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PASSING AS DEVIANT: Methodological Problems and Tactics*

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An often discussed and omnipresent feature of the development of sociology has been the interplay of theory and research methodology. As new data-gathering techniques are designed and implemented, new theoretical issues are made problematic at the same time as old problems become subject to empirical treatment. Conversely, theoretical and conceptual re-orientations give rise to methodological innovation and renovation. Where access to data is opened theoretical assessment is made plausible; where theoretical assessment is desired a pressure to gain access to data is generated. One way of conceptualizing these interchanges is in terms of the relationship between the organized intelligence techniques and the knowledge of social reality that characterize the enterprise of sociology at any given point in time. Sociology proceeds only on the heels of its intelligence advances.¹

Historically the sociology of deviance has been concerned primarily with questions about the deviant actor--his biography and his motives to violate social rules. The major intelligence sources have been proverbially unreliable crime statistics and interviews with deviants who have been processed through the control system. Very little information has been obtained from what have been called "uncaught" deviants.² Methods for gathering information on deviance and deviants in natural settings have been neither developed nor implemented. As a result of this intelligence failure,³ little is known about how deviant behavior is organized in society and, inter alia, what the determinants and consequences of that organization are. It

seems clear that the method of field observation is particularly suited to studies in the organization of deviance.

The purpose of this essay is to discuss a number of central aspects of an unexploited information gathering strategy-- "passing as deviant." Passing differs from ordinary participant observation in that the sociologist conceals his role as researcher from the group being investigated; that is, he works undercover and he works at being taken for a participant. Conventional behavior also may be explored by passing as a participant, but the researcher in the conventional setting faces a different set of contingencies from those which present themselves in the deviant locale. In this exploratory discussion we focus upon passing as deviant, although some of the problems and tactics surely apply to passing in conventional settings. It is our contention that this method eliminates much of the data contamination and obfuscation that often results from the more orthodox research techniques. Of course, as with any methodology, a set of difficulties and limitations inhere in the technique of passing as well.⁴

Here the aim is twofold: on the one hand we outline some of the ways in which the social organization of deviance hinders the investigator who would pass as a deviant participant, and on the other hand, some of the ways by which the social organization itself can be mobilized by the investigator in the interests of his research. It follows that research problems of a psychological or logistical nature are omitted in this presentation. The problems of entrance, exposure, conformity,

and access to information are discussed. We draw heavily on our current study of mixed male and female homosexual bars ("gay bars") and party life for illustration of the technique. Reliance upon our own study is coerced largely by the paucity of earlier research which has utilized the method of passing.

The method of passing articulates best, perhaps solely, with subcultural forms of deviance rather than with relatively atomized deviance or individual deviant acts. Research sites potentially amenable to this method might be unconventional styles of life (e.g., hippies, bohemians, homeless men⁵), deviant occupations (pool hustling,⁶ pan-handling), illegal passtimes (gambling, marijuana smoking, commercialized after-hours drinking), radical groups (religious cults,⁷ extremist political organizations, exotic or esoteric clubs such as flying saucer watchers or nudists), and social control settings, (rehabilitative⁸ or punitive organizations). In contrast to the more atomized forms of deviant behavior, subcultural deviance provides a comparatively routine round of activities that can be located in time and space. Finally, since subcultural groups are by their nature dependent upon social participation for their maintenance they often may be approached by outsiders if, indeed, they do not actively recruit them.

The Problem of Entrance

Deviant groups, like conventional groups, are to a large extent organized according to the social characteristics of the participants--their sex, race, age, social class, educational attainment, and so on. Pervading the problem of entering

or making contact with a deviant group or enterprise are considerations of the degree of congruence between the social traits of the investigator and those of the deviants. The social traits of the researcher in large part determine the particular groups in which he can attempt to pass. This is the first principle of passing.

There are three levels at which the researcher encounters a problem of entrance: location of a set of deviants whose traits roughly match those of the observer, admission into the deviants' physical setting, and acceptance into the social network therein. The permeability of these entrance points varies markedly across deviant groups. For example, the location of the hippies in San Francisco is patently not problematic although the location of a bookie joint might well be. On the other hand, an invitation to a hippie party might be difficult to acquire just as it may be no mean task to get beyond the door of a bookie joint.

