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# Territorial Behaviour in Lavatories of Gay and Non-Gay Bars

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Faculty of Graduate Studies
UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR
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# TERRITORIAL BEHAVIOUR IN LAVATORIES OF GAY AND NON-GAY BARS

by

Debra A.C. Lloyd

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## ABSTRACT

The response to personal space intrusions at washbasins and urinals was investigated in the washrooms of two gay and two non-gay bars. The sexual orientation of the 40 homosexual and 40 heterosexual subjects was assumed by their presence in these bars. It was predicted that heterosexuals at the urinal would experience greater anxiety than homosexuals when the experimenter, who was positioned at the adjacent urinal, asked a question. It was expected that this discomfort would be reflected in less positive head orientation, shorter duration of conversation, and less positive affect of speech for the heterosexual subjects. No differences on the dependent measures were predicted between homosexuals and heterosexuals when the experimenter at an adjacent washbasin asked a question. The results confirmed the view that personal space intrusions at the more personal location in a washroom, the urinal, would result in more symbolic distancing behaviour for heterosexuals than homosexuals. The prediction that homosexuals and heterosexuals would not differ on the relevant behaviours at a washbasin was upheld. The value of the dependent measures in natural settings as indicators of anxiety and the motivation

of the speaker to continue interaction was suggested. The results were also discussed in terms of two different norms operating in heterosexual bar washrooms; first, to talk at washbasins, and second, to respect the ritual privacy norms at the urinals. It was concluded that the rules of washroom behaviour intended to insure maximum privacy at the urinal were stronger for heterosexuals than homosexuals. A tentative explanation for the dynamics underlying the different norms was suggested utilizing the psychoanalytic concept of homosexual panic, the anxiety aroused in heterosexuals when they are in a situation which provokes their unacceptable homosexual feelings. Limitations of the experimental methodology were also discussed. Further research into different normative behaviours between homosexuals and heterosexuals was suggested.

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## Introduction

The fact that men use interpersonal distance, gestures, postures, and facial expressions to reveal their thoughts, feelings and intentions is obvious. Yet such use has received relatively little systematic study until recent years. Investigations that have emerged have been mainly within the environmental and social psychological disciplines, with little attempt to provide a more clinical focus on the dynamics underlying such behaviours.

Body communication is a presentation, an arrangement of movements. This arrangement inevitably has effects on the observer, whether with the conscious or unconscious intent of the actor. The actor's communication will be interpreted in terms of the observer's own experience. Spiegel and Machotka (1974) in their examination of body messages indicated that, whatever the cultural rules, an individual will always interpret a presentation partly in line with his own idiosyncratic cognitive activities. These cognitions will vary with his mood, age, sex, and personality processes such as fantasies, anxieties and defenses.

Typically, psychoanalytically oriented clinicians have ignored the context of behaviour and environmental psychol-

ogists have ignored psychodynamics. The present study attempts to reconcile these two approaches by demonstrating interface between body behaviours, behavioural settings, and psychodynamics in an exploration of the relationship between sexual orientation and defence of personal space.

Lett, Clark, and Altman (1969), in conducting an inventory of representative studies on interpersonal distance, noted that most of the research they sampled approached interpersonal distance in a 'static' sense. Geometric symbols, felt flannel, paper stick-on figures, and comparable representations of real people constituted methods yielding 2/3 of the findings. They made a call for more attention to be given to the importance of environmental-social contexts within which interaction takes place, as well as to methods and experimental designs which allow for the functioning of active social organisms.

As previously noted, there has recently been increasing recognition of the significance of physical space in social interaction. Attention has been given not only to territoriality, which connotes fixed geographic location, but also to personal space, a concept that has arisen to refer to the space immediately surrounding an individual which he feels to belong to himself (Dosey & Meisels, 1969). Hall (1959) studied how people respond to and use the distance between themselves and others. He concludes that this use has substantial effects on how someone behaves and that

it indicates how he is feeling about the other people involved. Hall sees distance keeping as a communicative behaviour which does not have its base in language but is often synchronized with linguistic phenomena.

More careful work by other investigators has established that people follow firmly established rules in how far they stand apart. An examination of sex differences in spatial behaviour indicates that females have smaller zones of personal space and can therefore tolerate closer interpersonal contact than males (Baxter, 1970; Hartnett, Bailey & Gibson, 1970; Liebman, 1970). Dosey and Meisels have interpreted personal space as a buffer zone which serves as a protection against perceived threats. Therefore when opposite sex pairs are mutually attracted it is not surprising to find that, for both sexes, the magnitude of buffer zones decreases considerably (Allgeier & Byrne, 1973; Byrne, Ervin & Lamberth, 1970).

Kuethe & Weingartner (1974) provided evidence that relating to persons of the same sex may also result in a decrease of personal space for homosexuals. In their study, homosexual and heterosexual prison inmates were required to replace felt figures of men, women, and rectangles exactly where they had seen them previously on a display board. After this reconstruction, the authors measured the distances between the figures. The reconstructions of social displays were the same for the two groups, except

for the display containing two men. The homosexuals placed the two male figures closer together than any other pair of figures. Further information about this type of interaction is lacking, since there is a paucity of literature investigating homosexuals and personal space.

Related to personal space is the concept of symbolic distance. Symbolic distance is taken to be the result of behaviour which does not involve physical spacing but which, nonetheless, creates a feeling of closeness or distance. For example, averted eyes, restricted body movements, and limited conversation are means of increasing psychological distance especially in a situation which could be regarded as menacing.

The perception of threatening elements in interpersonal situations, whether the threats stem from environmental or from intrapsychic sources, is seen to call forth measures for self-protection. An intrusion of personal space can be regarded as one such threatening factor since excessive closeness in our society signals physical contact, intimacy, and invasion of privacy. Liebman (1970) has defined a violation of personal space as any physical placement or distance related behaviour that does not meet with the individual's expectations at that moment and that, therefore, prevents him from fulfilling an interpersonal goal. Such a violation causes an experience of discomfort and displeasure.

