Student Organizations as Conflict Gangs, University of the Philippines, Diliman

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te presence of youthful street gangs is a common, and L growing, occurrence in the United States (Klein, Maxson, and Miller 1995, Klein 1995). Some have noted an increase in suburban gangs and "mall rats" in American society (Woodon 1995). Also common is the existence of fraternity hazing and disruptive behavior among fraternities during parties and other social functions (Nuwer 1990, Sanday 1990). However, gang-like conflicts among college fraternities are rare. Such is not the case in other countries. The purpose of this paper is to present information and analysis concerning the existence of interfraternity violent conflicts on the campus of a major state university in the Philippines, the University of the Philippines, Diliman (UPD).

These fraternity members typically come from comfortable family backgrounds with a good educational foundation. To be admitted to this university, they must have scored higher than all other applicants on a standardized national entrance exam. UPD is considered a very prestigious university in the Philippines. Many of the alumni of these fraternities are public officials and statesmen of the country. They occupy positions of leadership, influence, and professional stature. It is reasonable to expect the current members of these fraternities to aspire to the same positions of power and influence that former members now occupy in the Philippines.

Yet, the activities of these fraternity members often involve

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violent conflicts, fights which result in injury, and occasionally, in death. This statement is not meant to imply that these fraternities do not peform many useful social services and educational functions on the campus or within the greater society, for that matter. Rather, the existence and regular occurrence of these violent conflicts pose not only a dilemma and behavioral problem to the university community, but they also present an interesting behavioral phenomenon for the sociological analysis of youth deviance. Here is a situation which involves behavior similar to youth street gangs in the United States but which is committed by middle-class. fraternity members at a selective university.1

Historical accounts from university administrators and faculty indicate that fraternity violence on the UP campus began at around the end of WWII, with the death of a fraternity pledge during a hazing incident. In the 1960s, a student was killed in a conflict between rival fraternities, signalling the escalation of fraternity violence from hazing of pledges to interfraternity fracases. Reports of such interfraternity conflicts have surfaced regularly since then, but no systematic data or studies have been published on these incidents.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss and analyze this phenomenon by addressing contemporary campus records of inter-fraternity

violence, responses of fraternity members to personal interviews, and possible explanatory factors.

Methodology

Data for this paper were gathered through two methodological procedures. First, university police reports on known incidences of campus violence were reviewed. These reports covered the period January 1, 1991 to December 31, 1994. These reports recorded the following information: (1) the names of individuals suspected of involvement in the incident; (2) their social organization membership, if any; (3) the identity of the victim(s) and assailant(s) in the incident; (4) the numbers of victims and assailants; and (5) a description of the incident, including time, location, weapons confiscated, injuries received by the victim, previous incidents and/or provocations between the members of the conflicting organizations, and witness accounts, if available. Questions concerning information in the police reports were answered by police supervisors. There were 124 reported police investigations of violent incidences involving fraternity organizations during this four-year period.

The second methodological procedure involved personal interviews with members of 20 fraternities on the UPD campus. The interview instrument was pretested

soon after the beginning of fall semester classes. Interviews were then conducted by UPD students, under the supervision of the senior author, from July 1994 to December 1994. The interviews were held in various campus locations, including the fraternity hangout, locally referred to as a tambayan, or, loosely translated, a standby shelter. The total number of interviews collected was 138. Some fraternities were not represented in these interviews. However, fraternities identified in the police reports as being involved in violent episodes with other fraternities were included in the interviews. Respondents were asked questions concerning their attitudes regarding social values, educational or academic goals, and peer relationships; parental knowledge and previous involvement in fraternity activities; and general perceptions concerning the image of their fraternity on the UPD campus.

Results

Police reports. Data from the UPD campus police files indicated 195 reported incidents of interfraternity violence or near violence during the four-year period of study. Of the 25 registered fraternities on the campus, 19 were identified on at least one occasion in these reports as either instigator or "victim." Five of these fraternities were identified in nearly two-thirds

of the reported incidences (Table 1).

