

Lecture 6

Cities and minorities:

The case of gays and lesbians



The 2012-2013 Ontario Model World Health Organization (OMWHO) of the University of Toronto

- Each year OMWHO holds a conference on a current global health issue of great concern and importance.
- This year's conference: the issue of sustainable healthcare for a growing global community
- We invite people of different age groups and areas of specialization to attend
- For more information...





The 3rd Annual conference on
**'Creating Sustainable Healthcare with our
Growing Population'**

Find out more at
[www.OMWHO.org!](http://www.OMWHO.org)



OMWHO
Ontario Model World Health Organization
Conference
2012-2013
January 11th-13th 2013

Re my absence October 9

- For 4 days, I couldn't see out of one eye
 - On pain-killers
 - Didn't leave the house
- Sorry to miss our class



Re Jennifer's lecture October 9



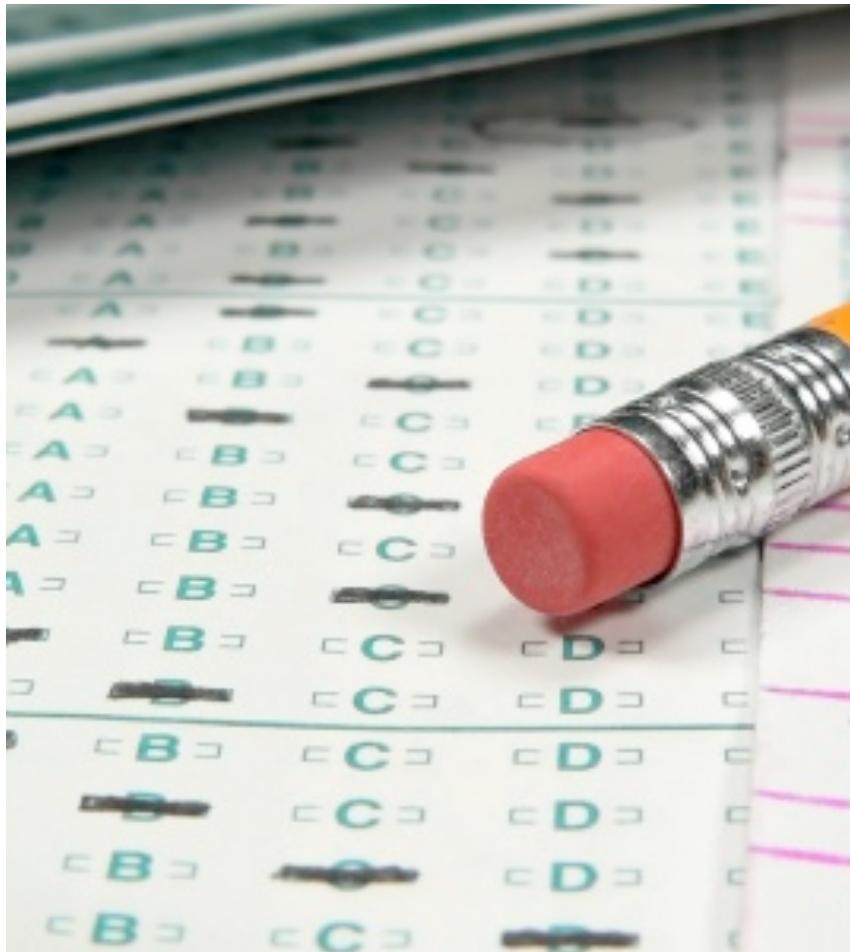
- Jennifer kindly agreed to give my lecture
- Why did people leave?
- They missed useful information about the test, plus the lecture itself

Re the material on First Nations

- In response to a student request, I belatedly provided this material
- I hope you found it interesting
- It may be on the final exam, like all other lecture material



Re the Test results October 16



- Congratulations to those who got an A
- It seems some students are not taking this course seriously
- Median grade = 62%
- Excluding the fails, median grade = 67%

What you should do if you got a low grade

- Carefully read the assigned material before lectures
- Attend all lectures and take careful notes
- Review your notes after each lecture
- Review your notes and readings before each test
- Attend scheduled review sessions
- Visit a TA with your questions
- Study with other students
- Make up and answer test questions together
- Seek help with mult choice tests at the Koffler Learning Centre



Habits of Inequality Theory

- All societies display social inequality of varying kinds
- These social inequalities are socially constructed: that is, collectively imagined on the basis of a supposedly important natural difference



Societies vary in Social Inequality



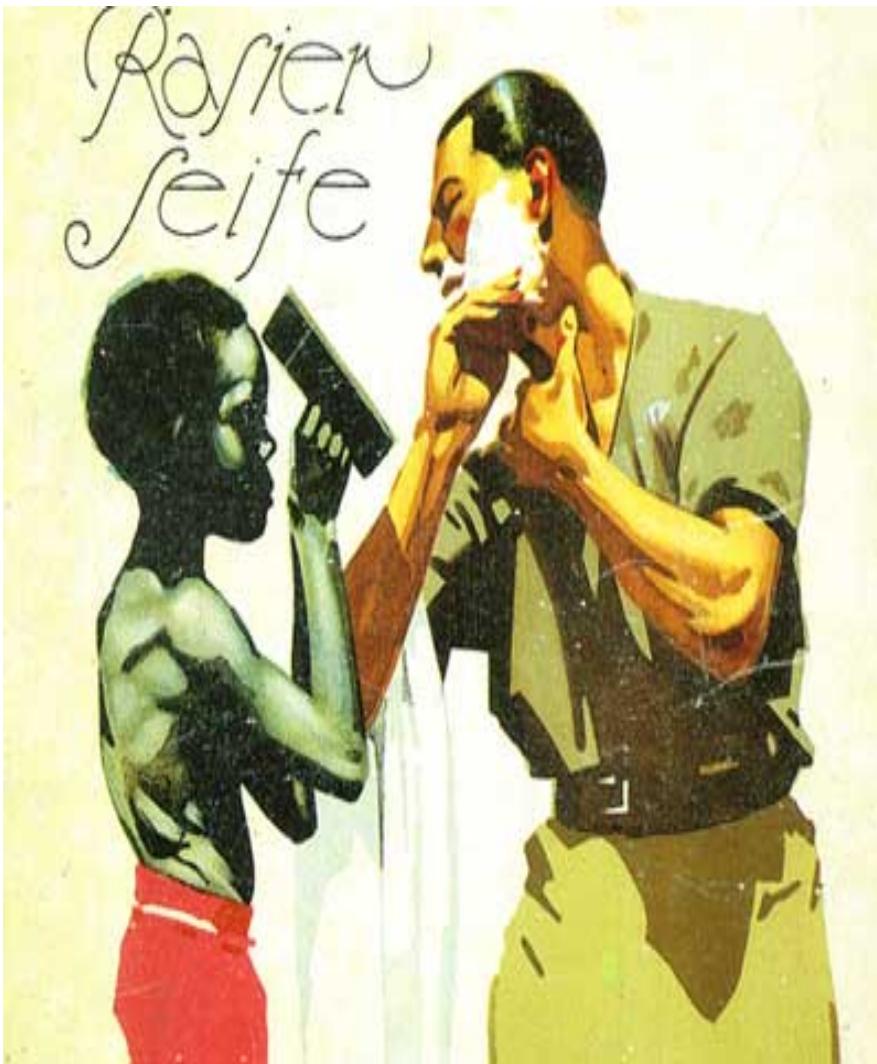
- Societies vary in the degree and kinds of social inequality they display.
 - The Scandinavian countries show least inequality
 - Canada falls somewhere near the middle of the pack
- Societies with the widest variety and intensity of inequality are most likely to display clear and long-lasting patterns we call “habits of inequality”

The Cultural Habits: S-N-P-N-S

- All types of social inequality display similar patterns or cultural “habits” that include the following (S-N-P-N-S):
 - Social differentiation
 - Narratives of blame
 - Practices of oppression
 - Narratives of validation
 - Strategies of resistance



S = Social Differentiation



- *Social differentiation* is the practice of identifying different “kinds” of people who are assumed to be essentially and importantly different
- E.g., Heterosexuals vs homosexuals.

Chania (or Xania), Crete



- Last week I visited Chania (Crete) for a family wedding
- It has been an important commercial town for 2000 years
- Today, it is a major tourist destination

Like elsewhere, gay and lesbian people have their own parts of town



1. Dyo Lux Revolution

- Sarpidonos Street 8, Chania,
Greece

2. Tavronitis Beach Chania,

- Crowd: Locals, tourists, not many oldies.

