Chapter 3

Narratives of Sexual Danger

A Comparative Perspective on the Emergence of the Clergy Sexual Violation Scandal

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Just over a decade ago there was a sudden profusion of narratives recounting sexual violations by members of the clergy. There quickly followed a wave of media reports and social science analyses identifying a new social problem most often referred to as "clergy abuse" or "clergy malfeasance." While clergy malfeasance refers to a range of behaviors including financial violations, misuse of leadership authority, and sexual misconduct (Shupe 1995), the sexual violations have captured the lion's share of public and scholarly attention. The Catholic Church priest cases certainly rank as the single most explosive scandal of this type. The narratives recounted by aggrieved families and their spokespersons raised the specter of widespread sexual activity, primarily with young sons of parish members, sending shock waves through that religious community. A secondary cover-up scandal emerged in the wake of revelations that in a number of instances priests had been involved in *serial* sexual violations, that the church had knowingly reassigned these priests to new parishes where other unsuspecting congregations were victimized, that priests were protected while families were deceived, and that the church sought to avoid legal responsibility for these actions. The succession of revelations in this episode was at least the epicenter event that drew public attention to a variety of other kinds of misconduct across denominational lines.

At least initially, the outpouring of journalistic and social science analysis of clergy sexual deviance treated these violations as anomalous. The revelation of a pattern of serious violations by highly

trusted figures in a sacred institution required explanation. Once this new category of deviance had been "discovered," the focus shifted to issues such as the number of perpetrators and incidents, distinguishing pathological attributes of individual perpetrators, perpetrator careers, the organizational environment in which the behavior was learned, organizational attributes associated with varying rates of violation and apprehension, and the impact of the violations on the parties involved. In this chapter we adopt an alternative perspective that investigates the "discovery" of clergy sexual violations through a comparison of sexual coercion scandals.

We contend that if clergy sexual deviance is examined in a historical-comparative perspective, the apparent anomaly disappears. The argument developed here rests on six pivotal observations. First, contemporary claims of sexual violations are not unique to clergy. Similar claimsmaking ("the activities of individuals or groups making assertions of grievances and claims with respect to some putative conditions") is occurring elsewhere in the social order around themes of "sexuality" and "coercion," most notably in workplace, professional, familial, and dating relationships (Spector and Kitsuse 1977, 75). Second, the available data indicate that the behavioral patterns around which claimsmaking is currently mobilizing have long histories. While there obviously is considerable variation in contemporary and historical rates of various behaviors, the evidence on prevalence and persistence is impressive. Third, there is little doubt that within all of the social networks involved knowledge about the problematic behavior was relatively widespread, but the narratives typically did not circulate outside these networks. Fourth, the nature of the danger posed by coercive sexuality has changed between earlier and more recent versions of each set of narratives. In particular, the current narratives emphasize the danger to individuals by virtue of their being placed in social relationships that undermine their self-directedness. Fifth, in the initial set of narratives the individuals located in the role of "victim" or "survivor" were predominantly families, women, and children while the "perpetrator" role was filled almost exclusively by adult males. There is some evidence that claimsmaking has since diffused more broadly. Finally, each of these contentious behavioral patterns achieved public visibility during roughly the same time period.

These observations suggest several premises that orient our analysis. Allegations of clergy deviance are not substantively unique but rather constitute one case in a series of thematically related claims now being advanced in a number of social arenas. This observation inclines us toward a structural analysis that might account for the emergence of thematically related claims. Further, the current claims identify behaviors that either were not defined as violations at an earlier time or were violations for which there was no extant social recourse, despite their being known to insiders. The fact that claimsmaking might have occurred but did not focuses our attention on how structural conditions have changed so that particular claims can now be advanced and warranted. The emergence of a common theme in contemporary narratives, an inappropriate type and level of relational control over individuals, hints at the nature of claims now considered legitimate to advance. The central role of women and children as "victims/survivors" and of males as "perpetrators" leads us to explore patriarchal control as the source of power being challenged in these narratives. The emergence of these claims in diverse social locations at approximately the same historical moment suggests to us a common set of structural factors that has rendered certain forms of relations increasingly problematic.

Since the emergence of the clergy sexual scandal emanates most directly from the narratives of individuals identified as "victims" or "survivors" within the narratives, we take the related issues of the structural conditions under which claimsmaking began and the nature and timing of the claims advanced as the problematic. In our analysis of the problematizing of sexual coercion, we treat the emergence of claimsmaking narratives as revelations of "scandal." Scandal refers to *patterned deviant activity within an established organization/institution that is externally challenged as a breach of its social trustworthiness* (see also Fine 1997). The argument formulated here is structural, with the specific goal of identifying the historically developing conditions underlying the emergence of a series of scandals thematized around sexual coercion. We argue that the temporal coincidence of these narratives can be traced historically to three interrelated developments in the reconfiguration of contractual and covenantal social relations (Bromley 1997). First, there has been a major expansion of contractual forms of social relations in both public and private

spheres over the last several decades. Correspondingly, personal autonomy, voluntarism, and self-directedness (rationality in the public sphere and self-actuation in the private sphere) have become the normative basis for connecting individuals to institutions and relationships in either sphere. Finally, regulatory units that authorize contractual standards and empower claimsmaking around those standards have been created, or their mandate has been expanded. The establishment of regulatory units creates third parties with an independent interest in social control, along with criteria, procedures, and power for exercising that control (Bromley 1998). The simultaneous development of more contractual organization, which redefines policies and procedures in terms of which claimsmaking can be legitimated; individuals with orientations and expectations premised on contractually compatible relationships, which yields a pool of potential claimants; and expansion of contractually oriented regulatory units, which can warrant claims, has created the basis for asserting contractual primacy. Clergy sexual deviance, then, became problematic and was subsequently discovered as a result of major structural changes in the contemporary social order.