A typical pattern of conflict was for a single fraternity member to be assaulted by a group of several "rival" fraternity members in a blitztype of maneuver. As the data in Table 1 indicate, this pattern occurred in 68 of the 195 incidences. Often, the police report indicated a previous encounter between members of the two fraternities, sometimes within hours of the reported attack. In these instances, the reported conflict appeared to be a retaliation for the earlier incident, in which the current "victim's" fraternity brother, or brothers, was victimized by members of the current offending fraternity. Less often (in 28 cases of the 195 incidents), there would be a "rumble" involving several members of rival fraternities in physical combat. In almost all instances of interfraternity conflicts, there were only two fraternities involved.

All of the attacks occurred in the campus, and most of these happened in just a few locations, including the student activities center, where the tambayans were located, and academic buildings. In addition, the majority of these conflicts occurred between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., with another "peak" period occurring from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Rarely did the attacks happen

past midnight (Figure 1). Sometimes, the offenders were reported by

witnesses or the arresting officers as wearing masks, but not always.

Table 1. Types of violent incidents between student organizations in UPD*

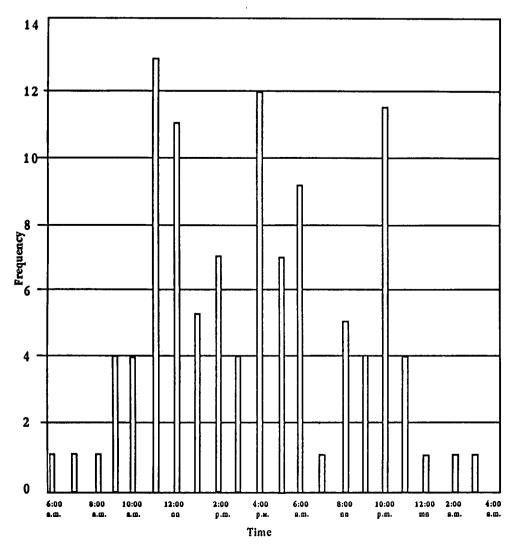
			Types of Violent and Near Violent Incidents								
Rank order	Name To of organi- zation	otal	Rum- ble	um- Ganged le up		Throw- ing of explo- sives	Vanda- lism	Carrying of wea- pons	Inti- mida- tion	Alco- hol use/ poses- sion	Hazing
	igma Rho	32	2	15	1	2	5	7	0	0	0
2 S	cintilla Juris	25	5	3	1	4	· 4	8	0,	0	0
3 A	lpha Phi Beta	24	5	8	1	5	1	4	0	0	0
4.5 T	au Gamma Phi	23	3	7	1	5	4	3	0	0	0
4.5. L	ipsilon Sigma Phi	23	2	7	0	3	5	5	1	0	0
6 A	lpha Phi Omega	11	3	4	0	1	2	0	1	0 ′	Ò
7 B	leta Sigma	9	1	4	0	. 2	0	2 .	0	0	0
8.5 P	i Sigma	7	2	2	0	1	0	2	0	0	0
8.5 T	au Alpha	7	0	5	-1	Ó	1	0	0	0	O
	lpha Sigma	6	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
10.5 E	Ipsilon Chi	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
12.5 E	leta Epsilon	5	0	4	1	Ò	0	0	0	0	0
12.5 L	atagaw Bro.	5	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0
14.5 E	ro. of the Filipin	os 3	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	. 0	0
14.5 V	anguard	3	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
16.5 P	alaris Confrat.	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
16.5 S	Sigma Kappa Pi	2	0	1	0	. 0	0	1	0	0	0
18.5		1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18.5	Pan Xenia	1	0	-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
22.5 E	eta Kappa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Samma Sigma Pi	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22.5 I	Cappa Epsilon	0	0	0	0	0	0	. 0	0	0	0
	Order of Aletheia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22.5 F	i Omicron	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	iilak-Silab										
•	Confrat.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tot	tal	195	28	68	9 .	25	24	34	4	2	-1

^{*}Based on 144 police investigations from January 1, 1991 to December 31, 1994

In the plurality of the incidences of actual physical assault, the weapons used were clubs (including bats and metal pipes). Other weapons used included explosives (such as "pillboxes" which were small, tighly-wound explosives), bladed weapons (such as knives and paper cutters) and assorted instruments, particularly fists, glass bottles, and tear gas. Firearm use was extremely rare in these conflicts (Table 2).

Categories are mutually exclusive.

