

Constructing violence against homosexuals: bringing activism and academia together in public policy

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CLAM. 2013. Sexuality, Culture and Politics - A South American Reader. Pp. 109-125.

ISBN 978-85-89737-82-1

Sexuality, culture and politics A South American reader

Although mature and vibrant, Latin American scholarship on sexuality still remains largely invisible to a global readership. In this collection of articles translated from Portuguese and Spanish, South American scholars explore the values, practices, knowledge, moralities and politics of sexuality in a variety of local contexts. While conventionally read as an intellectual legacy of Modernity, Latin American social thinking and research has in fact brought singular forms of engagement with, and new ways of looking at, political processes. Contributors to this reader have produced fresh and situated understandings of the relations between gender, sexuality, culture and society across the region. Topics in this volume include sexual politics and rights, sexual identities and communities, eroticism, pornography and sexual consumerism, sexual health and well-being, intersectional approaches to sexual cultures and behavior, sexual knowledge, and sexuality research methodologies in Latin America.



Constructing violence against homosexuals: bringing activism and academia together in public policy*

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From the 1980s onwards, violence against homosexuals became a central issue for activists, and increasingly, for the government and media. Denouncing violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation or sexuality has become an important milestone for the trajectory of the Brazilian gay movement, which popularized the term “homophobia” to characterize this type of violence.

Violence was, in fact, a structuring issue in the establishment of other collective identities in Brazil. This was the case with the women’s movement at the end of the 1970s, for example. This movement chose the slogan “those who love do not kill” as one of its flagships, and one of its first demands was the establishment of Specialized Women’s Units within Brazilian police departments (Cf. Schumacher & Brazil, 2000; for a history of the women’s movement in Brazil). A similar process took place in the black movement, which established racism and its criminalization as a central demand in the 1980s and ’90s. This strategy led to the development of service provision programs around racial violence through help-lines such as *Disque-racismo* (“Dial Racism”) in several Brazilian towns and cities. (Cf. Telles, 2003; for a discussion of anti-racism legislation in Brazil). In these three cases, “specific forms of violence”—gender violence, racism and homophobia—appear as cornerstones upon which other demands are developed and, in particular, legitimized.

The aim of the present article is to analyze the main aspects of the gay movement’s agenda, that is, the central aspects of its discourses and practices that aim to influence public policy dealing with violence. In particular, we are interested in identifying the relationship between activism and academia within these processes and the way in which, on the basis of this relationship, a certain type of knowledge has been produced in Brazil. We will analyze the production of *dossiers* regarding the murder of homosexuals compiled by the Grupo Gay da Bahia, from the 1980s onwards; the creation of a database by the Disque Defesa Homossexual helpline (“Dial Gay Protection”) in Rio de Janeiro in 1999; research into the investigation of the murders of homosexuals, also

* Translated from Portuguese by Ana Lopes. Originally published as: RAMOS, S. & S. CARRARA. 2006. “A Constituição da Problemática da Violência contra Homossexuais: a Articulação entre Ativismo e Academia na Elaboração de Políticas Públicas.”. *PHYSIS: Rev. Saúde Coletiva*, Rio de Janeiro, 16(2):185-205.

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in Rio de Janeiro; and, finally, victimization surveys carried out at LGBT Pride parades in 2003, 2004 and 2005.

The gay scene in the second half of the 1990s and the new characteristics of activism

In June 2006, the São Paulo LGBT (Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals, Travestis and Transexuals) Pride parade brought together more than two million participants, according to the organizers' estimates, and had as its central theme "*Homophobia is a crime: sexual rights are human rights*". The strength of these mass demonstrations—in 2006, Pride parades took place in 77 Brazilian towns and cities¹—is closely related to the movement's new configurations, developed in the second half of the 1990s.

Facchini (2005) suggests that the Brazilian gay movement has moved through distinct periods. She considers the "first wave" to be demarcated by the emergence of the *Somos* group and the newsletter *O Lampião da Esquina* (1978). The "second wave" occurred during the 1980s and was associated with the emergence of groups such as Triângulo Rosa (Rio de Janeiro), Grupo Gay da Bahia (Salvador) and also Atobá (Rio de Janeiro). Facchini also identifies a "crisis" during the first few years of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and a "revival" of activism during the 1990s (Facchini, 2005:87-184). One of the characteristics of this most recent period has been the increasing diversification and specialization of identity categories embraced by the movement. This follows a model inspired by international experiences (especially in North America), which Facchini defines as "sectarian". The titles of the national meetings of gay entities throughout the 1980s and 1990s express this diversity in their acronyms, which mushroomed in order to accommodate different identity expressions resulting from a process of continuous segmentation.