If we examine the series of scandals thematized by sexual coercion, the common problem identified in each is inappropriate configurations of contractual/covenantal social relations, specifically the failure to organize covenantal relations within a contractually compatible context. In each case the locus of the violation is the local site at which the presumptively autonomous individual connects with a relational network. The substance of the violation is the inappropriate form and/or degree of embedding of the individual at that site. The inappropriate embedding of individuals, symbolized through coercive sexuality, is the product of continued *sub rosa* patriarchal control. From this perspective, religious organizations are simply one site at which new forms of deviance are being constructed as part of a reconfiguration of dominant forms of social relations. We pursue this argument by first describing contractual and covenantal forms and changes in the relationship between the two forms and the utility of sexuality as a means of symbolizing and dramatizing inappropriate relationships. We then analyze four cases in which scandals have been defined through themes of sexuality and coercion—harassment, exploitation, abuse, and molestation—that closely resemble the current clergy sexual scandal.

Contractual and Covenantal Social Relations

The American social order is organized through two major forms of social relations, which we term contractual and covenantal. The two traditions construct social relationships on fundamentally different premises, yet they coexist within the contemporary social order and are integral to one another. Stated most parsimoniously, contractual social relations are those authorized by state-economic organizations (e.g., through property rights, organizational charters, professional credentialing), while covenantal relations are authorized through religious, familial, clan, community, and ethnic groups (e.g., through love, friendship, kinship, voluntary association relationships). Let us briefly summarize the two traditions and the shifting relationship between them.

From a contractual perspective individuals are the basic constituent unit of human groups, individual interests are the natural form through which human intentions take shape, and institutions are derivative units legitimated by and responsive to individual interests. It is assumed that collective good is the product of individual actions in furtherance of personal interest. In contractual social relations, such as classic buyer-seller transactions, participants signal their intentions through the process of negotiation with a goal of reaching mutual agreement. Contractual exchanges are organized positionally, which means that it is the category (e.g., employer-employee, customer-salesperson) into which participants fall that shapes relationships, and there is a sharp distinction between role and person. Since their objective is to effect an exchange, participants pledge to specific performances (e.g., hours worked and wages paid) rather than making more global pledges to another's overall well-being. Negotiations are orchestrated through a sequence of performance rituals (e.g., demonstrating products or skills, making offers, "good faith" deposits, "closing" ceremonies) that accentuate the presence of choice and voluntarism. Mutual agreement is most consensually achieved if the parties perceive one another to be acting reasonably (i.e., acting rationally on the basis of disclosed interests). Participants symbolize the relationships in which they are involved as ordered by mechanistic laws, most frequently those of justice, the market, and science. Individuals orient contractual relationships cognitively, and the capacity for acting rationally is foundational to reaching agreements voluntarily.

The covenantal tradition grants primacy to the community rather than to the individual as the elemental unit of human organization, since individuals are the product of the communities of which they are part. It is therefore incumbent on individuals to advance the collective good and to frame individual aspirations and actions in that context. In covenantal social relations, individuals symbolize their intentions through a process of vow-taking (proposals, marriage vows, professions of faith) with a goal of reaching mutual commitment. Covenantalism integrates role and person, which means that it is the unique essence of the individual (e.g., soul, personality) that shapes relationships (i.e., one relates to the other as a "thou" rather than an "it"). Because their objective is to become more integrally connected to each other, mutual pledges are to one another's overall well-being (e.g., personal or spiritual welfare) rather than to performance of specific actions. The sequence of rituals that build commitment feature progressive bonding and unity (e.g., dating, engagement, marriage). Mutual commitment is facilitated if the parties perceive one another to be acting in the proper spirit (e.g., loving, nurturing). Participants symbolize the relationships in which they are involved as being ordered by spiritual/personal agency, such as the laws of Love or God. Covenantal social relations orient individuals in terms of spirit, which is maintained through transpersonal connection with the larger whole of which the individual is part (i.e., the relationship between husband and wife or God and believer).

Virtually all public-sphere institutions have assumed a more contractual form, and this restructuring has been particularly pronounced over the last several decades. Rationalized organization in the form of corporate and governmental bureaucracies increasingly separates person and position, and the definition of positions is constructed legalistically in terms of rights and responsibilities (Sitkin and Bies 1994). Organizational output is commodified as products and services, with a corresponding conversion of participants into consumers and clients. For example, educational institutions have largely shed covenantal *in loco parentis* functions and have assumed an economic relationship involving exchange of credentialing skills and expertise for tuition. Traditional family physicians and community hospitals are rapidly being replaced by corporate health care service providers to which individuals are connected through contractual relations with employers and insurers. Individuals seek to ac-

quire appropriate market credentials and orient rationally in terms of self-interest toward their organizational environment in terms of both generating resources and meeting needs. The preferred persona in a contractual environment is one in which individuals operate autonomously as voluntaristic, rational entities. Organizational trustworthiness is defined impersonally in terms of honoring participants' rights and organizational responsibilities. Individual-organizational relationships are authorized through third parties that create adjudication forums to formally enforce agreements that often are secured through pools of capital (e.g., health insurance, liability insurance, and pension plans).