Figure 1. Time of occurence of violence, by hours



*Primary data compiled by the UPD Investigation Section

Victims usually were beaten around the head and shoulders, with injuries recorded as slight physical injuries (Table 3). This means the victim was not hurt seriously enough to require hospitalization but rather, minor medical attention. However, in

December 1994, one fraternity member was beaten to death in one of these fracases, in front of several onlookers and in broad daylight. While the assailants were wearing masks, witnesses were able to identify many of them. They are now on trial for this crime.

Table 2. UPD fraternity violence: weapons used in the assault and frequency (January 1991 to December 31, 1994)

Weapons*	_		Frequency
Clubs:	Subtotal	221	
steel pipes		•	166
baseball bat			30
wooden club			. 22
chaco (flexible club)			2
rubber pipe			1
Hand-thrown projectiles:	Subtotal	75	
pillbox (explosives)			51
stones			15
molotov bombs (incendiar	ies)		9
bladed weapons	Subtotal	18	
paper cutters			9
knives			6
fan knives			2
long knife (kris)			1
Miscellaneous:	Subtotal	105	•
fists			59
glass bottle			19
tear gas			10
guns			4
ice picks			3
tennis racket			2
ax			1
gloves			1
firecrackers			(100 pcs)
paddle			1
pillbox materials			1
rattan stick			1
walking stick			1
wrench			1
	Total		419

These were confiscated and reported weapons by the police.
Source: UPD Police Department

The survey dealt with a variety of social characteristics and attitudes of the respondents. These will be explored in an effort to deter-

mine possible distinguishing features among members of these organizations and potential explanatory factors for fraternity violence.

Table 3. Number of persons involved and injured, and types of injuries sustained as a result of violent incidents between fraternities, by calendar year*

Year	No. of 1	Physical Injuries Sustained			
	Involved	Injured	Slight	Serious	Killed
1991 January					
to December 31	166	13	13	0	0
1992 January					
to December 31	211	20	17	3	0
1993 January					
to December 31	326	32	29	3	0
1994 January					•
to December 31	150	30	24	5	1
Total	853	95	83	11	1

^{*}Based upon investigation reports of the UPD Police

Interviews

Personal interview data revealed several attitudinal differences among the fraternities, as classified according to their appearances in the police files of interfraternity conflicts. Using the figures presented in Table 1, all 25 fraternities were categorized into one of three levels of violence. Five fraternities which were reported at least 20 times were classified as "high violence." Those appearing from 5 to 11 times were categorized as "mid-violence," and the remainder were described as 'low violence."

The number of interviews conducted with each fraternity is presented in Table 4. Some fraternities were not represented in this survey. Their members were either not available for interviews or were uncooperative with the interview

process. However, all of the high violence fraternities, and all but one of the mid-violence ones, were represented.

There is no claim that the sample in this survey is representative of the fraternities identified by the respondents, or of fraternities in general. The number of fraternity members is not known by UPD officials, perhaps not even by the fraternities themselves. Strength in numbers is considered a valuable asset for the fraternities. maybe particularly for the more violent ones, and membership figures are not published. Fraternity identities in the police reports were derived from member confessions and/or evewitness identifications. Given these circumstances, complete representation in any survey is problematic and difficult to ascertain. Nonetheless, crude differences among fraternities may be observed in such a survey,

and it is in this spirit that the following discussions is presented.

Table 4. Student organizations in three groups according to level of violence*

Group	Number Surveyed
High violence (between 23 and 32 total violent incidents):	
Alpha Phi Beta	23
Scintilla Juris	8
Sigma Rho	11
Tau Gamma Phi	4
Upsilon Sigma Phi	8
Mid-violence (between 5 and 11 total violent incidents):	
Alpha Phi Omega	7
Alpha Sigma	11
Beta Epsilon	, 6
Beta Sigma	7
Latagaw Brotherhood	7
Epsilon Chi	NS⁵
Pi Sigma	15
Tau Alpha	5
Low violence (between 0 and 3 total violent incidents):	
Beta Kappa	1
Brotherhood of the Filipinos	. 3
EMC ²	2
Gamma Sigma Pi	· NS
Kappa Epsilon	3
Order of Aletheia	NS
Palaris Confraternity	· 3
Pan Xenia	6
Pi Omicron	NS
Sigma Kappa Pi	4
Silak-Silab Confraternity	NS
Vanguard	4
Total	138

