

Queer and Black: African American Activists and the Evolution of the LGBTQ Rights Movement, from Stonewall to Today

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Abstract

This research examines the crucial roles that African American activists had in the formation of the LGBTQ rights movement, beginning with the Stonewall Riots in 1969 and continuing with their advocacy efforts. This study aims to examine the intricate interconnections of race, gender identity, and sexual orientation within the framework of civil rights and social justice movements. This is accomplished by meticulously reviewing and analyzing the existing work. Bayard Rustin, Audre Lorde, and Marsha P. Johnson are renowned for their significant contributions to the struggle for LGBTQ rights amidst racism and job discrimination (Bowman, 2021). The article discusses significant historical events and the role of activism in them, illustrating the enduring impact of African American leadership on policy-making, challenging social conventions, and fostering inclusivity within LGBTQ communities. The analysis demonstrates how intersectional campaigning has supported both LGBTQ and other social justice causes. It illustrates how African American activists have united and fortified organizations frequently marginalized. This study aims to enhance understanding of the complex challenges and successes inherent in the ongoing struggle for equality and representation within the LGBTQ rights movement.

Keywords: LGBTQ, Queer, African American, Black Lives Matter, Human Rights

Introduction

The LGBTQ rights struggle in the US has changed a lot in the last one hundred years. To work for social justice and equal rights, many different groups have come together and made big changes (Babu, 2022). A lot of the talk is about the

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important work that African American organizers have done. Their different identities have helped the movement's leaders come up with new goals and plans. In this introduction, we talk about some background information, the research question and its aims, and the setting for the study of how African American activism has affected LGBTQ rights, from the Stonewall Riots to the current advocacy work.

People who are queer, gay, bisexual, lesbian, or transgender face a lot of prejudice and social shame. This is what started the LGBTQ rights movement. LGBTQ activists got together in the middle of the 20th century to fight against unfair laws, racism in society, and violence (Caldwell, 2022). You have the right to freedom, equal care, and respect, they told everyone. The movement has grown over time to include more people and issues, such as the right to an equal marriage, fair treatment at work, access to health care, and being shown in the media and at school.

African American activists have been very important to the LGBTQ rights movement by giving it important advice, strategic intelligence, and different points of view. LGBTQ people have had African American leaders fight for their rights in the past, and they still do today (Allen, 2012). They were very important to the early fight for LGBTQ rights and got ideas from the Civil Rights fight. They've also worked with Black Lives Matter and other groups to fight for LGBTQ rights and other wrongs that happen because of race, sexuality, and gender identity.

Things changed for LGBTQ people after the Stonewall Riots in New York City in June 1969 (Blum, 2019). A great many people spoke out against police sweeps and bias against LGBTQ people, especially people of color. Bush (2022) says that Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, two African American organizers, were very important in the Stonewall march. They actively challenged existing norms and fought for LGBTQ visibility and rights.

Review of the Literature

The scope of queer activism encompasses the dismantling and challenging of normativity in environments that criminalize, oppress, and perpetuate violence against queer people (Kamau, 2021). Whether or not they identify as LGBTQ, the innovations and strategies that have been implemented by individuals who have

challenged dominant normative structures in the southern region of the United States are inherently queer. Generally speaking, queer history places an emphasis on and shines a spotlight on LGBTQ social life and the pursuit of equality (Caldwell, 2022). John D'Emilio, George Chauncey, and Lillian Faderman, all of whom are historians, laid a substantial foundation regarding the existence of lesbian and gay people during the 20th century (Mohamed, Png, & Isaac, 2020). Sniderman & Piazza say that in recent decades, historians and academics have worked to broaden the conceptions of queer identity in the United States. However, the collective memory of queer organizing has brought the fight for marriage equality and the erasure of memories of the Stonewall Uprising to the forefront (Sniderman & Piazza, 2021).