When an invasion of the immediate space surrounding an

individual does occur, the typical response seems to be the maintenance of a 'freezing posture' and the avoidance of touching the other person (Hall, 1966), followed by movement to a more comfortable position (Felipe & Sommer, 1966). Felipe and Sommer invaded the personal space of strangers seated on benches and at library tables and produced observable flight reactions. Within five minutes after the experimenter had sat down so as to be as close as possible to the subject without actually touching him, 70% of the subjects had moved to another location. Garfinkel (1964) reported that when students attempted to violate the personal space of friends or acquaintances by getting nose-to-nose during conversation, this action produced avoidance, bewilderment, and embarressment on the part of the subject, these effects being most pronounced among males. Garfinkel has suggested that, regardless of whether the interacting pairs in his study were the same or different sexes or whether they were friends or acquaintances, the subjects attributed sexual intent to the violator.

Thus a relationship between distancing behaviour and affective states has been a common theme in research on personal space. Enforced closeness has been related to increased anxiety (Argyle & Dean, 1965; McBride, King & James, 1965) and, inversely, anxiety states have been found to increase interaction distance (Liepold, 1963). Liepold studies the distance at which college students

placed themselves in relation to an interviewer in either a stress or non-stress situation. The results showed that students given praise (non-stress) sat closest to Liepold's chair while students whose grades were criticized (stress) maintained the most distance. It seems that the interpersonal distance chosen serves as a cue which indicates to others the nature of the interpersonal relationship. If the chosen distance is consistent with the rules agreed upon, a person's motives are predictable and safe. Discomfort occurs if the conventions associated with a particular situation are not in operation. When the rules are broken, the invasion may arouse the suspicion of the invadee as to the motives of the invader (Vachon, 1974).

A particularly interesting convention in our society is ritual privacy, reflecting the notion that certain behaviours (e.g., grief, elimination, sex) have prescribed rules and that these behaviours are typically accomplished in nonpublic places. Altman (1975) suggests that the function of privacy is some sort of personal evaluation. Both successful and unsuccessful privacy regulation help people define the limits and boundaries of the self. When the permeability of those boundaries is under the control of a person, a sense of individuality develops. Kelvin (1973) views privacy in terms of individual independence, vulnerability, and power that others have or do not have over a person. For Kelvin, privacy involves protecting oneself

from the influence and power of others. Our ability to regulate interaction and to achieve desired states gives others less power over us. Pennoch (1971), Beardsley (1971), and Cross (1971) spoke of invasions of privacy as especially harmful because such invasions destroy individual autonomy, self respect, and dignity by taking the control of a person's life away from the person.

The washroom setting is one such situation where social interaction between strangers is usually avoided, a situation of ritual privacy. Lewis (1961) indicated that even among the extremely poor there are rigid rules as to privacy in the bathroom. Since our sex and elimination functions are behaviours that society thinks of as dirty, people try to hide and to disguise their involvement with both activities by seeking privacy for them. In a recent survey, Altman, Nelson & Lett (1972) found that people typically knocked on closed bathroom doors rather than barging in and the more intimate the activity (e.g., using the toilet) the less likely it was that others were permitted to use the bathroom.

A. Kira (1966) indicated that probably the most common and clear-cut example of a linkage between sex and elimination is to be found in our culture's insistence on privacy on a sexual basis, i.e. that there are men's and women's rooms, which guarantee complete privacy from the opposite sex but only limited privacy from members of the same sex.

Because there is a strong social sanction for obtaining privacy from others for personal hygiene, interpersonal interaction in the bathroom has gradually assumed a special off-limits character. For example, urinals in public toilets bring men very close to each other under circumstances where, for a period of time, they must expose themselves. When two men are urinating next to each other, considerable care is taken to ensure minimal eye contact and a forward orientation of the eyes, lest privacy be violated more than necessary (Goffman, 1971; Humphreys, 1970).

In spite of the obvious nature of these bathroom norms, little research has been conducted on washroom behaviour. Vachon (1974) predicted that, because of the privacy need, subjects in public washrooms would choose an end urinal (in a four urinal situation) over a middle urinal, in order to achieve a protected position. What he found was that in the presence of strangers one must be at least one urinal away from an occupied position. He concluded that the rules of distance define the nature of an interaction between strangers in a washroom, and that the urinal position chosen is a manifestation of these rules. He suggested that these strict rules of washroom behaviour are for the purpose of arousing the least attention in a situation where attending to your neighbour is strictly taboo. Anxiety or stress is aroused if these rules are broken. When the rules are obeyed the person is telling those involved that he does

not wish interpersonal interaction.

Reid and Novak (1975) provide support for the existence of these washroom rules with their finding that the presence of another male influenced a subject's selection of a urinal. In all but 2 cases out of 327, subjects maintained a distance of one urinal away. Further evidence that personal space invasion in a washroom produces arousal has been provided by Middlemist, Knowles, and Matter (1976). They found that closer urinal distances led to increases in delay of urination and decreases in persistence of urination, both measures being particularly sensitive to stressful arousal.

Another investigator into this area, Humphreys (1970), studied the sexual behaviour of homosexuals in select public washrooms or tearooms. The only true tearoom is one that gains a reputation as a place where homosexual encounters occur; and Humphreys noted the impact of societal definitions even on the secret and anonymous interactions that occur in such places. Activity in the tearooms is organized to make what is highly stigmatized seem matter of fact and taken for granted. So long as there is no conversation and little gestural communication, the participants can mask the varying interpretations each privately makes of what is going on. The mechanism of silence, then, goes beyond satisfying the demand for privacy. Like all other characteristics of the tearoom setting, it serves to

guarantee the impersonality of the sexual liason.

Presumably any washroom could qualify as a tearoom but comparatively few are singled out for this function at any one time. Those that are tend to be located in parks, movie theatres, YMCAs, and the like. These locations are chosen because they are accessible, are easily recognized by the initiate, and provide little public visibility. This last factor, viz., little public visibility, is the one that distinguishes the tearoom from the gay bar washroom. For this reason, the gay bar washroom does not usually cater to quick explicit sexual encounters. In fact the gay bar as a whole functions in a manner suprisingly similar to the heterosexual singles bar; that is to say, in both there are two main aims--sociability and sexuality. The gay bar provides a communicative service: it is a centre for the exchange of news and gossip and for the discussion of problems (Hooker, 1967). Thus the gay bar provides a chance for conversation with a potential partner before any sexual contact is made. Individuals who are concerned about the psychological characteristics of their partners have a chance to find out something about them. Also, this context of conversation lends a great aura of respectability to the whole affair, whereas simply meeting for a sexual encounter in a restroom is, in our society, quite clearly defined as disreputable (Hoffman, 1968). 'Cruising' in gay bars is not typically conducted in the washroom but

is more or less restricted to the bar proper. From what has been said one can, however, not draw the conclusion that interpersonal norms in gay and non-gay bar washrooms are strictly equivalent. In the absence of more directly relevant literature, we can rely on Kuethe and Weingartner's (1964) article, which implies that homosexual men are willing to allow closer proximity to their personal space by another male than are heterosexual men. Thus a violation of personal washroom space by another male may not be as anxiety-arousing for a gay as for a non-gay.