3. Agioi Apostoloi Beach

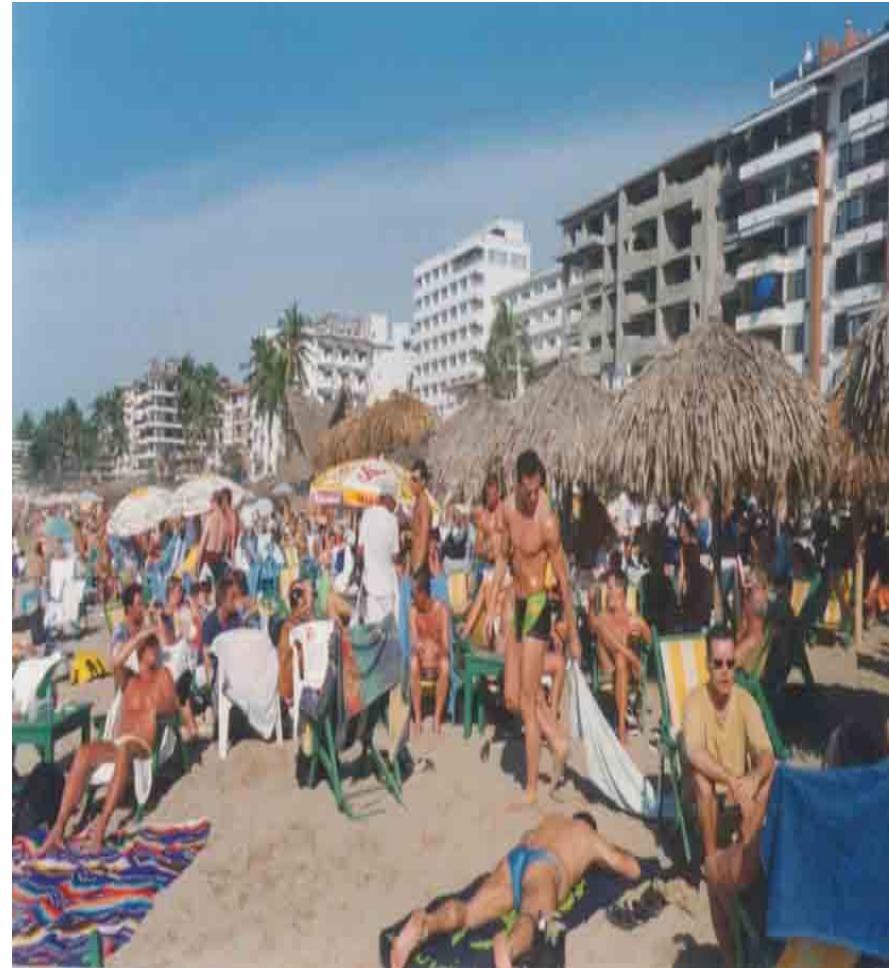
- Agion Apostolon Street, Agioi Apostoloi (Nea Kydonia), Chania,

4. Rapaniana beach

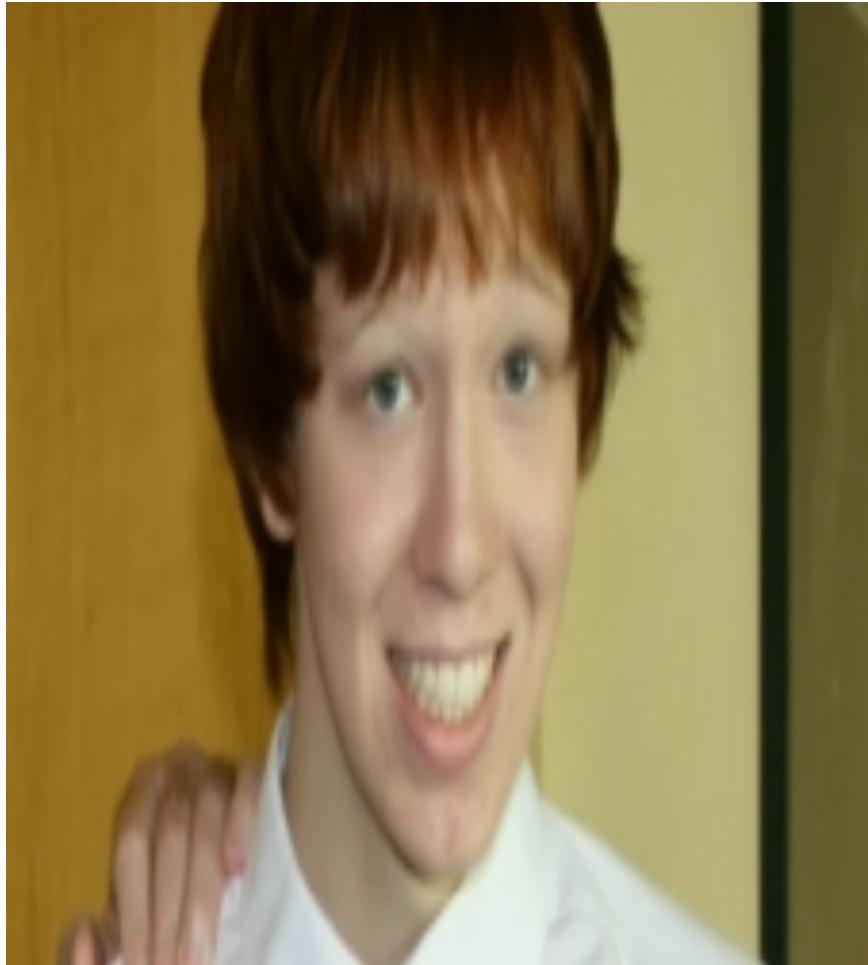
- Chania, Greece3 Ratings
 - Crowd: Men looking for sex.

Why do gays and lesbians have their own parts of town?

- LGBT communities develop in every city and tourist town(e.g., Puerto Vallarta)
- What is the value of cities for minority groups?
- What is the value of institutional completeness?



Gay Jamie Hubley (Ottawa) killed himself Oct 15, 2011. The only openly gay boy in his school, he had been bullied severely



- A suicide note was posted on his online blog
- The note spoke of the pain from both bullying and depression.
- "I'm tired of life, really. It's so hard, I'm sorry, I can't take it anymore," his note read.

Christopher Skinner, age 27

- was killed on Oct. 18, 2009 after being beaten up, then struck by a black SUV on Adelaide St. E. between Yonge and Victoria Streets
- His family made a final appeal last week for anyone with information on the case to come forward
- Christopher was gay
- Was this a hate crime; no one knows.
- The violent circumstances suggest it may have been



The numbers problem

- Unlike women, who are a majority of the population; and
- Unlike *ethnic* or racial groups, classes, or age groups, which may all be very large;
- The homosexual and lesbian population is very small – perhaps only 1-2 per cent of the total population
- Therefore, it is particularly vulnerable to attack and victimization

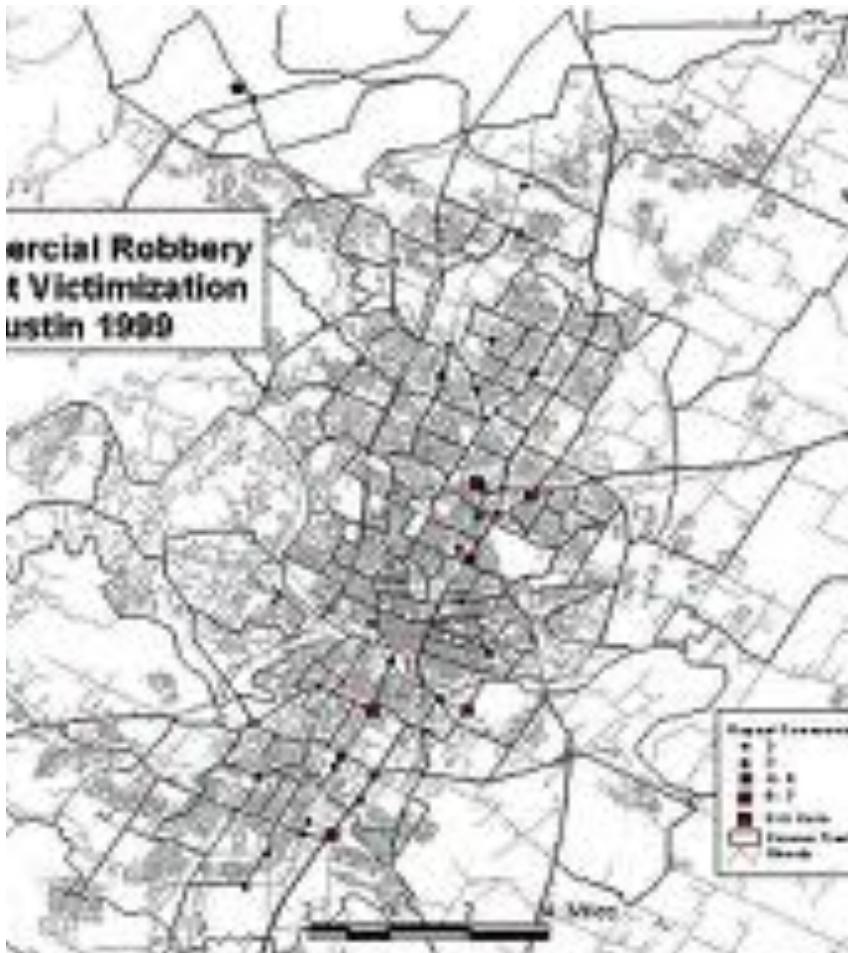
Consider the risks

- 98% of the population is heterosexual
 - Some fraction of this majority is strongly opposed to homosexuality
- Questions:
 - How can homosexuals safely find sexual partners?
 - How can homosexuals safely judge whether and when to “come out”?
 - How can homosexuals create safe, fulfilling lives for themselves in a dangerous world?

