

Lifestyles and Violence: Homosexual Victims of Assault and Murder

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ABSTRACT

Qualitative data from three sources are combined to assess lifestyle characteristics of homosexual victims of violent crimes. Data sources include studies of homosexual fathers, participants in public restroom sex and homosexual victims of murder. Descriptions of victims and offenders are provided and circumstances surrounding their interaction are detailed. Some homosexual men, those most fearful of being stigmatized as gay, adopt a covert lifestyle which tends to make them subject to criminal victimization. Establishment of gay love relationships and involvement with gay community institutions may reduce vulnerability to violent crimes.

A New York, heterosexual bar has a two-headed axe on the wall with a sign reading "Fairy Swatter." Although the bar's patrons may perceive all homosexuals as equally deserving of violent treatment, victims of such abuse are more apt to be people with a particular kind of homosexual lifestyle. Ironically, this living arrangement seems to be one characterized by covertness and adopted by those homosexual men most fearful of being stigmatized as gay.

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This article is a preliminary report on comparative lifestyles of homosexual males who have been victimized in violent crimes. We define "lifestyle" as arrangements which characterize domestic and intimate interactions. Just as there are a variety of heterosexual lifestyles, there are several homosexual lifestyles, and our concern is with comparing the relative propensity to crime victimization attendant upon varying lifestyles *within* the male homosexual worlds.

In this article Thorp's (1972) distinction between "homosexual" and "gay" is utilized. "Homosexual" refers to same-sex erotic behavior and orientation, while "gay" refers more specifically to those who identify and affectionally associate with a community of like-minded individuals. The more general term, "homosexual," is also employed when there is no knowledge about the person's degree of integration into the gay community.

This article begins by addressing the empirical adequacy of literature on homosexual victimization. The nature and extent of the qualitative methods used in the present study are then detailed. The findings from the research are discussed in which two primary questions are addressed: which homosexual lifestyles appear most subject to victimization?; and what is it about these victims' lifestyles that makes them susceptible? Suggestions for curtailing their victimization conclude the discussion.

PRESENT KNOWLEDGE OF HOMOSEXUAL VICTIMIZATION

Social scientific literature on homosexual murder victims is limited to four sources: Swigert, Farrell, and Yoels (1976), Fattah (1971), Sagarin and Macnamara (1975), and Rupp (1970). Each of these is discussed below. The study by Swigert, Farrell, and Yoels discusses five sex-related homicides, two of which involve homosexual victims. Due to the small number, they wisely avoid generalizing on the topic but provide valuable synopses of the cases.

In Fattah's (1971) research fifty theft-related homicides occurring in Austria were studied. He was able to identify two victims who were accused of homosexuality by their murderers. In spite of the small percentage of victims identified as homosexual, Fattah states that he has no doubt regarding "the special predisposition of the homosexual to become a victim of a theft-related murder" (p. 17).

Sagarin and Macnamara (1975: 16) suggest that homosexuals, as a category, expose themselves to greater risk of criminal victimization. Their two major hypotheses are:

1. Homosexuals are disproportionately the victims of criminal acts.
2. The significant variable in their differential victimization is their homosexuality.

After stating these generalizations, the authors provide a caveat:

The evidence supporting or refuting these hypotheses is not now at hand, but from a variety of sources a picture emerges of the nature and scope of homosexual victimization (p. 16).

The social scientific sources provided by Sagarin and Macnamara include a study by the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice of all crimes occurring in one week in nine precincts on the north side of Chicago (including one murder—that of an unemployed homosexual artist who was killed by a man he picked up in a bar), as well as Fattah's study, cited above. In addition, they cite a work by Houts (1970) which mentions the murder of a homosexual man by a lover-roommate which the author claims is "based on an actual murder that took place in New York." Finally, they include references to two literary sources (Sagarin and Macnamara, 1975:18).

