

**Committee:** General Assembly (GA)

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**Topic:** Addressing Cultural Relativism in the LGBTQ+ Community.



## I. INTRODUCTION

The General Assembly (GA) is one of 6 main organs of the United Nations (UN), recognized by its main purpose of being the principal policy-making organ within the organization. Therefore, the General Assembly is in charge of providing a space in which multiparty discussions occur, which cover a full range of international issues of importance for the international communities, as well as, approving budgets, and addressing the internal designations of the UN. According to the UN Charter, The General Assembly may consider the fundamentals of cooperation, international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments.

Discrimination and violence against people in the LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and/or Questioning) community are common practices. Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic attitudes are deeply embedded in many cultures around the world. People in this community face a lot of challenges due to this reason, including being arrested, blackmailed, extorted, stigma, violated, and in some cases, the death penalty as punishment for their existence. Institutional violence is habitual and another main challenge that the LGBTQ+ community agonize over, this can be found within healthcare systems, legal and judicial systems and in education, which can at least affect their physical and psychological health. All states have to promote and protect the international human rights law of all people by obligation and commend discrimination policies. Nonetheless, in some countries this is not being followed, leaving the LGBTQ+ community at risk and without basic human rights.

Ethnocentrism is an important part of this topic, the reason being that ethnocentrism is judging a culture or community and thinking that yours is better than the other. This can lead to discrimination against people that are different from you. To combat this, it is necessary to consider cultural relativism. Cultural relativism refers to not judging a culture or community

that doesn't have the same traditions as others and instead understanding all of the contrasting, different and rich traditions or practices within the large cultural context of our world.

To achieve a certain level of consciousness about cultural relativism regarding the LGBTQ+ community, it is essential to improve the view of those who do not quite yet grasp the concept and necessity of cultural relativism towards their treatment of this community. Discourse and an exchange of views between citizens regarding the cultural relativism and their beliefs must be used, to interfere with an acceptance and healthy integration of the LGBTQ+ community. The traditional values in place in society still provide important things to the current world and specifically to new generations such as being a good citizen; however, some of the ideas, beliefs and knowledge spread out can have discriminatory undertones and communities and minorities such as the LGBTQ+ community are severely affected and discriminated due to their sexual orientation, gender identity and others. They can be subjected to harsh policy measures, violence and conflict, thus, actions must be taken.

## **II. HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT**

**August 29, 1867:** Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, a German man, was the first person to be publicly declared as homosexual, defending the rights of homosexual, being one of the first LGBTQ+ activist known.

**May, 1897:** Magnus Hirschfeld, was a German medic and activist who was responsible for founding the first organization which was named "Humanitarian Scientific Committee", an organization which defended homosexual's rights.

**1948:** Harry Hay founded the Mattachine Society in the United States of America which is one of the first organizations concerning the rights of the LGBTQ+ community in the country.

**June 1969:** A riot in Stonewall, New York, conformed by people who fight injustices against their sexual orientation, join to raise their voices. Being the first official movement.

**1973:** The American Psychiatry Association Eliminated homosexuality from their list of mental disorders in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.

**1981:** The first cases of HIV and AIDS are made public thus bringing major controversy towards the idea that patients diagnosed with these diseases are homosexual and provokes an activism and defense response.

**1993:** The World Health Organization takes homosexuality off their list of mental disorders.

**2003:** The Supreme Court of the United States of America dictates in the case of Lawrence v. Texas that the laws which criminalize sexual relations with a person of the same sex are unconstitutional.

**2010:** The United Nations (UN) emits a declaration which supports de LGBTQ+ rights.

**2020:** The United States of America Supreme Court Law dictates in the case of Bostock v. Clayton County, that the law of Civil Rights in 1964 protects the LGBTQ+ workers from labor discrimination.

### **III. CURRENT HAPPENINGS**

Over the years, significant progress has been made in the fight for the rights of the LGBTQ+ community. In many countries, laws have been enacted that recognize equal marriage, adoption by same-sex couples, and protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Several countries have passed laws to facilitate the legal process of gender change and recognize the gender identity of transgender people. These laws allow modification of official identification documents to reflect self-perceived gender.

Every year, on June 28, the International LGBTQ+ Pride Day is celebrated. During this event, parades, rallies, and cultural events take place around the world to commemorate the fight for equality and rights for the LGBTQ+ community. The visibility and representation of LGBTQ+ people in the media and popular culture has been increasing. More movies, TV shows, and plays have featured LGBTQ+ characters and addressed issues of sexual and gender diversity.

#### **IV. KEY POINTS**

- **Implementation of legal protection and laws for the LGBTQ+ community**

It is essential to address the advances and challenges in the fight for the rights and legal protection of the LGBTQ+ community. This includes issues such as marriage equality, adoption by same-sex couples, employment discrimination, and violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

- **Visibility and representation within all spheres of society of the LGBTQ+ community**

Visibility and proper representation of the LGBTQ+ community in the media, culture, and politics are critical to fostering acceptance and equality. It is important to highlight the progress made and promote a more diverse and realistic representation of LGBTQ+ experiences in all spheres of society.