Implication

- Faced with ridicule, bullying, violence and occasionally even murder, **this group has had to develop strong protective strategies**
- How and where has it done this, and by what means?
- How has location made a difference for homosexuals?

The protective role of cities



- Cities are often said to be dangerous places
- Are they the worst places for homosexuals to protect themselves, or the best?
- If suitable, where in cities should homosexuals locate themselves?

Reliable statistics on homosexuality are scarce

- Data from the Canadian Census of 2001 found only 34,200 same-sex common-law couples
- Homosexuality is the sexual orientation of only a small social minority
- Canadian, US, and other studies suggest that only about 2-3% of sexually active men and 1-2% of sexually active women are currently homosexual



Debates flourish about numbers



- Homosexuals in cities are more concentrated in some neighbourhoods
- The homosexual population may reach 10 per cent or more in neighbourhoods where they are concentrated
- There is debate about how properly to define and measure homosexuality

The problem they face: homophobia

- *Homophobia* is conventionally defined as a fear or hatred of homosexuals
- The term ‘homophobia’ implies that anti-gay prejudice is an irrational feeling based mainly on fear and, consequently, a defense mechanism

Likely, this is incorrect

- Likely, opposition against gays and lesbians is not a phobia, but a **learned subcultural attitude**



Beliefs supporting hostility to homosexuality

- Some people continue to believe homosexuality is a choice and that it fundamentally defines people's character
 - These beliefs are correlated with hostile attitudes towards lesbians and gay men
- Some people also believe that homosexuality is a result of negative experiences with the opposite sex while growing up
 - No evidence to support this



Three aspects of homophobia



Herek (2004) has defined three concepts that capture the current meaning of *homophobia*:

1. *heterosexism*
 - a cultural ideology that favours cross-sexual over same-sexual behaviour
2. *sexual stigma*
 - *Negative labeling of people who practice any non-heterosexual behaviour*
3. *sexual prejudice*
 - Negative expectations and discrimination based on sexual orientation

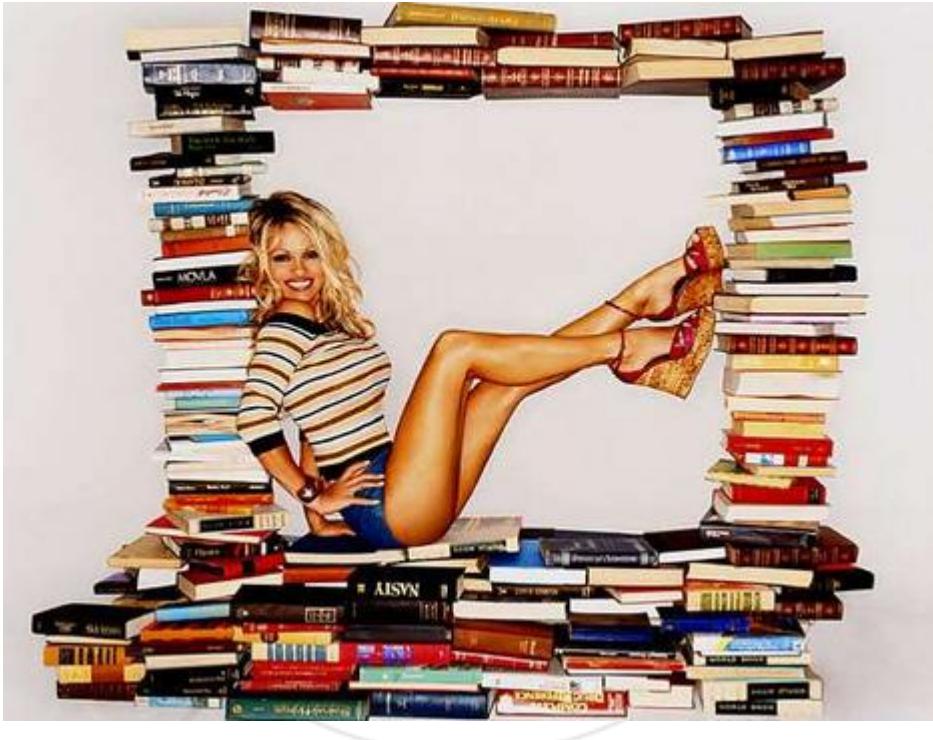
Four causes of “homophobia”

Social science research has identified 4 main causes:

1. Lack of openness to human diversity
2. Lack of openness to sexual diversity
3. Lack of familiarity with homosexuals
4. Membership in a homophobic culture



1. The role of sexual diversity



First, there is a general lack of openness to human diversity (i.e., conventionality)

Second is a lack of familiarity with sexual diversity

- People with a wide variety of sexual experiences are less homophobic than people with a more limited ‘lifetime sexual environment’

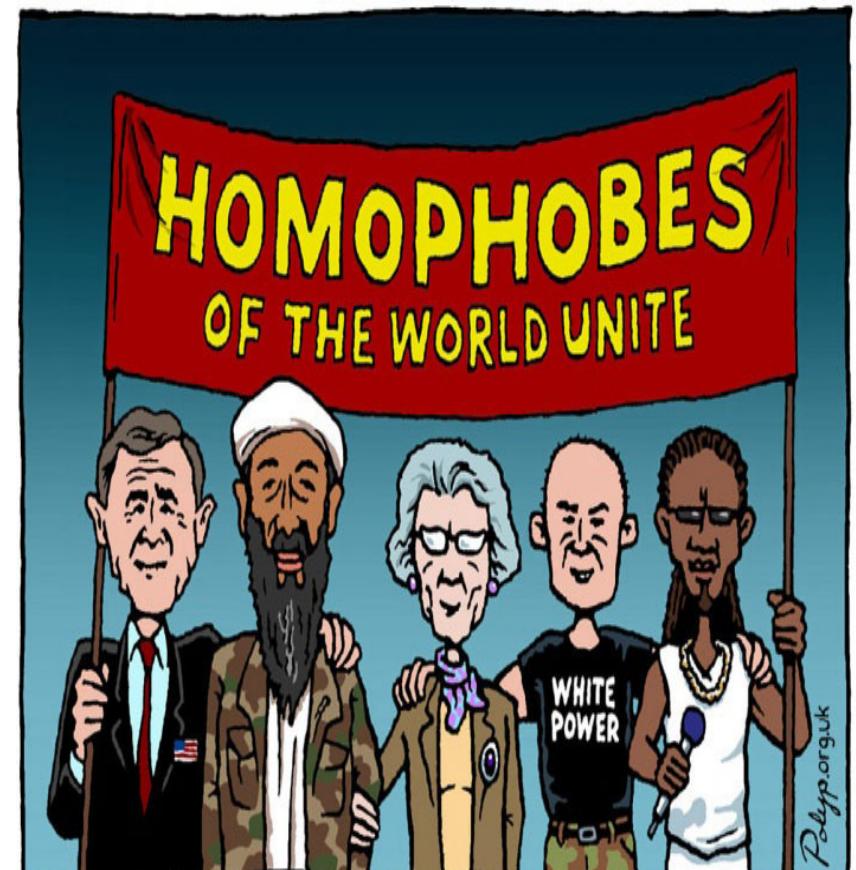
3. Familiarity with homosexuals

Third is a lack of familiarity with homosexuals

- People who live in small communities (where they are less likely to meet open homosexuals) are less accepting of homosexuality

Fourth is membership in a homophobic culture.

