

Stigma and Well-being of LGBT people in the United States

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ABSTRACT

The LGBTQ community has always been in a position of discrimination in society. They are considered "abnormal" by others for a variety of reasons: religion, race, social status, etc. With the development of society, people have different views on such groups. However, most people still hold prejudice against them. Our propose is to solve and reduce the discrimination of LGBTQ groups. Stigma also causes problems for this minority group: mental health disorders as well as violence from others. We figure out several solutions to help LGBTQ people, which are Detailed Psychological Consultation and Good Social Conduct. Gradually, there are more and more laws about homosexual people to protect their rights. In general, conservatives hold that LGBTQ people are not discriminated against in society and their status is largely normalized. In fact, it is impossible that there is no stigma with minority groups. Most of gay people are still reluctant to reveal their identity, which means discrimination indeed exists. In the meanwhile, social stigma and self stigma are also appear in the society. We wish LGBTQ people will have a normal position around the world one day.

Keywords: LGBTQ, discrimination, stigma.

1. INTRODUCTION

On June 26, 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that same-sex marriage was equal to heterosexual marriage. "This action will bring us together as a people," Obama said. Gays were accepted and recognized, but only in big cities like New York and Los Angeles. A former data analyst at Google said that there are many marriage men who use the web to survey gay life outside New York. The first study looked at the percentage of gay men in the United States. Surveys show only 1%, far from the generally accepted sociological figure of 5%. Another is that on Google in Mississippi, 4% of men search for homosexual porn, but 1% of them are married to someone of the opposite sex. Both studies suggest that many gay people (and not just men) are afraid to speak openly about coming out, so what causes them to do so? How can we help them? This research paper will mainly study the reasons why some American homosexuals dare not openly identify themselves and the solutions. We will conduct detailed analysis from multiple aspects.

2. MAIN BODY

2.1 Situation & Background

The LGBT community is a loosely defined grouping of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, LGBT organizations, and subcultures, united by a common culture and social movements. LGBT has been an issue since the time history can recall. Actually, people and the society have the sexual prejudice with this minority group, which is internalized sexual stigma that results in the negative evaluation of sexual minority. The lack of acceptance toward homosexuals is often just an expression of dislike to minority groups, to anyone who is different or to any opinion that is dissimilar. This feature is characteristic for primitive mentality, regardless whether the person who expresses this feature is an illiterate or is graduated from university. The acceptance of homosexuality has improved today, however, heterosexuality is still viewed as the normative, and homosexuality as the deviant sexual orientation.

According to Albarracin et al, sexual prejudice is conceptualized here as an attitude, that is, a category-based evaluative tendency to respond to individuals or groups according to their perceived sexual orientation [1]. Homosexuality is also a stereotype. Through social inheritance, negative stereotypes are transmitted, whether verbally or non-verbally. The next generation will pick up this stereotype from their parents and develop an aversion to the LGBT community. Because of the discrimination of this minority group, they get more chance of experiencing violence, especially compared with other students in their schools. Violence can include behaviors such as bullying, teasing, harassment, physical assault, and suicide-related behaviors. Violence is arguably the most extreme form taken by such enactments. Reflecting the hegemony of sexual stigma, violent victimization was long considered the inevitable price that homosexual people paid when they became visible to heterosexuals. Hate crime victimization exacts a serious toll. In addition to physical harm, hate crimes appear to inflict greater psychological trauma on victims than other kinds of violent crime. In one study, gay men and lesbians who had experienced a crime against their person based on their sexual orientation manifested significantly higher levels of anxiety, anger, depressive symptoms, and traumatic stress symptoms compared to lesbians and gay men who had experienced comparable crimes during the same time period that were unrelated to their sexual orientation [2]. Sexual minority victims of hate crimes have elevated levels of psychological distress. Cultural factors on the other hand increase sexual stigma and it is very clear in Albanian society, which is extremely conservative and patriarchal, and what we need is a real cultural change. Gay and bisexual youth and other sexual minorities are more likely to be rejected by their families. If one of the family members is homosexual, they will be very worried. This increases the possibility of them becoming homeless. Around 40% of homeless youth are LGBT. A study published in 2009 compared gay, lesbian, and bisexual young adults who experienced strong rejection from their families with their peers who had more supportive families. The researchers found that those who experienced stronger rejection were about: 8 times more likely to have tried to commit suicide, 6 times more likely to report high levels of depression, 3 times more likely to use illegal drugs and 3 times more likely to have risky sex.

Many LGBTQ workplace issues stem from the fact that currently, there's no federal law that explicitly protects employees from discrimination due to their sexual identity, gender identity, or gender expression. Such protections have necessarily come from state laws and federal court cases interpreting the law to protect LGBTQ workers. This patchwork of court rulings and state legislation leaves many vulnerable.

