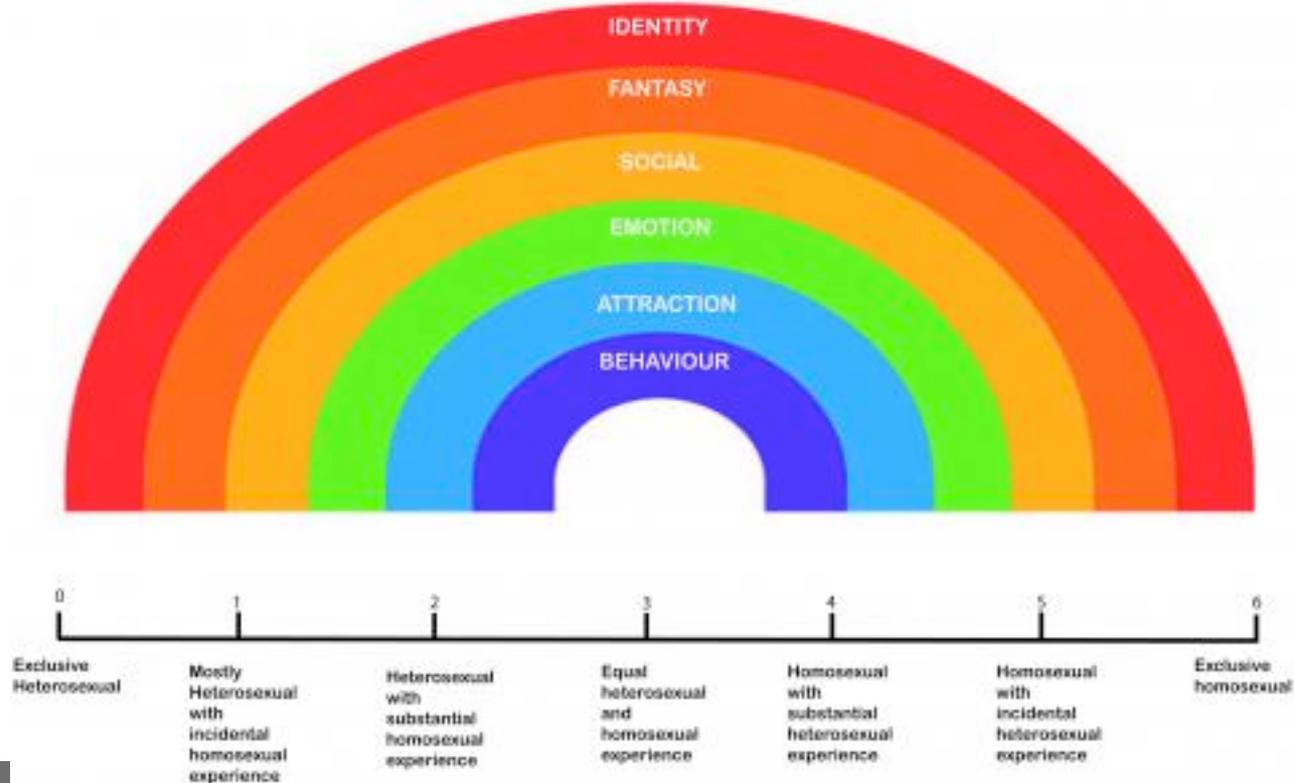


How Does Gender Matter for Who We Want and Desire?



Gender and Sexuality



The Gender of Sexuality

- For Sociologists the importance of sexuality is not so much whether people are gay or straight but rather why sexual behavior is so important to us in the first place
 - **Sex** (verb)- any act that is defined as sexual by a broader social environment
 - **Sexual identity** - refers to the particular category into which people place themselves based on current, largely Anglo-European divisions of heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual and asexual
 - **Sexual desire** - is defined as a combination of objective physical responses and subjective psychological or emotional responses to some internal or external stimulus

