



# Unmasking Intersectionality through Privilege, Oppression, and the Complexity of Identity

**Josh Chou**

Doctoral Student, Clinical Psychology  
University of Massachusetts Boston

# OVERVIEW

- 1 Unpacking my positionality
- 2 Experiences of intersectional oppression
- 3 Internalizing oppression
- 4 Cost of oppression
- 5 Social construction of intersectional identities
- 6 Takeaways





**"The normate subject position emerges from the sum of the privileged characteristics that identify them as the 'unmarked' human standard—white, male, middle-class, heterosexual, and non-disabled."**

– Rosemarie Garland-Thomson

# Why am I here today?





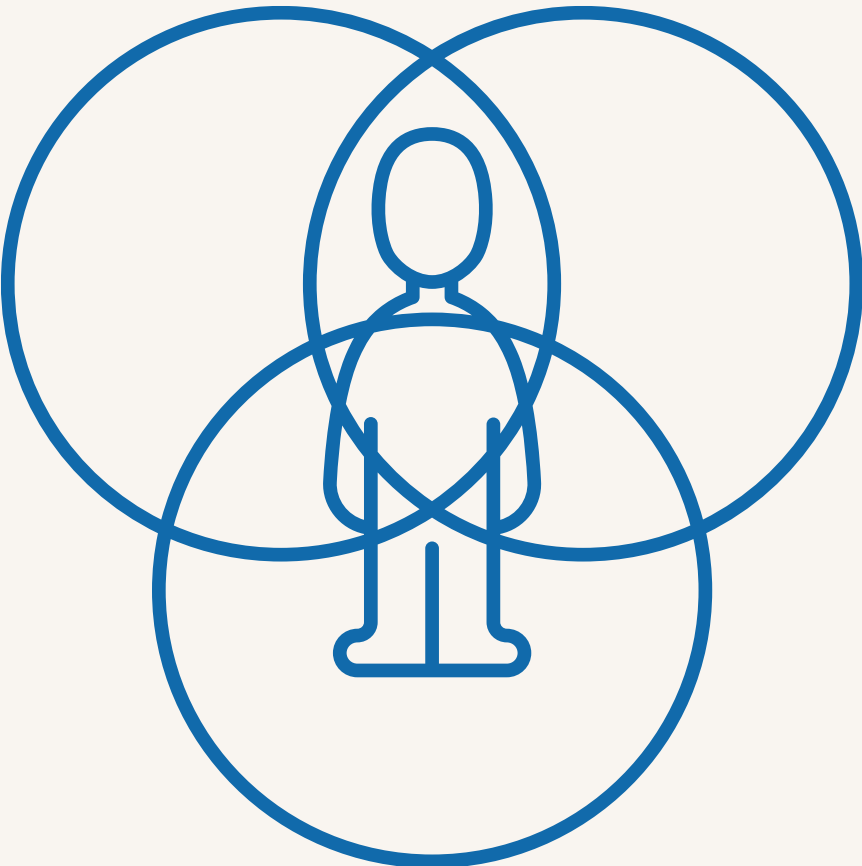
MY PRIVILEGE

GENDER

PHYSICAL DIS/ABILITY

SOCIOECONOMIC  
BACKGROUND

LANGUAGE



POWER

MY OPPRESSION

SEXUALITY

NEURODIVERGENCE

RACE/ETHNICITY

IMMIGRANT STATUS



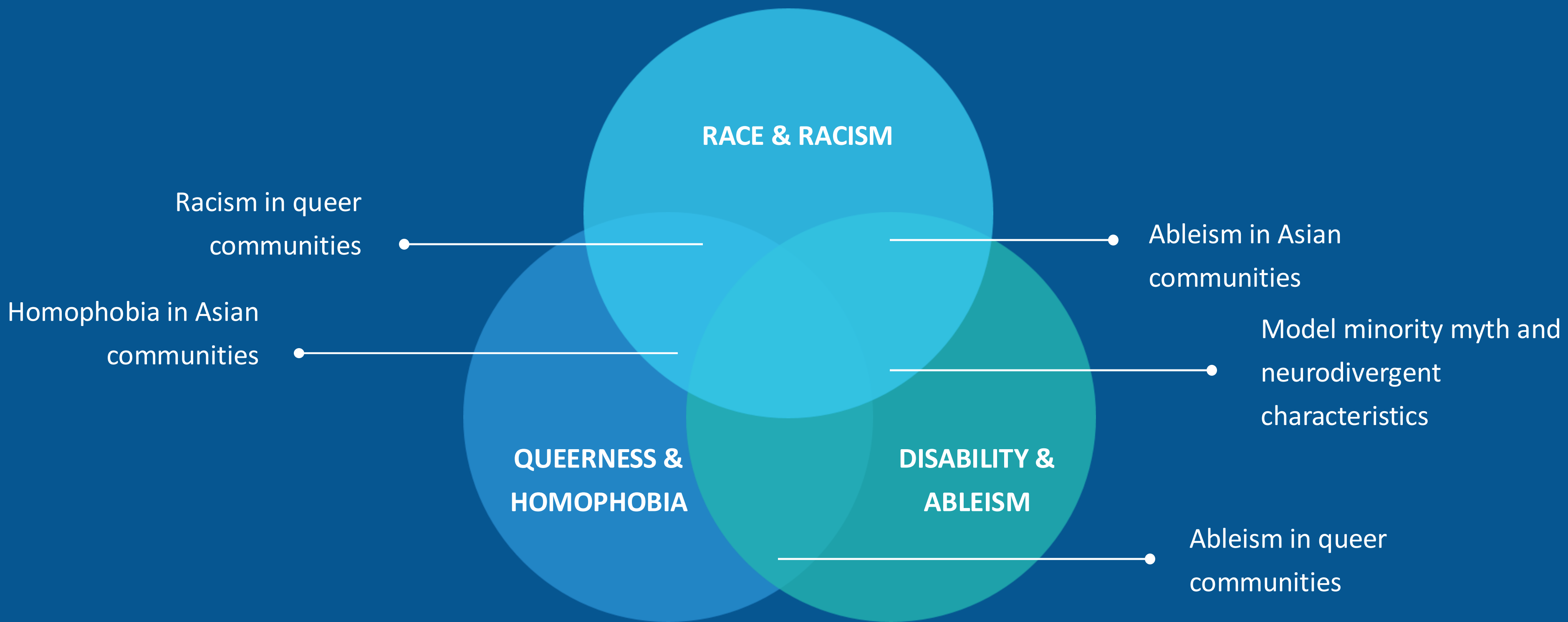


The barriers posed by these marginalized identities do not just add up.

**These identities intersect and exponentially increase the barriers I encounter.**



# EXPERIENCES OF INTERSECTIONAL OPPRESSION



# INTERNALIZING OPPRESSION



**Masking**  
Neurodivergence



**Passing**  
as Straight



**Assimilating**  
Culturally





# THE COST OF OPPRESSION

## ADAPTIVE STRATEGIES



**Masking**  
Neurodivergence



**Passing**  
as Straight



**Assimilating**  
Culturally