One explanation of the tensions which are the basis for these different norms may be found in classic psychoanalytic literature. Homosexuals, like heterosexuals, may have no desire to have their privacy violated when they are in a non-tearoom washroom situation, because they are presumably there for elimination functions. Psychoanalytic literature would suggest, however, that if such an intrusion did occur, it would have a much less disruptive effect for a gay than for a non-gay person.

The basis for this interpretation is Freud's concept of unconscious homosexuality. Freud (1925) indicated that "everyone, even the most normal person is capable of making a homosexual object choice and has done so at some time in his life and still adheres to it in his unconscious or else protects himself against it by vigorous counter-attitudes." Freud called the co-existence of heterosexual

and homosexual impulses in every human being bisexuality. Although this concept of bisexuality has never been verified, except by a priori reasoning, it has been called a dynamic concept since it presumes an endless variety of reactions in response to this mixture of heterosexual and homosexual impulses. L. Salzman (1957) criticized Freud's concept of bisexuality because of the tendency of those using this idea to characterize every withdrawal or difficulty with the opposite sex as either homosexual or the result of latent homosexual drives. Bieber (1972) would agree, his criticism being that, in his sample of heterosexual cases, at least 25% of the subjects revealed no evidence of homosexual propensities, conscious or unconscious.

It is argued by some psychoanalysts that a state of incompletely repressed homosexuality has been held responsible for much neurotic illness (cf. MacDonald, 1976). The affected person experiences considerable anxiety and tension in situations that threaten to evoke his unacceptable homosexual feelings. Some repressed homosexuals, if placed in a situation in which they can no longer deny homosexual thoughts, break into a feverish panic. This condition, called homosexual panic, is well recognized in American textbooks of psychiatry (cf. West, 1967).

Kardiner, Karush, and Ovesey (1959) suggested that the great majority of anxieties about being homosexual have nothing to do with true homosexuality. They broke these

anxieties down into three motivational components: sex, dependency, and power. The dependency and power components seek completely different non-sexual goals but make use of the genitalia to achieve them. These two motivations supposedly make their appearance at a time of self-assertive crisis resulting from failure in the masculine role in any area of behaviour. Kardiner, et al. provided a symbolic equation to represent the unconscious weakness of the male in such a crisis: I am a failure as a man = I am castrated = I am a woman = I am a homosexual.

This equation is a caricature of the social demand that every man fulfill certain masculine requirements. Any man who fails in the masculine role may symbolically conceive of himself as homosexual and develop anxiety about being homosexual. Competition with other men is inevitably viewed as a violent struggle for power in which the weaker man is castrated. Thus anxieties about being homosexual are not only motivated by the erotic desire for homosexual gratification but are also symbolic reflections of a failure, a competitive defeat in a male power struggle. These homosexual anxieties are usually absent in confirmed overt homosexuals, for they have accepted their homosexuality as a fact and have come to terms with it (Ovesey, 1965).

The exaggerated repression of the homo-erotic component in our society has resulted, in general, in a rather obsessive reinforcement of hetero-eroticism in men (Ferenzci,

1911). This helps us to understand why the typical male is expected to be independent, unemotional, strong, and aggressive. These demands for independence and for distance are especially pronounced in activities with other males. There is the assumption in our society that normal heterosexual males do not desire and, more important, do not express warmth, intimacy, or contact with other males. As a result of these norms, men develop goals for greater and more rigidly defined psychological distances from other males. As a consequence we would expect interpersonal behaviour between heterosexual men to be aimed at creating a sense of increased psychological distance, i.e., greater physical and symbolic distance, especially when their personal space is invaded in a situation of ritual privacy. As Goffman (1963) notes, "when the heterosexual is approached by an unacquainted male on what prove to be sexually improper grounds he may suffer concern that his appearance has elicited this and that others present, identifying the accoster, will wrongly impute homosexuality to the accosted."

When an invasion occurs, a person will try to re-establish his privacy, demanding an end to the intrusive behaviour by engaging in some form of compensatory behaviour. Argyle and Dean (1965) have suggested such a mutually supporting balance between physical and symbolic distance. They proposed that eye engagement, interaction distance, smiling, and the intimacy of verbal content of an interaction

summate on the dimensions of general intimacy and that the relative amounts of these behaviours will be adjusted until an equilibrium level is attained. Since physical distance is the most immediate and most direct way of expressing distance, it is likely that behaviours related to symbolic distance occur most frequently when acceptable physical distances are unavailable.

One such symbolic distance indicator is head orientation, a behaviour closely related to direction of gaze. The principal body movement characteristic of a receptive posture is the head activity that denotes attending to another person. Goffman (1964) suggested that direction of gaze plays a crucial role in the initiation and maintenance of social encounters. This is because whether or not a person is willing to have his eye 'caught' is one of the principal signals by which people indicate to each other their willingness to begin an encounter. It is through the mutually held gaze that two people commonly establish their openness to one another's communications. Exline (1963) found that men have exhibited a tendency to engage in eye contact less frequently than women. It has also been demonstrated (Ekman, 1964) that with eye contact omitted, in two person interactions, the head conveys the emotional quality of the communication. Anxiety can thus be conveyed by movements which block vision, providing a defense against further fear arousal. Sommer (1969) studied

responses to personal space invasion in a mental hospital. He noted that although flight was a gross reaction to an intrusion there were also many more subtle indications of patient discomfort. The typical sequence was for the victim to face away immediately, to pull in his shoulders, and to place his elbows at his side. Facing away was an almost universal reaction among the victims. In a review of studies demonstrating compensatory processes, Altman (1975) noted that several studies consistently demonstrated that as the distance between people decreased, the angle of orientation toward each other became less direct. That is, the closer they came, the more they began facing away from each other.