The problems encountered by the passing researcher at each level of entrance into any deviant group are very similar to those facing the novitiate deviant and, paradoxically, to those facing the plainclothes policeman. At all three levels, though primarily at the social networks entrance point, an outsider--be he a novitiate deviant, police officer, or sociologist--finds it necessary to cope with a kind of double closure one confronts around many kinds of subcultural deviance; to wit, one may gain entrance into the deviant enterprise only if he has had previous connections with it, but he can gain such

connections only if he has them. Hence, merely to enter the unconventional scene is itself a problem. This is one case of how deviant groups, unlike many conventional groups, contain boundary mechanisms which render their social organizations relatively inaccessible to non-members.

Many deviant groups must control information pertaining to themselves so that it is more or less unavailable to outsiders. The problem met by the passing researcher at the level of locating a deviant group is predicated upon the amount of information about itself that the deviant group can release as it exists in a more or less hostile social environment. To the degree that an unconventional group maintains a covert or sub rosa social organization one tactic for the observer is to establish contact with a participant or a non-participant who has relational linkages to the group. In order to determine the locale of illegal after-hours drinking places (sometimes called "blind pigs"), for example, one might frequent taverns where there is reason to suspect that patrons of such places gather earlier in the evening. In our case, in order to locate a gay blind pig it was necessary to make contacts in a particular gay bar; we have since learned of three of these establishments with little difficulty. Such persons as bartenders, bell hops, professional musicians, street peddlers, taxi drivers, or even employees of social control agencies often can be good intelligence sources on deviant locales in general.

Once a locale is found admittance may or may not be granted. It is at this point that the need to pass often

begins. A researcher may locate the meeting place of an exotic cult, for example, but attendance at one of its gatherings may be denied unless he assumes his passing role; in short, one must avoid being cast into a role similar to that of the sight-seer at the gate of a nudist camp. At the doors of many gay bars there stands a "gate-keeper," one of whose functions it is to keep away unwanted outsiders. At one gay establishment the male and female of the research team stood closest to the door while a male companion stood slightly to the rear; here admission was not attained. At another such place which we successfully entered the two males stood together so as to make the female appear to be the hanger-on. Likewise, it may be necessary to dress the part, use the cosmetics, and assume the "body idiom"⁹ of the typical participant: one's personal topography may provide the first clues to his deviant biography and hence his deviant credentials.

Once physical admittance is gained, the boundaries which are often most difficult to cross are those at the level of the group's informal social networks. Inside of many gay bars, for example, there are mechanisms that function to siphon out tourists, outsiders, or persons who unknowingly select a homosexual territory--e.g., generally poor service, perusal of age identification with magnifying glasses, overpriced drinks, and glares or comments from the "regular" participants.¹⁰ To offset these regulative responses the passing researcher can verbally or physically behave in a way which links him to the ongoing patterns of behavior. The researcher's task at this

point is to feed acceptable information into the informal intelligence and counter-intelligence systems of the deviant group itself. A bit of argot in one's speech might be helpful just as sitting with one's back to the bar and facing the customers is de rigueur in most gay bars. It should go unsaid that much of the prescribed behavior in a deviant setting is by no means self-evident; indeed it is this realm that in part constitutes what is problematic in the research itself.

The researcher must adapt his tactics to the social organization of the group itself. If, let us say, the group is differentiated along status lines, such as by race, class, or age, limits upon the researcher's personal alignments are predetermined. Just as the social characteristics of the observer determine which among many deviant groups he can study by passing, so do they partially qualify him for membership in certain sub-groups and exclusion from others. Like any other social participant the researcher has both alterable and unalterable traits. His unalterable traits--his sex, race, age, and physical appearance--predetermine the accessibility to him of the various pockets within the group structure. These traits largely account for how the investigator is coded by the participants as a potential contact within their matrix of relationships.

Besides the socially meaningful physical traits which he cannot alter there are the researcher's alterable or biographical traits, his social and educational background, his store of experiences, his likes and dislikes, his style of conduct

and humor, to name a few. In brief these traits may be avowed by or imputed to the researcher; they may pertain to his past, present or his future. The researcher attempting to pass necessarily alters his outward link to the group: he must seem to be a participant. However, in order that his role playing be comfortable, credible, and consistent we suggest that his alterable traits, save that of his spurious identity as a deviant, not be altered. Thus, disguises are to be avoided. The passing researcher minimizes personal alteration. For the few suspicious persons we have met in the course of our research there has been nothing so disarming as our candid admission that we happen to be sociologists.