Based on six incidents of homicide, three of which are fictional, Sagarin and Macnamara claim that "a picture emerges of the nature and scope of homosexual victimization" (p. 16). With no more than these data, Sagarin and Macnamara speculate that "the greater visibility of homosexuals, with larger numbers proclaiming their predilections and life styles," may result in "lesser fear by the potential victim of social opprobrium or of police apprehension, all without producing greater security against victimization" (1975: 23-24). The implication of the above is that victimization of homosexuals may be expected to increase as they gain liberation. This assertion will be examined in light of our findings on the victims' lifestyles.

On the basis of even less empirical evidence, Rupp, in his study, asserts that "anyone who has investigated sudden unexpected and violent deaths for any length of time will

come to the realization that the male homosexual is prone to this type of death with much greater frequency than the average citizen" (1970:189). Rupp's essay fails to inform on the topic he addresses, provides no data to support his assertion, and may be seen as little more than a diatribe against what he considers to be "the pernicious and insidious evil of homosexuality" (1970: 191).

Both Sagarin and Macnamara's study and Rupp's study reviewed above constitute, at best, speculative essays with the few examples cited to substantiate the authors' claims having been acquired through fortuitous circumstances. Without controlled studies of randomly sampled homosexual and heterosexual victims, it is not possible to determine whether either group is disproportionately victimized. This task would be particularly difficult since the size of the covert homosexual population is not known.

Furthermore, neither of these two studies discusses the plurality of homosexual lifestyles, thus obscuring lifestyle as a possible explanatory variable for *within* group differences of criminal victimization. In this article, we combine three data sources in an attempt to explore the latter point and ascertain lifestyle characteristics that may make *some* homosexual men subject to victimization.

METHODS

Data for this paper come from three qualitative sources: Miller's (1978) research of homosexual fathers, Humphreys' (1975) study of impersonal sex in public restrooms, and the authors' joint investigation of homosexual murder victims. Taken together, these three studies provide evidence suggesting differential homosexual victimization by lifestyle.

Study of homosexual fathers. Miller (1978) interviewed 50 homosexual men who are or have been heterosexually married, have fathered children and presently perform a parental role. They were located through multiple-source, snowball samples across Canada and the United States. This exploratory investigation sampled a wide range of homosexual father lifestyles. These men, who range in age from 24 to 64, manifest various degrees of overtness, various living and child custody arrangements, and a variety of occupations representing a broad spectrum of socioeconomic backgrounds.

In-depth interviews, lasting up to four hours each, were audio recorded. Additional data were obtained, where possible, by interviewing in the fathers' residences and by interviewing wives, children, and gay lovers. Interaction with significant others and peers was also noted at parties, "cruising" spots, gay baths, and bars. Research on two-thirds of the respondents has continued for three years since their initial interview (Miller and Humphreys, 1980). These longitudinal data include correspondence, field notes

from participant observation, as well as taped and untaped conversations (Lofland, 1976; Schwartz and Jacobs, 1979). During data gathering, respondents were questioned, among other topics, about any criminal victimization they may have experienced.

Tearoom research. Humphreys (1975) studied impersonal sexual encounters in public restrooms. This research involved observations of the interaction in those settings and later interviews with a sample of 50 men observed in the "tearooms," as these facilities are called by participants. Although all respondents were asked about their arrest records and any problems they may have had with physical or mental health, there were no specific inquiries regarding criminal victimization they might have experienced. However, twelve cooperating respondents were interviewed in greater depth, four of whom discussed assaults to which they had been subject. Humphreys was also able to follow later events in the lives of all fifty interviewees as reported in local newspapers. This allowed him to learn more about the crime victimization of these subjects.

Homosexual victims of murder. Both authors gathered information on homicides with homosexual victims over a five-year period from 1973 through 1977. The method involved accumulating as exhaustive a collection of such murders as possible, chiefly from secondary sources. Data were collected on 161 such victims from six gay newspapers, 11 metropolitan newspapers, and from the files of two cooperating police departments. In one instance, Humphreys visited the site of a murder and interviewed witnesses to the crime. In another case, the authors interviewed a "pimp" whose male employee had murdered a customer. As word of this research project spread, acquaintances of victims mailed newsclippings and personal comments to the researchers. In spite of limits on data access and the impossibility of random sampling, the multiplicity of sources delineates the violent acts and their homosexual victims.