- Fundamentalist religion is often behind homophobic laws, rules and beliefs
- So are macho team cultures



'UNLIKELY BEDFELLOWS'

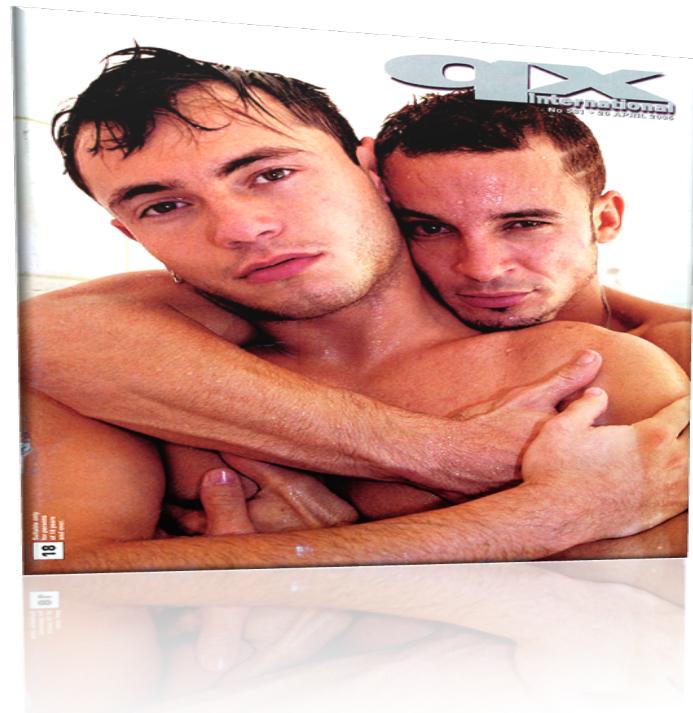
New ways of thinking about sexuality



- In the early twentieth-century, most North Americans held the view that sexuality is fixed and binary
- However, the American sexologist Dr. Alfred Kinsey showed that human sexual orientation lies on a continuum
- Today, people understand much more about homosexuality and are more tolerant of it than they once were

How communities grew

- Research by Alfred Kinsey and other researchers made people rethink their understanding of homosexuality
- Homosexuality was discussed more during the late 1950s and 1960s
- Information about homosexuality spread through newspapers and magazines
- Attracted isolated individuals to the growing gay communities in New York and San Francisco (for example)



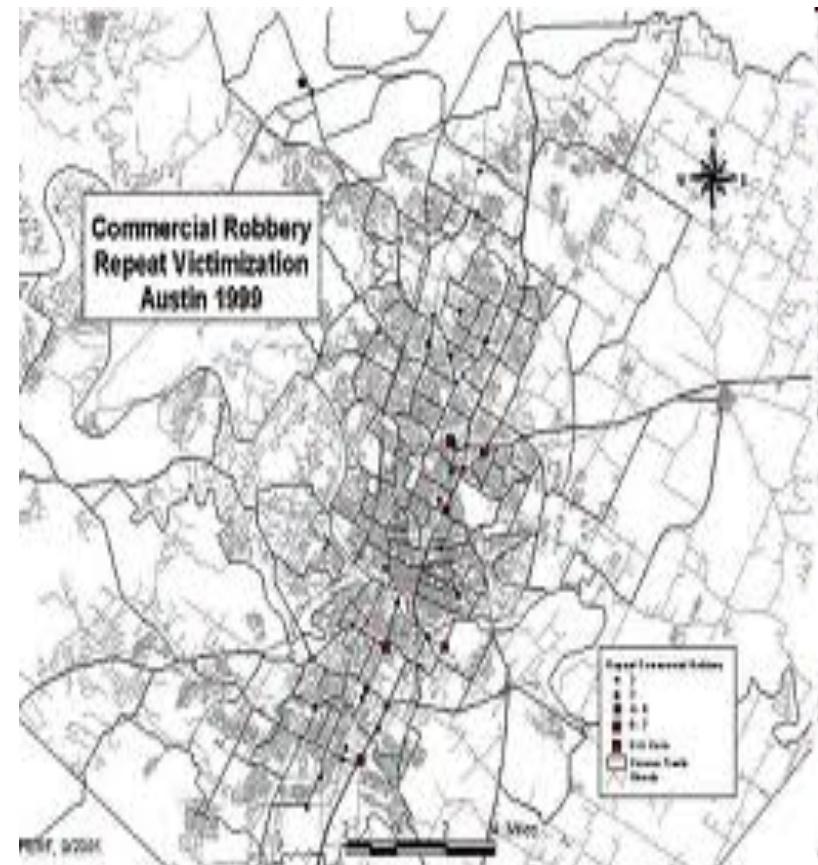
The role of the women's movement, birth control



- North American sexual norms have been changing for the last 100 years
- Some of the change is due to women's movement and the birth control revolution
 - Women are less homophobic than men
 - Contraception increased people's taste for non-reproductive sexuality

Victimization in cities?

- Cities are places of frequent victimization
- However, for homosexuals, cities represent safety
- Why are some people victimized in cities, and how do they avoid victimization?



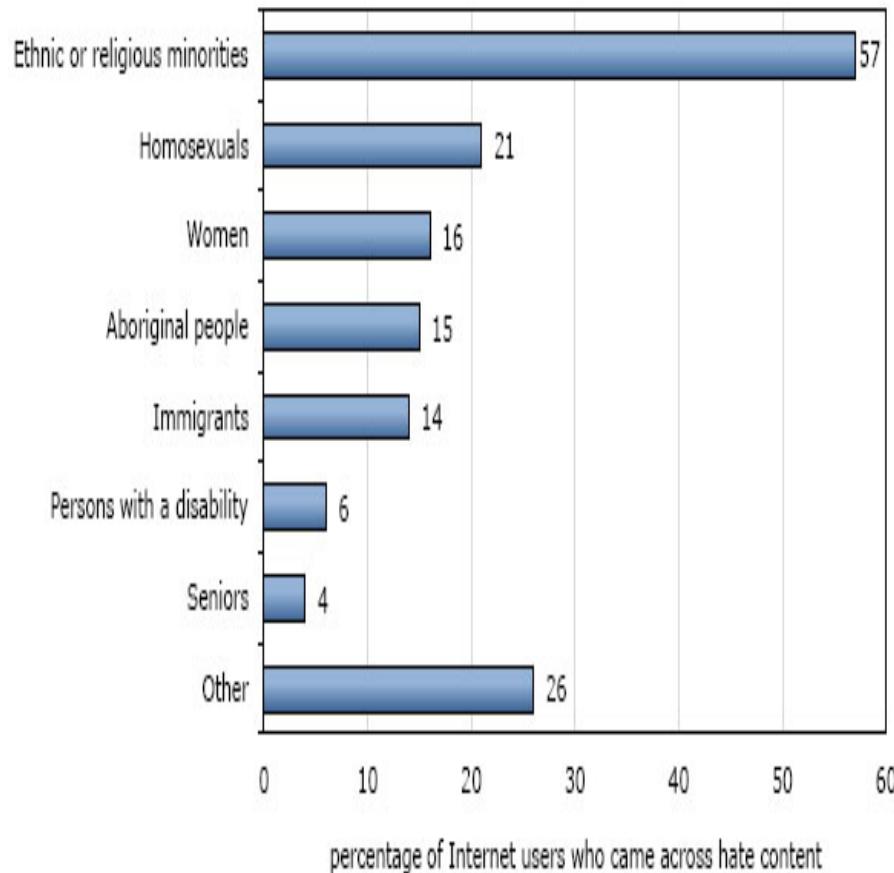
Victimization and inequality

- Like exploitation, domination, discrimination and exclusion, victimization is another common result of inequality
- Some groups are more likely than others to be victimized by criminals
- What do sociologists know about victimization and its link to inequality?



Victimology

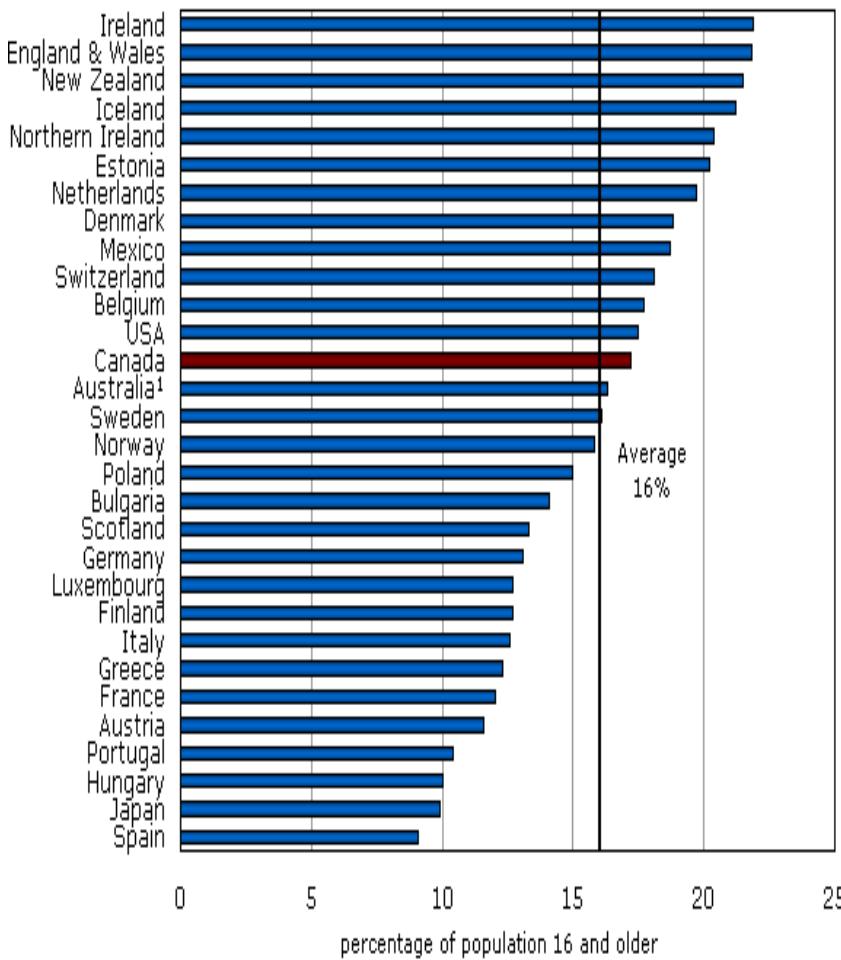
Target groups



- Victimology is the sociological study of victims of crime
- Typically, victimization is greatest among the disadvantaged
- Characteristics associated with an increased risk of violent victimization include:
 - self-identifying as homosexual
 - having some form of activity limitation or physical handicap
 - identifying as an Aboriginal person