Furthermore, Bongiovanni is of the thought that these narratives frequently depict events that took place primarily in regions that are not located in the South. A narrative of this uprising that has been whitewashed, such as the one that was presented in the film *Stonewall*, fails to expose the multifaceted acts of resistance and protest against state-sanctioned violence and police brutality that occurred on a national and regional scale (Bongiovanni, 2022).

Roberto Marín Vázquez argues in his article that from the perspective of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community, the Stonewall riots have become one of the most significant events of the twentieth century and a global symbol of the fight against oppression. When viewed from a more sentimental perspective, some individuals might even argue that the riots ought to be regarded as the "year zero" of LGBT history (Vázquez, 2020).

From the viewpoint of (Varga, Beck, & Thornton, 2019) During the 1960s, there were frequent raids on places that were welcoming to LGBT people; however, what happened after that was extremely unusual. The customers of Stonewall started to express their displeasure in a passionate manner and physically defied the way the police were treating them. Upon hearing the commotion, individuals gathered in the vicinity of the Stonewall Inn as well as in Christopher Park, which is located across the street. Protests demanding rights for LGBT individuals and communities took place over the course of several days after this demonstration of solidarity, allyship, and resistance.

Filip Šourek is of the thought that the decade of the 1970s is considered to be a pivotal period in the lives of gay and lesbian individuals in the United States. The

events and developments that occurred during this time period continue to have an impact on the LGBT community even to this day (Šourek, 2020). Stonewall riots in 1969 and the official beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the United States in 1981 are the two events that should be considered to be of the utmost importance. It is generally agreed upon that the Stonewall riots are the most significant event in the modern history of the LGBT community (Stein, 2022). These riots were the catalyst for a period of liberation and the fight for the rights of LGBT people in the United States during the seventh decade of the twentieth century (Pitman & Sargeant, 2019).

There has been a wide range of claims regarding identity and sex politics made by queer organizations in the United States since the Stonewall riots. Taking into consideration (Belmont & Ferreira, 2020), Stonewall could be understood as a series of protests that advocated for the right to engage in homosexual acts, the right to have a sexual life, and the right to behave in a manner that was different from the norms of heterosexuality.

Hemraj, Keeran say in their report that Several historians contend that the groundwork for the advancements in LGBT rights was established well before the Stonewall Inn Riots, particularly in New York, where homosexual men established their own communities prior to the riots, thereby establishing the basis for gay rights. Pro-Gay Rights organizations such as the Mattachine Society played an active role in promoting gay rights within government and legal institutions (Hemraj, 2020). A significant illustration of their accomplishments was the case of Dick Letisch, a member of Mattachine. Letisch made history by openly acknowledging his homosexuality in an American court, despite the fact that it was illegal at the time. However, he was not formally charged with any crime (English, 2020).

Tandon & Rao state that Pride parades are organized by the LGBTIQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transexual, Intersex, and Queer) community with the purpose of increasing their visibility, promoting social acceptance, fostering self-acceptance, and advocating for the legal rights of the community (Tandon & Rao, 2021). Pride is the commemoration of the wide range of differences, fairness, solidarity, and autonomy. In numerous locations, the festivities are prolonged for a duration of one week or even one month. June is designated as Pride Month, during which a variety of events take place, including marches, demonstrations, gatherings, political rallies, and parties (Caldwell, 2022). These events primarily aim to raise awareness about

the challenges encountered by the LGBTIQ community. This encompasses demonstrations against discriminatory laws and calls for the implementation of new legislation to safeguard the community. Pride parades can vary in size, ranging from a small number of participants to thousands of people (Tandon & Rao, 2021). These parades can range from modest gatherings to extravagant spectacles. Pride parades often feature participation from various community organizations, schools, churches, unions, political parties, and local businesses. These events may feature elaborately adorned trucks that play music while people dance. Pride parades typically culminate at a park where a grand celebration, often featuring live music, is held. This event is commonly referred to as the post-parade party or pride festival (Duberman, 1993).

