

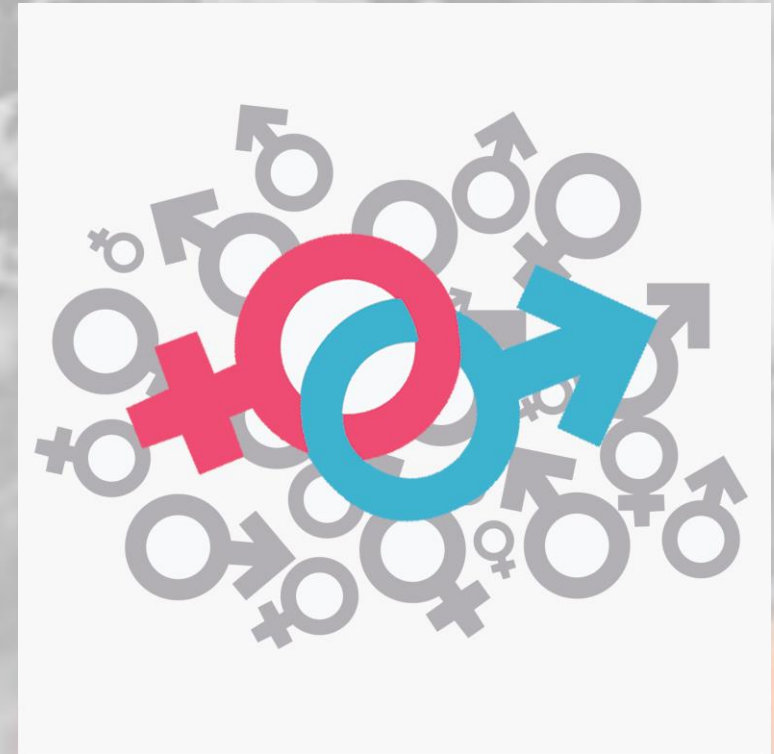


Human Sexuality

Social Agents

Defining Human Sexuality

- Sex can refer to:
 - Biological features
 - E.g. Gender
 - Physical Act
 - Gender Identity
- Human sexuality refers to:
 - Actions of sexual expression, as seen by cultural surroundings
 - i.e. What it means to be a “masculine” in society vs what it means to be “feminine”



Sexuality and Values

- Pluralistic society embraces wide range of sexual attitudes and values
 - Diverse societies more likely to accept range of behaviors, while more culturally homogeneous more likely to expect gender conformity
- Values influence sexual attitudes & behavior
 - Values: the qualities in life that are deemed important or unimportant, right or wrong, desirable or undesirable