Routine activities theory: Location is key

Participating countries



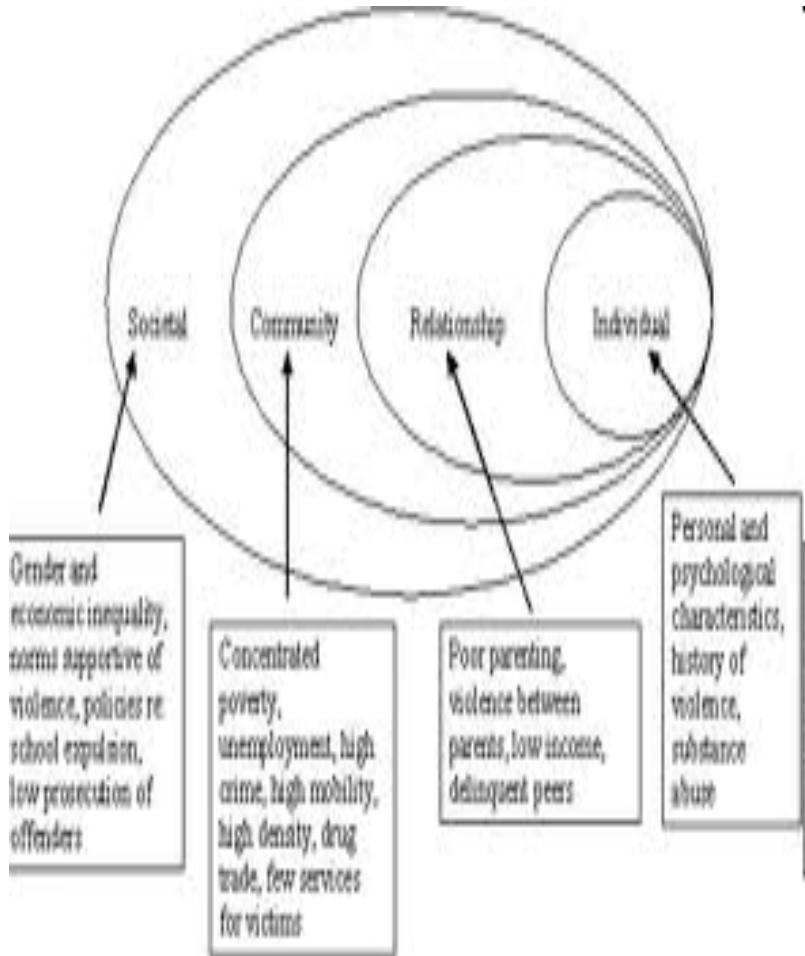
- Victimization is largely the result of how and where people spend their time
- Routine Activities Theory argues that victimization will be highest where likely offenders and suitable targets converge, and capable guardians are absent.
- As a country, Canada is relatively safe for most people
 - According to an international victimization survey, Canada's rate was average for the 30 participating countries (2004-2005)

Hot Spots and Young People

- “Hot spots” are places where the risk of crime is highest due to increased convergence of suitable targets and likely offenders
- Other factors also influence the high rates of victimization among Aboriginals (and others)
- For example, note that the Aboriginal population is *young* compared to the rest of Canada



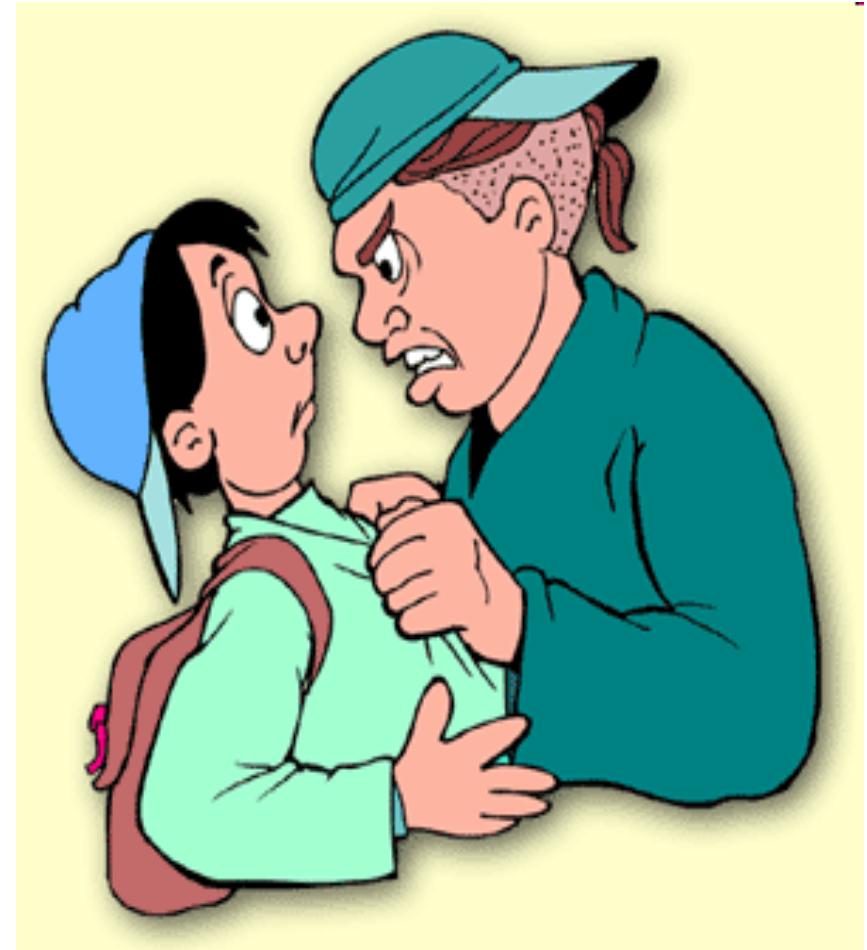
Places of Victimization



- Poverty, unemployment, crowding, and youth are all associated with crime and victimization in the general population
 - as well as among Aboriginals
- Workplaces are also hot spots of victimization
 - nearly one-fifth of all incidents of violent victimization occurred in the victim's workplace

Schools and Bullying

- Schools can be hot spots for victimization of all kinds.
- Even in grade nine, 45 per cent of boys and 32 per cent of girls reported having been bullied in the previous two months.
- Canada compared very poorly on bullying with many other countries for which data are available



Hate-motivated Victimization

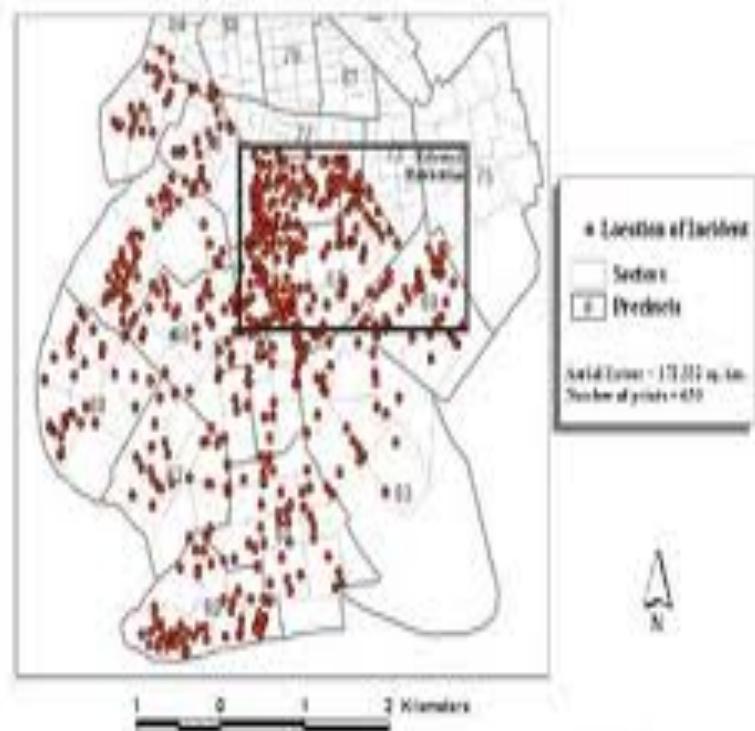


- Location aside, some people are more likely than others to be victimized
- in 4% of all incidents, victims believed the act was *hate-motivated*
- Experiences of victimization often leave a long-term mark
 - Fearfulness
 - Loss of self-esteem
 - Loss of confidence

The geography of victimization

Sociologists and geographers have been studying the location of criminal risks since the 1920s

Figure 1: Robberies in Brooklyn South
(07/26/97 - 08/23/97)



