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Title: Policing Identity

About the Author: Junior at the University of Illinois, I have always had an interest in how complex people are. With my recent influx of multiple GWS classes, I have been able to explore these complexities of human nature. As an English major, I have invested in my craft of interpreting and analyzing literature, and as of now am applying this skill set to analyzing and interpreting situations and people, moonlighting as an amateur ethnographer and researcher. One day, I hope to take these skills of understanding people as whole people and apply them to interpreting the ways in which law does and does not consider [multiply] marginalized people.

Keywords: Minority, Suburbs, People of Color, Disability, Asexual, LGBT, Transgender, Bisexuality, Geography, Interracial

Abstract: - Originally I was seeking to answer where did queer women of color fit into the dialogue on queer rights. Even more specifically what does being from a place such as the suburbs do to complicate this issue? However, with further reflection and the different directions that my research took me I ended up at an intersection I have ended up asking what voices have been silenced, which narratives are invalidated in order for the LGBTQ movement to blossom and take form? Furthermore, what role does geography play in marginalization, specifically, what role do the suburbs play in LGBTQ representation and presentation? With that I interviewed students on campus of their experiences of being on campus as a member of the LGBTQ community, with some of those students also being members of other marginalized communities on campus.

Initial Exercises: - General Areas:

- Sexual Education at University
- Geography's Role in Self- Identification
- Are University "comfort zones" really a safe haven
- Colonization at the University level through structured assimilation of western hetero-sexual normative culture
- Queering of black woman
- Can one possibly identify equally with multiple identities
- Areas of Most Interest
- Geography and Identification

o Geography is a silent divider that everyone sees but no one discusses, it must be important to recognize how where you are, not just what you are okays a key role in separation and identification.

§ Does your geographical setting form an identity?

§ How does suburban culture forward queer identity?

§ How does suburban culture hinder queer identity?\*\*\*

§ Is there an implied class structure through geographical identity?

§ Does queer identity change based on your geographical setting?

How did being a member of multiple minority groups effect one's inclusion and visibility in the LGBTQ, sexual minority group?

- Full citation and catalog information

o Full Citation

§ Greer, Phil. ERA Battle Remembered. 1987. Chicago Tribune Newspaper.

o Catalog Information

§ Record Series Number: 41/2/46

§ Box 3: Scrapbook 1986-87

- Analysis

This appears to be a newspaper clipping from a political rally. In small print below the picture it states that the clipping is from the Tribune. The clipping takes up a quarter pages in the newspaper that it came from it looks like. The clipping is a large photograph with a titled caption below it. In the photograph there are four Caucasian women that have chains locked around their waists, which are connecting the four women. There is what appears to be another woman present in the photograph, however, she is cut off in the photo and thus does not appear to be the focus of the photograph, but rather was caught in the shot. The first three women that are chained together from left to right all have their fists raised in the air. The first woman has a sheet of paper in her hand and is reading from it. While it is almost impossible to make out what is on the paper, it looks like they are music staves, causing me to believe that it may be a song that she is reading from. The third girl from the left is saying something and the fourth woman is clapping. This lends to the idea that perhaps there is some type of chant going on at this time in the photograph. The title to the caption states, "ERA Battle Remembered", and the caption discusses the total 15 women that were present in the group and marched in the outside the governor's office in Springfield, Illinois. By the succinctness of the caption and the absence of what would suggests that there was more said about this rally such as more words cut off, it appears that this is all that was said about the event in this particular issue of the newspaper. While it does not say who wrote the caption it does say that the photograph was supplied by a man by the name of Phil Greer. When further investigating who this Phil Greer was, seeing if he possibly held a position with the women's group that was photographed in the group or perhaps a member of the Tribune staff I found that he was Director of Photography at the Chicago Tribune for 20 years and one of the projects he was involved in won a Pulitzer Prize. He presently is a photojournalist-in-residence at Southern Illinois University- Carbondale. These credentials most certainly add to how calculated this shot appears to be. It is added on the clipping in this scrapbook that this newspaper clipping was from 1987, this is written in pencil and is not part of the document itself. It was added by whoever put the whole scrapbook of LGBTQ events and happenings together. The newspaper clipping as I said before is from the Chicago Tribune and the photo in the clipping was taken at the governor's office in Springfield, Illinois on a Tuesday. It was said in the caption that this rally was held in memory of the inability for legislators to ratify the ERA (Equal Rights Amendment) 5 years ago. The most compelling part of the message is what the picture does not state, but what the photographer captured. The presence of the women raising their hands in fists, a motion that is most commonly identified with the Civil Rights and Black Power movement is what drew my attention to the photograph in the first place, even though nothing is mentioned about this in the very short article/caption to the picture, I think that it is the most telling part of the picture. That is because while looking through the entirety of the scrapbook, when looking for the presence of colored bodies in the context of the LGBTQ community, this is the only place that I find it, not in the women, but rather in their actions. There are many references to the African-American Civil Rights movement, which are subtle throughout many photographs of political rallies also in the scrapbook; however, there appear to be no minority students present throughout. Seeing as how all the women that were chained together all had on the same shirt, it appears that the women were members of a group, however, the photograph nor the caption does not lend to tell us what group, if any they are affiliated with. Along with that although the women look to be saying something the picture and article renders them silent, with no statements taken from anyone at the rally, nor any naming of the women. Making them anonymous and silent, the women's bodies serve to have to speak for them. This short article within the Tribune paper was created in order to inform the readers of this newspaper of what was going on politically in the area. Something that is worth noting is the very miniscule amount of