The majority of pride festivals typically include a designated area specifically catered to children. Pride festivals may incorporate concerts, drag performances, open-air activities, film showcases, or beach gatherings. Pride festivals attract members of the queer community, as well as their family and friends, individuals who support the LGBTIQ community, and people seeking entertainment. Presently, numerous pride events in North America are scheduled to take place on a weekend that is in close proximity to June 28 (Sniderman & Piazza, 2021).

These events also facilitate individuals in accepting and celebrating their true selves, while confidently expressing their identity to the world. Commemorations are also conducted to honor individuals who perished as a result of violence, hate crimes, and HIV/AIDS. Pride events are predominantly held worldwide in June to commemorate the Stonewall riots that took place in 1969 in Greenwich Village, New York City (Todd & Alabanza, 2021).

African American Activists in Pivotal Moments of the LGBTQ Rights Movement

African American activists have played crucial roles in shaping significant moments of the LGBTQ rights movement, demonstrating resilience, leadership, and approaches that consider the intersectionality of various struggles, thereby enhancing the broader pursuit of social justice. Starting from the period before the Stonewall uprising, individuals like Bayard Rustin and Audre Lorde laid the groundwork by advocating for civil rights and LGBTQ equality (McCoy, 2023). Rustin's strategic organization of the 1963 March on Washington not only

highlighted the interconnected challenges faced by racial and LGBTQ communities but also established a model for building coalitions and employing nonviolent resistance in social movements. Lorde, a pioneering black lesbian feminist, challenged conventional norms within feminist and LGBTQ circles by advocating for a more comprehensive and intersectional approach that addressed issues of race, gender, and sexual orientation (Braydon, 2022).

The Stonewall Riots of 1969 were a pivotal event in LGBTQ history, during which African American transgender women such as Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera played vital roles in opposing police brutality and mobilizing the LGBTQ community against institutionalized oppression. Their leadership underscored the interconnectedness of LGBTQ activism, placing particular emphasis on the experiences of transgender individuals who belong to racial and ethnic minority groups within the larger movement (Perkins, 2022). The riots not only ignited a surge of LGBTQ mobilization and prominence but also emphasized the persistent obstacles encountered by African American LGBTQ individuals, who persisted in facing discrimination within both LGBTQ and African American communities.

Contributions to Policy Changes, Community Organizing, and Cultural Representations

❖ Bayard Rustin: Advocacy and Legacy

Bayard Rustin was a very important figure in the history of civil rights and LGBTQ rights in the US. He helped bring together movements for LGBTQ rights and racial equality long before the word "intersectionality" became popular. Rustin was an out gay African American man. Rustin planned the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963. His guidance made it clear that the fights against racism and homophobia were linked. Even though he was gay and faced discrimination, he pushed for an open politics. This was true even during the civil rights movement. On the other hand, he said that freedom and justice could not be separated by gender or orientation.

Rustin always said that oppressed groups had to work together because it was so important for them to. The civil rights movement and the early LGBTQ movement changed the way they did things because of what he stood for. Following generations of organizers were able to deal with the tough and often interconnected problems that oppressed people face because Rustin stressed working together and across

groups. His life's work made it possible for LGBTQ issues to be a part of larger movements for social justice. This meant that new movements would fight against oppressive systems that work together, rather than just one problem at a time.

❖ **Audre Lorde: Intersectionality and Activism**

Audre Lorde was a "black, lesbian, mother, warrior, and poet." She made a big impact on the feminist and LGBTQ groups by speaking out against exclusion and supporting intersectionality all the time. Race, gender, sexuality, and health are all hard topics that Lorde wrote about in her poems, essays, and talks. "The Cancer Journals" and "Sister Outsider" are two of her best-known books. Her work was both literary and political, and it showed the struggles of people who are often left out of big issues and forgotten about.