Source: NYPD Crime Complaint Index, 1997

Reproduced with permission of the Center for Applied Studies at the University of

The Chicago School of Sociology



- Max Weber was the first sociologist to study city life and the rise of cities
- However, the Chicago School of Sociology first produced a major body of sociological work about cities in *North America*
- Indeed, the Chicago approach to sociology (of all kinds) focused on locational patterning

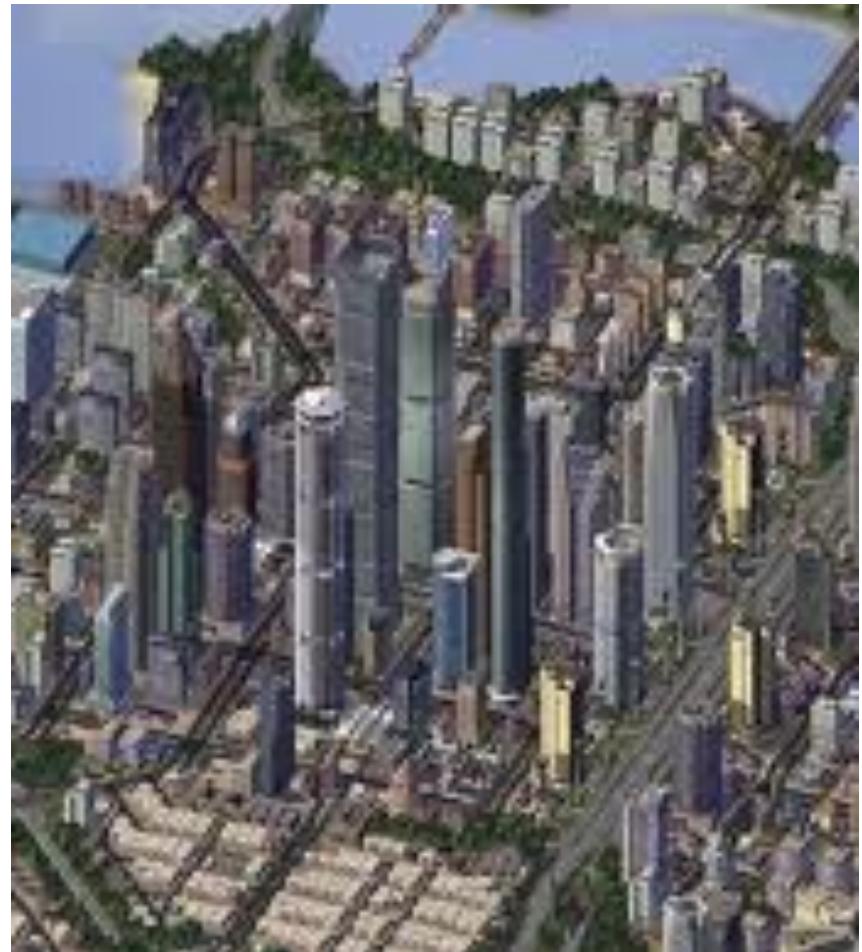
Focus on city ecology



- In the typical city, different activities are concentrated in different areas, partly because of different lifestyle choices
- Population density – a characteristic feature of cities -- can become a social problem
- However, it can also be a benefit, since it increases institutional completeness and social resources

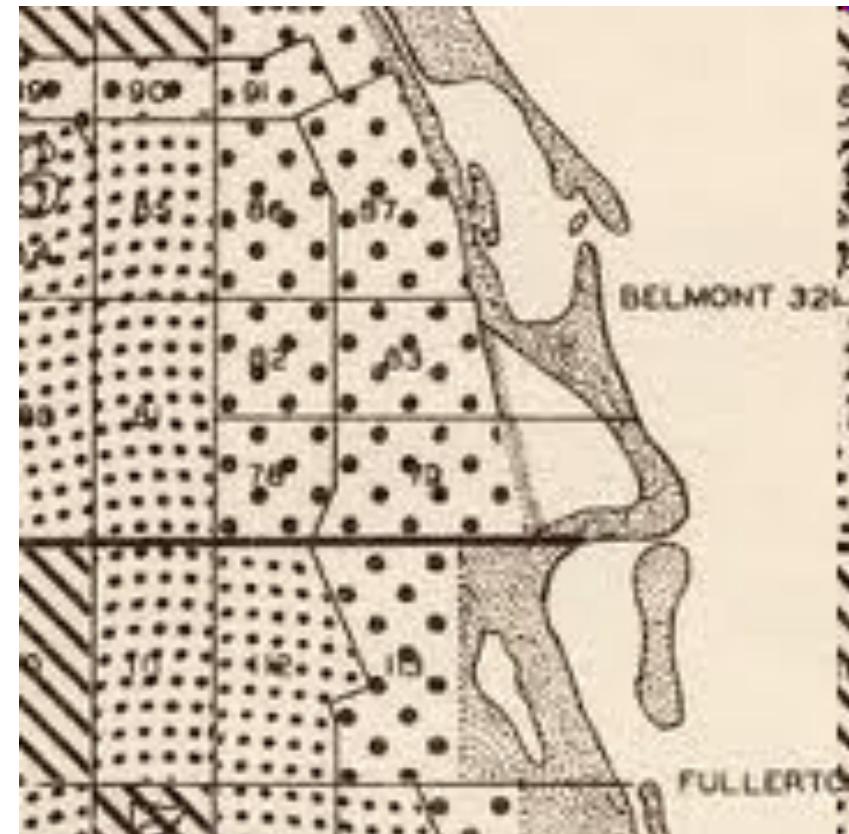
Gemeinschaft versus Gesellschaft

- Compared to rural areas, social relations in cities are often based on narrow personal interests, not common experiences or shared values
- This insight is central to the classic comparison of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* by German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies

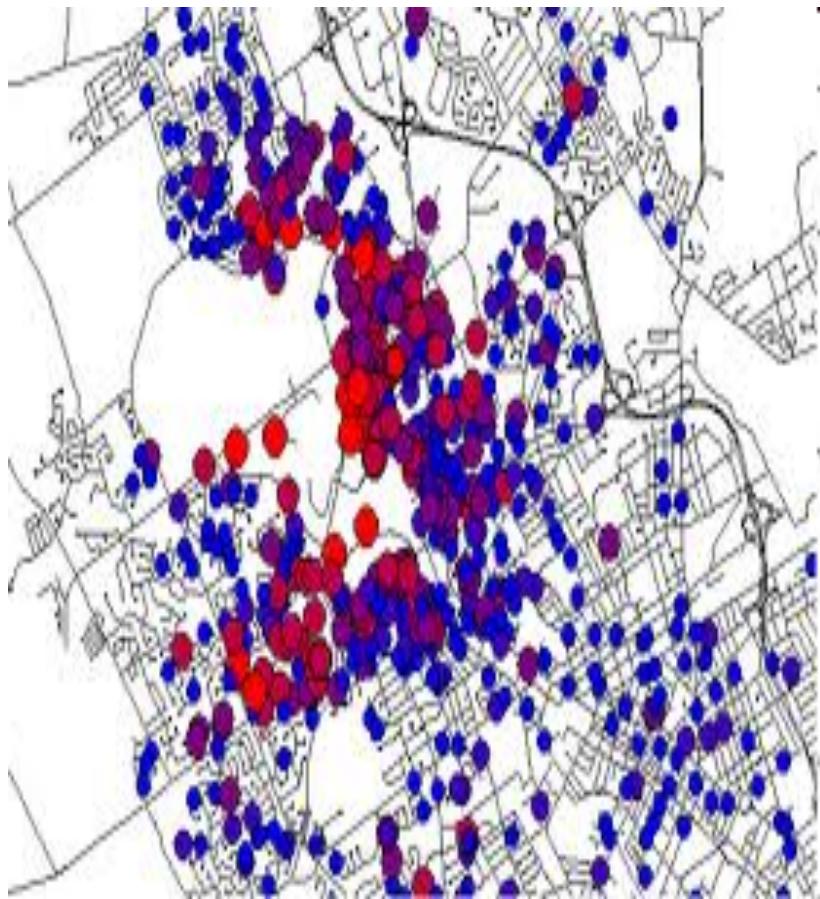


Social disorganization in Chicago

- Between 1860 and 1910, Chicago grew from a population of 10,000 to over two million, mainly through immigration
- Chicago, like other North American cities, grew by spreading outward along transportation lines: roads, railroad tracks, and waterways
- Chicago's growth was associated with a growth of crime, poverty, illness, homelessness, poor housing conditions, and bad working conditions
- Sociologists developed what came to be known as Social Disorganization Theory (or SDT).

