

# Introduction to LGBTQI Oppression & Activism

Oppression & Justice (Fall 2013)  
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# Terms

- **LGBTQI:** Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex
- **Heterosexism:** pervasive and systemic denigration and oppression of non-heterosexual people
- **Heteronormativity:** Institutionalized norms built around hegemonic, heterosexual standards for identity and behavior; works in tandem with gender binaries and gender norms
- **Homophobia:** behavior, attitudes, or affects (disgust, fear) based around an aversion to non-heterosexual people and lifestyles

# Considering Privilege

Peggy McIntosh:

**“I will give here a list of special circumstances and conditions I experience which I did not earn but which I have been made to feel are mine by birth, by citizenship, and by virtue of being a conscientious law-abiding ‘normal’ person of good will” (37)**

**Group Work!**

**Make a similar list based on heterosexual privilege**

# Importance of Stonewall



- ◎ June 1969, New York
  - > Police raid as part of a city-wide crackdown on gay bars
  - > Arrests, reports of police brutality
  - > Led to two-day riot, increased public awareness
- ◎ **Gay liberationism:** “destroy the limitations of the patriarchal sex and gender dynamic that insists on a masculine/feminine and homo/hetero division” (Engel 42)
- ◎ **Focus on self-definition**
- ◎ **Coming out** as public and political act
  - > Potential for further oppression but also for empowerment, gains in community/affiliation

# Some Strands of the Gay Rights Movement

- ◉ More reformist (e.g., Gay Activist Alliance) and revolutionary arms (e.g., Gay Liberation Front)
- ◉ Internal fractures along race and gender lines led to multiplying activist groups
  - > Move away from notion of monolithic gay identity
- ◉ Queer Nation tried to establish unifying banner and reclaim previously derogatory term—“queer”

# Continuing Struggles (in brief)

- Nature vs. nurture debates
- Stereotypes and cultural appropriation of narrow version of queer identity
  - > Worry that activists will “privilege that identity at the expense of silencing non-conforming members of its own community” (Engel 59)
- Relative invisibility of LGBTQI individuals who are not white, male, middle-class
- How gay rights fits into civil rights and human rights discussions
- “Pseudo-equality” achieved, not complete equality
  - > Pushback from active and well-funded political and religious groups

# Charges Brought Against LGBTQI People?

Unnatural or pathological behavior, desires

Unsafe around children or bad family environment

Sinful

Generally sexually deviant or sexually dangerous

Morally dangerous to society at large

Process of challenging and refuting these charges

# Liberal Neutrality

- ◎ “the state should not reward or penalize particular conceptions of the good life but, rather, should provide a neutral framework within which different and potentially conflicting conceptions of the good can be pursued” (Kymlicka 883)
  - > Championed in our society– part of respecting diversity, autonomy, individuality
- ◎ Does the value of liberal neutrality provide us with reasons to grant LGBTQI people more liberties and opportunities? Or should we not “force some citizens to tolerate what they find morally abhorrent”?
  - > Does it make a difference what the source of non-heterosexual identity is?

# On Same-Sex Marriage

- ◎ Some reasons offered by proponents
  - > Marriage as “central to concepts of good citizenship”  
(Brake 29)
  - > Recognize loving union
  - > Legal, economic, social benefits
  - > Equal treatment
- ◎ Some reasons offered by opponents
  - > Defined between man and woman
  - > Immoral lifestyle
  - > Gateway to other non-traditional marriages
  - > **...essentially heterosexist**
- ◎ Given the patriarchal and heteronormative underpinnings of marriage in this country, do you think that advocating for same-sex marriage is an important way to promote justice and reverse oppression for this population?

# Additional Resources

- Interactive Timeline for Fight for Gay Rights:  
<http://nation.time.com/2013/03/26/pride-and-prejudice-an-interactive-timeline-of-the-fight-for-gay-rights/>
- “Definitions: Homophobia, Heterosexism, and Sexual Prejudice.”  
[http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/html/prej\\_defn.html](http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/html/prej_defn.html)
- “What Is Heteronormativity?” <http://www.genderandeducation.com/issues/what-is-heteronormativity/>
- Gender Equity Resource Center:  
[http://geneq.berkeley.edu/lgbt\\_resources\\_definiton\\_of\\_terms#heterosexism](http://geneq.berkeley.edu/lgbt_resources_definiton_of_terms#heterosexism)
- GLAAD Media Reference Guide: Transgender Glossary of Terms  
<http://www.glaad.org/reference/transgender>
- Kymlicka, Will. “Liberal Individualism and Liberal Neutrality.” *Ethics* 99.4 (1989): 883-905.

Happy Halloween!

