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Capitalism and the LGBT Community

**Introduction**

Hate crimes against the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) community are still increasing at an alarming rate in the United States. In 2015, hate crimes due to sexual orientation were at its peak, as approximately one in five of these crimes was against the LGBT community. LGBT community is still among the most vulnerable community in the U.S. due to their sexual identity and preferences. In the 20th century, many movements and protests were made by the LGBT community in the U.S. to gain equal rights in the community. A critical examination of the life of LGBT community illustrates that they had suffered from discrimination in the past. The LGBT community began to get a prominent place in the country with the inclusion of capitalism. Substantial organization changes were brought in corporations by employee resource groups of LGBT. In the private sector, substantial organization changes occurred more quickly as compared to the public sector due to the capitalist structures. Corporations dominatingly take positions on major issues of the LGBT community, such as openly advocating for LGBT individuals.

**Discussion**

In the mid-1900s, the LGBT community had faced various difficult circumstances as they did not possess any common platform. A common platform is highly necessary for a community to defend its rights and status in the country. The LGBT community established a number of employee groups to defend their interests. With the creation of these LGBT employee groups, multiple opportunities for LGBT individuals were created (Githens and Aragon 125). The basic purpose of these employee groups was to provide social support to workers so they can work without any fear. Scholars often argue that capitalism created a significant structure in the U.S. that gives rise to the identity of gay and lesbian. The concept of homosexuality or transgender was relatively new in the U.S. due to which people were unable to accept the change. The emergence of these ideologies and sexual identities was very important for the LGBT community to prevail in the country (Goodwin, Jeff, and Hetland 87). However, its emergence was a slow process as compared to the emergence of other identities.

With the passage of time, the LGBT community began to organize their own surroundings. Certain bars and clubs were established in the San Francisco area. The concentration of gay bars in the San Francisco area was increased as these people had to fulfill their intimate desires. Many scholars and historians made a critical examination of the policing policies regarding lesbians and gays. Police officers were well aware of the establishment and enrichment of these gay bars and clubs. Instead of protecting them, police officers began extortion from these bars and clubs. It is important to consider the fact that expanded post-war policing in response to the LGBT community (especially homosexuality) enabled those individuals to get their basic rights in the country (Agee 463). The policing of the gay bars and clubs helped to organize gays and lesbians civil rights. At the beginning of the 20th century, the individual household production system was widely spread. However, capitalism began to replace that system due to which a significant reduction had observed in self-sufficient households. The production of these households was largely depended on the nuclear family. Due to the importance of the nuclear family (husband, wife, children), it was impossible for homosexual people to enter a same-sex relationship. At that particular period, entering in the same-sex relationship was difficult as household production was solely based on the heterosexual relationship. A critical examination of the heterosexual relationship reveals its importance as it played a central role in living a sustainable life. A profound transformation has been observed in the functions and working of the nuclear family due to the expansion of capital and wage labor (Abelove 469).

In addition to household production, capitalism played a vital role in the emergence of homosexuality. It is necessary to consider the fact that capitalism allowed for selling a person’s labor that was not produced inside of the family. Due to this, homosexual people were no longer entitled to forcefully continue a heterosexual relationship just for the sake of income. The production of households decreased gradually but steady in response to that shift. A significant decline has been observed in the procreative relationships after the replacement of household production with capitalism. Over the span of decades, people who had same-sex attraction began to establish an intimate relationship with other same-sex individuals. The establishment of intimate relationships among same-sex individuals began to develop social networks. The development of social networking then encouraged other same-sex individuals to join the LGBT community without any fear. Scholars examined the emergence of gay and lesbian individuals back in World War II. It is noteworthy to consider different scenarios that were in place during World War II. That Great War had wiped numerous men and women from around the world. It created highly critical situations for men and women who were left in the country. The slow emergence of gay identifies culminated after going through same-sex environments in the country in response to the Great War. Same-sex relationships were already present during that war, but its emergence was steady. The formation of urban communities based on sexuality resulted after that war. The beginning of the first significant LBGT community was started after the Stonewall riots. These riots gave rise to the liberation movement of LGBT. It is important to consider the fact that the gay and lesbian movement network was strongly started after the induction of capitalism structures. The structures of capitalism, such as a decline in self-sufficient households, allowed the LGBT individuals to actively participate in these movements (Martinez, Omar, and Dodge 229). Astounding success was accomplished by the LGBT community after pressuring corporate leaders through the strong network.