- **Accessibility and protection in health services**

The health and well-being of LGBTQ+ people are relevant issues to address. This includes accessibility to culturally competent health services, prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, as well as support for the mental and emotional health of the LGBTQ+ community.

- **Inclusivity in education**

It is crucial to talk about the importance of inclusive and non-judgmental education at all levels, from schools to higher educational institutions. This implies the implementation of policies and programs that promote inclusion, respect and diversity, as well as the adequate training of teachers and educational personnel.

- **Fight against discrimination and violence**

Despite progress in many countries, discrimination and violence against the LGBTQ+ community continue to be significant problems. It is important to address these issues and promote awareness of the need for laws and policies that protect the rights and safety of LGBTQ+ people, as well as foster tolerance and respect in society at large.

## V. UN ACTIONS

The United Nations has made significant efforts to promote and defend the rights of the LGBTQ+ community. Some of those actions are:

- **Declaration of Human Rights:** The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, establishes fundamental principles of equality and non-discrimination that apply to all people, including members of the LGBTQ+ community.
- **General Assembly Resolutions:** The United Nations General Assembly has adopted several resolutions addressing discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity. For example, in 2011 a landmark resolution was issued recognizing violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity as a violation of human rights.
- **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR):** OHCHR has worked to promote and protect the rights of LGBTQ+ people. They have produced reports and recommendations, and have collaborated with Member States to address violations of the human rights of LGBTQ+ people.
- **Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS):** UNAIDS has advocated for the inclusion of the LGBTQ+ community in the global response to HIV/AIDS and has worked to ensure access to prevention, treatment and care services for all people, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- **Education and Awareness:** The United Nations has conducted awareness campaigns and educational programs to promote acceptance and equality of LGBTQ+ people. These efforts seek to combat stereotypes and discrimination, and encourage inclusion and mutual respect.

## VI. BLOCK ANALYSIS

### **American Group:**

In the Americas region, the situation of the LGBTQ+ community differs from country to country. Some countries have taken significant steps to protect the rights and equality of LGBTQ+ people, Mexico made progress with the legalization of equal marriage at the national level, although the situation may vary in different states.

In the United States, there has been significant progress in advancing acceptance and equal rights for the LGBT community. One of the most notable milestones was the landmark decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges* in 2015, which legalized same-sex marriage nationwide. In addition to this, comprehensive anti-discrimination laws have been implemented at both the federal and state levels to protect LGBT individuals in various aspects of life, including employment, housing, and public accommodations. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 has been interpreted to offer protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation, and many states have reinforced these protections with additional legislation.

Canada has been a pioneer in the advancement of LGBT rights in North America. In 2005, it became one of the first countries in the world to legalize same-sex marriage, marking a historic milestone. The Human Rights Act in Canada explicitly includes protection for gender identity and expression, further solidifying anti-discrimination measures. In the realm of healthcare access, Canada has made efforts to ensure equal treatment for LGBT patients and the removal of discriminatory practices within healthcare settings.

### **Latin America & Caribbean Group:**

In the Caribbean, several countries maintain laws that criminalize homosexuality and do not provide adequate protection for LGBTQ+ people, although there has been some progress in decriminalization in some countries. In Latin America, the situation varies, with progress in some countries such as Costa Rica and El Salvador, but significant challenges in others such as Honduras and Guatemala.

On the other hand, other countries such as Argentina, legalized equal marriage and passed gender identity laws. Uruguay has also legalized marriage equality and enacted laws that protect the rights of trans people. In Brazil, the right to civil union for same-sex couples was recognized, but equal marriage is not yet legalized at the national level. Colombia legalized equal marriage and has enacted laws against discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

### **Western European Countries:**

In the Western European countries there are 3 countries who stand out concerning the equality in rights that the LGBTQ+ community and those are Malta, Belgium and Luxembourg. This region is well known for being pretty accepting and open minded

concerning these topics, still some countries such as Latvia, Romania and Slovakia are still in the process of understanding this way of thinking

### **Asia and Pacific Groups:**

This region has a very diverse variation of thinking since certain countries have not considered or tried to understand in the slightest the type of thinking that the LGBTQ+ community has while other countries have honestly accepted it pretty well.

In the case of Japan, its traditionally conservative societal values have presented challenges in advancing the rights and acceptance of the LGBTQ+ rights, additionally, North Korea hasn't made an effort towards understanding this community. Some countries have even made laws which don't permit the showcasing of anything having to do with the LGBTQ+ community.

### **African Groups:**

Most countries in this region are very closed minded going to complete extremes and making laws against same sex marriage or like in Uganda where they apply the death penalty in countries where the sharia law is active such as Nigeria, Mauritania and Somalia, countries like Uganda and Kenya are also making laws which ban promoting any type of "homosexuality" in addition to same sex marriage and intercourse

### **Eastern European Countries:**

The situation of acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community in Eastern European countries is diverse. Russia has enacted restrictive laws and created a hostile climate for the LGBTQ+ community. Ukraine has seen progress on LGBTQ+ rights, although challenges remain. Belarus lacks comprehensive legislation to protect LGBT rights. Moldova has made some progress, but social acceptance remains variable. Bulgaria faces challenges in terms of rights and discrimination towards the LGBT community. It is important to note that the situation may be more complex in each country and is subject to change.

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