyth 1989). The same bingeing behavior occurs among pre-incarcerated criminals, if the circumstances permit it, who are about to start serving a prison sentence. Upon release the process repeats itself (Sykes 1958). Whether in the urban gangs from inner city ghettos, in lower or working class cliques, college students or middle class workers seeking relief from stressful lives, bingeing functions as a form of relief.

The Addictive Binge

Other motivations for bingeing can be seen as addictive, much like the abstinence/relapse cycle of the addict (Ray 1961). Repeated bingeing puts the individual in two worlds. The participant develops an identity which is developed through shared roles and experiences during these intense activities. He/she consequently develops values and perspectives about the self/insider and outsiders/non-bingers. Life for the binger becomes similar to that of a heroin addict; a cycle of abstinence and then relapse or a cycle of pain/pleasure. The pain/pleasure cycle becomes relative and pleasure becomes the absence of pain. Although the pleasure decreases absolutely the increased pain during abstinence creates an equal amount of relative pleasure during relapse. Much like the weekend binger returning to work,

...the seeds of a new attempt at abstinence are sown, once addiction has been reestablished, in the self-recriminations engaged in upon remembrance of a successful period of abstinence. (Ray 1961 139)

They weigh social situations and are measured by the other participants in these situations, often with the result that the value of the binger's identity relative to the social world of that activity is examined. The labeling of oneself as something deviant, committed to the values and statuses of the deviant group, is contrasted with non-deviant identities and relationships. One tries occasionally to abstain and indulge in his aspired to self image. He seeks validation from others in this new situation. Generally the period of abstinence is not gratifying. The deviant questions the value of a non-deviant identity. He nourishes reflections of past deviant

activities which includes comparisons with his non-deviant identity. The deviant again realigns his values with his bingeing status. Hence the world of the binger where reflection upon identity brings on a continuation of the cycle of abstinence and relapse. This cycle is fostered by the degree of value conflict. If the bingeing behavior "fits" into a particular lifestyle or whether a lifestyle has been created to accommodate the deviant bingeing behavior then periods of abstinence/relapse become archetypal. For example, the weekend drunk who maintains a job on the weekdays and is tolerated, accommodated, or assisted by family and friends. Others may not be able to do this and conflict becomes too great bringing on more extended periods of abstinence/relapse. Social structure and culture determined the degree of conflict or social psychological grief which necessitates differing degrees of compartmentalization. It is rare that anyone never enters the cycle since all deviant bingeing behaviors are questioned periodically. Bulimia, binge eating followed by vomiting and/or laxative use, also fits into the addictive binge category because of its compulsive nature (McLorg & Taub 1987).

The Occasional Binge

Other bingeing behavior occur less frequently, such as, streaking, mooning, or other brief flings at public nudity. Bryant (1982 136) contended that it was one generation flaunting their liberated values in the faces of the older more conservative generation. Anderson (1977 232) said that it embodied the new morality, and as such, was "perceived by many to be a challenge to traditional values and laws." Like other bingeing behaviors it retains parameters of time and place. Mooning, like streaking, was considered a prank and an insult to conformity and normative standards of behavior (Bryant 1982). Both streaking and mooning are collegiate behaviors, an environment given to bingeing.

The current erotic tourism industry can be considered a form of sexual bingeing. Indeed, the sex tourism industry in Southeast Asia has its roots in the Vietnam war. The Vietnam era had brought a constant supply of soldiers/tourists looking for hedonistic bingeing (Evans, Forsyth, & Wooddell 2000). The erotic tour works for some individuals because it is the realization of fantasies. In addition, enlistment can take place in private

and participation takes place in far away places. The sexual tourist avoids public degradation. For a growing number of individuals and cliques, erotic tourism represents socially acceptable and easily procured sex. Most of the tours have legitimate covers such as fishing trips, golf, rafting, beach, or scenic excursions.

Strip clubs and the table dancing and private performances which take place within them reflect elements of sexual bingeing. Such behaviors take place under the cover of dark strip clubs. Table dancing and indeed private dancing involves even more cover (Enck & Preston 1988; Forsyth & Deshotels 1997, 1998).

In Miller's (1958) description of lower class culture, one of the components: excitement, represents the occasional binge. Excitement is a heightened interest in the seeking thrills, particularly experienced through sex, alcohol, gambling, going out on the town, making the rounds. It is considered a brief - periodic adventure, followed and preceded by, a period of long inaction, referred to as hanging out. Occasional deviant bingeing has no cycle but occurs when individuals feel the need for distraction/recreation. Only in a secondary sense is relief a product. Depending on the specific behavior and within this social context, occasional bingeing may be conceptualized as harmful, erotic or cute.

DISCUSSION

This paper has examined the social dynamics of the deviant bingeing process. Three conceptual paradigms: the potentiality of temporal opportunity structures, the intention of deviance compression, and the operationization of this intention, framed in terms of motivations for bingeing, have been combined into a unique frame for articulating this process.

Deviant bingeing can be seen as being pursued in the interest of vitality and health and incorporated in lifestyle, but bingeing behavior can also be seen as dysfunctional in that this occasion for relief and to deny responsibility, may subtly grant some with the license to avoid a measure of the psychological costs, like shame and guilt, usually coupled to particularly offensive or harmful conduct. Taken to the extreme it can be dysfunctional in that it can create victims in its aftermath.

Deviant bingeing is the functional equiva-

lent of a ritualized occasion in which persons are briefly licensed to ignore some of the norms that apply to them. As such bingeing behaviors differ on a legitimate/illegitimate continuum. By punctuating the routine rhythm of social life with ritually embraced durations of rule violation, the norms of everyday life are made more endurable for those who are escaping oppression of sorts and for those who merely feel burdened by such societal structures. These periods become customs for sacrilege. Deviant bingeing is a ready vehicle to cut loose and disavow our transgressions (Little 1989).