Another symbolic indicator is duration of speech. Lengthier communications have been shown to be associated with more positive attitudes toward the object of communications (Mehrabian, 1965; Rosenfeld, 1966). Related to this, Mahl (1959) and Kasl and Mahl (1965) provided evidence that speech disturbance frequency (e.g., stuttering, pauses) was a correlate of a communicator's level of anxiety of discomfort. Mehrabian and Diamond (1971) found that nonverbal communications of positive feelings and the amount of conversation were correlated; together they defined a factor of social behaviour referred to as "affiliative behaviour." Mehrabian (1971) reported that speech duration was greater with a non-threatening than with a threatening

addressee. In addition it may be assumed that feelings of comfort or discomfort will be more directly reflected in the positive or negative affect of the content of a response. Here verbal content refers to the substance of the verbal communication or to what is said. With the content a person can convey discrepancies between his preferred and achieved leval of privacy and can give information as to desire for further interaction (Altman, 1975).

Statement of the Problem

Washrooms are situations in which there are strong prescribed social norms against any intrusion of ritual privacy (cf. Kira, 1966; Lewis, 1961). If privacy mechanisms such as personal space (cf. Liebman, 1970) are violated, it implies an inability to regulate interaction and therefore there is increased vulnerability (Kelvin, 1973). In such situations, discomfort and anxiety are likely to occur.

Very little research has been done utilizing washrooms as behavioural settings. However, what has been done indicates that there are strict rules for avoiding interaction (cf. Vachon, 1974; Humphreys, 1970). Humphreys' observations were of tearooms, washrooms especially designated as places to make homosexual sexual contacts. It is likely that this type of homosexual washroom does not have the same behavioural norms as a gay bar washroom. Gay bars, on the whole, function in a similar manner to non-gay bars, i.e., pick-ups

occur in the bar proper and sexual encounters between males may be characterized as disreputable in both types of washrooms (Hoffman, 1968).

However, homosexuals and heterosexuals may have different rules about how closely they may approach each other and this may be reflected in differential washroom norms (cf. Kuethe and Weingartner, 1964). A psychodynamic interpretation provides one possible explanation for the basis of these different norms. The theory of unconscious homosexuality would see heterosexuals evidencing homosexual panic, a reflection of their repressed homosexuality, when confronted with another male who is violating their personal space. This self-assertive crisis referred to by Kardiner, Karush, and Ovesey (1959) would be especially potent in a situation with sexual overtones (in a washroom at a urinal, as opposed to at a washbasin). In terms of normative theory, privacy defense mechanisms should be more operative at the more personal location.

The present study examined the use of such privacy-defense mechanisms as head orientation, length of communication, and affect of speech in response to personal space intrusions in the washrooms of gay and non-gay bars. Since a more suitable personal distance was not available to a subject (at least temporarily) at either the washbasin or urinal, the reaction to any discomfort from this intrusion would tend to be distancing behaviour of the symbolic

variety. Different responses were predicted for the two locations in these washrooms.

The predicted response to intrusion on the part of the heterosexual subjects at the urinals was for greater anxiety than that experienced by homosexual subjects. It was expected that this discomfort would be reflected in greater head aversion, shorter duration of conversation, and less positive affect of speech for the non-gays.

In the washbasin situation no differences were predicted between heterosexuals and homosexuals on the dependent measures. In this location, the privacy needs associated with urination would not be in operation nor would the intrusion of personal space have sexual overtones.

In summary, we predicted an interaction effect. It was proposed that there would be no significant differences on the measures between the gays and non-gays at the wash-basin location but that there would be differences in the urinal situation.

## Chapter II

## Method

### Subjects

Eighty subjects were selected, 40 on the basis of their homosexual orientation and 40 on the basis of heterosexual orientation. The sexual preference of the subjects was assumed by their presence in a gay or non-gay bar, since personal contact, aside from interaction in the actual washroom encounter, was avoided. Twenty homosexuals and 20 heterosexuals were randomly assigned to the urinal situation and the same number were randomly assigned to the washbasin situation. The age range of the subjects was approximately 25 to 30 years and bar patrons who appeared to deviate from these confines were not used. The socio-economic class of the subjects was roughly equivalent as judged by the price range of drinks in the bars. Since liquour consumption could have had an effect on anxiety levels, the experimenter did not approach anyone who appeared to be under the influence of alcohol.

### Procedure

Pre-test. Prior to the actual data collection the experimenter was coached by a person of bisexual orientation

who was familiar with behaviour in both gay and straight bars. This was done to ensure that the experimenter gave away no clues as to his sexual orientation during the experiment proper. In addition trial runs, both in and out of the gay and non-gay bar situations, were completed so that the experimenter was familiar with his routine and felt comfortable during the actual experimentation. Every attempt was made to ensure constant presentation of the experimenter across all groups-including dress, speech, and mannerisms. The experimenter was a heterosexual confederate.

Experiment proper. Four bars were used (two gay, two non-gay) so that 20 subjects were selected from each. Observations were carried out for four days (Monday to Thursday) at the homosexual bars, alternating the bar location every other night. Observations of heterosexuals were performed in the same manner. Thus responses of 10 subjects were recorded each night. Observations were recorded only between the hours of 6 to 10 p.m. each night, as the bars tended to be least busy then. These bars were of the variety of pick-up or singles bar. Each had four urinals and three washbasins except for one non-gay bar which had four urinals and four washbasins. In the three washbasin bar a subject was not approached if he was positioned at the middle basin since this was a situation where the experimenter had no alternative but to use the adjacent basin. The distances between urinals and

between washbasins was also determined. They were approximately equivalent, the urinals being 30" ± 2" from centre to centre and the washbasins being 28" ± 1" from centre to centre.

The experimenter sat, drinking beer, at the closest available table to the washroom entrance. He was accompanied by two others, one male and one female, so that no assumptions could be made by the bar patrons as to his sexual orientation.

Patrons were only approached as subjects when there were no others present in the washroom. The assignment of a subject to a urinal or washbasin situation was made on a random basis and if the subject was not in the appropriate position when the experimenter entered the washroom he was discarded as a subject.

Urinal situation. The experimenter entered the washroom immediately after the subject. The experimenter then positioned himself at the adjacent urinal so that he was furthest away from the arm the subject was using to urinate with. This was done on the assumption that the arm being used might provide a defensive block when the arm was positioned for urinating. If the subject was at an end urinal and his only approachable side was blocked by his arm he was disqualified.

Washbasin. The same conditions which held for the urinal situation were used at the washbasins. However,

before the experimenter entered the washroom he waited for a 30 second period to allow the subject time to use the toilet before approaching the washbasin. If the subject, when the experimenter entered the washroom, was still at a urinal the experimenter went to the entrance of one of the enclosed cubicles on the ploy of blowing his nose. When the subject approached the washbasin the experimenter positioned himself at the adjacent washbasin.