^{*}Police data from January 1, 1991 to December 31, 1994

One possible source of motivations for violence might be generally termed 'legacy.' Perhaps members of fraternities have rela-

tives, including fathers, who were members of the fraternity, and learned of the violence, and possibly of the animosities, among

bNS means not in survey.

certain groups on campus from these relatives. In addition, members might have parents who they feel accept their participation in violent activities whether or not these parents were ever involved in a fraternity or sorority. The results of this survey indicate that the fraternity members were not significantly distinguishable in terms of familial legacy. Members of more violent fraternities felt their parents approved of their activities compared to members of low violence groups, but it was not clear from these responses if the parents approved of the violent activities of their sons. Furthermore, it should be emphasized that these responses were from the perspective of the respondents, not of the parents themselves or other relatives.

Another possible source of influence on violence among these fraternities is the age factor. Perhaps the more violent groups are composed of younger students who might be more susceptible to violence as a means of expressing group loyalty or of defending one's sense of honor and pride. Significant age differences among those surveyed did appear. The mean age of the respondents belonging to the low violence organizations was 20.11 years, 19.91 years for the mid-violence group, and 19.35 years for the high violence fraternities. In addition, the mean age when they joined the fraternity was 17.96 for the low violence members, 17.86 for the mid-violence respondents, and 17.67 for those belonging to the high violence fraternities. These numbers support the view that violence among fraternities is, to some degree, a product of relatively young age and, correspondingly, of social immaturity and peer susceptibility of fraternity members.

Besides these social characteristics of fraternity members, the survey also measured attitudinal views of the respondents. One such attitudinal expression concerned the approval of violence to resolve disputes. The responses to this item are presented in Table 5. As the figures indicate, there was no significant difference among the three levels of fraternities with respect to approval of violence to settle disputes. However, the percentages in Table 5 indicate that members of the most violent fraternities express greater approval for using violence to settle disputes than do the members of the other fraternities, and this conclusion also applies to the "don't know" or "no response" category. Perhaps in this instance, hesitancy to provide a clear, positive response to the statement implies unstated approval of violence.

Table 5. Violence as an acceptable way to settle disputes*

Response	Low v	Mid- iolence	High
No	23	48	36
	(88.5%)	(82.8%)	(66.7%)
Yes	2	6	10
	(7.7%)	(10.3%)	
(18.5%)		` '	
Don't know	1	4	8
or no response	(3.8%)	(6.9%)	(14.8%)

*Results: chi-square= 12.09, df = 6, p-value = .059

The respondents were also asked to rank the importance of the following four values in terms of the importance of these values in their lives: "a democratic and just society"; "a good UP education"; "strong moral values"; and "good relations with the barkada." The first of these value statements yielded no significant differences fraternity members among surveyed. With respect to the value of a good UP education, the percentages revealed that the more violent fraternity members accorded this value lower importance than did the respondents from the low violence fraternities. but the differences were not linear (Table 6). For example, a greater percentage of the most violent fraternity members reported this value as having both the lowest and the highest importance in their lives. Perhaps these fluctuations reflect genuine disagreement among the respondents, or perhaps they reflect the overall importance of having a "good UP education" among students, including members of fraternities.

Table 6. Value of a "good UP education"*

Value	Low v	Mid- iolence	High
Lowest importan	ce 2	6	7
•	(7.7%)	(10.3%)	(13%)
Next to lowest	4	12	9
importance	(15.4%)	(20.7%)	(16.7%)
Next to highest	14	13	11
importance	(53.8%)	(22.4%)	(20.4%)
Highest	6	27	27
importance	(23.1%)	(46.6%)	(50%)

*Results: chi-square= 12.09, df = 6, p-value = .059

The responses to the importance of strong moral values indicate that members of the more violent fraternities tended to see this value as having lesser importance in their lives than did other respondents (Table 7). This value was of lowest

Table 7. Value of "strong moral values"*

Value	Low v	Mid- iolence	High
Lowest importan		4	8
-	(3.8%)	(6.9%)	(14.8%)
Next to lowest	3	12	20
importance	(11.5%)	(20.7%)	(37%)
Next to highest	10	29	17
importance	(33.5%)	(50%)	(31.5%)
Highest	12	13	9
importance	(46.2%)	(22.4%)	(16.7%)

^{*}Results: chi-square= 17.07, df = 6, p-value = .009

importance to members of the most violent fraternities, but it was of highest importance to those from the least violent organizations.