In the private sphere, institutions such as family and church have also assumed a more contractual form. Families increasingly resemble "firms," selling their labor and purchasing services in the economy. Expanding family participation in the economy, particularly increased female entry into the labor force, has resulted in commodification of traditional family functions (including food preparation, household maintenance, and childcare). Purchasing an expanded range of goods and services, in turn, necessitates more extensive participation in the economy to generate the required financial resources. Internal family structure too is configured so that covenantal relationships preserve contractual viability. Mechanisms such as prenuptial agreements (that pledge prospective mates to specific relational performances and prearrange postmarital division of personal property), proposals to calculate "comparable worth" of domestic responsibilities, and "planning" of family size around career development and economic resources exemplify such arrangements. Love and interpersonal intimacy are constructed within this institutional context. The emerging model of romantic relationship is more individuated and self-oriented, and sexuality is a primary bonding mechanism. Relationships are created and sustained around simultaneous cultivation of one's own unique essence on the one hand, and development of intimacy (the mutual revelation and sharing of individual unique essence) with a romantic partner on the other. Such relationships are intrinsically valuable; that is, the relationship itself and rewards associated with participating in it are "priceless." A variety of state, economic, and professional organizations secure the voluntarism of familial relationships and the potential for individuals to reassert autonomy.

To summarize, over the last several decades contractual and covenantal relationships have continued to partition into the public and private spheres, respectively. With the expansion of contractualism, both spheres have moved toward compatibility with contractual forms. Individuation has increased, with autonomous, voluntaristic, self-directed individuals as the normative form. In the contractually oriented public sphere, individuals connect with organizations in either production- or consumption-related roles. These roles are the local sites at which the autonomous, voluntaristic, rational individual meets the rationalistic, positionally oriented organization. Organizational and individual expectations both are defined impersonally in terms of rights and responsibilities. Individual embeddedness and organizational encapsulation are constrained and monitored closely. Covenantal forms therefore become increasingly irrelevant to and incompatible with contractual order. Indeed, any relational form that embeds the individual in the organization on noncontractual grounds is illegitimate. Sexually based embeddedness is emblematic of this violation because it involves personal, intimate relationships.

In the covenantally oriented private sphere, individuals connect relationally in familial, religious, and associational networks. Roles such as romantic partner, spouse, or parent are the local sites at which autonomous, voluntaristic, self-actuated individuals connect with others in personalized relations. Group and individual expectations are defined personally in terms of mutual commitment to others' well-being. At the same time, such special relationships must not undermine individual autonomy, voluntarism, and self-actuation. Any relational form that embeds individuals by compromising these attributes is defined as detrimental to individual well-being and therefore as illegitimate. Since sexuality is a primary means through which individuals embed in romantic/familial relationships, coercive sexuality dramatically symbolizes illegitimate covenantal forms. In both public and private spheres, then, coercive sexuality epitomizes illegitimate individual-social network connections and thus constitutes the grist for scandal.

Four Types of Sexual Coercion Scandals

A variety of public forums have of late featured the narration of sexual stories. In his introduction to *Telling Sexual Stories*, Kenneth Plum-

mer observes that "We have moved from the limited, oral and face to face tales told throughout much of history . . . to a contemporary late modern world where it seems that 'sexual stories' know no boundaries" (1995, 4). Indeed, he asserts that "Sex, then, has become the Big Story." Or, as Steven Seidman puts it, "sex not only went public but it pushed its way into the social center" (1991, 124). Contemporary sexual stories by both men and women include both positive accounts—sexual fantasy, liberation (and more recently abstinence), self-discovery, coming out, and intimate fulfillment—and negative accounts—sexual dysfunction, disease, victimization or survival, harassment, assault, abuse, and addiction.

The recent profusion of sexual narratives might appear paradoxical given the Victorian tradition of sequestering and maligning sexual expression. Seidman astutely observes, however, that there has been a profound transformation in sexuality over the last several decades that constitutes "a transformation in the meaning of sex as momentous as its construction as a domain of love" (1991, 124). As he describes this transformation, sex has become "a domain of pleasure, self expression and communication apart from a context of intimacy or love. As a medium of these secular values, sex was defined as acceptable in virtually any consensual adult context. Eros was, in effect, transfigured into a site of individuation and social bonding" (124).

It is precisely this tension between individuation and bonding that renders sexuality a source of danger. On the one hand, sexuality becomes a primary means of expressing individual essence and uniqueness; on the other, it is a means of connecting with another through intimacy and self-disclosure. Coercive sexuality is illegitimate in both cases, as it undermines the capacity of the individual to maintain either autonomy or connectedness in a voluntaristic, self-directed fashion. In the public sphere, sexuality, either as an expression of individuality or as bonding, becomes incompatible with contractual logic. To import sexuality into contractual organization coercively indicates the untrustworthiness of presumptively contractual arrangements. In the private sphere, to coerce intimacy and thereby counterfeit connectedness is equally contradictory and is indicative of untrustworthy covenantal relationships. Coercive sexuality is thus emblematic of inappropriate social relations, and any publicly revealed pattern of either type is potentially scandalous.

In order to interpret clergy sexual deviance contextually, we identify four other types of coercive sexual relationships. Two of the four types, sexual harassment and sexual exploitation, are located in public-sphere institutions and are defined in terms of contractual rights and responsibilities. *Sexual harassment* refers to any attempted or completed sexual relationship by one individual within an organizational context that impedes occupational performance or opportunity of another individual. We use such relationships in corporate and governmental bureaucracies to illustrate sexual harassment. *Sexual exploitation* identifies attempted or completed sexual relationships in the context of treatment of clients by professional service providers. We illustrate sexual exploitation with such relationships between therapists and clients. The two remaining forms are found in the private sphere and are defined in terms of covenantal commitments. *Sexual abuse* refers to attempted or completed coercive sexual activity in the context of covenantal role relationships. Conjugal sexual relationships that are coercive in nature illustrate this type. Finally, *sexual molestation* refers to attempted or completed coercive sexual activity in the context of covenantal relationships involving socialization or care. Sexual relationships involving parents and children represent this type.