View of Sexuality Values

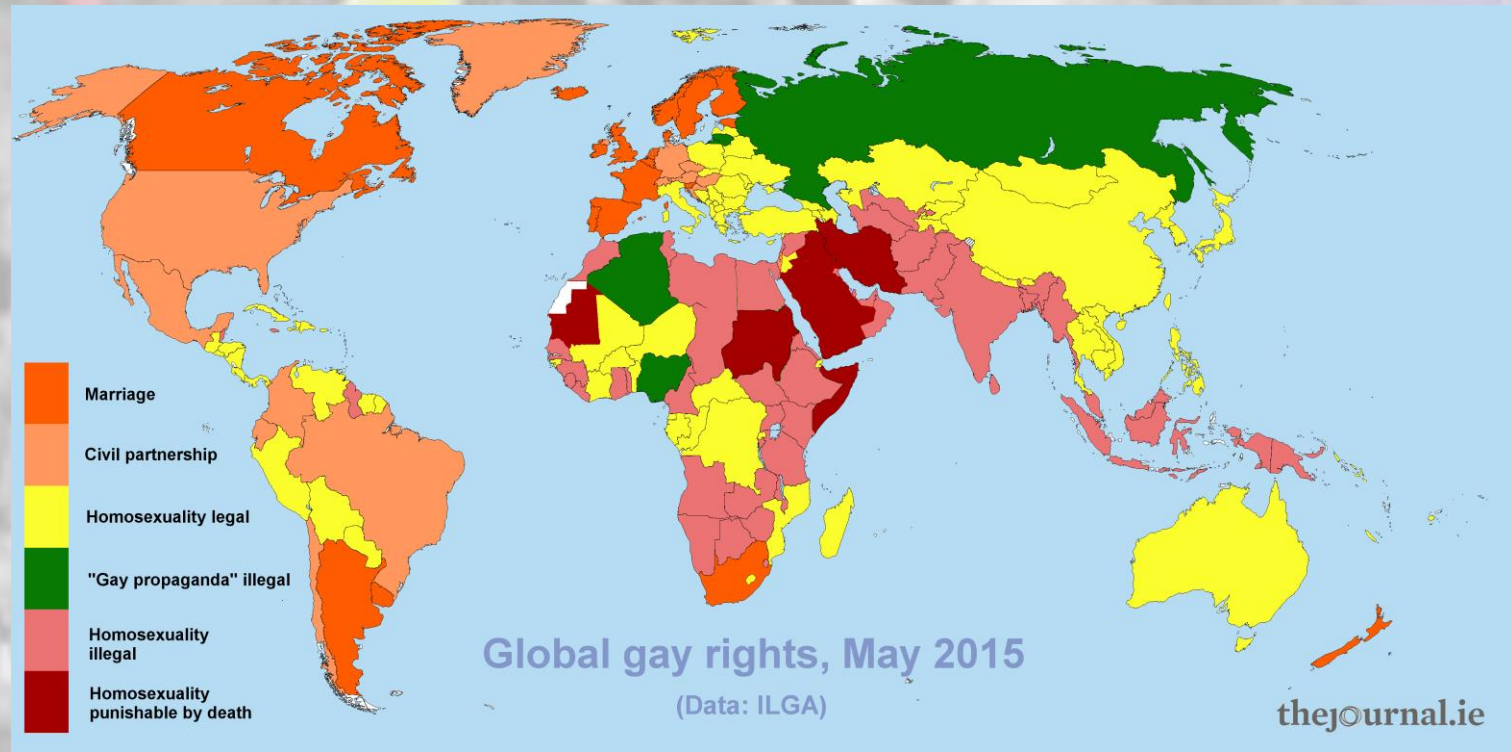
- Legalism – Moral laws from an external source
 - “If it is legal it must be ok”
 - Ex. If Homosexuality is legal it must be “ok”
- Situational Ethics – decision making is context-dependent and rules are flexible
 - Ex. “ Something may not be ok now, but might be under other circumstances”
- Ethical Relativism – no one correct moral view, but rather diversity in beliefs is considered natural and based upon culture
 - “It might be ok for one culture, but not another, and it shouldn’t be judged”
 - Ex. “I’m not homosexual, but I don’t judge people who are”

The Sociological Perspective

- Examine effect of cultural institutions and beliefs on sexual behavior and attitudes
 - Ex. How does the strength of religious institutions impact the views of sexuality in country A versus country B?
- Societies differ widely in sexual attitudes, practices, customs, e.g.
 - Marriage
 - What is the role and definition of marriage?
 - Sex partners
 - Views of “promiscuity”
 - What constitutes Sexual Contact
- Double Standard – Often what is “acceptable” for males is seen as “unacceptable” for females

Sources of Views of Sexuality

- Parents
 - Responsible for earliest views of sexuality. Children learn by observing
- Peers
 - Open individuals to variety of different perceptions
- Religion
 - Typically teach to the conformity of traditional roles and values
- Ethnicity
 - Differing cultural views based on ideals of ethnic group
- Mainstream culture
 - Provide more insight into cultural norms



Perspectives of Human Sexuality: Classical Era

- The Historical Perspective
 - No uniform understanding of Human Sexuality
 - Many difference throughout history
 - Historical Examples
 - Incestuous relationships in classical era
 - Having male and female extra-marital relationships in ancient Greece and Rome
 - Ancient Hebrew practicing Polygamy
 - Prostitution “oldest profession”



Perspectives of Human Sexuality: Religion

- Most major religions have stricter views of sexuality and gender roles
 - Islam
 - The Islamic tradition values only marital sexual contact
 - Far East
 - Taoism (China) – sex is a form of worship that leads to harmony with nature, as well as immortality
 - The Early Christians
 - Sex was restricted to marriage and was for procreation and not for pleasure
 - Lust made sexual expression inherently evil
 - Divorce was outlawed