Thus, the first six national meetings (1980-1992) were called the Brazilian Convention of *Homosexuals*, the seventh (1993) was entitled the Brazilian Convention of *Lesbians and Homosexuals*; the eighth, the Brazilian Convention of *Gays and Lesbians*; the ninth (1997) the Brazilian Convention of *Gays, Lesbians and Travestis*². Subsequently (and up until the XII Convention, which took place in the National Congress' buildings in 2005), these meetings were referred to as the Brazilian Convention of *Gays, Lesbians and Transgenders*.

¹ Visit www.abglt.org.br for more information.

² Translator's Note: "Travesti" is an emic category in Brazil, referring to men who adopt a female gender performance in a full-time (or almost full time) fashion and who typically engage in some form of bodily modification without necessarily wanting to undergo gender reassignment surgery. Neither "transsexual" nor "transvestite" fit this category, so we have adopted the emic terminology throughout the present article.

The category *transgender* (used simultaneously to designate *travestis* and transsexuals), is at present the focus of a great deal of controversy and faces fierce resistance from *travestis* (Facchini, 2005). Perhaps for this reason, the XII National Convention decided that the movement, aside from including *bisexuals*, would also designate the inclusion, *travestis* and *transsexuals* (rather than *transgenders*) by the inclusion of a “T” in its acronym. Thus, what we now refer to as the gay movement—in the past referred to as the Brazilian Homosexual Movement—is now really a Movement of Gays, Lesbians, *Travestis* and Transsexuals³ (Vianna & Carrara, 2010).

Another striking characteristic of that movement is the increasing predominance of groups that take their inspiration from the “NGO” (Non Governmental Organizations) model. Until 1990, Brazilian meetings brought together six to eight groups. In 1995, 31 groups were involved in the foundation of the ABGLT (Brazilian Association of Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals and Transgenders). In 2006, the ABGLT’s website listed a network of 165 organizations—109 gay, lesbian, *travesti* and transsexual groups and another 56 allied organizations devoted to human rights and HIV/AIDS. In fact, this “NGO-izing” of social movements is characteristic not only of the gay movement, but it is also common in the feminist movement in Latin America (Alvarez, 2000). This process is characterized by (among other things) the valuing of technical skills (as opposed to the idea of “representativity”); the professionalization and specialization of activism; the tendency towards diversification and multiplication; dialogue with international experiences; and the quest for autonomy from the State, combined with competition for resources in order to maintain infrastructure, which tends to include offices, equipment and staff (Fernandes, 1988; Alvarez, 2000; Facchini, 2005).

During the second half of the 1990s, in addition to the proliferation of organizations and the establishment of national networks⁴, a series of heterogeneous and relatively isolated processes and events led to significant changes within activism as well as in the social representations of homosexuality, traditionally scarred by stigma and deviancy.

The first one of these processes consists of several initiatives aiming to prevent discrimination and establish rights within the legal and judiciary system. Although the Constitution of 1998 was developed during the period of the movement’s renewal, it did not include the expression “sexual orientation” in the article that prohibits discrimination on the basis of “origin, race, sex, color and age” or in the article on labor rights. Nevertheless, in addition to the Constitutional amendment bills currently in the Brazilian Congress, more than 70 municipalities and the Federal District have enacted legislation against discrimination based on sexual orientation, together with

³ Apart from the broad categories included in the acronym LGBT, there are subgroups encouraged by the proliferation of internet based discussion lists, such as “bears”, “gay Jews”, “barbies”, “young gays” and others.

⁴ Facchini argues that in spite of the existence of a national association, the movement remains a set of isolated entities, with different formats, which continue to emerge from the “schisms” within existing groups or from “projects” originally developed within existing organizations that subsequently became autonomous (Facchini, 2005:277).

eight states. These political units have put in place significant measures to prevent this type of discrimination (Vianna & Lacerda, 2004). There is also an important bill now in front of the Brazilian Congress which seeks to amend the Penal Code and Law n. 7.716, which criminalizes prejudice on the basis of color or race. This bill aims to include punishment for discrimination and prejudice on the basis of gender and sexual orientation. Finally, the juridical establishment of rights process most emblematic expression has been the bill presented to the Federal Chamber in 1995, which seeks to regulate “civil unions between persons of the same sex”.