Because Lorde didn't like how narrowly feminism was defined as only caring about the problems of white middle-class women, she became an activist. She didn't like how it didn't care about the problems of women of color, gays, or working-class women. She said that the only way to really be free was to be a woman who valued and accepted everyone's uniqueness. She used the saying "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" a lot to stress that the same ideas and structures that keep oppressive systems going can't be used to break them down. This idea brought together more extreme and less extreme ways for feminists and LGBTQ people to change society.

She made a difference that went beyond just representing culture. Lorde spoke out against negative ideas about Black women and lesbians in her work and speeches. She spoke out so that people could say what they wanted and so that people who are often ignored could be heard. By editing and adding to many collections, she changed the way people thought about culture and made sure that more people respected different points of view. These collections gave women of color and LGBTQ people important places to share their stories. Lorde's work will always be remembered. Today, social justice groups that stress acceptance, togetherness, and celebrating differences are made possible by her work on intersectionality.

Schools are being called after her, awards are being given, and events are being planned to show how important she was to literature, feminism, and LGBTQ rights (Williams, Housman, & McDonald, 2020). A lot of people and groups still get ideas from her life and work, which shows how important they were.

Audre Lorde has changed the way people think about different societies, how groups of people work together, and how laws are made. She strengthened the feminist and LGBTQ movements by asking for an inclusive approach to social justice. She also questioned popular cultural stories and gave people who are often ignored a chance to speak out (Carey, 2020). She did work that still affects activism and scholarly study today. This shows how important it is to be open and work together to fight for equality.

❖ **The Stonewall Riots of 1969**

Because she was so brave during the Stonewall Riots in 1969, Marsha P. Johnson was an African American transgender woman who paved the way for others to follow. Johnson did a lot to help the Stonewall Inn fight against police violence. She gave protesters hope and became a symbol of how strong people can be when they are being pushed around. Because she was honest and open, more people learned about the problems transgender people of color face. They have to deal with racism that is built into the system as well as homophobia and transphobia.

After the riots, Johnson was a big part of the reason why LGBTQ people did something. She helped start the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR) with Sylvia Rivera. People from racial groups that are often left out are helped by this group of homeless queers and trans youth. It was Johnson's leadership that brought attention to the need for intersectional activism. If you want to look at LGBTQ rights, you should also look at racism, class, and gender identity. She opened up the movement to more people, and transgender people of color were able to have their wants and concerns heard.

Latina icon Sylvia Rivera was transgender. She fought for everyone's rights and had a plan for how to make them better. During the Stonewall Riots, she was also a very important leader. The work that Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson did together showed how strong friendship can be between people from different cultures. She helped get ready for and keep the fight going before, during, and after the riots.

It was very important to Rivera that the fight for LGBTQ rights took into account several different groups. This is the most important thing she forgot. Rivera always thought it was important to talk about and notice how transgender people are pushed to the edges of society, especially those who are already on the outside

because of their race or class. This is what she did: she got involved and worked with other people. In order to protect transgender and queer youth, she pushed for safe housing and for them to be included in LGBTQ problems that don't usually involve them. It was Rivera's job to lead a movement that tried to see things more fully. This method took into account the fact that people's race and gender identity have different effects on them.

❖ **Impact of Stonewall**

The Stonewall Riots in 1969 changed the lives of LGBTQ people forever. They got people moving and made it possible for groups to grow in ways that had never been possible before. After that, a lot of new rights-fighting parties and groups were created. All of them fought for LGBTQ rights, acceptance, and getting everyone to work together. The Gay Liberation Front and the Gay Activists Alliance bring people in the community together to talk about politics and normal life.

The first Pride marches in 1970 were changed by Stonewall. People from New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago went to these events to remember the riots that happened a year ago. They turned into yearly events that brought people together, made them stronger, and led to new calls for equality. Every year, pride events quickly spread to other parts of the US and the world. They were important spots for LGBTQ people to be seen, make friends, and speak out in public. People from all over the LGBTQ community came together at pride marches, which changed the way LGBTQ activists did their jobs by giving them a stronger sense of who they are through protest and celebration.