All subjects. After the experimenter had taken his position subjects under both conditions were asked, "Do you know if a band plays here on the weekend?" The response was recorded by means of a concealed audio cassette recorder. From this recording the author determined the duration and affect of the responses. Precautions were taken to ensure that the identity of none of the subjects was revealed and the tape recordings were erased after they were scored.

The experimenter also noted the head position of the subject while making his reply. If the subject's head turned more than approximately 30 degrees to the side away from the experimenter he was assigned a score of -1. If his head was less than 30 degrees to either side it was scored 0 and if more than 30 degrees toward the experimenter it was scored +1.

The affect of the responses was scored on a five-point bi-polar scale, a rating of one denoting a very friendly

response and five a very hostile response. The affect of the responses were scored by two raters; the experimenter who recorded the responses and a blind rater. Prior to the actual rating, both raters practiced affect scoring on sample responses to ensure consistency. When there was a discrepancy, the average of the two ratings was used. In addition to a test of their significance, these data were also used as a validity crosscheck on duration of response, i.e., to determine if the more negative content was associated with shorter speech duration.

## Chapter III

## Results

The data for the four groups were collected and four levels of analysis were performed. These are:

1. An analysis of variance in a 2 X 2 design was used to analyze duration of responses. This provided information about location effect, sexual orientation effect, and an interaction between these two variables. To locate where significant effects in the two factor analysis specifically occurred, a post hoc Newman-Keuls test was utilized to test for between group differences.

2. Chi-square tests were used to analyze for head orientation effects. These were done separately for urinals, washbasins, heterosexuals, and homosexuals.

3. The sign test was used to analyze for significant differences between groups on the affect of response measure. This nonparametric statistical procedure was used since this measure consisted of values from a five point ordinal scale.

4. A Spearman rank order correlation between the affect

scores and the duration of responses was determined to assess the extent of the relationship between these measures.

The variances of the four groups were heterogeneous on the measure of duration of response. For this reason, log transformations were performed to make the cell variances comparable. Inspection of the heterosexual washbasin data from the two bars, one with four basins and one with three basins, indicated that there were no obvious differences in results. The data from these two bars was therefore collapsed.

The two factor analysis of variance revealed that there was a significant difference between groups for sexual orientation, $F$ (1,76) = 6.48, $p < .05$, with heterosexuals speaking for a shorter length of time than homosexuals. A significant difference was also found for location, $F$ (1,76) = 11.77, $p < .01$, with subjects at the urinals speaking for a shorter length of time than subjects at the washbasins. There was a significant interaction between sexual orientation and location, $F$ (1,76) = 7.14, $p < .01$. The source table for this analysis is presented in Table 1. The interaction is graphically illustrated in Figure 1.

A Newman-Keuls test was used to determine where the differences between groups lay. The results indicate that heterosexuals at the urinals spoke for a significantly shorter time than heterosexuals at the washbasins, homosexuals at the urinals, or homosexuals at the washbasins. No other comparisons were significant. The results of this analysis are presented

Table 1

Analysis of Variance of Duration of Responses for Sexual Orientation and Location

| Source | SS | df | MS | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sexual orientation | .16 | 1 | .16 | 6.48* |
| Location | .29 | 1 | .29 | 11.77** |
| Sexual orientation X Location | .18 | 1 | .18 | 7.14** |
| Error | 1.88 | 76 | .03 | |
| Total | 2.51 | 79 | | |

