



# The Long Arc of Justice: Lesbian and Gay Marriage, Equality, and Rights

*Richard Mohr*

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Engaging the whole spectrum of public-policy issues affecting gays and lesbians from a humanistic and philosophical approach, Richard Mohr uses the tools of his trade to assess the logic and ethics of gay rights. Focusing on ideas and values, Mohr's nuanced case for legal and social acceptance applies widely held ethical principles to various issues, including same-sex marriage, AIDS, and gays in the military. By drawing on cultural-, legal-, and ethical-based arguments, Mohr moves away from tired political rhetoric and reveals the important ways in which the struggle for gay rights and acceptance relates to mainstream American society, history, and political life.

Mohr forcefully counters moralistic and religious arguments regularly invoked to keep gay men and women from achieving the same rights as heterosexuals. He examines the nature of prejudices and other cultural forces that work against lesbian and gay causes and considers the role that sexuality plays in the national rituals by which Americans define themselves. In his support of same-sex marriage, Mohr defines matrimony as the development and maintenance of intimacy through the means by which people meet their basic needs and carry out their everyday living. Mohr contends that this definition, in both its legal and moral sense, applies equally to homosexual and heterosexual couples.

Mohr also considers gays and lesbians as community members as he explores the prospect for greater legal and social inclusion. He concludes by suggesting that recent progress in addressing civil rights for gays and lesbians and the nation's symbolic use of gay issues on both sides of the political spectrum calls for a culturally focused gay politics.

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