LGBTQ employment discrimination laws vary between states. Only 23 states (in addition to the district of Columbia) bar discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in both the public and private workforce. All told, nearly half of the U.S. LGBTQ population lives in a state that does not prohibit employment discrimination because of sexual orientation and gender identity.

This disparity in protecting LGBTQ workers' rights is cause for alarm.

Research suggests that openly gay job applicants in some industries are as much as forty percent less likely to receive job interviews. Transgender individuals have an unemployment rate three times higher than the national average. Public approval of LGBTQ individuals has risen dramatically over the past several years. In 2014, 49 percent of respondents to the longstanding General Social Survey said that "sexual relations between two adults of the same sex" were "not wrong at all," which represented an all-time high. As that figure suggests, though, there still exists a large population that perceives LGBTQ relationships to be immoral.

What's more, negative sentiments towards LGBTQ relationships are pervasive even in individuals who otherwise espouse support for such relationships, according to Tina Fetner, Associate Professor of Sociology at McMaster University. A number of studies have found that Americans are much more positive toward formal rights than they are toward informal privileges, such as public displays of affection, revealing that acceptance of lesbian and gay sexuality is still incomplete. This dynamic was well-observed in a Human Rights Campaign Foundation report. In it, a large-scale survey of LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ workers revealed that 81 percent of non-LGBTQ respondents indicated that their LGBTQ coworkers "should not have to hide their identity." Despite the seeming acceptance of these identities, 70 percent of the very same pool of respondents indicated that talking about sexual orientation at the workplace is "unprofessional."

What this declaration does not account for, though, is the social pressure on all employees to reveal their identity through day-to-day casual conversations with coworkers. For instance, the same survey found that conversations regarding social lives occur on a weekly or daily basis for 84 percent of respondents, with 65 percent saying the same about conversations on relationships, and 36 percent about sex.

2.2. Problems LGBT People May Met

Some people associate the mental status of sexual minorities with their discrimination, and point out that sexual minorities are more likely to be discriminated against because their psychological conditions are more unstable. Those who say this obviously reversed cause and effect, and it is precisely because of discrimination that sexual minorities are more prone to psychological problems. And for sexual minorities, they face external discrimination every day, and they also suffer direct violent attacks when their mental health is affected. On June 12, 2016, a man burst into a gay bar called "Pulse" in Orlando, Florida and opened fire, killing 49 people and injuring 44 others [3]. In the past few decades, the most famous Stonewall incident occurred in the early morning of Saturday, June 28, 1969. Nine police officers entered the Stonewall Hotel where sexual minorities met and arrested employees for selling alcohol without a license. They also assaulted customers and forced the bar to be cleared. At the same time, in accordance with the requirements of New York law, arrest anyone who wears at least three pieces of clothing that does not match his gender [4]. There are many similar incidents. A survey in a city in southwest China showed that gay/bisexual (58.7/ 58.7) people are more likely to suffer school violence than uncertain/heterosexual (51.6%/ 48.1%) people. Homo/bisexuality is positively correlated with school violence suffered by middle school students [5]. In the family, the negative parenting style of parents acts as a countermeasure for external pressure. The mental health development of sexual minorities at higher risk of susceptibility is more likely to be. There can be a serious hindrance. Therefore, due to social prejudice, homosexuals have a higher incidence of psychological disorders, and have more depression and anxiety such negative emotions also exist in the general public. Homosexuals must be highly negative the stereotype of "psychological individual" [6].

Nowadays, the mental health of sexual minorities has improved due to the development of science and technology. Compared with a few decades ago, the Internet has greatly promoted the mental health of sexual minorities. The rapid development of the network with young people as the main audience has promoted the spread of the concept of social justice, and more young people have participated in the ranks of supporting homosexuals. In addition, the network also has anonymity and interactivity. Sexual minorities are more daring to confess their identity on the Internet. They actively communicate with the society and while absorbing mainstream support voices, they actively construct their own subcultural value system. This has strengthened the internal cohesion of sexual minorities to a certain extent. And these help young sexual minorities alleviate the pressure of social prejudice. The level of internalized aversion of the sexual minorities in a stable

relationship was significantly lower than that of the sexual minorities without fixed partner. It may be due to the fact that both lovers of sexual minorities face the same life challenges, so the two in a stable relationship can understand each other better, and work together to overcome the negative influence of the negative attitude of the outside world under mutual care [7]. However, the welfare brought about by technological development is only one factor, and eliminating social structural discrimination against sexual minorities is a more effective solution.

2.3. Solutions

During the time that the Trump administration dominated America, the rights of LGBTQ people have been seriously offended. They aren't treated equally as other residents, this led to a result that they met the barrier when they access critical government services such as employment, justice system and law enforcement interactions, education, housing, and immigration. The living conditions of LGBTQ people haven't been so hard like now.