The Problem of Exposure

The passing researcher faces the constant possibility of being found out. There is a need for tactics to conceal the nature of his relationship to the group. However, it is our experience as we practice passing in gay circles that more immediate than the problem of being exposed as researchers is that of being unmasked as "straight" (non-homosexual). In the typical deviant group a stigma attaches to conventionality vis-a-vis its dimension of nonconformity. Put another way, our impression is that in the gay world far more opprobrium would be mustered toward a secret heterosexual than toward a homosexual doing undercover research.

In any case, while it is a simple matter to obscure one's purposes for passing, successful passing itself warrants some conscious maneuvering. The obvious way to obscure one's

purposes is to tell as few outsiders as possible of the study's existence and to beg the confidence of those one does inform. Like exposure as a researcher, furthermore, exposure as a conventional necessitates manipulation of one's external relation to the group. Here it is a matter of minimizing the permeability of the investigator's conventionality in his everyday life. An appropriate tactic is to maximize the social and physical distance between the deviant site and the researcher's usual round of activities. A student of a revolutionary group, for instance, would do well to avoid being caught visiting a stock broker's office. Quite literally, then, the passing researcher must build a measure of difficulty into his own study--where there is easy access for him to the deviants likewise there is easy access for the deviants to him. Although occasionally this distance may stir some curiosity among the participants as to why one would travel so far or why one is unacquainted with a similar crowd in his own locale, we have found this contingency to be easily handled: the fear of jeopardizing one's career, for example, is taken as a perfectly legitimate excuse.

The salience of the problem of exposure as a conventional is somewhat higher during field trips than between them, however. The passing researcher is in an exceedingly marginal situation, for even if he succeeds in passing as deviant he then faces the same problem of exposure that is faced by the deviants qua deviants. In some deviant groups the researcher who seeks to pass may be either taken for or taken by an agent of social control--the police. Because there is some marijuana

use in the gay crowd of our study the participants show some concern about any ambiguous outsider. Since the role of the undercover sociologist by no means has been institutionalized the only undercover role available for imputation is that of the policeman.¹¹ To an illegal deviant, what often is suspicious about a "suspicious person" is that he may be a social control agent.

Moreover, where the deviance is illegal the passing researcher may run a risk of arrest. This may be true even if the researcher himself does not engage in illegal acts but is merely present at a site where such acts occur. Indeed, to a sociologist unfamiliar with this method of research it no doubt would appear that the most serious problem of exposure arises when the passing investigator faces the deviants' expectations that he will participate in the deviant behavior itself. Of course this matter loses its importance when the deviant behavior is neither illegal nor distasteful. However, it must surely seem that this problem merits attention in a study such as one of homosexuality. Thus participation or "conformity" in an illegal subcultural setting is itself a methodological and tactical concern.

The Problem of Conformity

Once the boundaries to a deviant site are forded the matter of one's relation to the context in the eyes of the participants is resolved ipso facto. To a large extent subcultural deviants, like so many policemen, phenomenologically divide the social world into two categories, the deviant and

the conventional. This tendency is hardly puzzling, given that there is empirically an organized bifurcation between unconventional and conventional locales. It is precisely this organized bifurcation that creates the problem of entrance and thereby poses an intelligence challenge to the sociologist with designs to pass.¹²

A consequence of the phenomenological aspect of this division is that, with entrance achieved, the researcher is assumed to be deviant. Participants in the gay world tend to use two exhaustive categories--gay and straight. A person is or is not gay; no category exists for marginal cases, just as there is no manifestly organized locale for marginal cases. Hence, if a researcher has met the entrance requirements for a relatively closed gay bar or after-hours party, he is taken to be qualified on the lowest common denominator of a gay locale.

It should be apparent that this assumption of deviant orientation is of substantial tactical value to the researcher: he need not attempt, behaviorally, to establish his deviant identity by, say, feigning a homosexual interest in others. On the other hand, of itself this identity imputation does not provide immunity to the problem of deviant participation.

The problem of deviant participation will take on different contours depending upon the type of unconventional behavior being investigated. The pressures upon the researcher to engage in illicit conduct vary across deviant groups, so generalizations about tactical responses would very likely be overdrawn in view of the state of knowledge of the organization of

deviance that now obtains in sociology. Nevertheless the situation of the passing researcher in a study of homosexual bars and parties may serve to illuminate the more general problem of conformity.