Sexual Harassment

The historical expansion of contractualism has involved a progressive partitioning of contractual, public-sphere relationships and covenantal, private-sphere relationships, such as the physical separation of home and workplace and the passage of nepotism laws (Kanter 1977). However, at least through the 1950s managerial workers remained strongly embedded in the organizations that employed them. Writing in 1956, William Whyte described the "organization man" as one who did not simply work for but *belonged to* the organization. Individuals fashioned out lifetime careers within an organization, and some organizations became renowned for loyalty to employees. Regulatory units in the form of personnel departments and grievance procedures were most often controlled by the organization itself (Dobbin et al. 1988). The available evidence strongly indicates a long history of occupational segregation of women through formal and informal control mechanisms. Women's occupational status and oppor-

tunities have been shaped not only by gender but also by sexuality (Kwolek-Folland 1994; Peiss 1983; Roy 1974). Rosabeth Kanter's *Men and Women of the Corporation* (1978) describes the legacy of this system as women in lower-ranking staff positions allied with more powerful males to create stability and opportunity for advancement. Women in higher-ranking positions had a limited number of adaptations available to them, all of which were gender related. Irrespective of rank, then, women's organizational status has been gender related, even if this only occasionally involved explicitly sexual alliances.

The nature of public-sphere organizations, worker orientations, and regulatory activity began changing quite rapidly beginning in the 1960s. As we have already noted, there was a massive expansion of corporate and governmental bureaucracies around which credentialed, middle-class careers were constructed. Bureaucratic structuring created a more positional, rationalistic form in which individuals became temporary functionaries. The shift from a hierarchical toward a more therapeutic style of bureaucracy accentuated the importance of contingent, voluntaristic relationships. On the organizational side, one result was weaker loyalty to individual incumbents. In fact, organizations were advised not to elicit too much commitment from employees. Randall states that "At high levels of commitment, it appears that the costs of commitment outweigh the advantages. . . . The firm may lose flexibility and find itself burdened with overzealous employees" (1987, 467). Managerial workers beginning careers in corporate and governmental bureaucracies adopted a stance based on comparable contractual logic. Randall observes that "greater numbers of employees are refusing to commit totally to the firm, and executive mobility between firms has been observed at an unprecedented high level" (468). The normative form of individual-organization connections thus is one of limited embeddedness. Trust is impersonal in that pledges on both sides rest on specified rights and responsibilities associated with organizational position (Giddens 1990; Shapiro 1987). Organizations become untrustworthy when rules and procedures are violated so as to undermine contractual agreements. As a noncontractual form, sexuality is by definition irrelevant to organizational performance, and coercive sexuality therefore represents a scandalous disregard for individual rights.

A major change in regulatory units also occurred with the active intervention of the state through extension of 1960s civil rights legislation

that articulated the contractual logic governing organization-employee relationships (Dobbin et al. 1988; Sutton et al. 1994). Regulatory agencies began specifically targeting gender-based employment violations, and claimsmaking has been facilitated by court rulings that reject requirements that claimants demonstrate psychological harm or impeding of job performance (Masters, Johnson, and Kolody 1995, 646). It is not surprising that tension between organizations and regulatory agencies has been high, as organizations are likely both to "shield" practices from external observation that will result in liability or loss of control and to decline enforcement of external norms.

While the formal structure of corporate and governmental organizations moved in a more contractual direction, informal patriarchal control persisted. Current survey estimates of sexual harassment of women yield rates from 40 to 90 percent (Mackinnon 1979; Tangri, Burt, and Johnson 1982; Janus and Janus 1993). In addition, episodes such as the U.S. Navy's Tailhook scandal offer every indication that organized patterns of sexual harassment are deeply entrenched in some organizations and that women in these situations often are well aware of their vulnerability. The rooting of harassment claims in contractual social arrangements is indicated by the rising percentage of males as claimants. Current survey data indicate that between 10 and 20 percent of men report being sexually harassed (Tangri, Burt, and Johnson 1982; Janus and Janus 1993). The succession of sexual harassment scandals thus became increasingly likely as the contradiction became more pronounced between formal structure, individual expectations, and regulatory mandates on the one hand, and de facto organizational practices and shielding on the other.

Sexual Exploitation

Contemporary therapy is a contractually linked restorative technique. Philip Rieff (1966, 68) states that predecessors to contemporary therapy, which he terms "commitment therapies," were designed to "commit the patient to the symbol system of the community." By contrast, the development of "analytic therapy" constituted a technique "to manage the strains of living as a communally detached individual" (1966, 74). Although the earliest therapies, most notably psychoanalysis and behaviorism, disembedded individuals from "positive communities," therapy was a prolonged process in which there was a major

power imbalance between analyst and analysand. The therapeutic relationship was premised on the analysand accepting a "patient" role through which to achieve insight and ego control, and the therapist acting as an agent of societal reintegration. Regulation of the therapeutic relationship was ensconced firmly in the hands of professional associations, which largely protected the profession and its practitioners (Derber, Schwartz, and Magrass 1990; Prilleltensky 1997). Certainly through its early history therapy was a male-dominated profession, patients were predominantly female, female sexuality was a major theme in psychoanalytic theories, and there was a persistent tendency to medicalize female characteristics (Tennov 1975). It is not surprising, therefore, that sexual relationships occurred between male therapists and female patients. Data on such relationships are sparse. However, the facts that a number of prominent therapists married former patients and that some privately acknowledged that they allowed patients to sexually "act out" suggests a continuous pattern of such relationships over time (Chesler 1972, 138–42).