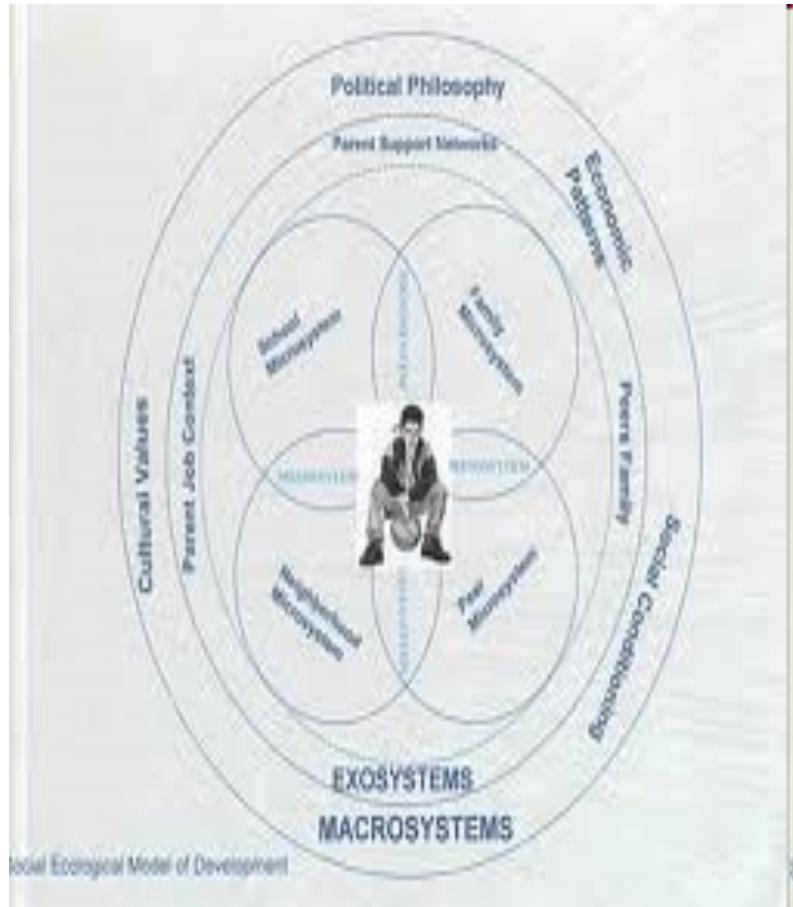


Disorganization or different organization?



- W.I. Thomas defined *social disorganization* as "the inability of a neighborhood to solve its problems together"
- Later sociologists preferred the term "differential social organization," to recognize that different sets of competing norms may co-exist in a city
- All researchers recognized that cities are places where many normative (or rule-) systems co-exist

Location creates risk of crime



- In the urban areas where recently-arrived poor people were living, social control was especially weak
- Weak social control, not the criminality of particular ethnic groups, produced crime there
- Shaw and McKay's key finding was that *location, not personality*, produces delinquency and victimization

The role of “social disorganization”

- Ethnic diversity interferes with social control by limiting communication among adult members of the community
- No wonder, then, that delinquency rates are highest in areas of poverty and “culture conflict”
- To some degree, the crime and delinquency rates also reflect differential rates of policing throughout the city



Skid Row – the most disorganized locale

- According to the ecology theory, social controls are weakest in the downtown core of the city, where the poorest, most isolated or disadvantaged people live

At the very core of the core is *Skid Row*

- an area found in every city, characterized by isolated transient people (especially, men) with no strong personal networks, no money or jobs, and no property ownership in the neighbourhood



Skid Row in Toronto



- In Toronto, Skid Row was historically located in the area bounded by Church and Parliament, Wellesley and Queen
- Historically, a “deviance service centre”:
 - where you can “safely” act in deviant ways
 - Also, an area of poverty, prostitution, addiction, and homelessness

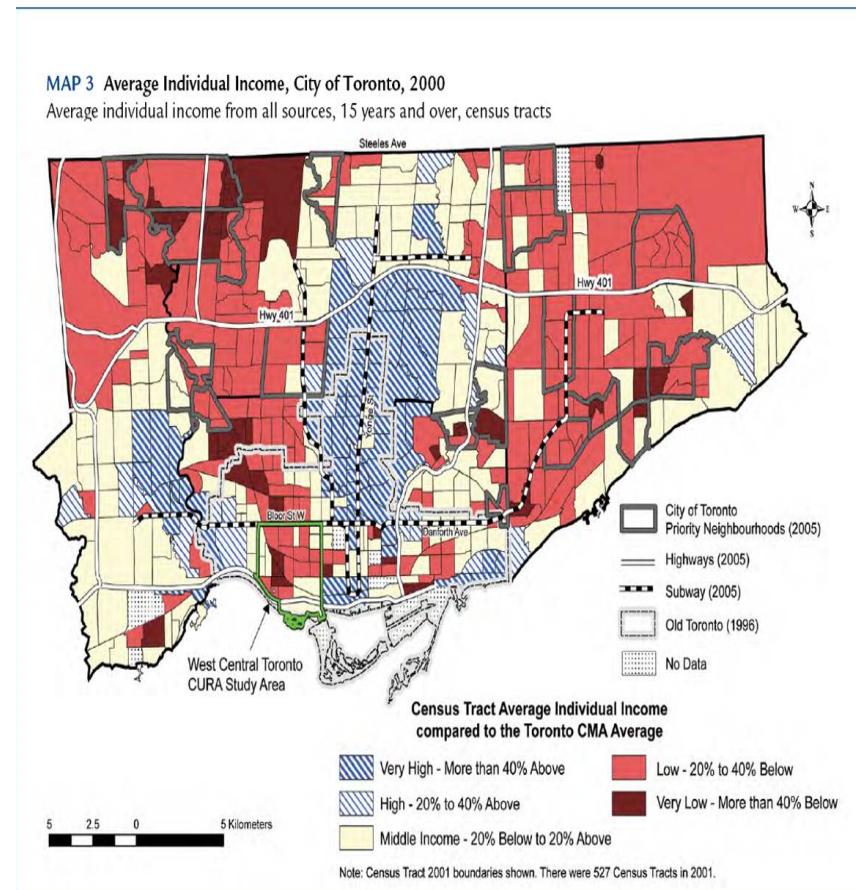
Church and Wellesley

- Toronto's present-day gay neighbourhood is located at the northwest corner of historical skid row (i.e., near Church and Wellesley streets)
- It is what Herbert Gans has called an *urban village*
 - *Why is it located here?*
 - *Why has it become an urban village?*



The value of urban diversity

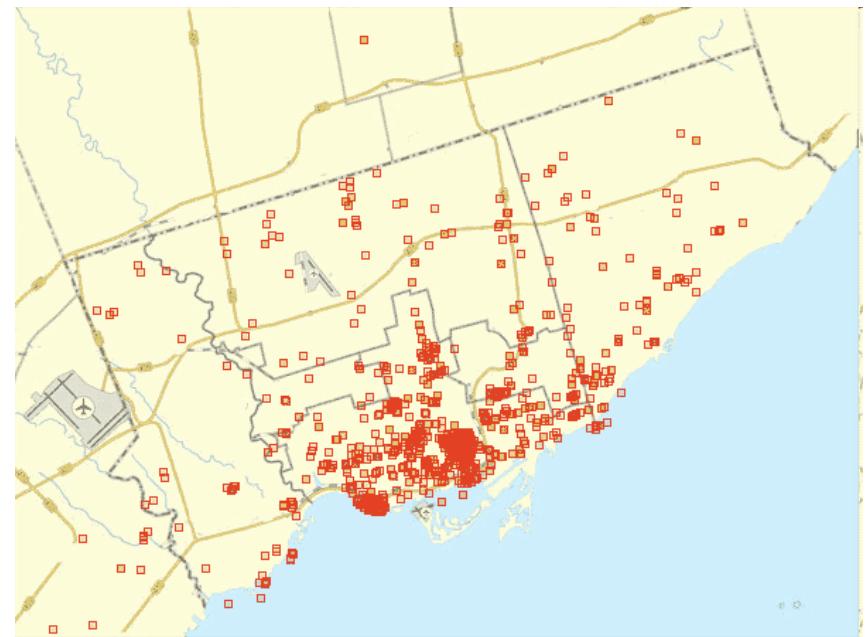
- Diversity in modern cities means a choice among multiple neighbourhoods and lifestyles
- The size, density, and heterogeneity of cities actually encourages the formation of subcultures
- Cities can support various interest-based cultures and institutions
- And, large cities like Toronto can even have gay and lesbian areas like the area around Church and Wellesley Streets