The following criteria were used in assessing which cases qualified for the study:

1. Was there strong evidence that the crime victim was homosexual in orientation or behavior? (a) Did a news source identify him as homosexual? (b) Was there evidence that a homosexual act or liaison was involved in the murder? (c) Did circumstances of the crime point to homosexual involvement on the victim's part? (d) Did evidence around the body link him to a homosexual lifestyle? (e) Did friends identify him as being homosexual?
2. We included only those cases where the crime was related to the victim's homosexual lifestyle. For example, we excluded the case of a gay organizer who, while returning home from choir practice, was mugged and murdered. We omitted from the sample a homosexual college professor, known to one of the researchers, who was killed when he surprised a burglar in his apartment. This fatal encounter apparently involved no lifestyle factors, since subsequent trial evidence revealed that the burglar had also brutally attacked a woman in a neighboring apartment a short while before murdering the professor. We also excluded the case of a gay bartender, employed in a heterosexual bar, who was gunned down by a disgruntled customer.

3. Cases of homosexual inmates murdered in prison were eliminated, since the institutional setting confounds the lifestyle variables.
4. Finally, we excluded from the sample all cases where the nature of the lifestyle was not indicated or where the degree of the victim's homosexual identity was unclear. This criteria led us to omit cases of multiple homicide and arson of gay institutions. In total, 23 cases were eliminated due to insufficient or obscure lifestyle data. Also excluded were 32 victims of arson, 48 victims of mass murders, and 6 homicides that took place in England. We retained 52 cases of individual Canadian and American homosexual murders for which the data were adequate to assess the victim's lifestyle.¹

Because the victims, being dead, could not be interviewed, we developed an index that relies on variables easily ascertained from newspaper, court, and other archival records.² The index consists of four gross indicators that measure the victims' relative openness of homosexual lifestyle along a co-vertness-overtness continuum. Although other variables might be preferable for precision, we found these to be ones most consistently reported by the data sources.

The first two indicators measure the relative freedom of individuals to reveal their homosexuality in their home and work lives. The other two measure the extent of known affiliation with gay institutions and the degree of openness about homosexuality with significant others. In short, the first pair measure the extent to which victims' homosexual behavior is potentially constrained, and the others measure the extent to which they appear to have yielded to these inhibitors. Finding a bi-modal distribution of scores on the index, we ranked the cases as relatively "low" or relatively "high" in homosexual overtness.

FINDINGS

Since gay newspapers were the chief source of data for the homicide study, we assumed that the vast majority of victims would have lived relatively open gay lifestyles. Contrary to expectation, 63.5% of those murdered ranked low on the overtness index. If the victims were relatively "closeted," how then did gay newspapers find out about them? In re-examining our data, we discovered a surprising 38.5% (20) of all victims were identified as homosexual only after testimony about sexual orientation was raised by apprehended offenders. Another 42.3% (22) were identified as gay through special circumstances of the offense (e.g., the victim's carrying a homosexual movie ticket).³ Given the criterion of eliminating all reports with obscure lifestyle data—generally cases of relatively closeted men—the finding of victims' low overtness rankings represents a conservative estimate.

Most of the homicide victims studied were thus characterized as maintaining a highly covert lifestyle. These men were not well known to the gay community, and gay newspapers generally discovered their homosexuality only through sources external to both the community and victims. We refer to these victims as "homosexual marginals."

Although this category of cases might be seen as "closeted," not all closeted people are homosexual marginals. For example, many gay men are relatively covert in the sense of being non-public in presentation of their homosexual identities, while simultaneously maintaining love relationships with other gay males. Their knowledge of and participation in the gay world may be extensive; however, by keeping their audiences carefully segregated, they remain somewhat closeted. In contrast, homosexual marginals tend by definition to lack gay identity, engage in furtive sexual encounters, lack skills that facilitate operation in the gay world, and exist on its perimeter.