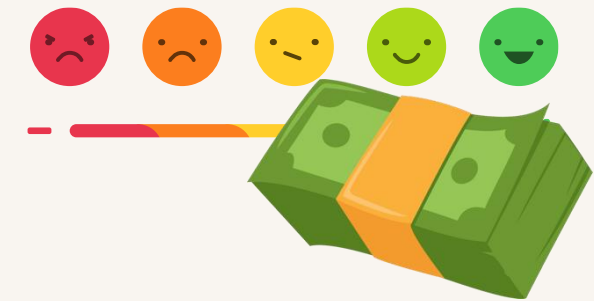
## HOWEVER...



**Personal**  
Costs



**Psychological**  
Costs



**Emotional**  
Costs

# SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF INTERSECTIONAL IDENTITIES

## **We are socialized to...**

experience ourselves and others as racialized, when race does not exist without racism and racial hierarchy.

## **We are socialized to...**

understand disability under a medical model where disability is solely viewed as an individual impairment, without considering societal barriers and attitudes that exclude disabled people.

## **We are socialized to...**

view queerness as novel, deviant, and radical, and not an aspect of the full range of human sexuality and love.



**Disability, queerness, and  
ethnocultural identity are all part of  
the rich range of human experiences.**



# TAKEAWAY 1

Recognizing privilege can often be difficult and uncomfortable.  
Liberation through resistance and ownership of oppressed  
identities can be empowering.



# TAKEAWAY 2

Listen to us and learn from us,  
but we do not represent all of those who have these  
identities, we represent one experience.



# TAKEAWAY 3

Social justice is not a destination, it is an ongoing journey.  
We are all on this journey, even those who are marginalized.



**I encourage you to envision justice.**





# Thank you!

**CONTACT**

[josh.chou001@umb.edu](mailto:josh.chou001@umb.edu)