Things got better after Stonewall in terms of being seen and having strong groups, but African American LGBTQ people still had to deal with a lot of discrimination, even in their own communities. Black and other LGBTQ people of color often found it hard to speak up and share their stories in mainstream LGBTQ spaces because they were racist, left out, or not represented. However, homophobia and transphobia made it harder for African American groups to accept and help gay and transgender people. African American LGBTQ people often had to deal with tough social situations and fight for acceptance on many fronts because they were left out on two levels (White & Baumann, 2019).

There was a clear need for intersectional advocacy right away since these issues kept coming up. Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson were both leaders who fought for

justice. Their lives showed how race, gender identity, and sexuality are all linked. Putting the needs of the most vulnerable people first was the only way to really make progress against all kinds of oppression, as shown by their work. Because of this, intersectionality became a principle that later groups and activists followed. As well as rights for sexual orientation and gender identity, they said that the movement's goals should be fair treatment of race, gender, and money (Sanders, 2019a).

Era	Advances Achieved	Persistent Challenges	Key Takeaway
Post-Stonewall 1970s	Foundation of LGBTQ groups	Racism in LGBTQ spaces, homophobia in Black communities	Need for intersectional, inclusive activism
Present	Global recognition, Pride	Continued dual discrimination, under-representation	Centering lived experience of marginalized voices

Contributions to Policy Changes, Community Organizing, and Cultural Representations

African American LGBT rights activists have changed the way LGBTQ rights are fought for in the US. The problems of race, gender, sexuality, and class have all been brought together into a bigger picture of social justice. At least one person who helped start the Combahee River Collective was Barbara Smith. An important part of her work was bringing up intersectionality, the idea that people can be oppressed because of their race, gender, class, or sexuality. Smith's important work changed both the way policy arguments were framed and the policies that were made. It told people who fight for LGBTQ rights to understand and deal with the different situations of the most disadvantaged people. This was something Audre Lorde did to help the LGBTQ and feminist groups grow. As a Black lesbian feminist, Lorde pushed for policies that didn't just focus on one part of identity. She also fought against different types of injustice. Because of her work as an activist and researcher, being gay is no longer a crime, and sexual orientation is now protected by anti-discrimination rules. These were big steps toward making things fair for everyone.

It was very important to change the rules after Stonewall. A lot of the work that was done to make homosexuality legal was done by African American LGBTQ activists. Their work helped get rid of laws that made relationships between people of the same gender illegal. It was a good move for the law and for everyone in general. Things did not just change for these changes to happen, though. Laws against discrimination kept getting better, making them more open to everyone. Because of this, laws were made that make it illegal to treat people differently at work, in housing, and in public places. People who were Black and LGBTQ had a hard time getting people to work together and follow strict rules against discrimination. The results showed how important it is for communities to have clear rules that keep everyone safe so they can grow and move forward.

An important part of the fight for their rights has also been getting Black LGBTQ people to work together. The National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) is a smart political group that looks out for the rights of Black and LGBTQ people. The NBJC has worked on important issues like the HIV/AIDS disaster, which has made it easier for Black LGBTQ people to get medical care, keep their homes safe, and make money. While the Black and LGBTQ movements were going on, many people didn't speak out. The NBJC and other groups like it helped those people by making their identities more public and building support networks. LGBTQ+ black activists have worked to make areas safer, bring attention to mental health problems, and help people who are being treated unfairly. Communities often get together in the form of workshops, support groups, and training forums. The goal of these events is to teach people more and make those who are on the outside better. These approaches stress participation, which means that the people who are touched come up with their own answers. This brings people together and lets them make changes when problems keep happening.