Approved by a special commission in 1996, several amendments were made to this latter bill, including the substitution of the term “union” by “partnership”. Despite its limitations, the bill gave great visibility to the debate surrounding gay, lesbian and transgender rights in the national media. Although there are critical voices, the mainstream movement, led by ABGLT, supports the bill. They see it as representing a step towards a more inclusive law.⁵

The judiciary system has been another fundamental arena for the development of new rights. Several cases, especially those involving welfare rights lawsuits (and their resulting sentences), opened up the way to legislative changes to such an extent that at the end of the 1990s, for example, there was a rapid increase in the number of welfare systems (at state and municipal levels) extending conjugal rights to same sex partners.

The second significant transformative process in the gay scene in the 1990s was the consolidation of a relatively strong market for goods and services targeting gays and lesbians. While at first this market was composed mostly of bars, clubs and saunas, it subsequently began to include internet sites, movie festivals, specialized magazines, publishers, hotels, tourism agencies, and fashion designer labels, among others. The proliferation of these commercial ventures (which was heterogeneous and contained unique regional characteristics) contributed, in some places, to the emergence of an alliance between market and activism—something rare in Brazilian left tradition. Together, these initiatives constituted new spaces of sociability often positioned within the framework of a commitment to develop a “positive identity”, and encourage “self-esteem”. Despite several problems resulting from the segmentation of this market and the consequent exclusion of certain groups (for example, barring *travestis* from gay premises), the so-called “GLS market” (Gays, Lesbians and Sympathizers) became, in some towns, the central *locus* for gay activism. This was the case of Sao Paulo (França, 2006).

⁵ The defense of unions or civil partnerships between same sex couples has been a recurring theme in the main gay pride parades in Brazil. In Curitiba, in 2004, the slogan was “Family, Pride and Respect”; in Rio de Janeiro, “Civil Union Now!”; in Blumenau, “Homosexuality, a family matter”; and in São Paulo, “We have Pride and Family”. In 2005, the São Paulo parade, the biggest ever seen in the country and one of the biggest in the world, had as its theme “Civil Partnership, now. Equal Rights! Neither more nor less” (Vianna, Carrara, 2010).

Combining the previous initiatives, the third transformative process which took place in the 1990s was the adoption, by activists and non-organized gays, of a politics of *mass visibility* and the emergence of *Gay Parades*. These parades, which appeared during the middle of the last decade, became part of the efforts of both NGOs and of independent activists. The parades currently bring together thousands of people in dozens of Brazilian towns and cities. Many have some financial support from the Health Ministry, others from the Ministry of Culture and several have support from local councils and state secretariats. In the largest parades, there are partnerships with private enterprises, especially gay and lesbian bars and clubs, which bring their sound systems to the parades.

Finally, the fourth and final transformative process we will highlight relates to the mushrooming of initiatives within academia, with the incorporation of homosexuality and “homoeroticism” in the curricula of the Human and Social Sciences in research centers and universities across the country. The Brazilian Association for Homo-culture Studies (ABEH) was founded in 2001, at a meeting that took place at the Federal Fluminense University. This association organizes biannual congresses in Brazilian universities. A search in the CNPq’s *Plataforma Lattes*⁶ for the terms “homoeroticism”, “homosexuality”, “gay”, “lesbian” and “queer” in June 2006 retrieved no less than 1420 researchers working on these issues. The same search in 2001, when the Brazilian Association for Homo-culture Studies (ABEH) was founded, retrieved 212 researchers. The extraordinary growth within this period must be attributed mostly to the increase in the number of CVs on the platform. In this sense, the situation in the second half of the 1990s was very different from the one in the 1980s, when only a few intellectuals (who were mostly also activists) dedicated themselves to the study of homosexuality related issues in Brazil.

It is in the context of this short but intense process of social transformation, involving public entities, GLBT activism, the market and academia, that studies of violence against homosexuals or homophobic violence in Brazil should be understood.

Representation of violence: homosexuals murdered and the Grupo Gay da Bahia dossiers

Founded in 1980, the Grupo Gay da Bahia (GGB) was the forerunner of the model that would later be adopted by most gay organizations in the following decade. Along with the group Triângulo Rosa, from Rio de Janeiro, GGB created a more pragmatic activism, demanding rights and exposing violence. In the 1980s, this group was already preoccupied with the degree of institutionality of the organizations within the movement (Câmara, 2002; Facchini, 2005). In the case of GGB, this was translated into a quest for legal registering and recognition as an institution of public interest.

⁶ Translator’s Note: Brazil’s primary on-line academic database.

According to its founder, the anthropologist and activist Luiz Mott, GGB began to collect data on violence against homosexuals in the 1980s, collecting records of murders “where the motive resided in the homosexual condition of the victim, explicitly or indirectly” (Mott, 2002).⁷ These records, which consist mostly of newspaper clippings (and, less predominantly, of activists’ testimonies) were published in dossiers that became famous nationwide.⁸ Their revelation made possible the exposure of violent crimes against homosexuals, especially from the 1990s onwards. To a great extent, this systematic exposure of murders of homosexuals encouraged by the GGB helped break the silence regarding this form of violence.