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

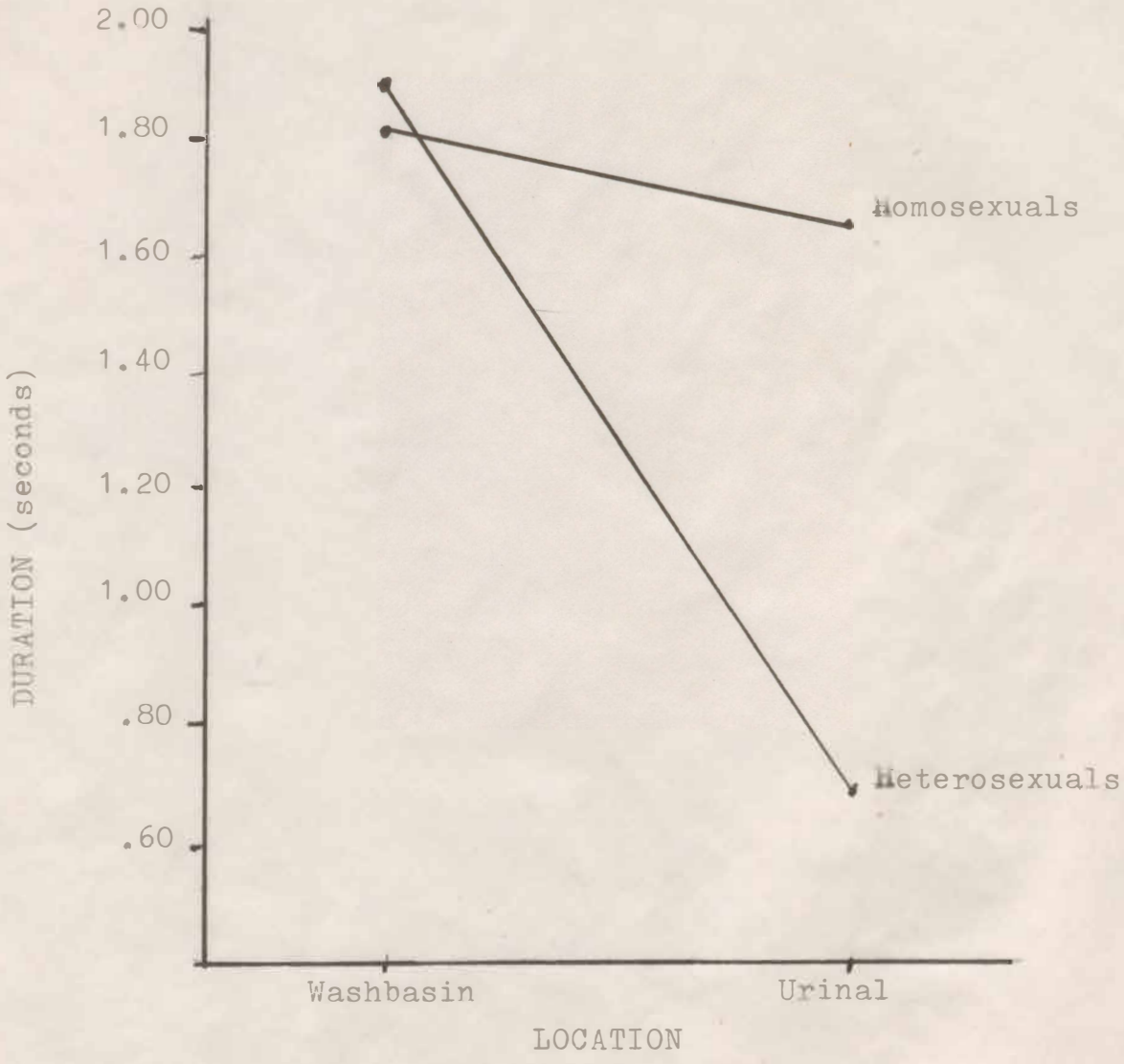


Figure 1. Mean duration of responses according to sexual orientation and location.

in Table 2. The means and standard deviations for the duration scores are presented in Appendix A. The raw scores and the transformed scores are presented in Appendix B.

Head orientation during reply was scored +1, 0, or -1: When the head was turned more than 30 degrees to the side away from the experimenter it was scored -1, 0 when the head was less than 30 degrees to either side, and +1 when the head was more than 30 degrees toward the experimenter. Yate's correction for continuity was applied because of small cell frequencies and two-tailed tests of significance were used. No significant chi-squares were found. These results are presented in Table 3.

The affect of the subjects' responses was scored on a five point bi-polar scale with a score of one denoting the friendliest response and five the most hostile response. Of the 80 responses scored for affect, 82.50% of the time the two raters agreed completely and 100% of the time they did not differ by more than one point. The modal response for affect scored three and the range of the scores was fairly restricted.

Table 2

Newman-Keuls test,

Table of Q for Duration of Responses

| Groups | Heterosexual Urinal | Homosexual Urinal | Homosexual Washbasin | Heterosexual Washbasin |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Heterosexual Urinal | | 5.23* | 5.99* | 6.11* |
| Homosexual Urinal | | | .76 | .89 |
| Homosexual Washbasin | | | | .13 |
| Heterosexual Washbasin | | | | |

* $p < .01$

Table 3

Chi-square tests of Head Orientation*

| | Urinals | |
|---|---|---|
| | Heterosexuals | Homosexuals |
| Away (-1) | 2 | 0 |
| Straight (0) | 6 | 3 |
| Toward (+1) | 12 | 17 |

$\chi^2 = 2.01$, $df = 1$, $p > .05$, n.s.

| | Washbasins | |
|---|---|---|
| | Heterosexuals | Homosexuals |
| Away (-1) | 0 | 0 |
| Straight (0) | 2 | 1 |
| Toward (+1) | 18 | 19 |

$\chi^2 = 0$, $df = 1$, $p > .05$, n.s.

| | Heterosexuals | |
|---|---|---|
| | Washbasins | Urinals |
| Away (-1) | 0 | 2 |
| Straight (0) | 2 | 6 |
| Toward (+1) | 18 | 12 |

$\chi^2 = 3.33$, $df = 1$, $p > .05$, n.s.

| | Homosexuals | |
|---|---|---|
| | Washbasins | Urinals |
| Away (-1) | 0 | 0 |
| Straight (0) | 3 | 1 |
| Toward (+1) | 17 | 19 |

$\chi^2 = .28$, $df = 1$, $p > .05$, n.s.

* The away and straight data were collapsed so that a 2X2 cell design was used in the computation of the chi-squares.

A sign test referred to as the median test was used to analyze the affect of the responses. This test compares the medians of two samples and is based on the expectation that as many observations in each sample will fall above as below the joint median (Ferguson, 1971). The results indicated significantly less positive affect of reply for the heterosexuals at the urinals when compared to the other three groups-heterosexuals at the washbasins, homosexuals at the urinals and homosexuals at the washbasins. No other significant differences between groups were noted. The comparisons are presented in Table 4.

Spearman rank order correlations were performed on each group to determine if there was a relationship between duration of reply and affect of reply (Homosexuals at Urinals = .69, $p < .01$; Homosexuals at Washbasins = .66, $p < .01$; Heterosexuals at Washbasins = .70, $p < .01$; Heterosexuals at Urinals = .18, n.s.). It is apparent that for all groups, except heterosexuals at the urinals, a longer reply was significantly associated with a reply containing positive affect.

Table 4

Sign tests of Affect of Responses

| | + | − | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Homosexual Washbasin | 9 | 11 | $\chi^2 = 0$, df = 1, $p > .05$, n.s. |
| Homosexual Urinal | 8 | 12 | |

| | + | − | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Homosexual Washbasin | 9 | 11 | $\chi^2 = 0$, df = 1, $p > .05$, n.s. |
| Heterosexual Washbasin | 8 | 12 | |

| | + | − | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Homosexual Urinal | 8 | 12 | $\chi^2 = .10$, df = 1, $p > .05$, n.s. |
| Heterosexual Washbasin | 8 | 12 | |

| | + | − | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Heterosexual Urinal | 2 | 18 | $\chi^2 = 8.32$, df = 1, $p < .01$ |
| Homosexual Washbasin | 12 | 8 | |

| | + | − | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Heterosexual Urinal | 2 | 18 | $\chi^2 = 5.83$, df = 1, $p < .01$ |
| Heterosexual Washbasin | 10 | 10 | |

| | + | − | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Heterosexual Urinal | 2 | 18 | $\chi^2 = 7.29$, df = 1, $p < .01$ |
| Homosexual Urinal | 11 | 9 | |

## Chapter IV

## Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to examine the use of such privacy defense mechanisms as head orientation, length of communication, and affect of speech in response to personal space intrusions in the washrooms of gay and non-gay bars. It was predicted that when an intrusion occurred at the urinals, heterosexuals would experience more anxiety than homosexuals and the resulting discomfort would be reflected in shorter duration of speech, less positive affect of speech, and a more negative head orientation during reply to a question. It was also put forth that when an intrusion occurred at the washbasin ,there would be no significant differences between homosexuals and the heterosexuals on the dependent measures. The intrusions that occurred in these situations were not only spatial invasions but invasions of what Goffman (1971) refers to as the conversational preserve. By the experimenter asking the subjects a question, he was violating one of the territorial rights of the individual to exert control over who can summon him into talk and when he can be summoned.