Over the last several decades, the contractual context in which therapy occurs has been extended. Among the most important developments are the professionalization and credentialing of therapists, which has sustained their power base as experts; the bureaucratization of therapy, which has structured therapy in positional terms; and the inclusion of therapy as a contractual health care benefit, which has created a potential regulatory coalition. At the same time, the advent of humanistic psychology changed the meaning of therapy and in the process has expanded the clients' control. The fundamental premises of this perspective—that human beings naturally seek growth, have vast untapped potential, and should seek self-fulfillment unrestricted by social convention—meant that healthy individuals might use therapy as a means of realizing their true potential. Individuals entering therapy under these circumstances were likely to perceive therapists as fiduciaries and service providers and to expect that therapy would enhance individual autonomy, voluntarism, and self-actuation. By its nature therapy may involve an unusual degree of embeddedness for a public-sphere relationship, as clients must abandon psychic defenses and reveal inner psychic states. The therapy relationship has thus come under intense pressure as the profession assumes a more contractual form while maintaining that covenantal commitment to the client's well-being is integral to the

therapeutic process. In order to accommodate contractual logic, therapists are treated as fiduciary agents charged with protecting clients' rights and personal security while the client's capacity for autonomy and voluntarism is diminished. The ethical position required of the therapist is minimum embeddedness to effect personal reintegration, and the fiduciary relationship becomes untrustworthy when the therapist advances personal over client interests. Sexual relationships therefore are violations: sexuality needlessly embeds the client, by definition is not in the client's interest, and is rooted in an asymmetrical power relationship that compromises consent.

While the professionally organized practitioners have retained considerable autonomy, a variety of regulatory mechanisms have been created or expanded (Freidson 1984). With the bureaucratization of therapy, administrators defend organizational over practitioner interests; extension of credentialing increases professional oversight; and contractual provision of mental health benefits creates regulatory interests by health care and insurance firms. Recent developments in codes of ethics and law have increased the likelihood of regulatory unit intervention and expanded the grounds for claimsmaking. A number of states have criminalized therapist-client sexual contact, created provisions for civil suits by clients (negligence, breach of fiduciary trust, malpractice, breach of contract, infliction of emotional distress), and excluded client consent as permissible grounds for defense (Pogrebin, Poole, and Martinez 1992).

Although therapy has steadily moved in a more professionalized, bureaucratized direction, subject to expanded regulatory control, patriarchal dominance within the ranks of therapists has persisted. Evidence from surveys of various types of practitioners over the last several decades indicates rates of sexual contact with at least one client in the 5 to 10 percent range, predominantly involving male therapists and female clients (Akamatsu 1987; Gartell et al. 1986; Pope and Bouhoutsos 1986). There is reason to suspect that these figures represent significant underestimates. Most surveys are based on therapist self-reports (which tabulate violators rather than incidents), under conditions in which codes of ethics explicitly proscribe therapist-patient sexual contact. As with many other categories of victimization, the vast majority of exploited patients do not file complaints. Other data show that nearly two-thirds of therapists have treated clients who reveal a sexual relationship with a prior thera-

pist (Gartell et al. 1986). This finding also suggests that therapists are well aware that colleagues are involved in sexual liaisons with clients. This continued prevalence of informal therapist-client sexual relationships in the face of the contractual organization of therapy, individual expectations of therapy as a vehicle of empowerment and autonomy, and the formation of an activist coalition of regulatory units created the basis of a continuous series of revelations about scandalous conduct by therapists.

Sexual Abuse

The history of the family is one of tightly integrated kinship organization in the context of religious and community authorization, and sexuality was organized in the service of collective needs. The shift from extended family to nuclear family, with its basis in romantic love, created the foundation for strong, emotionally based personal connections. However, romantic love legitimated through marriage re-embedded individuals, women in particular, within the familial institution (Goode 1959). Lewis Coser (1974) refers to the resulting households as "greedy institutions" in their encapsulating qualities, particularly for "housewives." The strong emphasis on internal solidarity is evidenced by the problematizing of breakdowns in the integrity of families in the form of divorce and extramarital liaisons (Davies 1982). Danger was thus externalized in the service of a public rhetoric of family harmony (Miller 1990). There is strong historical evidence of sexual coercion in marital relationships simply by virtue of the connection between physical and sexual abuse, although abuse has been formally recognized only recently. The erosion of community and extended kinship networks along with an absence of state-authorized regulatory units left family members in abusive situations few public forums for claimsmaking, guaranteeing the virtual invisibility of such sexual coercion.

There have been dramatic changes in the nature of familial and intimate relationships over the last several decades. Family units have moved in a more contractually compatible direction, with less embeddedness in covenantal networks. As we have already noted, contracting for a variety of domestic services was integrally linked to the proliferation of two-career families; likewise, the contractual nature of other institutions offered families commodities and services rather than

networks of support (Weiss 1973). Correspondingly, there has been a diminution in the authority of traditional covenantal institutions, most notably church and family. The logic of intimate relationships has shifted as well. Relationships have assumed a much more contingent character, which Anthony Giddens defines as "pure relationships." This type of relationship occurs when individuals enter it "for its own sake, for what can be derived by each person from a sustained association with another; and which is continued only in so far as it is thought by both parties to deliver enough satisfactions for each individual to stay within it" (1992, 58). This means that love is "active and contingent" (61–62). These relationships are premised on a connection between autonomous, voluntaristic, self-actuated individuals who construct intimacy by exploring, developing, and disclosing their identities. Sexuality is a primary means of covenantal bonding in which individual unique essence can be expressed and intimate, personal connectedness can be achieved simultaneously. Giddens asserts that this new active and contingent form of love "for the first time introduces the ars erotica into the core of the conjugal relationship and makes the achievement of reciprocal sexual pleasure a key element in whether the relationship is sustained or dissolved" (62). Trustworthiness in such relationships is sustained by nurturing and honoring the integrity of the other while creating intimate connectedness. Coercive sexuality is taken as evidence of the instability of one's own identity, an inability to nurture one's partner's identity, and an inauthentic intimate connection.