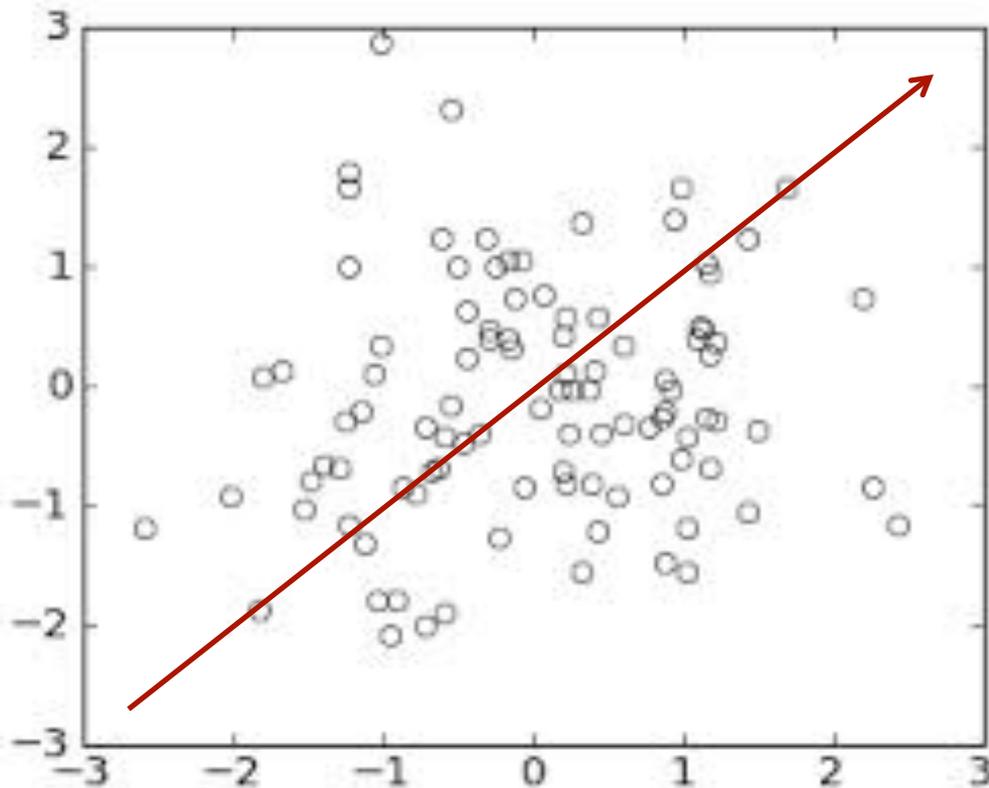
Cisgender and Transgender Identities

- Cisgender-refers to people who are born one biological sex and feel most comfortable as the gender traditionally associated with that sex.
- Transgender – refers to people who are born one biological sex but feel more comfortable as the gender traditionally associated with the opposite sex
 - Transsexuals: people who change their biological sex to conform to their gender identity
- Trans people are often considered to be mentally ill in popular culture.
 - They face discrimination from many contemporary groups and legal structures in the US.
 - The most trans positive nations are Iran and Thailand, and both nations provide social and financial support for transitioning citizens.

Does Sexuality Have a Gender?

- ➔ We create the idea of gender in part through our expectations about what it means to exist as a sexual being as a woman or a man
 - ❑ Sex itself becomes a way in which to create an accountable performance of gender
 - ❑ Gender often includes “Sexual Scripts” or ideas about how biological sex, sexual behavior and gender identity intersect
- ❑ One common stereotype is that sexuality confers gender and vice versa
 - ❑ Sexuality-gender association: the stereotype that lesbians are more masculine, etc..
 - ❑ The stereotype that homosexual individuals have “homosexual careers”, and heterosexual have “heterosexual careers”

Sexuality: Social and Biological



Biological and sociological forces shape sexuality, including;

- Sexual desire
- Sexual identity
- Sexual behaviors

Sexual Scripts

- Sexual scripts answer the question: what exactly are we supposed to do, sexually speaking?
 - Women often experience a double standard
 - Virgin/Whore dichotomy
 - Slut vs. Stud
- Sexual scripts are the learned guidelines for sexual expression that provide individuals with a sense of appropriate sexual behaviors and sexual desires for that particular culture
- Religion often has an important role to play in the establishment of sexual scripts.

Sexual Scripts: Religion and Sexuality

Sexuality and Religion

- Hinduism: Established in prehistory, India
 - Have a variety of restrictions on sexual behavior, however many religious stories include diverse sexuality. Fairly neutral on same sex relationships and hold mixed beliefs on transgender identities. Support monogamy.

- Judaism: Established about 1300BCE
 - Sexual restrictions focused on marriage. Orthodox Jews do not support same-sex relationships and oppose trans rights. Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist Jews accept same-sex relationships and trans identity. Support/require monogamy.

Sexual Scripts: Religion and Sexuality

- Buddhism: Established about 520BCE
 - Generally discourage **all** sexual activity. Have few specific restrictions. Generally, do not consider questions of sexual orientation or marriage to be religious in nature.
 - Some groups historically support same-sex relationships
- Islam: Established about 622CE
 - All major sects disapprove of same sex relationships and provide strict rules surrounding marriage, polygamy is acceptable. Same sex relations between men are not acceptable, and same sex female relationships are defined as adultery.
 - Transsexual people are considered to be part of natural human variation and are generally accepted.