After president-elect Joe Biden inherited a country left by Trump which full of issues haven't been solved such as COVID-19, another big issue is LGBTQ's people rights.

So, what can we do, as a member of the world?

Here's what you can do to be a friend of LGBTQ youth:

Every one of us:

1. Don't make assumptions about someone's sexual orientation or gender identity. Give them enough respect and treat them just like the normal people. We are equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. LGBT rights are human rights and they matter too [8].

2. Against homophobic, transphobic and anti-LGBTQ harassment and discrimination.

3. Against the use of anti-gay slurs.

4. Respect anyone who chooses to come out.

To your classmates

Make your classroom a safe space and ban anti-gay language.

Advocate for schools to adopt and enforce a nondiscrimination policy that includes sexual orientation and gender identity.

Make sure school activities include everyone.

Create presentations and/or lesson plans about LGBT History Month.

Support your children and their friends who question their sexuality or identify as LGBTQ.

Feel free to discuss these issues with school staff.

Help your children or their friends complain about discrimination or harassment.

Protect individuals from homophobic and transphobic violence.

Prevent torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

Repeal laws criminalizing homosexuality and transgender people.

Prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Safeguard freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly for all LGBT people [9]

Show young people that they can be authentic around you [10].

And as for the scenario that LGBTQ people don't want to public that they've already come out, we can help them from these perspectives:

2.3.1 Detailed Psychological Consultation

It is suggested that American psychological and medical institutions conduct some interviews for these homosexual groups, collect a large number of relevant data based on pathological knowledge and theoretical knowledge, and make an academic analysis of their psychology, so as to find out the physical and social reasons why they are not willing to disclose. For example, like the governments should cooperate with the psychology experts in universities, and investigate a Hidden questionnaire (which means the paper should avoid the words like 'homosexual', 'LGBT', make efforts to reduce their awareness of being a LGBT people while answering the questions.), try to find out the purest difference between their mental states and those of normal sexual orientation.

2.3.2 Advocate Good Social Conduct

The reason why LGBT people are reluctant to disclose their identity is largely because they are easily discriminated against in the society, which makes them unable to act smoothly as normal people, such as in social security, employment and even in daily life. So, while the government should not encourage homosexuality, it should firmly resist identity discrimination. The government should advocate equality for all people, respect, protect human rights and ensure that all people are treated fairly in society without privilege and absolutely without discrimination. What the governments could do is that try their best to deduct the discrimination from people to the LGBTQ, for example like offer better help to these special people in medical treatment and householding, remember that they don't want the special

attention, they just want to live as the normal people like others, so if society want to give a help and let them feel the warmth, never 'Good intentions do bad things', what you've done may hurt them more if you haven't consider about what they really what.

From the governments perspective:

Privately raised concerns and forwarded recommendations for reform in the context

of dialogue with Governments.

Monitoring and bringing to light the pattern of human rights violations affecting LGBT people, including reporting made on OHCHR field appearances.

Participate in public advocacy on decriminalization and other measures necessary to strengthen the protection of human rights for LGBT people, including through speeches and statements, newspaper articles, video messages, fact sheets and distribution of various materials.

Working with UN partners to implement a variety of activities designed to combat discrimination and violence fueled by hatred of LGBT people.

Provide support for special approaches in the context of their truth-seeking activities and secret Government communications.

Supporting human rights advocacy bodies, where several have addressed the issue of discrimination linked to sexual orientation and gender recognition in previous general comments and concluding observations and continue to promote steps that must be taken by each of the States to comply with their obligations under the international treaty. in this regard.

Provide support for the Universal Periodic Review, which provides a forum for concerns about the rights of LGBT people to be screened and for recommendations to be made.

3. CONCLUSION

In short, Americans are divided on whether LGBTQ discrimination really exists today. Conservatives argue that LGBTQ people are not discriminated against in society because their status is largely normalized -- they are allowed to appear on TV shows and movies, and that many businesses voluntarily have their own nondiscrimination policies. However, ask LGBTQ people themselves and they say in their daily life they constantly see discrimination. Institute of the university of California, Los Angeles, A LGBTQ researcher, William in a recent study found that compared with heterosexual, lesbian, gay and bisexual bullying, firing, promotion or hard when renting proportion is much higher when they are in trouble. In a 2015 survey of transgender Americans, 30 percent of employed

respondents said they had experienced some kind of workplace discrimination in the previous year; a survey said they had encountered some form of housing discrimination. All this suggests that there is a reason why gay people are reluctant to reveal their identity. Hopefully, in the future, trans people around the world, not just in the United States, will no longer face any form of discrimination and will be able to live a normal life like everyone else.

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