More than one identifiable lifestyle may be seen as encompassed by the term "homosexual marginal." Certainly, the lifestyles of homosexual fathers and other heterosexually married homosexuals differ in significant ways from that of closeted bachelors who, although similarly marginal, have a different set of lifestyle contingencies. The overt category also contains a number of distinct lifestyles: e.g., communal activists, gay singles, and cohabitating couples.

Certain homosexual lifestyles may be rare among victims of homicide. For example, those homosexuals with a celibate lifestyle are not found in cases from the murder victim study, nor are those whose sexual outlet is exclusively with "male masseurs." Gays in sexually exclusive, "closed couple" (Bell and Weinberg 1978) arrangements are also uncommon in our sample of murder victims. Contrary to popular belief, we found no deaths resulting from sado-masochistic sex play.

PROFILE OF THE HOMOSEXUAL MARGINALS

We have noted that the relatively covert men, marginal to the gay culture, comprise the majority of victims in our homosexual murder study. Thirty-six percent of these homosexual marginals were heterosexually married at the time of their death. There are no available data on the number of others

who had been married at some earlier time. A third of these homosexual husbands were killed while away from home on a business trip, by male hustlers or hitchhikers they had picked up.

Evidence from Miller's (1979a,b; 1980) study of homosexual fathers corroborates findings of the homicide investigation. Respondents in his research who report the greatest victimization are also those who score lower on the overtness scale. In contrast, gay fathers who rank high on this index (generally those no longer living with their wives) report little victimization. Presently married homosexual men, participating in furtive sex, experience more "close calls" in this regard. Additionally, these men tend to lack both knowledge about the gay world and social skills necessary to operate effectively in it (see Hooker, 1965: 99-100). They have little information about gay institutions or opportunities for social life, such as house parties, bars, gay religious congregations or political clubs. They lack familiarity with gay media and are not generally aware of either local or national gay organizations. In brief, these men are peripheral to the gay culture.

The homosexual marginal fathers generally report being shy in approaching and conversing with gay men, suffering intimidation in gay groups, and having few or no close gay friends. They are the ones most apt to characterize the gay world with such negative evaluations as "shallow, bitchy, unstable, snobbish, and a waste of time." One respondent commented:

I'd spend ages concocting an excuse to get an evening away from home. Then I'd drive around endlessly, desperately trying to discover where gays hang out; maybe find a (gay) bar or bath and, more often than not, I wouldn't even score—only games and stuck-up posing. Go home frustrated. Risk my marriage for that? So I started on hustlers and street pick-ups. Better luck there.

Lacking the knowledge, skills, domestic arrangements, and time to interact successfully in the gay world, respondents turn to more freelance methods of acquiring homosexual partners.

As our homicide data reveal, these marginal methods sometimes have fatal results. An example is the case of a clergyman who left his wife and three children at home while attending a national church convention in a distant city. Shortly after midnight on the convention's second day, he

checked into a slum hotel with a juvenile whom he identified to the desk clerk as "my brother, Steve," although his family later assured police that he had no such brother. About 3:30 that morning, a resident of a neighboring room heard screams. Later, the victim was found dead of multiple stab wounds, naked and lying in a pool of blood on the floor. A transient "hustler" was later arrested for the murder.

Operating on the periphery of gay institutions and social networks offers these men little support and protection.⁴ Conventions of interaction are more ambiguous and thus more subject to misinterpretation. Covert homosexuals on rigid time schedules and feeling uncomfortable about their sexual desires may not take the time to play the waiting games of cruising nor cool-headedly negotiate expectations. An offender in the homicide study comments:

I thought he was going to pay me (for sex). He used to. But he wouldn't this time, so I beat him.

The pressured, rushed activity of homosexual marginals may sabotage their aim of obtaining safe sex, particularly if they are imprudent in their hasty sexual approach. Partners may respond violently if they perceive they are being dealt with in an aggressive or perfunctory manner (see, for example, Corzine and Kirby, 1977: 183). Another offender is reported as saying:

He pushed me around and treated me like shit. He was cold and bossy, like a big-shot. He could've at least treated me nice. I hated how he made me feel.