African American LGBTQ people have done a lot to fight against bad stereotypes and demand that the arts and media show LGBTQ people in a more nuanced way. Artists and activists have always pushed against and torn down harmful ideas about sexuality, gender, and race. They have instead tried to make identities that are good, difficult, and different stand out more. People who write, like Essex Hemphill and Cheryl Clarke, have used their work to question racism, sexism, and identity-based abuse. These changes have affected culture and given voice to thoughts that were not heard before. These artists have written poems, essays, and plays that have

changed and questioned some of the most familiar stories. People can now see how difficult and full of life the lives of Black LGBTQ people are.

Making art for the sake of making art isn't the only thing these changes in culture mean. People have become more aware and concerned since they shared their stories and art. This has changed the way people in school and the community think about things. Using art to fight for justice, equality, and inclusion and to make people aware of these problems has become very important. This is achieved by giving people who have been pushed to the edges a voice and inspiring new artists and activists to stick with the fight.

Not only have these efforts to change policies, build communities, and make art helped the cause of LGBTQ rights, but they have also brought the movement closer to a future that is more truly inclusive and intersectional. This is proof that social justice works best when different issues are looked at in light of how they affect each other and broad and specific answers are found so that no one is left out.

Impact of Intersectional Advocacy on Advancing LGBTQ Rights within Broader Social Justice Movements

Now, a big part of the fight for LGBTQ rights, social justice, and changes to the law in the United States is intersectional advocacy, especially as created and pushed by African American advocates. These backers have opened up the conversation about laws and policies by talking about how race, gender identity, and sexual orientation affect people all at the same time. This has helped the cause reach more people and help those who need it the most.

Politicians who talk about diversity are not the same as activists who only talk about one problem at a time. African American activists have always said that it's important to see people as whole people who are harmed by more than one system of tyranny. The way people talk about and make rules has changed because of their work. Policy models not only deal with certain types of discrimination, but they also look at how bias like racism, sexism, transphobia, and others affect people in general. This is why laws have been made that are completer and more open to everyone. Some of these are laws that protect people from being discriminated against because of their race, gender, or sexual orientation; healthcare that meets

the needs of transgender and nonwhite people; and changes to schools and workplaces that address intersectional injustices.

Some groups are left out too often, so intersectional activism has focused on getting those groups to work together. Instead of working alone, LGBTQ groups, civil rights groups, and feminist causes have joined forces to share resources and ideas. Because of this, strong relationships have formed based on a shared desire for social justice. Activists can now work together to stop police violence, make it easier for people to get health care, or push for changes in the criminal justice system thanks to this partnership. This gives them more power in politics and lets them share their work with more people. These partnerships not only make things worse, but they also change the goals of action to show how different types of injustice are linked and affect people with similar interests.

Three young black gay women, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi, began Black Lives Matter (BLM). It shows how well projects that involve everyone have worked. BLM has always made it clear that LGBTQ rights and racial injustice go hand in hand. They showed what it's like to be a member of more than one oppressed group and have been abused by the cops, seen as biased, or left out. But BLM brought the idea of intersectionality to the attention of people who make choices and plan events. It was first used in schools. This made people in the movement talk about things like cops, changing the courts, and making it easier for LGBTQ people of color to get help from the government. It's also become more public about the problems and issues transgender and gender-nonconforming people face all over the country because of the movement. They have been kept safe and are now a part of the fight for race justice in general.

Policy can be changed by advocacy that looks at how different problems are linked. This might even change rules and institutions. Laws like these, which were hard fought for by intersectional activists, made sure that LGBTQ people of color would not be discriminated against in housing, jobs, or health care. When race, gender, and sexual orientation are taken into account, these rules show how bias can show up in various ways. Often, African American LGBTQ leaders have been at the forefront of these problems. They have said that because they have personally experienced discrimination in many forms, laws need to be made that are just as hard. This kind of action has made it easier for LGBTQ people of color to get health care that fits their culture. To do this, they've pushed for services that are simple to

get to. They have also tried to change how schools and businesses work by fighting racism and other systemic issues.