State-authorized regulatory units moved on a parallel course. State regulation of traditional family arrangements has loosened in certain respects, such as no-fault divorce and prenuptial agreements designed to preserve the individual autonomy and contractual viability of marriage partners. At the same time, the state has assumed a much more activist role in preserving individual voluntarism within marital relationships through physical and sexual abuse laws. A coalition of feminist and social service reform groups provided the primary impetus for these laws in the 1970s (Tierney 1982). The movement continued with revisions of rape laws in a number of states during the 1980s. These legal reforms created provisions such as mandatory reporting and arrest, graded levels of sexual assault to facilitate prosecution, partial or complete exemption of marital relationship as a defense, and assessment of responsibility based on force employed rather than resistance offered (Ferraro 1989).

While the formal structure of family has moved in the direction of individual autonomy and voluntarism, informal male physical and sexual dominance has persisted (Gelles 1977). Sexual coercion in families is overwhelmingly male-initiated with females as victims. Several surveys report that about 10 percent of women report having been raped in marriage relationships (Russell 1982; Finkelhor and Yllo 1983). Based on such percentages, marital rape is the most frequent form of rape, although the rate of reporting by victims is extremely low. The link between marital rape and informal male dominance is underscored by the facts that frequently sexual assault is intended as punishment and that it occurs when couples are separated or divorced. The movement of the marital relationships in the direction of greater autonomy and voluntarism, partner expectations of intimate relationships as a source of individual fulfillment and empowerment, and regulatory intervention against physical and sexual coercion together created the conditions for a succession of revelations of marital sexual coercion in high-profile cases.

Sexual Molestation

In the history of the family, the positions of youth and women are comparable in their degree of embeddedness in the patriarchal family unit. The process of disembedding youth occurred slowly over a long period of time. The growing importance of the autonomous individual and the accompanying notion of individual development gradually led to the conceptualization of "childhood" and "adolescence" as distinct stages of life (Kett 1977). Schools were a major source of contractual influence as they "removed children from the family, set up a system of authority based on state sanction and expertise . . . and instituted a 'work' discipline strikingly similar to that of adult organizations" (Kanter 1977, 12). Nonetheless, youth remained strongly embedded in the family as their importance to families shifted from economic to emotional. Public-sphere institutions supported familial controls, and even childsaving agencies operated largely to protect the community and family rather than children (Platt 1969). It is not surprising, therefore, that sexual relationships within families, overwhelmingly involving fathers and daughters, assumed the form of "turning girls into second wives" who served as sexual partners and housewives (Gordon 1986, 254; Gordon and O'Keefe 1984). Such

relationships were secluded from public view and often were "normalized" within the family.

Changes in the status of youth within the family have been dramatic in recent decades. Children are much more likely to be socialized in the kind of contractually oriented two-career family we have already described. Contractual influences in the socialization process now involve ever earlier schooling. Daycare, for example, operates as "institutionalized, professionalized, and governmentally regulated group care" (Loeske and Cahill 1994, 195) designed to insure that children are "adjusted and attuned to bureaucratic life," through "control of human emotional irrationality" (Kanter 1972, 186–95). At the same time, within the family childhood and adolescence are firmly ensconced as developmental periods during which covenantal bonds are utilized to develop the child's unique essence. As this nurturance process evolves, children become an emotionally "priceless" asset in creating the same kind of love and companionship marriage partners seek with each other (Zelizer 1985). Children in these families expect that their identities will be cultivated and honored; and, ideally at least, behavior is coordinated through voluntary agreements. As one contemporary childrearing manual puts it, children should become "self-regulating, self-governing, inner-directed and separate" (Gordon 1975, 41; Cress and Bromley 1997). In this type of family, parents are treated almost as fiduciaries who provide children with the requisites for life in a contractual world while committing to their well-being during the "parenting process." Trustworthiness involves embedding the child sufficiently to provide necessary love and security while progressively disembedding to insure the capacity for eventual autonomy. To invoke the current colloquialism, parents should provide children with both "roots and wings." One major form of untrustworthiness is embedding a child so as to undermine movement toward autonomy, toward building voluntaristic relationships, and toward promoting self-actuation. Sexuality involving children is by definition untrustworthy parenting. It is involuntary since the power asymmetry precludes consent, it promotes the adult's needs at the expense of the child's, and it retards the child's progress toward autonomy by linking the child's emotional welfare to parental needs.

Regulatory agencies also began more active intervention in the socialization and discipline of children as part of the general campaign against violence and sexual coercion in families. The "discovery" of

child abuse by pediatric radiologists and the creation of the "battered child syndrome" was pivotal in that campaign (Pfohl 1977). While there were few cases of legal intervention in child abuse cases prior to the 1960s, by the end of that decade every state had enacted child abuse legislation. In the 1970s federal legislation designed to create uniform state statutory definitions of abuse specifically included parental sexual contact together with physical coercion in the definition of child abuse. The involvement of physicians in controlling child abuse weakened the traditional alliance between family and physicians and, along with mandatory reporting provisions, created the basis for increased intervention (Beckett 1996; Nelson 1984). Child welfare officials also came under increased pressure to identify warning signs of sexual and physical abuse (Howe 1992), and developed reporting procedures that privileged victim accounts (Margolin 1992).