Scrutiny of the organized mechanisms and constraints that frequently operate in gay bars lead one to the conclusion that even where many of the participants are oriented toward the recruitment of sexual partners¹³ no one is obliged to accept an invitation. Moreover, no one is likely to be subject to a direct approach with manifest sexual purposes. Rather, the process of partner recruitment is in its essentials an interactive process that tends to blur the line between seducer and seduced. Through the exchange of a variety of cues the level of intimacy is gradually escalated until either one party withdraws or the sexual encounter is actualized. It is emphasized that the escalation process is a highly fragile one, with the exchange of cues by its nature allowing for a graceful exit by either or both parties at any point. In short, gay approaches are indirect. In many a gay setting direct approaches are taboo; indeed, they are considered in the vocabulary of the participants "fruity." For the researcher the only, albeit imperative tactic is knowing the cues. It might be added, as a moment's reflection reveals, that were it not for what might be called the rules of approach the gay scene, peopled by individuals pursuing their sexual interests as they saw fit would take on the character of a Hobbesian sexual situation. That it is not, makes passing possible. By definition the

organization of sexual recruitment, like any social organization, implies the possibility of its circumvention. We venture to say that a sociologist is more apt to be directly approached by a homosexual in a comparatively unorganized setting such as a public restroom or a park bench than he is at an established gay scene. It is not unlikely that organized options for avoiding deviance are available in other subcultural settings.

For the researcher, however, the problem of conformity includes facets other than that of dodging illicit behavior. Prominent among these facets are other constraints and controls upon behavior that contribute to the regulative order of subcultures, such as rules circumscribing the relational system and those defining the proper content and style of conduct in sociable interaction. When the subculture is not productive of deviant acts, when it involves, for example, an unconventional style of life or passtime, the tactics of the researcher need only to relate to these features of the subcultural order.

To the extent that the subculture is partially organized along status lines so must be the behavior of the researcher since he is by dint of his role subject to the same normative constraints as are the participants. In good part this topic refracts back to that of the researcher's alterable and unalterable traits and their implications for attachment to one or another status group. The concern here is with the consequences of such an attachment for the researcher's behavior. Here is another case in which the researcher must follow the prescriptions inhering in the group structure. It is assumed

that personal contacts between status groups will be more or less limited within and across various subcultures of deviance; it follows that the personal contacts of the investigator are limited accordingly. It is our impression that the investigator must abandon plans he might at first have to establish personal relationships with all of the participants despite whatever damage might seem to be done to his intelligence function. An illustration may be taken from one of the bars we have been investigating during the course of our study. In this bar there exists a rather striking racial cleavage in interpersonal contacts such that a participant's associations are in general limited to members of his own race. We have found as white researchers that part of our research role necessarily involves some, though for the most part passive, discrimination against Negroes. For us the choice was between having the bulk of our contacts with whites or Negroes, since a white person who crosses the racial line is stigmatized as a "dinge queen" and consequently finds himself ostracized by most of the white participants.

Apart from the normative aspects of status differentiation, there is in any subcommunity some degree of regulation of general styles of sociable interaction. There are preferred topics of conversation, special vocabularies, forms of wit and humor, modes of greeting, expected levels of situational involvement,¹⁴ and the like. In the gay bar, perhaps just because it is a bar, the participants seem to demand a high level of fun orientation or "gaiety" and sanction overly somber

friends or associates. Though the passing investigator in the homosexual world can avoid sexual encounters, he cannot avoid being gay in this second sense.

The Problem of Gathering Information

The major portion of the discussion thus far has centered upon some of the obstacles that may arise in a sociologist's attempt to pass as deviant. Several means of overcoming these obstacles have been suggested. There nevertheless remain problems that the researcher faces as he seeks to fulfill his intelligence function. There are essentially two kinds of information that a passing researcher must preoccupy himself with gathering: tactical information and data, the former referring to the kind of knowledge the researcher needs in order to adapt effectively to the situation, the latter to the kind of knowledge he needs in order to describe accurately the various dimensions of the situation that he makes problematic in his study. The quality of data gathered depends largely on the researcher's success in adapting to the situation.

One available tactic for the researcher in his attempt to adapt to some deviant groups and subsequently to acquire knowledge about them is to take on, openly, the role of the novice. This may involve an avowal of total ignorance about the deviance in question, or more likely, an avowal of ignorance about the deviance as it is carried out in a particular setting. It is difficult to conceive of many groups, much less those with comparatively closed cultural systems, without places for newcomers eager to be oriented to the people, customs, and

activities at hand. As the researcher is taught the rudiments of adaptation to the situation he simultaneously has access to information regarding the methods and mechanisms of socialization into the group and its activities, the status of the person being socialized, and, of course, some aspects of the group to which he is being introduced. Here is one instance of the constant interpenetration between tactical information and data.