Compounded victimization. Respondents in the homosexual father study report assaults by "gay-bashers," theft of their autos, and being robbed by hustlers. One subject was driven to an isolated area on a cold evening, stripped, beaten, and abandoned; and another was anally raped at knifepoint by a pick-up. Likewise, some respondents in a tearoom study were blackmailed, assaulted by a gang of young toughs, and two subjects were even murdered by a hustler (Humphreys, 1975: 89-90,99,129). An ironic finding, however, is that involvement in tearoom activity, while exposing the participants to possible arrest, provides less danger from violence than other cruising locales available to this covert population. All the victims in these cases fit the profile of the homosexual marginal.

Being victimized is often cause for guilt (Geis, 1975), but being victimized in the course of pursuing socially devalued goals produces concomitantly greater guilt and shame. Many homosexual father respondents seriously confronted their homosexuality for the first time as a result of suffering criminal victimization. In being attacked, they did not so much come out of the closet as have the closet involuntarily ripped from around them. Such unanticipated exposure may be psychologically devastating. Two homosexual fathers, for instance, report having considered suicide after such experiences.

Homosexual fathers' pain of victimization is heightened by the perception of being powerless to right the wrong, thus being multiply victimized. These respondents felt constrained from seeking medical attention for their wounds, although some sought therapy for emotional difficulties resulting from the attack. Few reported the incident to police, since they lacked identifying information on the offender and believed the case to be unsolvable. Others avoided reporting because they perceived the police to be unsympathetic. Indeed, blackmailed tearoom respondents report that most of the offenders are police officers. Finally, the assaultive event so diminishes the self confidence of these men that their emotional resources to press charges may be undermined (Humphreys, 1972: 23-26; Harry and DeVall, 1978).

An example of these factors is expressed in the case of a homosexual father who was hospitalized after an almost fatal attack from a hitchhiker he had solicited for sex. His wife, children, and most friends were startled to learn of this heretofore hidden aspect of his life. Even though a near murder had been committed, no charges were pressed due to the stigmatizing contingencies of the case.

Offenders against homosexuals. In the homosexual as in other worlds, marginals tend to be thrown into interaction with other marginals (Lindquist and Hirabayashi, 1979). Those who occupy the more central arena of the gay culture tend to find both social and affectional opportunities in friendship groups and relationships with lovers and move in a network of gay institutions (Humphreys, 1979a,b). Homosexual marginals, on the other hand, are more apt to spend leisure time in the company of runaways, derelicts, drug abusers, and hustlers encountered in bus terminals, all-night coffee shops, or on the streets (Hoffman, 1979; Humphreys and Miller, 1980).

Given this differential association, it should not be surprising to discover that 64% of the homosexual marginals in the victimization study were murdered by pickups and hitchhikers, most of whom could be identified as hustlers by references in the data to the exchange of money. Only 37% of the offenders against those who scored high on our overtness index could be classified as pickups.

Forty-two percent of those victims with a more overt gay lifestyle were killed by "gay-bashing" gangs or groups of bikers. Only 12% of the homosexual marginals were murdered by such marauders. Because such anti-gay gangs seek victims in areas known to be frequented by gays—areas which the marginals often avoid for fear of exposure—they are likely to find the more openly identified gay men in these locales (Klibanoff, 1979).

Hustlers, although less obviously predatory or homophobic than gay-bashers, may react with ambivalence towards their own sexuality and with rage toward their sexual partners. Forty-nine of the 50 respondents in Furnald's (1978) study of male street prostitutes had spent some time in juvenile correctional institutions. Although the median age of his respondents was only 18 (mean = 18.2, range = 15-21), 8% of these hustlers had been incarcerated in adult prisons. Sixty-four percent had been arrested at least once, and 14% were arrested seven or more times *prior* to the time they began hustling.

The extent and severity of hustlers' criminal careers is important in terms of dangers they pose to the relatively isolated, homosexually unskilled, often desperate men who seek them out for sexual services. Humphreys' interviews with street hustlers over a ten-year period reveal that a third of them report being sexually assaulted during the incarceration that nearly all experienced. With no programs of therapy offered in the nation's institutions for victims of jail rape, it is not surprising that those thus victimized occasionally react in rage towards furtive, frightened, and sometimes insensitive sexual partners (Bryant, 1977: 257).