Particularly given the normative priority of nurturing fragile individual essence in middle-class families, the prevalence of sexual relationships between fathers (or surrogates) and daughters might seem incongruous. However, the data indicate a pervasive pattern of male violations. Between 10 and 50 percent of women report experiencing sexual assault during childhood, and incest is reported by 10 to 20 percent (Finkelhor 1984; Finkelhor et al. 1990; Meiselman 1990; Russell 1986). It is particularly striking that rates of sexual abuse are quite high in the middle class where "pure relationships" presumably are most thoroughly institutionalized. The reporting of such relationships is extremely low since male violators use their power within the family to maintain secrecy. The shift in childrearing practices in the direction of contractually compatible socialization along with covenantal commitment, expectations from both parents and children that socialization will use voluntaristic methods consistent with the child's self-actuation, and expanded child protection mandates created the basis for scandal when sexual relationships with children were revealed.

Clergy Sexual Violations

We examine the case of clergy sexual violations, and the Catholic priest scandal in particular, separately here not only because it is the focus of this volume but also because it is a distinctive case in at least three respects. First, it is not clear what kind of case it is, at least from

the perspective of the participants. Some actors have treated the violations as a betrayal of the family-church alliance while others have defined it as a failure of fiduciary responsibility. Second, this scandal differs from the other four types in that state regulatory agencies have less control over churches than over secular entities. Moreover, neither the regulations governing exploitation nor those dealing with molestation anticipated religious organizations/functionaries as violators. Third, although there have been prior sexual violation episodes involving denominations, these were treated as isolated incidents. The current scandal appears to constitute a precedent-setting event that is likely to shape a new category of deviance (clergy malfeasance) and will influence the disposition of future incidents. We begin with an analysis of the structural conditions associated with clergy sexual violations in general, and then turn to the Catholic priest scandal.

Mainline religion has progressively assumed a more contractually compatible form since the Protestant Reformation. Secularization theory chronicles the movement of religion into the private sphere, and church-sect theory describes organizational changes that involve movement of individual denominations toward contractual compatibility. Still, the alliance between family, community, race, and ethnicity remained strong in a number of social locations. It was common for individuals to maintain strong religious identities and loyalties over their lifetimes, and, particularly in the conservative denominations, for individuals to be rather firmly embedded in their religious traditions. State control over churches has been minimal in the United States as a product of constitutionally mandated church-state separation. Denominations have therefore been largely self-governing, and some religions, such as the Catholic and Mormon churches (see for example Firmage and Mangrum 1988), have maintained rather elaborate internal judicial systems. As state regulatory agencies have expanded, the domain of these systems has steadily narrowed toward adjudicating only internal religious/spiritual issues. The extent of sexual violations in religious groups through American history probably will never be known, but both sexual experimentation and violations are part of the early histories of a number of churches and religious movements. If historical case studies are representative (e.g., Brown 1986; Curb and Manahan 1985; Daichman

1990; Foster 1981), there is no reason to believe that sexual violations were less frequent in earlier historical periods.

Recent scholarship on mainline churches emphasizes the movement toward more contractually compatible organization over the last several decades. As Mark Chaves (1993, 25) describes this change, religion is now "marketed," with the result that churches "become marketing agencies and the religious traditions become consumer commodities." Churches "rationalize their structures to manage efficiently both their current resources and their attempts to win new members (i.e., to expand their market share)"; "'Organization men' replace priests and prophets among the religious elite"; and "the organizational ethos becomes dominated by a 'logic of bureaucracy' rather than by theological concerns." There is a decline in religious authorization and greater contractual compatibility (Bromley 1997), which takes such forms as loosening of sacred narratives so as to emphasize individual empowerment, organizing as voluntary associations with a service orientation that resembles other civic associations, assuming a noncontroversial political stance that Williams and Demerath term "civic religion" (1991, 420), and incorporating therapy as a restorative technique. Individuals are more likely to make decisions about membership and attendance voluntaristically on grounds of convenience and personal preference. As Hammond puts it, "Greater numbers of persons now . . . legitimately look upon their parish involvement as their choice, to be made according to their standards. That involvement is now calculated as rewarding or not by individually derived equation" (1992, 169). Roof and McKinney reach much the same conclusion, stating that "The subjective aspects of faith have expanded as ascriptive and communal attachments have declined" (1987,67). As mainstream denominations gravitate toward more contractually compatible forms, definitions of trustworthiness move in the direction of impersonal rather than personal trust. To the extent that clergy assume managerial/therapist roles, normative expectations approach those for their professional, secular counterparts. To the extent they sustain a relationship as spiritual leaders of a church-family alliance, normative expectations approach those for extended family members. In either event, of course, coercive sexual relationships are scandalous.

While there has been some increase in state regulation of religion,

and certainly of the myriad "special purpose" organizations created by churches, specifically religious activity has remained largely outside state control. Denominational bodies continue to include administrative units that function in a regulatory role, and, like professional associations, they have been more likely to promote clergy loyalty and defend organizational interests than to seek redress for claimants. The absence of a regulatory unit to empower claimsmaking may well be the key difference between clergy sexual violations and the other forms of sexual violations discussed above. As clergy assumed a more professionalized, service-provider orientation and parishioners began orienting to churches as consumers and clients, the potential for claimsmaking increased. However, the absence of external regulatory agencies turned claimsmaking inward.

There simply are no systematic data on clergy sexual violations, since the various denominations have largely maintained internal control over adjudication of complaints. In the case of Protestant churches, for example, clergy heterosexual relationships with adult parishioners may be the most common type of incident (Shupe 1995). Since religious counseling is not state-authorized, incidents are less subject to external control than comparable incidents involving secular therapists. Nonetheless, publicly visible sexual scandals have rocked numerous denominations (e.g., Poloma 1989; Jenkins 1996) as well as various contemporary religious movements (Wallis 1983; see also Jacobs's contribution to this volume). The sheer number of individual instances and the diversity of groups involved in these violations suggest a rather pervasive pattern of deviance.