A recognized newcomer to a deviant subculture is defined by the participants as a person in need of tactical information. Thus, there is enormous room for exploitation of this role by a sociologist. By playing the role of the novice the researcher is given the right to probe for details pertaining to the group. The right to probe may often be highly profitable, since many deviants do a good deal more than deviate. The gay bar is a case in point: in our study we have often been struck by how seldom the topic of homosexuality is broached. Rather, more conspicuous are such topics as the music, the temperature of the beer, new hairdos, an acquaintance's level of sobriety, etc., while homosexuality is, at it were, only latent in the situation. While it is typically necessary for one to appear as deviant before he may enter an unconventional setting, once upon the scene deviant proclivity is taken for granted and frequently more pedestrian concerns come to the fore. Hence the limited right to probe granted to the newcomer may be highly propitious.

Paradoxically, information not infrequently accrues to the passing researcher as an outcome of mistakes he makes in his attempt to adapt to the situation. Through inadvertently violating rules the boundaries of acceptable behavior sometimes begin to emerge. While the researcher new to a subcultural scene almost inevitably violates by accident some rules, these blunders are quite consistent with the role of novice. An honest plea of ignorance of group customs, then, is taken as legitimate in the context. Moreover, such a plea supplies another partial resolution of the problems of exposure and conformity.

The problem of gathering information involves an element that is not present in most other methods of social research. Ordinarily the investigator or interviewer can claim scientific neutrality and assure the respondent that any information he divulges will be kept confidential. This claim of course cannot be made by a researcher passing as deviant. Therefore, norms that define certain topics as taboo for the participants also define limits of inquiry for the researcher. The investigator passing as a religious cultist, for example, might well find it off limits to ask fellow club members whether or not they have ever been under psychiatric care. On the other hand, that a given topic is taboo is itself a kind of data for the student of subcultural processes.

Finally, because the passing observer, like any participant, is tied into a more or less bounded segment of the larger group--assuming it is large enough to be differentiated--his intelligence capability is grounded in the structure of the

group he studies. This grounding affects the gathering of information in at least two respects. First, his observational nexus or purview of the larger group is a function of the extent to which there are interchanges between the sub-group in which he is located and other sub-groups within the setting. Where a group is differentiated by age, for example, and the age statuses have minimal contact with one another, the researcher gathers only a modicum of data about the activities of age groups other than his own. Secondly, the researcher's opportunity for orally transmitted information in personal contacts is limited by the same features of the structure he confronts. In a word, the knowledge the researcher acquires through the method of passing reflects the social organization of the subculture he selects for study.

Final Remarks

The foregoing has centered upon the operationalization of a method for the study of subcultures of deviance. Although much of this discussion is equally applicable to passing in conventional groups, it seems that there is a need to consider separately deviant groups as contexts for passing in view of the covert nature that is, perforce, characteristic of groups whose organization bears the imprint of social control. In this sense, the process of social control has created an intelligence problem for the sociology of deviance.

Nonetheless, one argument against passing holds there are inherent methodological hazards involved in the technique. It is said that because the researcher is seeming rather than being

a participant, and because at some level of consciousness this is perceived by the authentic participants, the behavior in direct response to him that he sees and the attitudes he hears are not sufficiently natural to meet scientific standards.¹⁵ While there is no doubt a basis for this argument in some instances of passing it seems highly unlikely that this bias would sully the data of the passing researcher more than would be the case in which an interviewer admits his affiliation with the conventional world. It is not clear to us why a deviant would alter his behavior more for a suspected intruder than for an obvious intruder. Indeed, from this point of view, it seems that the argument set forth against passing becomes, in its implications, an argument in favor of passing.

Furthermore, even assuming a basis for the argument, it is not necessarily the case that subtle distortions in interpersonal interaction would affect the data of every researcher. A student of social organization finds that the "subtle distortion" argument underestimates the strength and tenacity of patterns of organized behavior. We would find the suggestion far fetched, for example, that our presence gave rise to the rules of sexual approach or the racial cleavages we have encountered.

Apart from questions of validity, this method rather dramatically raises certain ethical issues. This problem in the social control of sociology is not examined here. We embrace as a justification for passing as deviant the richness and reliability of information to which this method alone opens access.¹⁶

It should be evident from the foregoing that passing offers the researcher a special kind of intellectual excitement as well as advantages from a methodological standpoint. The researcher who ventures out to pass as deviant finds that many of the solutions to methodological and pragmatic problems in the field are concomitantly of interest to his analysis. Here is a brand of sociology where theory and action are poignantly joined.