Perspectives of Human Sexuality: Modern Changes

- The Middle Ages
 - Women viewed as Sinful (Eve) and Saintly (Mary)
- The Protestant Reformation
 - Idea of Marriage for priests, and sex for more than just procreation
- Colonial Era
 - Europeans transported ideas to other cultures
- Industrial Era
 - Sexuality suppressed and not talked about

Perspectives of Human Sexuality: The 60s

- The Sexual Revolution
 - During the 1960s and 70s views on sexuality changed
 - Forces that brought about the revolution include
 - The birth-control pill
 - The mass media
 - Playboy Magazine
 - Discussion and portrayals of sexuality accepted & commonplace



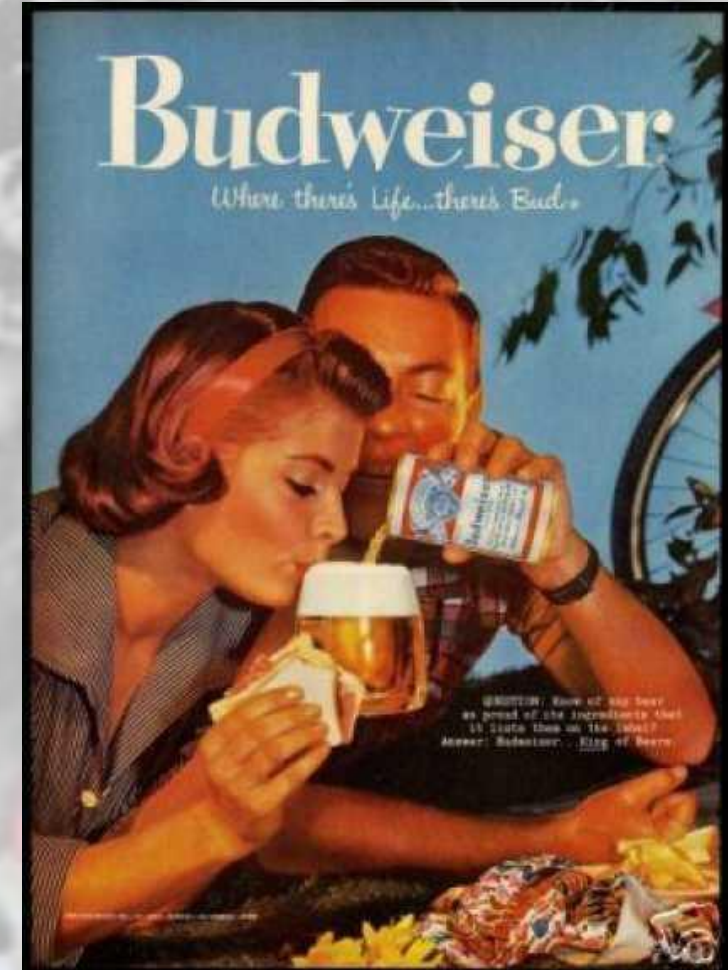
Broadening Perspectives of Sexuality

- Gay Rights activism
 - Arose during the sexual revolution
 - AIDS education, prevention, and treatment
 - Pushing for legal marriage equality
 - Achieved in United States in June, 2015
- Sex research
 - Trying to learn more about psychology of sexual attraction
 - Sexually explicit questionnaires
 - Masters & Johnson laboratory research



The Historical Perspective: Recent Trends

- More teens sexually active
 - Teen Pregnancy is down
 - Sexual Education is more common
- Teens are becoming sexually active at younger ages
- Female sexuality is accepted
- Gay Rights movements common
- Sex is discussed openly
 - Pornography commonplace
 - Sexual themes in advertising



Feminist Theory

- Challenges such traditional views as
 - Men as breadwinners, women as homemakers
 - Men as political policymakers
 - Men as objective, rational beings and women as emotional, irrational creatures
- Asserts men have no right to control a women's body
 - Main argument being used against abortion



Homosexual Theory

- Theory of the psychology and sociology of gender roles and sexual orientation
 - Challenges heterosexist assumptions
- Asserts sexuality is more varied than those in power want to believe
 - Ex. Just because there is a law that bans it, it doesn't mean it does not exist

