

Gay rights movement

Sociology



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The paper "Gay Rights Movement" is an excellent example of an assignment on sociology. The purpose of this paper is to provide a critical discussion on the role of identity in the gay rights movement. The format that this paper will utilize is to first identify what difficulties are inherent in mobilizing on the basis of the identity under study. Following this point a discussion on how the presentation of identity influences tactics, strategies, and organization. Firstly it is the case that there are a number of inherent difficulties in mobilizing a movement such as the gay rights movement insofar as it is the case that there are a plethora of people with potentially different motivations that must be represented. In this respect one could state that under identity political theory the main criticism would be that under some circumstances one could state that liberal homosexual activist is looking for a type of full acceptance and even a degree of assimilation into a number of different institutions, however, many queer activists and advocates seek to differentiate themselves from the norm by not wanting to join the mainstream. In this regard, one could present the argument that identity theory in regards to homosexual political activism would be counter-productive owing to separate desired outcomes. Building on this point a secondary criticism of the identity theory and how it impacts the gay rights movement is that there may by its very nature there would typically be no homogeneity of the gay movement and by having a single voice speaking for the entire group promotes a type of assimilation rather than a pluralism. In regards to the ways that the presentation of identity influences tactics, strategies, and organization of the movement one would first like to draw historical examples. If one were to pay close attention to the work of the 'Gay Liberation Front' one immediately recognizes that while they have a

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particular focus on the rights of homosexuals they have stated that their objective is for the sexual liberation of all people. From this perspective, one could say that a cornerstone of this strategy is to accommodate the special needs of such a large group of people that they, in fact, create an identity that could be characterized as being a majority. On the other side of the spectrum, one could say that the ' Gay Activists Alliance' which was also popular in the 1970's had a primary focus on the single issue of preserving the dignity of all gay people. From this perspective, the organization has become a much more focused/targeted political movement in the gay rights movement insofar as there is no direct expressed attention to the queer, bi-sexual, transgender etc. communities. One could conclude that this has affected strategy in that focus could be finely honed on very specific issues so that measurable progress could be made. In conclusion, it is difficult to measure the effect of identity on the gay rights movement because so many different strategies have been employed by such a diverse group of people. One could present the argument that if using identity theory to categorize the gay rights movement it would be too broad to meet the needs of all individuals within the group. Building on this point if a group were to be too finely focused, they may achieve tremendous goals for their highly specialized group but not necessarily for the entire movement. However, there is little question that tremendous strides have been achieved by the gay rights movement and in this regard, one should not discount the effect that identity has played