The history of sexuality is a history of resistance and opposition to moral codes. The culture of resistance is established by the forms of moral regulations (Peiss 9). The emergence of sub-cultures by sexual minorities gives rise to cultural resistance. The concept of same-sex was new for the citizens of America; therefore, they were not ready to accept this. David K. Johnson, in his book "How Physique Entrepreneurs Sparked a Movement," demonstrated the beginning of gay commercial culture. He argued that the sexual identity of gay and lesbian emerged in the market for physique magazines in the 1950s (Johnson 870). These magazines established networks of correspondence to defeat obscenity laws for political organizing.

In the beginning, many capitalists were not ready to accept the concept of the LGBT community. One must need to understand the hardships that were faced by the LGBT community. During and after the McCarthy era, many hate crimes and discriminations were reported by LGBT individuals. Employers were more likely to oppress an individual who belongs to the LGBT group. It is of utmost importance to understand the origin of Stonewall riots as it directly related to the oppression and discrimination of the LGBT community. During that period, LGBT individuals were openly oppressed by employers. The employers used to treat these LGBT individuals harshly and bitterly. There is a well-documented history of discrimination and oppression towards the LGBT community by employers. Before the Stonewell riots, the homosexual activities were profoundly asocial due to limited social institutions for the LGBT community (Escoffier 69). The riots of Stonewall were started to put an end to these oppressions and discriminations. There were many organizations during that period who were openly discriminating against LGBT individuals during the hiring procedures. Therefore, activists of the Stonewall riots began targeting these organizations in order to defend the rights of the LGBT community. It is important to mention that lesbians were unable to pursue their life due to patriarchal culture in the society. Therefore, these women tried to seek their desires in lesbian bars (Kennedy and Davis 65). These lesbians’ bars provided them with a protected environment. LGBT ERG was established in 1978 to minimize these discriminations in the workplace and the employment sector. However, LGBT ERG had to work for many years in order to regulate a nondiscriminatory policy. The LGBT ERG needed to pressurize government and organizations so they may develop these policies. At the beginning of the 21st century, the majority of the organizations were compelled to adopt nondiscriminatory policies. The adoption of these nondiscriminatory policies was highly necessary for organizations in order to avoid any conflict. Interestingly, government agencies were the last to adopt these nondiscriminatory policies as compared to corporations. Corporations progressively adopted these policies to ensure the provision of equal rights for the LGBT community. It is necessary to consider the fact that many companies adopted these nondiscriminatory policies before their states. After a significant period, states and local discriminatory laws were established to entertain the inclusion of sexual orientation.

In addition, altruistic reasons compelled companies not to adopt the policies that are in favor of the LGBT communities. At that period, customers’ expectations and support were highly important for the organization. These organizations did not want to adopt LGBT friendly policies due to religious fundamentalists. Therefore, in the beginning, companies were not willing to confront that risk as it might damage their customer base. However, pressure by employee activists forced companies to adopt these policies. Now, it is of utmost importance to examine circumstances and conditions that encouraged employers to risk the loss of customers in order to ensure the satisfaction of homosexual workers. In the mid-1960s, capitalism created a unique structure in which gay and lesbian identity emerged. At the beginning of the 21st century, newer forms of capitalisms’ structures were also formed. These newer forms contained a substantial portion of the identity of individuals that were wrapped up in work. Previously, employers were encouraged to improve productivity by creating positive human relations at work. In addition to this, employers also adopted several paternalistic employment practices such as career-long employment, etc. in order to enhance the productivity of employees. However, in the current era, new approaches have replaced those traditional practices. Now, employers are designing workplace environment in order to help employees in the creation of meaning through their jobs. For certain white-collar workers in the modern world, the identity of an individual is combined with work. A significant shift has been observed after the inclusion of new forms of capitalism, such as personal identity in the workplace (Martinez, Omar, and Dodge 231). Due to this evident shift in the workplace, personal and sexual identity become a major part for employees to go to work in order to seek meaning in their lives. Hence, it is evident to say that the workplace has become a center of personal identity, which helped the LGBT community to prevail in society.