FOOTNOTES

1. See Albert D. Biderman and Albert J. Reiss, Jr., "On Exploring the 'Dark Figure' of Crime," The Annals, forthcoming issue (November, 1967), for an application of the intelligence perspective to the study of crime.
2. Ned Polsky, Hustlers, Beats, and Others, Chicago: The Aldine Publishing Co., 1967, pp. 117-149.
3. Some roots of intelligence failure in organizations are systematically presented in Harold L. Wilensky, Organizational Intelligence: Knowledge and Policy in Government and Industry, New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1967, pp. 175-178. Wilensky's otherwise useful analysis suffers from his lack of appreciation of the enormous and paradoxical dependency of intelligence agents (or "contact men") on the very environments about which they seek to gather information.
4. We emphasize that passing as deviant is but one among various direct means of gathering information on the social organization of deviance. As we see it, there are four basic possibilities:

Situational Identity of Researcher

		Disguised	Undisguised
<u>Situational Behavior of Researcher</u>	Participant	Passing	Participant observation
	Non-Participant	Unobstrusive observation	Interviewing or the use of informants

A recent example of participant observation in the study of the organization of neighborhood gangs is Gerald D. Suttles, Taylor Street: Identity and Conduct in an Urban Slum, (tentative title), Chicago: University of Chicago Press, forthcoming. By unobtrusive observation we mean field work in which the investigator takes up a position or role in or near the deviant setting but does not attempt to appear as a participant. This technique is rarely used but one instance of it is Sherri Cavan, "Interaction in Home Territories," Berkeley Journal of Sociology, 8(1963), pp. 17-32; part of the time Cavan worked as a barmaid to facilitate observation of a gay bar. An example of the interview as a means to organizational data is Albert J. Reiss, Jr., "The Social Integration of Queers and Peers," Social Problems, 9(1961), pp. 102-120.

5. Nels Anderson, The Hobo: The Sociology of the Homeless Man, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1923. In this classic study the investigator was able to benefit from his own experiences as a participant in a deviant style of life.
6. Some of Polsky's research on hustling bordered on passing, op. cit., pp. 41-116.
7. Passing as a potential convert was involved in a study of an unconventional religious group--John Lofland, Doomsday Cult, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966.

8. See William C. Caudill, et al., "Social Structure and Interaction Processes on a Psychiatric Ward," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 22(1952), pp. 314-334.
9. Erving Goffman, Behavior in Public Places: Notes on the Social Organization of Gatherings, New York: The Free Press, 1963, pp. 33-35.
10. Sherri Cavan, op. cit.
11. On "simulation of reality" by plainclothes policemen see Lawrence P. Tiffany, Donald M. McIntyre, Jr., and Daniel L. Rotenberg, Detection of Crime, Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1967, Part III, "Encouragement and Entrapment." When the police officer cannot simulate reality, i.e., pass as deviant, as in the case of narcotics enforcement, he must develop informants. A sociologist interested in the organization of heroin use would probably have to follow the police example. We trust it is self-evident that there are other forms of subcultural deviance besides heroin use for which the possibility of passing is ruled out.
12. It should be pointed out that homosexual partner recruitment occurs in a variety of settings. For an ingenious solution to the problem of conformity by a disguised researcher studying public restrooms where homosexuals recruit partners, see R. A. Laud Humphreys, "They Meet in Tearooms: A Preliminary Study of Participants in Homosexual Encounters," paper read at the meetings of the Society for the Study of Social Problems, San Francisco, August, 1967.

13. It should be pointed out, as persons who have patronized gay bars are well aware, that gay bars vary in the functions they serve for the participants, whether as settings for non-sexual contact among friends at one extreme or as meeting places for sexual liaisons at the other. Most gay bars probably fall somewhere between these two extremes. A discussion of this topic may be found in Sherri Cavan, Liquor License: An Ethnography of Bar Behavior, Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1966.
14. Situational involvement is insightfully discussed in Goffman, op. cit., pp. 35-79.
15. A position like this is taken in Kai T. Erikson, "A Comment on Disguised Observation in Sociology," Social Problems, 14 (1967), pp. 366-373.
16. For one ethical argument against disguised observation under all circumstances, see Erikson, ibid.