In 1988, when the murder of theatre director Luiz Antônio Martinez Correa took place in Rio de Janeiro, newspapers began to use the expression “murder of homosexuals” to problematize and recognize the existence of a “type of crime” that had hitherto tended to be reported as an isolated event (Lacerda, 2006). By then, voices of gay activists also began to make themselves heard through the newspaper columns in the form of opinion pieces interpreting the “specific nature” of such violence. Simultaneously, artists and “personalities” identified as gay spokespersons began to publicly expose “prejudice against homosexuals” as the explanation for the lack of police interest in investigating these cases. In her study based on Rio de Janeiro newspapers from 1980 to 2000, Lacerda (2006) states that the term “homophobia” appeared for the first time in 1992, in *O Globo* newspaper, in order to designate “hate of homosexuals” (Lacerda, 2006, p.107). In the second half of the 1990s, publication of “statistics”, by the GGB and Grupo Atobá (founded in 1985 in Rio de Janeiro) became a regular event, systematically accompanying the reporting of new murder cases.

The development of an archive and the publishing of reports (Mott, 1999; Mott & Cerqueira, 2001; and Mott et al., 2002) on murders of homosexuals contributed greatly to the exposure of “violence against homosexuals” and “homophobia” as one of the priorities of the movement. However, the predominantly sensationalist approach of the print media, especially during the 1980s and 1990s, encouraged the formation of a partial picture of the victimization of homosexuals that often tended to “confirm” the representations of homosexuality that were then current (even for the movement itself). In these, tragedy was, to a certain extent, the result of the victim’s own moral weaknesses and choices. Such representations were particularly strong when the victims were *travestis* and in the cases of middle class gays murdered by male prostitutes.

Up until the end of the 1990s, the emphasis on lethal violence, the exhibiting of corpses and the reiteration of consummate tragedies, may have contributed to preventing gay

⁷ The report “Murders of homosexuals in Brazil: 2005”, published on GGB’s site, counted 2511 victims between 1980 and 2005 (www.ggb.org.br).

⁸ In 2001, the source for 76% of the 132 murders registered by GGB came from newspapers; 15% were from the Internet and 9% from oral communications, television or letters sent to the GGB (Mott, 2002, p. 56).

activism from developing a more proactive and propositional stance on the issue of violence.⁹ In contrast to the women's movement (which, at the end of the 1970s and during the 1980s developed an agenda which included demands for the establishment of Specialized Women's Units within police services), the gay movement continued to concentrate on exposing violence until the 1990s. This reinforced the representation of homosexuals as "victims" of a violence they could not avoid.¹⁰ Also significant was the contrast between the public safety and justice fields, where the gay movement's stance was predominantly passive and lacked proposals, and the field of public health, where the movement developed powerful discourses, demands and practices. In the latter field, creativity, irreverence (as exemplified by the "transe numa boa" ["have nice sex"] poster campaign¹¹), demands and especially a focus on the fight against HIV/AIDS (by demanding, for example, free and universal access to medication), in addition to the direct participation of activists in prevention activities, were responsible, to a great extent, for the direction taken by "the Brazilian response" to the HIV/AIDS epidemic (Galvão, 2000).

The *Disque Defesa Homossexual* hotline and new relationships between activism and academia in the formulation of public policies

The Disque Defesa Homossexual (DDH) hotline was the first manifestation of public policy in the field of safety directed towards homosexuals. It emerged towards the end of the 1990s, within a context of the proliferation of NGOs and networks, gay parades, the internet boom and a growing gay market. Created in 1999 within the Safety Secretariat of Rio de Janeiro, DDH was planned as a protection program and not just as a reporting mechanism. The project was an experiment in establishing direct partnerships between police and activist groups in order to rapidly trigger into action both crime prevention initiatives (activating police forces in places and situations at risk of violence) and services to victims of crime (mobilizing the police to investigate aggressors and criminals and activating NGO-based psychological and legal support networks).

This experience was developed in the context of a set of programs in the area of public safety that heralded the democratization and modernization of the police system. It

⁹ A defensive reaction to militancy may have been strengthened by the fact that activism operates mostly through media and the fact that *travestis* and transsexuals appeared much later as political and social actors within the movement.