That intense rage is present in nearly all homicide cases with homosexual victims is evident. A striking feature of most murders in this sample is their gruesome, often vicious nature. Seldom is a homosexual victim simply shot. He is more apt to be stabbed a dozen or more times, mutilated, *and* strangled. In a number of instances, the victim was stabbed or mutilated even after being fatally shot. In all homicides in the United States during 1976, a knife was employed as the murder

weapon in only 17.8% of the cases. Our sample of homosexual victims reveals stabbing as the chief cause of death in 54% of the murders. Only 19% were shot, usually in conjunction with beating or stabbing, another 19% were beaten to death, 6% strangled or smothered, and one was thrown to his death from a roof.

Street hustlers are not, as some policing agencies contend, innocent children who are seduced and molested by "dirty old men" (Humphreys, 1978). Such a moralistic simplification ignores the fact that hustlers tend to be young men with a great deal of criminal experience and traumatic incarceration in their backgrounds, ill at ease with their own homosexual feelings and behavior, angry, and in need of money to finance poly-drug habits (Furnald, 1978). The homosexual father quoted above, who saw hustlers and street pick-ups as less frustrating than cruising gay bars, as less threatening to his marriage, as offering "better luck," risks assault, robbery, and even death.

Are gay lovers the offenders? Rupp's moralistic article designates jealousy between gay lovers as a major causative factor in the murder of homosexual men (1970: 190). Sagarin and Macnamara (1975:18) also recognize disputes between lovers as a cause, but wisely place these behind liaisons with street hustlers as explanatory of such crimes. Interviews with police officers also indicate a folk wisdom that lovers' quarrels and triangles are responsible for a high proportion of homicidal victimization among gays.

In light of these indicators, we searched reports on our murder victims for clues that love relationships might be involved in the homicides. One 1974 case was found in which a lover of some years past returned to seek financial assistance from his former roommate, whom he shot in anger after his request was refused. In Austin, Texas, another man was fatally shot by a friend with whom he had argued. We found no indication that this victim and offender were roommates or lovers. No case in our sample could be classified as resulting from a dispute between present lovers or members of a love triangle.

This finding is particularly surprising considering the consistent pattern in American crime data of one in every eight murders occurring between spouses and of a like percentage

taking place between members of a heterosexual love relationship or triangle. Nearly one in four murders in the United States is thus related to a conjugal or other heterosexual lifestyle. What accounts for these murder and lifestyle differences between hetero- and homosexuals?

An answer may be that gay lovers, lacking the restrictions of marriage bonds, separate easier than their heterosexual counterparts. Gay couples, therefore, may not need to resort to such extreme means as murder in order to dissolve a union. Gays often complain about the lack of social sanctions to support gay love relationships: religious ceremonies, although available, are seldom used; states do not recognize marriage contracts between same-sex couples; families may not be supportive of such relationships; and there are no mutually produced children to hold lovers together (Plummer, 1978). However, the very lack of social supports for gay love relationships may enable them to fall apart without the fatally explosive force that so often characterizes the disruption of heterosexual unions.

Persons adopting any of the several heterosexual lifestyles need not live in fear of "straight-bashing" gangs outside their singles' bars, nor are even the most marginal threatened by male prostitutes who may react with murderous rage to an approach that triggers the memory of prison experiences. But non-gays do have cause to fear death from the hands of their nuptial or cohabitational partners.

Our study of homosexual victims provides evidence suggesting that gay men whose lifestyle combines heterosexual marriage with homosexual desires and furtive activity are threatened with the worst of both worlds. Driven to the margins of gay society for sexual arrangements that may prove fatal, they are also subject, like heterosexual men, to assault by disgruntled wives. Many of Miller's (1979b) homosexual father respondents report being attacked by spouses, punched, and having bottles, knives, or scalding liquids thrown at them. Of the variety of lifestyles we have been able to examine from our samples, that of the heterosexually married homosexual may prove to be most subject to criminal victimization.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Lifestyle emerges as a major variable in evaluating crime victimization of homosexual men. This study's heavy reliance

on archival data, from a sample of homicides for which no claim of representativeness can be made, precludes decisive evidence of direct, causal connection between lifestyle factors and disproportionate vulnerability to violence. Due to the small number of cases and the exploratory nature of this research, findings from the present study should be seen as tentative and suggestive for further investigation.