It is important to consider the concept of free choice in employment to demonstrate consumerism in employment. In the past few decades, employers assumed that majority of workers would serve their whole job in a particular organization or company. However, it is obvious that many jobs in private sectors are no secure. Employers have the power of promotion or demotion of any employee. Due to that particular reason, employees move from job-to-job to acquire a better paying job. It is essential to consider the fact that workers are consumers at work. They are no longer consumers after work. Employees expect to find a better job during strong economic times. It is evident that there is plenty of job opportunities for employees during strong economic times. Therefore, employees are not afraid to leave a job in order to find a well deserving job opportunity. 401(k) plan replaced the defined-benefit pension plans due to which employees can get a little incentive if they wish to remain with the same employer. This is called consumer mentality in employment by those who advocate autonomy and free choice. This consumer mentality in employment is known as consumerism. Consumerism has its own merits and demerits when it comes to the existence and enrichment in the LGBT community. On the bright side, consumerism allowed the LGBT community to prevail in the workplace effectively. The consumerism encouraged activists of the LGBT community to pressurize employers in order to make significant LGBT-friendly changes in the workplaces. However, it has been observed that government administrators and politicians are not much eager to adopt the changes that are proposed by the LGBT activists through consumerism. Government administrators are not eager to make changes in employment laws or in government employment practices.

LGBT activists have secured many significant wins for their community in the workplace and employment. Regardless of their strong efforts, the pace of these changes in order to change the public policy is somewhat slow. According to the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, only 13 states prohibited the discrimination of the LGBT community as compared to the general population in employment (Martinez, Omar, and Dodge 235). Furthermore, in 2008, eight additional states prohibited hiring and employment discernment in the public sector of employment only. However, these statistics show that consumerism and capitalism played a vital role in emerging the LGBT community.

The growing trend of gay and lesbian identity in the country also actively associated with the economic structures of capitalism. The practical construction of capitalism is characterized as one simulating factor considering the wide acceptance of gay and lesbian in the U.S. community. The emergence of gender roles in the forms of gay and lesbian start getting attention in the colonial era. It is noteworthy to indicate that the period of colonialism also has great influence when it comes to establishing capitalism. It was the time when capitalism starts establishing its roots against the conventional idea of an individual form of production. With time, the phenomenon of household individual production declined and the strong structural position hold by capitalism in a gradual manner. The idea of the nuclear family ultimately linked with the overall economic system of wage labor. The idea of household production acknowledged the development of heterosexual association, whereas the approach of capitalism acknowledged the growing idea of a bisexual relationship that is keen to embrace the new gender roles. The practical application of capitalism is different from individual production form because it encourages the basic idea of buying consumer products produced outside the domain of the family unit. This increasing trend in society eventually caused the complete decline of the economic concept of household production in a gradual manner. The dramatic shift in economic imposition in society also observed in the form of structural changes in family associations. The increasing idea of capitalism opened flexible ways for people to portray their LGBT position by establishing the domain of gender roles as gay and lesbians. This form of argument helps to recognize that the practical implications of capitalism ultimately played a useful role in accepting the position of gender identity, particularly in the forms of gay and lesbians. This approach of gender identity development is recognized as the gradual change in the society that reflects various aspects of consideration.

**Conclusion**

The phenomenon of same-sex attractions starts allowing people to reveal their gender identities more easily and openly. The formation and gradual development of gay identity formation also reflected in the forms of economic conditions for the gay and lesbian community in the country. The practical approach of capitalism encouraged the LGBT community to enhance their involvement in the economic process of the country. The idea of the gay and lesbian freedom movement is characterized as another significant paradigm of raising the idea of employment activism in the country for LGBT representatives. The active role of capitalism can also be observed in the case of the gay freedom movement as it provided a grassroots connection to the active movement after the historical events of the 1969 time-period. The development of a gay network tremendously changed the former position of the gay and lesbian community. The immense struggle in the form of the gay rights movement played a positive role for the LGBT community to successfully apprehend their economic rights. This influential phenomenon also compelled decision-makers to alter workplace policies and implications in favor of the LGBT community. Oppression of the LGBT community in the form of various discriminatory actions tremendously diminished by the new economic approach of capitalism.

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