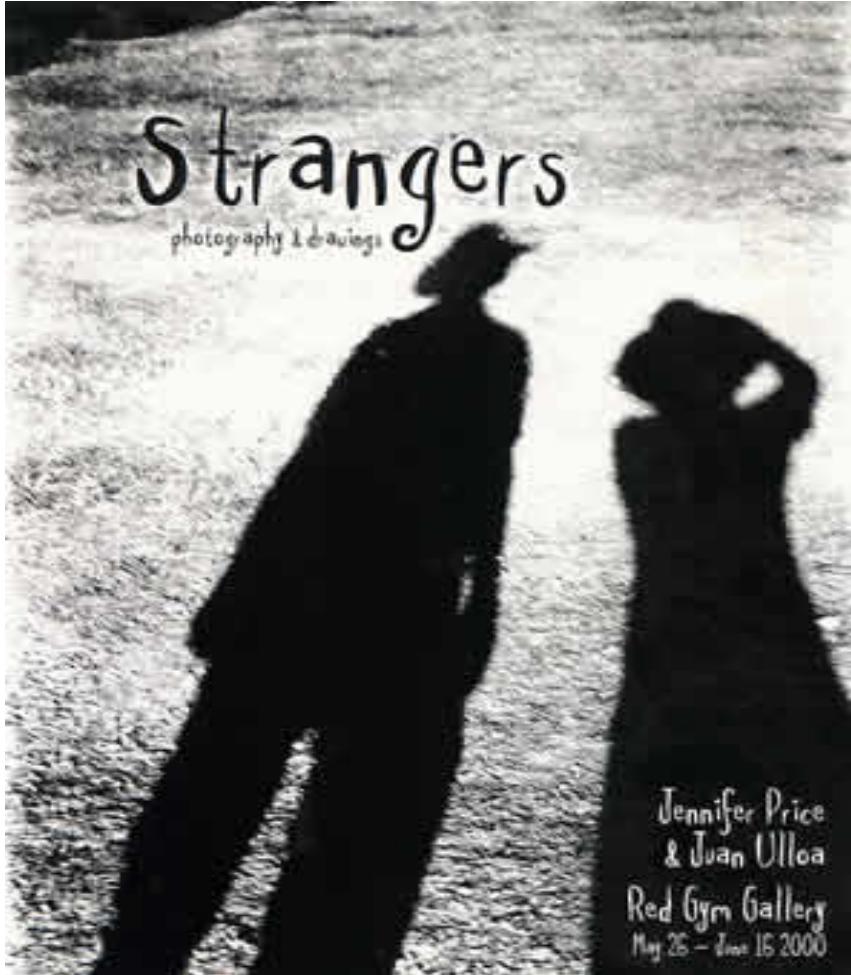
Wirth and the “urban way of life”

For Louis Wirth, three characteristics of city organization influence the “urban way of life”:

- First, the large number of inhabitants leads to anonymous, superficial and **transitory social contacts**
- Second, the high population density leads to strategies for **keeping strangers at bay**
- Third, the diverse, ever-changing population makes people **feel somewhat unstable and insecure**



Strangers in cities: good or bad?



- City living means coming to terms with these facts about the urban way of life
- However, we do not avoid all interactions with all strangers in cities
- Cities give us opportunities to interact *positively* with strangers who share our interests
 - Strangers with similar interests and lifestyles often locate in the same parts of a city

Large numbers make subcultures possible

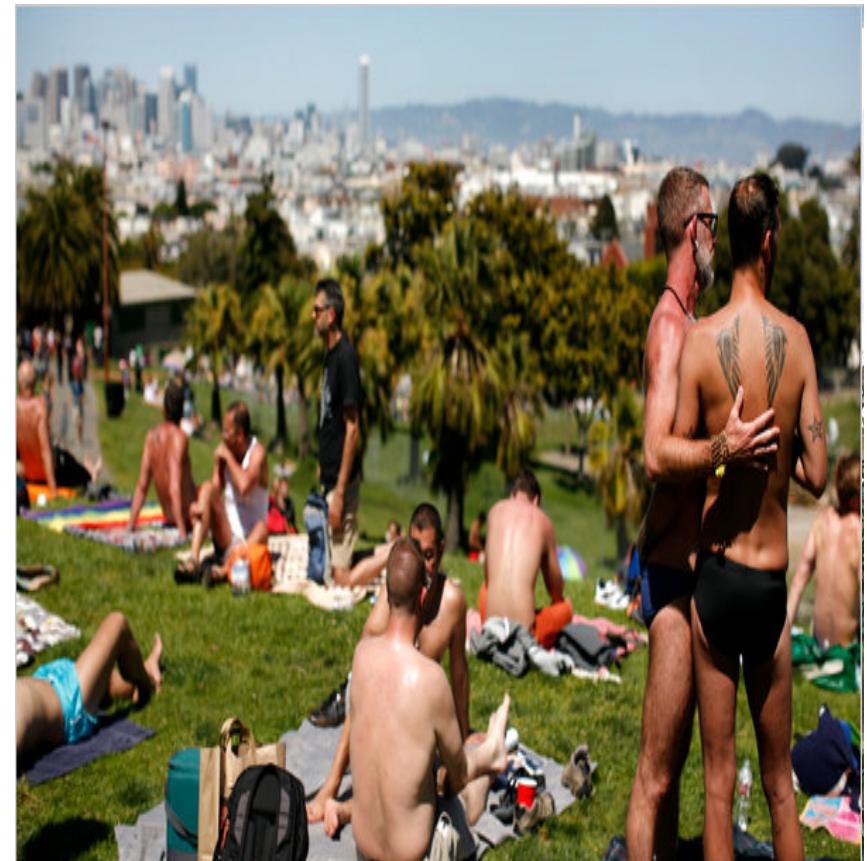
- Many people with homosexual desires are reluctant to self-identify as homosexuals
- They fear the risks associated with doing so
- So, a subcultural world of homosexuals has developed
 - generally, in large, cosmopolitan cities



prikkel@dds.nl

Ethnic and homosexual communities

- Communities do a great deal to promote and protect their members
- *Ethnic communities* do this by publicizing community issues, promoting local activities, and using local institutions to maintain group traditions
- So do *homosexual communities!*



Communities and institutional completeness



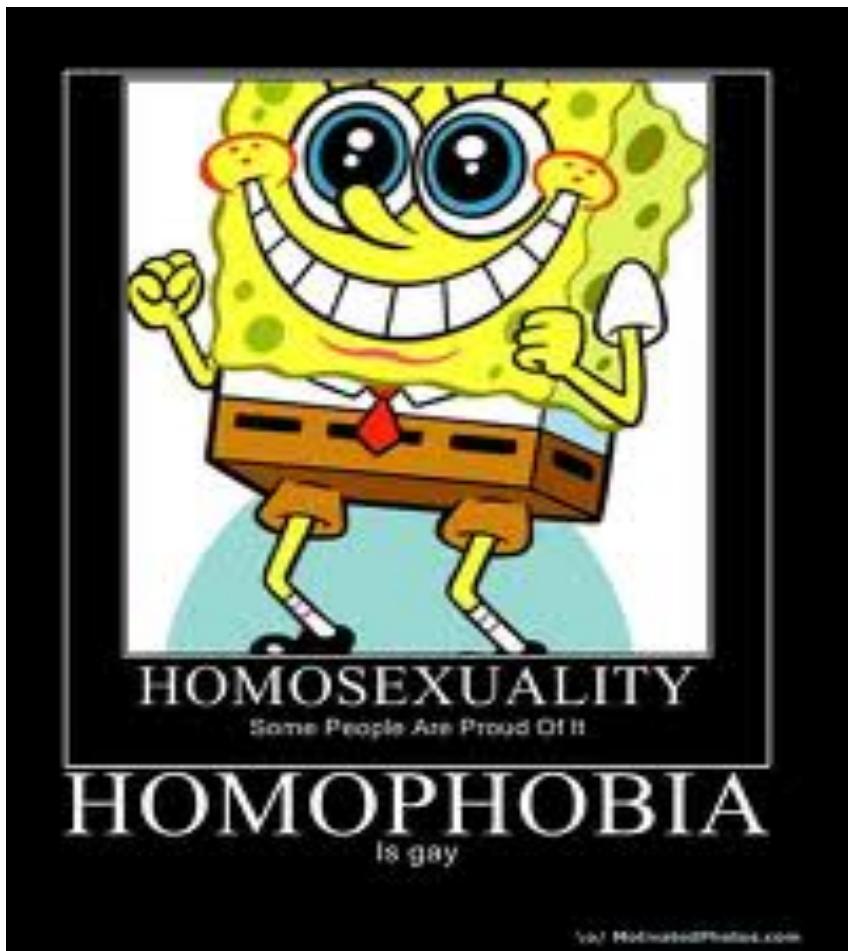
- Today, cities *remain* places where minorities and disadvantaged people have the best possible chance of making new lives
- That is why homosexuals come to live in cities
- There, if the numbers are sufficient, they create their own community, lifestyle, and subculture

Community building: a strategy of resistance for minorities

- Today, large gay and lesbian communities exist in various North American cities, including Toronto
- Today, Toronto's gay community is among the most institutionally complete and best known in the world
- Gay bars, clubs, and bathhouses provide meeting places and “safe places” for coming out



Cities can be safe places



- Cities can be places of danger
- However, for victimized groups like homosexuals, they can be places of safety
- Using institutional completeness, they have built communities where they are safe and accepted
- City life promotes an acceptance of social diversity, tolerance, and independent lifestyles

Cities are more free, not (just) disorganized

- Cities are not necessarily disorganized, just free
- Cities are just well-enough organized to permit diversity, and poorly-enough organized to fail to ensure conformity
- One other thing we have learned from the study of both homosexual and ethnic minorities is the value of *institutional completeness* as a strategy of resistance