In lieu of a major study that will permit representative sampling of large numbers of murders, no conclusions can be reached about differential rates of homosexual and heterosexual murder victimization. Until that time, we are thrown back on availability samples and limited data. However, since the literature to date offers little empirical data on the subject, it is important to present even preliminary findings that emphasize the need and direction for more extensive investigation.

Findings of the research confluence reported in this paper suggest a need for further examination of lifestyle impact on susceptibility to victimization. Our data indicate that lifestyles minimizing overtness structurally limit homosexual opportunities to clandestine sex with demonstrably dangerous pick-ups in unprotective settings. Such conditions leave the way open for attack by criminal opportunists who would exploit the secrecy. Homosexually marginal lifestyles also reduce the possibility of establishing intimate relationships within the more safeguarded gay culture.

Moral entrepreneurs and other agents who promote social conformity prescribe that homosexuals get married, settle down family-style, and fit in. For married homosexuals who are unable to relinquish same-sex activity, this prescription directs them into a singularly risky lifestyle. The homosexually oriented person who tries to escape stigmatization by fleeing into a covert lifestyle may become trapped in an even more fearful situation. What he may gain in avoidance of stigma, he loses in susceptibility to crime victimization.

Although Sagarin and Macnamara speculate that a possible effect of homosexuals coming out of the closet is to increase their victimization (1975: 23-24), our data suggest the contrary. Movement of homosexual marginals into openly gay lifestyles appears to decrease their vulnerability to violent crime. The gay world not only offers a variety of social, affectional, and cultural opportunities but also tends to protect members from those who may victimize them.

NOTES

¹ During the five-year period of study, we found no case of a woman identified as lesbian being involved as either victim or offender in homicide. Given the disproportionately low involvement of women in violent behavior, such a hiatus in data should be surprising. Since lesbians may be less visible in our society than gay men, they may also be less recognizable as victims (See Simon and Gagnon 1967; Lewis 1979:13).

² The following index was constructed to distinguish among various homosexual lifestyles along a covertness-overtess continuum:

1. Degree of autonomy in familial habitation.
2. Degree of occupational autonomy.
3. Extent of involvement with gay institutions.
4. Amount of homosexual disclosure in primary relationships.

A rating along a three-point scale (from 0 to 2) was assigned to every victim for each of the above indicators. Each case accumulated a possible score from 0 to 8 to designate the relative degree of homosexual overtess. In view of a bimodal distribution of scores, we ranked those scoring 1 through 4 as "low" on the index (none scored "zero") and those scoring 5 through 8 as "high." Thus, 63.5% ($N = 33$) ranked "low," and 36.5% ($N = 19$) ranked "high" on the index.

³ Of relatively covert victims in the murder study, 57.6% were identified as homosexual by special circumstances or evidence at the scene of the crime; 45.4% were identified as such by apprehended offenders; another 6.1% were identified by informants (close friends, acquaintances, or anonymous callers). Of the relatively overt victims, 15.8% were identified as homosexual because of special circumstances; offenders identified 26.3%; 10.5% were identified by informers; and 57.9% were recognized as regular participants in the gay community. Note that these percentages sum to more than 100% because some victims were identified by more than one source or manner.

⁴ John Knight, prominent homosexual murder victim featured in Bell's *Kings Don't Mean a Thing* (1978), provides an example of the homosexual marginal who was poorly integrated into the gay world. Bell's fascinating book is not discussed in this paper only because it is not a social scientific source, *per se*. To date, it should be noted, the most valuable literature on homosexual murder victims and offenders has been provided by freelance writers and journalists (e.g., see Hardy, 1979).

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