Sexual Scripts: Religion and Sexuality

- Christianity: Established about 30CE
 - Diverse perspective on sexual behavior. Generally require monogamy, with this except of Fundamentalist Mormons, who practice polygamy. Catholicism says chastity is ideal, but only restrict religious leaders.
 - Oppose adultery, but most modern churches don't ban specific sex acts, and hold diverse views on same-sex relations and trans identities.
 - Denominations that generally oppose same-sex relationships: Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Methodist, Southern Baptist, Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons
 - Denominations that generally support same sex-relationships: United Church of Christ, Evangelical Lutheran, Quakers, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Alliance of Baptists and some Anglican churches

Sociology in the Bedroom: Sexual Identities

➤ **Monosexuals**

- **Heterosexual, (or straight)** which refers to the social identity of a person who has sexual attraction to and/or relations with people of the opposite biological, is a concept or identity that emerged in the mid-nineteenth century.
- **Homosexual, (or gay)** which refers to the social identity of a person who has sexual attraction to and/or relations with people of the same sex, is a concept or identity that emerged in the mid-nineteenth century.
- **Autosexual-** people who prefer solo sexual experiences over sexual experiences with another person
- **Skoliosexual-** Attraction toward non-binary individuals

Sociology in the Bedroom: Sexual Identities

➤ **Polysexuals**

- **Bisexuals**, which refers to the social identity of a person who has sexual attraction to and/or relations with people of the both the same and opposite biological sex
 - **Pansexual**, which refers to the social identity of a person who has sexual attraction to and/or relations with people of a variety of biological sexes and gender expressions
 - **Demisexuality** is a sexual orientation in which someone feels sexual attraction only to people with whom they have an emotional bond, regardless of their gender.
- **Asexual, (Ace)** refers to a person who does not feel sexual attraction to any other person.

Sociology in the Bedroom: Relational Identity

➤ Relational Spectrums

- **Aromantic** is a person who experiences little or no romantic attraction to others, but may still experience physical attractions
- **Demiromantic** -is a sexual orientation in which someone feels romantic attraction only to people with whom they have an emotional bond.
- **Hetero/Homoromantic** – regardless of sexual attraction, romantic emerge with only one gender identity.

Socially Dominant: Heterosexuality

- In the US today heterosexuality is seen as the given, the assumed, the norm; and that homosexuality is the phenomenon that needs to be explained.
 - However, diverse sexual behavior has existed throughout history.
 - Diverse sexual behavior also exists in the animal kingdom
- What kind of power does an individual or group gain from being a member of a group that is defined as “the norm”

Socially Dominant: Heterosexuality

- There was no such thing as “heterosexuality” or “homosexuality” until the 19th century
 - The two terms were made popular by a sexologist, Richard Krafft-Ebing who wrote about homosexuality as a personality disorder in his book in 1886
 - Historically, sexual identity was tied to sexual behavior. Different cultures and time periods had different rules about appropriate sexual behavior
 - Aristocratic incest, child brides, sexual duty etc, polygamy.

Biologically Dominant: Bisexuality

- Bisexuality is an even more recent concept
 - Freud believed that all humans are potentially bisexual
 - Today research suggests that while bisexuality is very common, some small percentages of people are not.
- Common stereotype about bisexuals
 - Promiscuity
 - Pretending
- Bisexuals are often stigmatized by both heterosexuals and homosexuals

Compulsive Heterosexuality

- Compulsive Heterosexuality describes the way in which heterosexuality becomes institutionalized into the process of daily life, dictating norms and distributing power and privilege
 - Not only does compulsive heterosexuality demand opposite sex sexuality but it also requires the public performance of heterosexuality
 - Heteronormativity is the way in which heterosexuality is viewed as the normal, natural way of being (e.g. Prom King and Queen)
 - What are some examples of compulsive heterosexuality in contemporary US society

Heterosexism and Heteronormativity

- When did you know you were straight? Is not asked as often as - When did you know you were gay?
- The privilege of not being called upon to explain your sexual desires and behaviors is part of heteronormativity
 - ❑ *Hetero-privilege is the set of unearned rights that are given to heterosexuals in many societies*
 - ❑ *Institutions, norms, and values in heteronormative societies reinforce the perceived normality of heterosexuality*

Power, Masculinity and Sexuality

- In the U.S. much of popular culture focuses on adolescent boys' obsession with sex
 - Sex is association with power - Impotency is seen as implying that the man is literally without power
 - Men are seen as sexual subjects, meaning they have a sense of power and agency that allows them to act in their bodies rather than being acted upon
 - Masculinity is often associate with sexual aggression or dominance as well as emotional distance
- What implications do these issues have for men? For women?

Power, Femininity and Sexuality,

- In Karin Martin's research, she found that many girls saw sex as something that happened to them, rather than something they actively desired and pursued
 - Many experienced ideal love with their boyfriend, or submission and adoration
 - To see oneself as a sexual object is to see oneself as the passive recipient of sexual behavior and sexual desire, or the one being sexually acted upon
- Women as passive, men as active in U.S. culture
 - E.g. Status and power of women's virginity
- What implications does this have for women? For men?