There have been big changes in how people and things are shown in the media and in everyday life because of intersectional efforts. They have also changed the rules and the way things work. There are now more LGBTQ people in politics, government, and society in general. A lot of work is being done to make sure that the opinions of those who aren't heard are heard. People who are part of intersectional activism have told the media and other groups to include more real-life experiences and points of view by pointing out stories that mostly feature white people or cisgender people. The issues that LGBTQ people face are linked to other social identities and structural problems, which has helped more people understand them.

Intersectional advocacy can mean a lot of different things. By running for office, black LGBTQ people have often been able to change laws. They have fought for things like equal marriage, stricter anti-discrimination laws, better housing and health care access, and legal papers that take gender identity into account. Many kind people have worked hard to improve things for transgender people. Transgender people can now get health care that fits their gender and are no longer at risk of being discriminated against. Creating partnerships has also brought together groups like Black Lives Matter that fight for social justice and women's and immigration rights. It's better for platforms and society as a whole when people work together and talk about different things. Since a long time ago, it has become easier for people to work together to fight against unfair structures.

More people are getting involved in their neighborhoods and in fights for LGBTQ rights and other types of justice. One great thing about them is this. It's become clear to many that the fight for LGBTQ rights is also a fight for justice for women, people of color, and low-income people. Platforms for a lot of different kinds of things have grown because of this. They make sure that progress in one area leads to progress in other areas and that no group that is behind in the fight for justice and equality is left behind.

Conclusion

The African American and LGBTQ rights groups came together because they had strong leaders, a strong will, and a desire to make society fair and equal (Moreau, Nuño-Pérez, & Sanchez, 2019). This study looked at the important parts that African American activists have played from before the Stonewall riots to now, focusing on their important contributions and long-lasting effects. Before the Stonewall riots, people like Bayard Rustin and Audre Lorde laid the groundwork for issues that affect more than one group. They showed that the fights for civil rights and LGBTQ rights are a lot alike. Rustin was able to work with others and use peaceful protest when he organized the March on Washington in 1963. Lorde's poetry and activism helped fight against unfair treatment of women and LGBTQ people in the feminist and LGBTQ groups (Blum, 2019).

The Stonewall Riots of 1969 changed the lives of many LGBTQ people in a big way. At this time, Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera were two very well-known African American transgender women. Their leaders not only spoke out against police brutality, but they also got LGBTQ people to fight against unfair systems of power (Tillery, 2019). Many people spoke out and brought attention to the riots, which led to the creation of many LGBTQ groups and the start of annual Pride marches.

African American activists had a big impact on the movement after the Stonewall riots by pushing for changes in the law, getting people to work together, and showing off their culture. The National Black Justice Coalition and Barbara Smith talked about how important it is to work for policies that help everyone and make sure that those who are left out get the help they need (Gibb-Clark, 2019). Essex Hemphill and Cheryl Clarke went against what people thought and added to the stories about LGBTQ experiences, which made them more present and easier to understand. In the bigger picture of social justice movements, the Black Lives Matter movement shows how intersectional action has helped LGBTQ rights make progress. Bridges (2019) says that fighting different kinds of abuse has changed the way people fight for change and brought together groups that are usually left out. Women and people of color who fight for LGBTQ rights have been very important in the fight for social justice and diversity.

There is still a fight for equal rights, rules that include everyone, and more positive portrayals of LGBTQ experiences in culture. These are all examples of how they have

changed things. The fact that the movement keeps growing shows that these advocates support intersectional advocacy ideas. These ideas are very important for getting rid of racism and making sure that everyone is truly free (BONILLA & TILLERY, 2020). This study shows how important it is to have a wide and collaborative approach to social justice by recognizing and praising the work of African American activists. Their indomitable determination and capacity to lead others inspire new activists, which keeps the fight for fairness and equal rights strong and can lead to great changes.

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