It is with regard to the importance of the barkada, however, that the strongest and most consistent differences among the respondents appeared (Table 8). A barkada is a social group, basically, a peer group, which is an important social characteristics in Philippine society, including settings encompassing criminal or deviant behavior (Aldaba-Lim 1969, Jocano 1975: Chapter 8). It is not surprising to learn that such a grouping is of importance to some fraternity members. The order of its importance in the lives of these respondents, according to the reported levels of violence among these different fraternities, however, is not only the most statistically significant finding of this study, but it has important implications for the dynamics of violence in this setting. Over 46 percent of the members of the high violence group stated that the barkada was of highest or next to highest importance in their lives, and this figure was several times higher than for the other two groups. Moreover, fewer members of the most violent fraternities indicated the barkada was of lowest importance in their lives than did respondents from the other two levels of fraternities.

It was not clear from the responses in Table 8 just how extensive the conceptualization of a barkada was to the respondents. For example, while it may be assumed that the concept applies to the immediate members of a fraternity or to social organizations. it may also apply to the extended membership of these groups, including the alumni and adult supporters of the group. The full extent of such an identification, particularly for the more violent groups, could have an impact on their behavior and attitudes regarding the acceptance of violence in certain situations. What is clear from these findings. however, is that identification with the barkada is strongly associated with violence among fraternities. and this factor should be included in attempts to explain and control fraternity conflicts.

Table 8. Value of "good relations with barkada"*

Value	Low v	High	
Lowest	18	28	23
importance	(29.2%)	(48.3%)	(42.6%)
Next to lowest	6	22	6
importance	(23.1%)	(37.9%)	(11.1%)
Next to highest	1	6	18
importance	(3.8%)	(10.3%)	(33.3%)
Highest	1	2	7
importance	(3.8%)	(3.4%)	(13%)

[•]Results: chi-square= 26.51, df = 6, p-value = .00018

Conclusions

From the results of this paper, several behavioral patterns and attitudinal characteristics were evident. Most of the violent incidences occurred in the form of a gang attack of several members upon a lone, isolated rival member during daylight hours, in prominent and well-populated areas of the campus. In addition, most of these violent incidences involved a small fraction of fraternities, referred to in this paper as "high violence" fraternities. Furthermore, the majority of conflicts involved hand-wielded weapons (guns were almost never used), and resulted in minor or slight physical injuries. While there was no evidence of a familial legacy among the various fraternities, which might account for some of the long-standing violence, the more violent groups were composed of younger members who, collectively, looked upon their group, the barkada, as the most important force in their lives.

These conclusions suggest several possible explanatory factors only a few of which can be addressed in this paper. These explanations are based on sociocultural aspects of Philippine society.

One possible explanation of fraternity violence is the cultural acceptance of violence as a matter of settling disputes, a general "subculture of violence" (Wolfgang

and Ferracuti 1967) which fraternities may be emulating in their own way. Although such violence may involve a heavier use of firearms than was found among the UPD fraternities, the general pattern of resolving disputes through violent means may be an overriding, cultural conditioning factor in fraternity conflicts.²

Another possible explanatory scenario involves the allegiance of members of violent fraternities to their group, and such faithfulness may be more likely to occur among younger, more impressionable students. While such loyalty and peer influence may be expected in most social groups, the strength of this connection seems greater among the more violent groups. Perhaps this connection is accidental. However, it might be necessary to invoke strong sentiments of group identity and loyalty among members, especially with newer members, in order to intensify the violence and animosity which seem to exist among rival fraternities.

The importance of the barkada to violent fraternity members was already discussed in this paper. The presence of another cultural value in Philippine society might facilitate the socialization process of newer fraternity members to the notion that rival fraternities are the "enemy." This value is known as pakikisama, which refers to "giving

in" to the wishes and directives of others, particularly older members of one's social setting. Studies indicate this value is introduced in early stages of socialization, primarily through the family setting (Guthrie and Jacobs 1966:Chapter 11). However, the concept of pakikisama is also seen in other social settings (Lynch 1970:11), presumably including fraternity groups.