attention that is given to the women's cause, while, it does mention that legislator's failed to ratify the ERA 5 years ago, it does not go into why, or even what is being done now outside of the protest in order to get this amendment passed. It also fails to tell us what the ERA even entailed. By researching further I was able to find out that the Equal Rights Amendment proposed that people "under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex" (Francis). This shows that while there was an obvious interest in what was happening with this Equal Rights Movement, the interest does show to be very small. Surprisingly, the amendment has yet to be passed.

As it relates to my ethnographic project, this short article and photograph opened a lot of doors by presenting more questions than answers. It caused me to ask with, the presence of the iconic Black Power fists what was the movement trying to say? Outside of this symbolism, why wasn't I finding anyone behind these fists who looked anything like those who had gave the fists and the messages the meaning that they had? The fists were calling for equality, yet the pictures fails to show equal distribution of other marginalized bodies in this particular community.

Question:

Plan:

EUI References/Tagging:

- Educating Our Youth in Queer Topics: Is UIUC Truly a Community Leader- Keri Britton (2009)
- The Facebook Effect: Social Network Sites and Changing Experiences of LGBT Students at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign– Romero Jason (2-8-2008)
- The current and potential targeting of LGBT people in sexual violence prevention education in and around UIUC- Nick Gooler (2009)
- Conflicting Identities: Life of LGBT Students at UIUC- Marcus Lane (2009)
- Researching Gay Speech Patterns at the University of Illinois- Jacalyn Rauch (08-2011)

Reflect: This project was a very eye opening and enriching experience, broadening my knowledge and how seeing people's experience as a sort of learning in itself. I would have to say the most disappointing part of this ethnography project was that we were forced to destroy our audio files of our interviews. While I understand the intimate nature of the interviews and the need to protect those who do interview, when someone has opened up and given us, the University, a piece of them- something so intimate as their identity, the core of that which is them, to try to put that on paper is to inherently do it no justice. Just by doing that I a lot of the hurt, the disappointment, the apprehension, the levity, the hope, and the light. Those are things that just can't be replicated, and I tried my hardest to. Perhaps we could offer the option for people let their actual files be archived. While my life was enriched by hearing these voices. I'm the only one that ever will.

Recommendations: The place for improvement by the University that came up in my interview was a feeling that there was no community and there was no way to reach out to people of similar identities. One interviewee mentioned finding someone else that was asexual here through the internet and that this could even be used as a positive avenue for people to reach out to others if they are not active members in the LGBTQ resource center on campus. In addition to that, there is a necessity to treat people as complete, intricate people by addressing all parts of them and how to integrate into this society. As one interviewee brought up he did not feel issues on campus when it came to being who he was, "it was the outside world [he was] afraid of."