This investigator found that heterosexuals at the urinal

spoke for a significantly shorter time when making their reply than either homosexuals at the urinal or washbasin or heterosexuals at the washbasin. This was consistent with findings on the affect of the subjects' replies. The data indicated significantly less positive responses for heterosexuals at the urinal when compared to heterosexuals at the washbasin, homosexuals at the washbasin, and homosexuals at the urinal.

The redundancy of the dependent measures provided a validity cross-check for the use of duration and affect of reply as defensive manoeuvers. These territorial mechanisms could serve two functions in a personal interaction. First, there is communication value since they signify the motivation of the speaker to continue the interaction. For example, a denial of the desire for interaction would involve a minimal response and negative affect of speech. Secondly, these mechanisms provide an index of the anxiety of the speaker. The relative importance of these two functions could not be assessed, of course, on the basis of the data collected in this study.

The head orientation data indicate that the norm to look toward a person when talking to him is operative at both locations, the urinal and the washbasin, for both heterosexuals and homosexuals. It seems that this norm may override any tendencies to not attend to a person when in a privacy situation. For all groups, then, it appears that the need to attend to someone when speaking to them

was strong enough to ensure that nearly everyone at least glanced at the experimenter. Perhaps an index, such as the ratio of time spent looking at the experimenter to duration of reply, would have proved more discriminating. Quickly glancing at the experimenter while making a long winded reply could have different connotations than maintaining constant eye contact while making a short response although both are positive head orientations and would take the same amount of time.

Although the present study dealt with symbolic distancing behaviour rather than representations of physical distances, these results are relevant to Kuethe and Weingartner's (1974) findings. Kuethe and Weingartner's study indicated that homosexuals were willing to accept less interpersonal distance between men as measured by the placement of felt figures. The present investigation found, on the one hand, that homosexuals at the urinals were more willing than heterosexuals at the urinals to talk and look at the experimenter. On the other hand, the results show that at the washbasin homosexuals did not respond more positively than heterosexuals. Thus under the supposedly higher arousal condition, the urinals, the present study supports Kuethe and Weingartner's findings as it does not in the more neutral washbasin condition. Kuethe and Weingartner's study did not, however, deal with arousal conditions as the present study did. The present results suggest that differences in personal space accessibility

between heterosexuals and homosexuals may be dependent on the location at which they are invaded.

Taken as a whole the present findings can be interpreted as confirming the view that personal space intrusions at a more personal location in a washroom, such as a urinal, result in more symbolic distancing behaviour for heterosexuals than for homosexuals. In addition, our expectations that homosexuals and heterosexuals would not differ in their behaviour at the washbasin was confirmed. This latter finding may be a result of the privacy needs associated with urination not being in operation at this location and the intrusion not having sexual overtones as it would at a urinal.

Since there were differences between urinal and washbasin behaviour for the heterosexuals, the possibility exists that there are two different kinds of norms, dependent on location, operating in non-gay washrooms. It may be that the norm is to talk at washbasins in washrooms and that there are no ritual privacy needs associated with washing and public grooming in bar washrooms. On the other hand, the urinal situation has strong sexual connotations because of the exposure of the genitals. This would result in ritual privacy being more operative at the more personal location for heterosexuals.

If the subjects perceived the intrusions at the urinals more as sexual advances than the intrusions at the washbasins then it is likely that the urinal situation would be seen as

more threatening by the heterosexuals than by the homosexuals. Homosexuals, if not welcoming the advances, at least would not find them so anxiety provoking since such overtures would be more familiar to a patron of a gay bar. In the present study homosexuals evidenced a less negative reaction to personal exposure than heterosexuals. It would seem that there is mainly one norm for gay washroom behaviour and that this norm may be equivalent to the norms experienced by heterosexuals at washbasins.

In addition, the interactions that occurred between the experimenter and the homosexual subjects could not be characterized as pick-ups or sexual advances and it was apparent to the raters that the responses of the subjects were merely friendly conversation. It simply appeared that the homosexuals were not bothered by conversation at a urinal and took it in the same stride as conversation at a washbasin. Heterosexuals at the urinals, on the other hand, were less open and friendly in their conversation than any of the other groups.

It would seem then that the rules of washroom behaviour intended to insure minimal attention from others at a urinal are stronger for heterosexuals than for homosexuals and one possible interpretation is that more anxiety and a more defensive attitude occurs for the non-gays when the rules are broken. These norms and the reaction to their violation may be a reflection of society's judgement that our sex and elimination functions are, in some way, dirty and need to be

kept private.

We may look to other underlying dynamics to explain the existence of norms for washroom behaviour. In this case, one explanation may be found in the classic psychoanalytic concept of homosexual panic, the dread of discovering homosexual tendencies in oneself. A person who has incompletely repressed his unconscious homosexuality may experience much anxiety in a situation which threatens to evoke unacceptable homosexual feelings. Kardiner, Karush, and Ovesey (1959) also suggest that any male who fails in the masculine role of being strong, aggressive, and in control of the situation may symbolically conceive of himself as homosexual and develop anxiety about being homosexual. Not being able to prevent a personal space and conversational preserve invasion at such a highly private location as a urinal may indicate to the heterosexual that he has failed in his role. In addition, as Goffman (1963) explains, being approached by a strange man in a situation which is sexually improper (such as a urinal) may cause a man anxiety in the fear that his appearance has elicited this stranger's behaviour. Since the subject's movement is physically restricted at a urinal, the reaction of someone with these anxieties, as the present study seems to indicate, would be for defensive manoeuvers such as making short and less positive replies, indicating no desire for further interaction, when questioned by the experimenter. An important limitation to this psychoanalytic perspective is that our experimental design precludes

a definitive interpretation of the results in terms of Freudian theory of unconscious homosexuality. First of all, we had no means of measuring the degree of repressed homosexuality in our subjects, nor a method for determining the various expressions an incomplete repression might take. As a result, this interpretation must remain speculative.

Limitations and implications for future research

The first apparent limitation is the use of only one experimenter in the washrooms. Even though the attempt was made to ensure that the experimenter gave away no clues as to his sexual orientation, very subtle cues may have escaped scrutiny. Although the experimenter maintained a constant presentation of himself throughout the experiment, stimulus properties inherent in the experimenter may have affected results. Future research in this area should consider the use of more than one experimenter to see if the results can be replicated.