This explanatory path not only suggests the presence of younger, more impressionable members within the more violent fraternities but also the existence of a conscious, perhaps calculated, training and socialization process involving the virtual indoctrination of animosity and violence in pledges and younger members of the fraternity. The younger average age of the members of the more violent fraternities, and the retaliatory nature of most of the recorded instances of interfraternity violence on the UPD campus, support this interpretation.

Other researches in the Philippines suggest the presence of a significant amount of middle-class delinquency (although not gang delinquency), which some interpret as an indication of a general feeling of invulnerability to sanctions and prosecution among upper middle-class youths (Shoemaker 1992). Analyses of sociocultural values and lifestyles

in some areas of the Philippines further contribute to this explanation by suggesting the presence of a "big people" mentality, in which political and economic power are thought to provide favoritism and privilege (Machado 1983, Lynch 1984).

Another cultural aspect of Philippine society which may be operative in this situation is the value of avoiding shame, or hiya, upon oneself or one's family (Bulatao 1964, Lynch 1970). In the present context, shame may become relevant when a student is failing in school. To avoid the humiliation of being dismissed from school because of failing grades, the student might purposefully engage in disruptive behavior, in the context of fraternity violence, in order to be disciplined for this reason rather than for the reason of failing in school.

The present analysis indicates that most instances of fraternity violence occur during the second half of any given term but not during the exam period (data not shown). This pattern provides some support for the view that violence is used to camouflage a student's poor academic performance. However, systematic analysis of this scenario is not possible with the existing data since the academic records of individual fraternity members are not available. (As mentioned earlier, fraternity

membership is not indicated in university records.)

Avoidance of shame may be a factor in the explanation of fraternity violence in another way. Insults or threats to the fraternity can be used to foster a stronger sense of group identity and loyalty. In effect, the fraternity becomes a kind of family for its members, and threats to the group become interpreted as threats to the individual's sense of pride and dignity, values which are highly regarded in Philippine society.

Many of these sociocultural themes are discussed in Jocano's discussion of street gangs in a Manila slum (1975:Chapter VII). Although exact ages were difficult to determine. Jocano indicated that most of these gang members were "young," but young adults would seem to be more accurate (the average age of a street gang member, according to Jocano, was 25). Furthermore, most gang members had been arrested or had served time in prison, and they typically came from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. These differences between fraternity members and street gang members render direct comparisons between the two kinds of groups difficult to maintain. Moreover, current systematic information on street gangs in the Philippines is lacking, as Klein correctly notes (1995:217).

However, it is interesting that many of the sociocultural values and behavioral patterns are found within both settings. It is uncertain just what, if any, connection may exist between street gangs and fraternity groups. Certainly, in this study, there was no indication that the fraternities had any association whatever with street gangs in the slums. In addition, Jocano's discussion provides no indication that street gang members have any connection with universities or fraternities in any manner, except perhaps as individual workers or laborers on college campuses. Yet, there may be a more general pattern of cultural diffusion which is manifested in violent and otherwise deviant behavior among certain groups of young adults which cuts across the social class spectrum.

Clearly, we are far from grasping a complete understanding of the violence observed in this study. The explanatory scenarios identified in this paper offer some possible clues, but additional study seems particularly warranted for this topic before more definite interpretations may be offered. Such analyses would not only provide more understanding of the violence among the fraternities on this Philippine campus but may also offer a fuller knowledge of patterns and motivations of violence among youths or young adults in general.

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Endnotes

¹Lomnitz (1986) identifies young gangs called porros in Mexico. Some of these gangs are found on university campuses, but their members tend to serve the function of fomenting social and political unrest through terrorism, not the pursuit of a collegiate education (1986:15-16). Moreover, members of porros tend to come from lower-class backgrounds. As Lomnitz (1986:19) observes, "The porros is a rebel of the lowincome neighborhoods..." Thus, the presence of gang activity within a fraternity setting would be unusual in Mexico.

²In a personal conversation with a fraternity member on the UPD campus, this reason was

given as a major explanation for the level and persistence of interfraternity violence on the campus. Essentially, this fraternity member justified the violent conflicts among rival fraternities because, as he saw it, that was the way political disputes and power struggles were handled Philippines. the fraternities, therefore, were just following the behavior patterns they saw among adults in their society. One potential problem with this line of reasoning is that similar patterns of fraternity violence are not found in all campuses across the Philippines, although the fuller extent of fraternity conflicts in the country is not known.

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