Turning to the Catholic priest scandal, the pattern of events represents a confirmation of the argument developed here. The Second Vatican Council launched rather dramatic reforms beginning in the 1960s that moved the church in the direction of greater contractual compatibility, expressed internally as an accommodation to modernism (Ebaugh 1991). The church proposed to reduce its authority so as to promote such accommodation, unevenness of change and reversals of course notwithstanding. For example, doctrine was to be analyzed and expounded in ways consistent with the methods and findings of science, and traditional covenanted religious communities were dismantled or reconstructed so as to reduce the perception of seclusion. Priests symbolically repositioned themselves to reduce social distance from parishioners through such means as delivering the

Mass in vernacular while facing the congregation. Correspondingly, parishioners were empowered through church assertions of mutual responsibility with priests for ministerial activity and of "collegiality" with higher-level clerics. There were also pledges to democratic process, the integrity and inviolability of individual conscience, and equality and human rights. Like their Protestant counterparts, of course, individual Catholics already were moving toward greater voluntarism and autonomy in their relationships with the church. At the same time, the hierarchical nature of the church combined with church-state separation meant that regulatory processes remained centralized and internal, thus permitting continued shielding of contested practices.

As the priest sexual scandal demonstrates, the movement of the church toward contractual compatibility did not eliminate strong covenantal relationships between church and family through priests. The informal access to children that many families extended to priests, often in their homes as extended kin, is one indication of the continued influence of priests in family life. Despite the increased autonomy of families vis-à-vis the church, the alliance continued to be a close one for many families. One familiar theme in families' detection of sexual violations is initial disbelief and subsequent appeal to church superiors rather than to secular authorities. It was only after continued dissimulation and manipulation by church officials that most families looked elsewhere for redress (Shupe 1995). The matter of expansion of regulatory mandate is somewhat more complex. The mandate of regulatory agencies did not expand specifically with respect to churches, and church shielding of violations persisted. What did occur was that the expansion of laws and regulatory agencies governing abuse and exploitation created the basis for intervention in the priest violation cases. Added to the availability of external agencies were the intense conflict between modernist and traditionalist coalitions within the church, each faction having its own motives for exposing internal violations (Jenkins 1998), and a grassroots family movement within the church determined to overcome official intransigence (Miller 1998). These two sets of groups provided regulatory agencies with critical information and witnesses. Of course, intervention was facilitated by the very nature of the violations, involving as they did violation of clerical vows, homosexual relationships, and child molestation.

Informal patriarchal influence thus increased through the continued informal authority of priests, embeddedness of families in the church community, and shielding by the church hierarchy of any violations that occurred. The extent of priest sexual violations is difficult to estimate; several factors contribute to underestimation. These include the massive resignations in the priesthood over the last several decades that increase the difficulty of identifying earlier cases; the continuing reluctance of church members to make formal, public claims; and the practice by church officials of demanding sealed records as part of case settlements. There is little doubt, however, that violations have been pervasive The most common estimate is that there are several hundred extant cases in the United States alone. Further new cases continue to be uncovered that increase estimates, and the number of revelations in European countries is now on the rise. Claims of violations by adults indicate that these patterns have been well entrenched over a number of decades. There is also compelling evidence that violations were known to church officials, that priests used their authority to coerce sexual relationships, and that church officials shielded the offending priests. This combination of practices created conditions highly conducive to precisely the kind of scandal that is now occurring.

Conclusions

The recent clergy sexual violation scandal has been treated by the media and social scientists as an anomalous episode of deviance, in an unexpected location, that requires explanation. Once the unrecognized problem was discovered, the search for precipitating conditions and perpetrators commenced. We offer a different perspective, a comparative perspective that seeks the structural sources of discovery in the form of narratives of sexual danger. We examine clergy sexual violations in the context of four other behavioral patterns based on coercive sexuality—harassment, exploitation, abuse, and molestation. In each case the behaviors have long-standing histories, have been relatively pervasive, were known within but not outside the arenas in which they occurred, were defined as problematic at about the same time, and initially involved women or children as victims.

We argue that the discovery of a series of coercive sexuality scandals is rooted in the changing nature of the two major forms through which contemporary social relations are organized, contractualism and covenantalism. The patterning of organizational structure, individual expectations and behavior, and regulatory mandates all shifted in the direction of greater compatibility with contractual requisites. However, informal patterns of patriarchal dominance persisted, creating the basis for scandals in which institutional arrangements are found to be untrustworthy. Coercive sexuality is a particularly powerful means of symbolizing inappropriate relationships, as it violates the premises of both contractual and covenantal social relations. The argument we have fashioned here does not constitute a full theory of scandal. Rather, our interest is in identifying common structural conditions out of which a series of scandals with the same theme appeared in different social locations at about the same time. Each scandal was discovered, defined, revealed, promoted, and resisted in a specific social location through the actions of specific coalitions of actors. A historical analysis of each scandal is necessary to detail these dynamics.

From our perspective, the most important insight to be gained from this analysis is that danger appears where there are breakdowns in social order. Scandals involve a particular kind of disorder, a breakdown in institutional trustworthiness. The requisites of contractual compatibility have made the autonomous, voluntaristic, self-directed individual the basic building block of the social order. In order for contractual and covenantal forms of social relations to coexist, both individuation and social bonding are necessary. There is danger to be found at social sites where the individual connects with social institutions such that some degree of individual embeddedness is called for. Coercive sexuality powerfully symbolizes inappropriate social relations because it violates the fundamental premises of both contractual and covenantal relationships. The process of discovering the problem, identifying the responsible agents, creating categories of claims-making, and invoking rituals of social control domesticates the danger. Clergy violations were discovered late in this series of scandals—largely, it appears, because regulatory units integral to the narration and validation of claims were not in place. The Catholic priest cases are therefore a precedent-setting episode, and future episodes will be profoundly shaped by the resolution of the present scandal.

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