A second limitation was no reliability measures on head orientation. The present study was limited in this respect since it would have been difficult to have a concealed second observor and, further, the presence of a third person in the washroom could possibly have had an effect on the behaviour being observed.

A third limitation had to do with the problem of having little information about the subjects. The experimenter had to rely on estimates of the age range of the subjects and

sexual orientation had to be inferred from their presence in gay or non-gay bars. Since there was no independent measure of homosexuality or heterosexuality, this study has no firm basis on which to assume homogeneity of the population with respect to their sexuality. In addition, it is ideally desirable to collect additional data from subjects in a post-experimental interview. For example, an independent measure of anxiety would have been desirable. However, since informed subjects may have alerted other potential subjects about this study this was impossible. As a result qualitative material about how subjects felt when their personal space was invaded was not available for analysis.

The present study may make a contribution to observational techniques. Past experiments have dealt mainly with physiological responses to invasions at urinals (cf. Middlemist, Knowles & Matter, 1976) or gross flight reactions (cf. Vachon, 1974). This experiment indicates the value of verbal and non-verbal reactions in naturalistic settings and bridges the gap between laboratory and field research in the study of these behaviours. For example, duration of response seems to be a reliable symbolic indicator of the reaction to territorial intrusions. Further research to determine its validity in other natural settings would be valuable.

This investigation also provides support for Argyle and Dean's (1965) equilibrium theory which suggests a mutually supporting balance between different distancing behaviours.

This has not always been found in the laboratory setting (cf. Coutts & Schneider, 1977). In the present investigations' naturalistic setting the use of one defensive mechanism, such as shorter duration of speech, corresponded to less positive affect of speech.

This study contributes to the present body of knowledge about washrooms. Other studies (cf. Vachon, 1974; Reid & Novak, 1975) have shown that when men urinate they position themselves at least one position away from someone already at a urinal. The present study expands on the understanding of this behaviour. There is probably some type of arousal involved here and it is not simply stress invoked as a result of invasion of heterosexuals in a washroom but rather stress resulting from invasion of heterosexuals at a urinal. This seems apparent since the ritual privacy norms do not exist for heterosexuals at washbasins and for homosexuals do not alter behaviour at either the washbasin or urinal. Middlemist, Knowles & Matter's (1976) study indicated that some type of arousal was the intervening variable causing urination onset delay and short urination persistance when invasion at a urinal occurred. The present study expanded on this study of the effects of this stressful arousal by looking at individual differences when subjects were intruded upon. The use of verbal and non-verbal cues as indices of this arousal were also investigated in this study. These measures provided parallel results, unlike the findings of some investigations

using multiple verbal and non-verbal measures (cf. Evans, 1972).

It would be interesting to consider the possibility that differences in norms exist between homosexuals and heterosexuals in many other forms of nonverbal as well as verbal behaviours (e.g., eye contact timing, hand gestures, voice intonations) and that these differences may lead to asynchrony in homosexual-heterosexual interactions. This asynchrony could thereby lead to feelings of uneasiness and could result in negative associations for both groups. Such an explanation could account, in part, for why homosexuals are not generally accepted and do not blend easily into our society. However, the significance of other differing homosexual and heterosexual norms can only be determined from further research.

Finally, a broader sociological perspective might be useful both for the definition of the problem and the interpretation of the results. The verbal and nonverbal responses to violations of personal space could be examined within a larger social context than the lavatory itself. What is the relationship between the properties of the social interaction within the bar proper and the rules or norms operating within the lavatory? What other normative systems are operating? It is also necessary to point out that we cannot assume that all gay bars are the same. Such bars may themselves differ along a status hierarchy. Moreover, different social norms may operate at different bars making it difficult to generalize to all gay bars on the basis of the present study.

# Appendix A

## Means and Standard Deviations for Duration

| | | SEXUAL ORIENTATION | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Homosexual | Heterosexual |
| LOCATION | Urinal | M = 1.65 sec.<br>SD = 1.04 sec. | M = .69 sec.<br>SD = .53 sec. |
| | Washbasin | M = 1.80 sec.<br>SD = 1.03 sec. | M = 1.88 sec.<br>SD = 1.46 sec. |

## Appendix B

## Raw and Transformed Scores for Duration

| Subject | Homosexual Washbasin | Homosexual Urinal | Heterosexual Washbasin | Heterosexual Urinal |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | x, log(x+1) | x, log(x+1) | x, log(x+1) | x, log(x+1) |
| 1. | 3, .6021 | 5, .1761 | 1, .3010 | 0, .00 |
| 2. | 4.5, .7404 | 1, .3010 | 4, .6990 | 0, .00 |
| 3. | 2.5, .5441 | .5, .1761 | 4.5, .7404 | .25, .0969 |
| 4. | 3, .6021 | .5, .1761 | 4, .6990 | .5, .1761 |
| 5. | 2, .4771 | 1, .3010 | 2, .4771 | .5, .1761 |
| 6. | 2, .4771 | 1, .3010 | .5, .1761 | 1, .3010 |
| 7. | .5, .1761 | 1.5, .3979 | 1, .3010 | .5, .1761 |
| 8. | 1, .3010 | 2, .4771 | 1, .3010 | 1, .3010 |
| 9. | 1, .3010 | 2, .4771 | 1, .3010 | .5, .1761 |
| 10. | .5, .1761 | 2.5, .5441 | 2, .4771 | .5, .1761 |
| 11. | 1, .3010 | 3.5, .6532 | 2.5, .5441 | .5, .1761 |
| 12. | 1, .3010 | 4, .6990 | 2, .4771 | 2, .4771 |
| 13. | 1.5, .3979 | 3, .6021 | .5, .1761 | 2, .4771 |
| 14. | 2.5, .5441 | 2, .4771 | 1, .3010 | .5, .1761 |
| 15. | 2, .4771 | 2.5, .5441 | 2, .4771 | 1, .3010 |
| 16. | 2, .4771 | 2, .4771 | 2, .4771 | 1, .3010 |
| 17. | 1, .3010 | 1, .3010 | 3, .6021 | .5, .1761 |
| 18. | 2, .4771 | 1, .3010 | 2, .4771 | .5, .1761 |
| 19. | 2.5, .5441 | .5, .1761 | .5, .1761 | .5, .1761 |
| 20. | .5, .1761 | 1, .3010 | 1, .3010 | .5, .1761 |

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