Bingeing can also be understood as "creative deviance" (Douglas, Rasmussen & Flanagan 1977 238), deviance which functions to solve problems or to create pleasure for the individual. Many forms of deviance, however, do not work in such simplistic ways. Most deviant bingers do not find that it works for them. They discover they are too ashamed of themselves or that the risk of shaming or embarrassment is too great, so they do not continue (Grasmick & Bursik 1990). Other people find it hurts them more (or threatens them) or, at the very least, does not do anything good for them. So many forms of bingeing do not continue, but other forms of bingeing apparently do work. They receive opportunistic pleasure in a "celebration" atmosphere of the compression of time and many do not suffer condemnation due to cover or compartmentalized.

Drinking is probably the most recognized form of deviant bingeing. In our society drinking temporarily suspends the individual's responsibility for their behavior. Our beliefs about the disinhibiting effects of consuming alcohol allow us to excuse what would otherwise be considered, outrageous, loud, disruptive, discourteous, impolite, or risky behavior with the mythical phrase "I must have been drunk" (Little 1989). The phrase becomes a cover or compartmentalization of the bingeing behavior.

[T]he state of drunkenness is a state of societally sanctioned freedom from the otherwise enforceable demands that persons comply with the conventional proprieties. For a while-but just for a while-the rules (or more accurately some of the rules) are set aside, the drunkard finds himself, if not beyond good and evil, at least partially removed from the accountability nexus in

which he normally operates. In a word, drunkenness in these societies takes on the flavor of "time out" from many of the otherwise imperative demands of everyday life. (MacAndrew & Edgerton 1969 89-90)

All deviance involves a transcendence of boundaries and most theories of deviance involve some level of explanation for this surmounting of moral borders. Whether transcendence is represented by the emotional unrestrained seduction of Katz (1988), the more rational edgework of Lyng (1990), or the deviant bingeing behavior process here; it is the essence of all theories of deviance-seeking to account for participation in aberrant conduct.

FURTHER RESEARCH: DEVIANCE AND PLAY

Early theorists (Thrasher 1927; Tannenbaum 1938) characterized much of delinquency and gang behavior in the context of fun and adventure. Researchers on crimes by youth and adults (Mayo 1969; Belson 1975; Csikszentmihalyi & Larson 1978; Riemer 1981; Nettler 1982) found excitement to be a motive for some delinquents to violate the law. The research of Allen and Greenberger (1978) revealed an aesthetic element in acts of vandalism. Vandals apparently enjoy the auditory, visual, and tactile sensations which result from the destruction of material things, a process Allen and Greenberger (1978) called creative conversion. Lejeune (1977) discovered that for some criminals, adventurous deviance was more pleasurable because it involved risk. Richards, Berk and Foster (1979) extended the research that explained middle class involvement in delinquency as fun and adventure (Matza & Sykes 1961), claiming that most middle class delinquency was a form of play. In a study of shoplifters, excitement was shown to be a primary motivation for repeat offenders (Klemke 1978). Samenow's (1984) research revealed that trying to beat the rap was exciting for the criminal. Forsyth and Marckese (1993) found thrills and the display of skills to be one of the primary motivations for poachers persisting in their illegal behavior. Katz (1988) and Lofland (1969) both demonstrated that many deviant acts were associated with and generated by excitement.

The dominate theoretical perspectives have neglected the idea that deviant acts may

be so attractive that neutralization, rationalization, frustration, or vengefulness are superfluous to the act. Most social scientists have ignored the thrill dimension while others have treated it in an ancillary way (Curcione 1992). But many individuals are motivated by the excitement, challenge and relief from boredom that deviance offers. For certain others, however, fun and adventure offer benefits that compensate for the risks involved in crime.

Research on play suggests that recreation for many individuals is a reaction to the conditions of alienation and involves the search for self. Lyng's (1990) research on what he terms edgework involves play motivated by such social psychological forces. For those involved in labor, which for them represents little creativity leaves them in a search for phenomenological experiences. Edgework (Lyng 1990), such as skydiving, is a type of experimental anarchy in which the individual moves beyond the realm of established social patterns to the very fringes of ordered reality. Deviant bingeing behavior is indeed both similar and unique from edgework. Edgework involves games of risk played by a yuppie class of workers looking to spend money, conspicuously consume, display skills and get relief at the same time in a structure activity which carries no aberrant baggage.

Lyng (1990), Katz (1988), and Klausner (1968) made us aware that there is a need to examine deviant behaviors for the meaning it has for the perpetrator rather than resort to old saws like labeling and differential association. Klausner (1968) emphasized stress seeking: the enjoyment of beating the odds and getting adrenaline rushes. The process of deviant bingeing reaffirms the basic components of many of these classic and contemporary ideas. In this context, temporal opportunity structures, deviance compression, and bingeing behavior become heuristic devices in which to frame deviant acts as well as more conventional ones because the the bingeing process addresses many of the same motivational issues.

Further research should develop a series of theoretical propositions which predict the circumstances necessary to produce each form of bingeing behavior. That is, use the various deminsions of the temporal opportunity structure and deviance compression to predict relief, addictive, and occasional

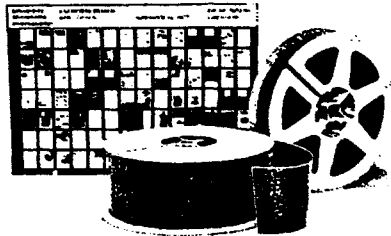
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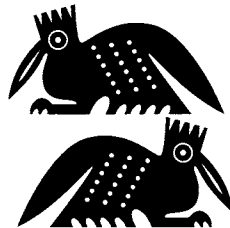
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