¹⁰ Mott (2002:65-66) answers the criticism that "the publication of crimes against homosexuals perpetuates a victimist stance", stating that "among all social minorities, homosexuals constitute the segment most discriminated against [...]. In denouncing and protesting against gay homicides, we never treated gays, lesbians and transgenders as 'helpless', unable to face and overcome such violence. To the contrary, we realistically portrayed the strength of homophobic evil, aiming to increase awareness not only among the powers that be within global society, but especially among the potential victims of this bloody war. This was done so that, by reacting against and avoiding risk situations, these people do not become one more number enlarging the sad statistics and that, instead, they mobilize in order to eradicate this very real epidemic of hate".

¹¹ One of the first and most famous posters of the HIV/AIDS prevention campaign, used by GAPA of São Paulo, was created by the artist Darcy Penteado, one of the founders of the *O Lampião* newsletter.

was also predicated upon intense participation of civil society organizations. A team composed of people from universities and NGOs developed programs through the Sub-secretariat of Research and Citizenship of the Secretariat of Public Safety of Rio de Janeiro, between January 1999 and March 2000. Among these programs were: the Police Ombudsman, the Women's Protection Program and the Referring Centers for Sexual Minorities, Anti-Racial Discrimination and Environmental Protection.

The creation of the DDH involved several actors: the secretariat for state security, all the bodies of the gay movement of Rio de Janeiro, ISER (the Institute for Religion Studies, an NGO dedicated to research), a Member of Parliament (Carlos Minc's, a PT state MP) and two researchers at the Social Medicine Institute of the State University of Rio de Janeiro (Martins, 2001). The events that triggered the gay movement's demands upon the security secretariat (which subsequently prompted the planning of DDH) were a series of violent attacks on young gays in an area of GLS bars and clubs in Botafogo, a neighborhood in the (upper middle class) South Zone of Rio de Janeiro, and police's lack of readiness in responding to these.

One of the significant differences between the creation of the DDH and previous violence reporting initiatives was the presence of researchers linked to an NGO and a University as political actors. This was a decisive factor in the program's development, not just as a service for victims, but also as a center for the production of data on violence.¹² Another difference was that the production of knowledge on the victimization of homosexuals and the characterization of homophobic violence in Brazil had earlier been based on newspaper clippings. The data generated by DDH was based on reports from the victims themselves and, therefore, began to problematize several situations where violence and discrimination were associated with homophobia.¹³

Analysis of the first 500 cases dealt with by the program revealed the intensity of the silent, daily dynamics of homophobia. Most reports were cases of verbal abuse, threats, extortions, physical aggression and a great number of complaints of "discrimination" (at school, at work, in shops and also at home and in the community), as well as conflicts of a cyclical nature between partners. No less than a third of the cases reported to the DDH referred to incidents which took place at home or in the community. This is an indication of the frequency of non-sensational and non-lethal crimes, generated and experienced on a micro-societal level within the sphere of family and acquaintances. In general, this is a not-for-profit criminality, in which victims and perpetrators share the same social networks (Ramos, 2001).

¹² During the volunteer training period, a database was established, and the cases communicated to the DDH were monitored on a monthly basis.

¹³ From 1999 onwards, newspapers from Rio de Janeiro began to cover non-lethal violence against gays and *travesti* more often, utilizing the DDH's data (Lacerda, 2006. p. 43).

The study proposed a matrix for the analysis of these cases, classifying them as follows:

- 1) interactive crimes (aggressions and discrimination that took place at home, in the neighborhood and between partners, in which lesbians—not just gays and *travestis*—appeared as victims in significant numbers);
- 2) crimes for profit (blackmailing, extortion, muggings and ploys such as, “goodnight Cinderella”¹⁴ mostly perpetrated against gays and *travestis*);
- 3) hate crimes (beatings, serious threats to life and reported murders), mostly perpetrated against *travestis*.

The experience of the DDH inspired several other initiatives supported by state governments and town halls across the country. In Rio de Janeiro, the program was partially closed after March 2000, when the team that coordinated the Referral Centers left the security secretariat (Martins, 2001), interrupting the systematic collection of data.

Homosexuals murdered in Rio de Janeiro: research on the justice system

In the 200 news clippings collected from the dossier kept by the “28th June” group in Rio de Janeiro, Carrara & Vianna (2001) identified 105 records of police incidents documenting the murder of homosexuals, resulting in 80 lawsuits. Of these lawsuits, they analyzed 57. Although these results were neither conclusive nor statistically representative, the findings were highly significant, since for the first time it was possible to examine the hypothesis that an “impunity” logic predominates in the criminal justice system when the victims concerned are gay. One of the surprises was the fact that lethal crimes resulting from armed robbery (of mostly middle class gays who were victims of prostitutes in their own homes) constituted a specific universe, due to stigmatizing characterizations of the victim by police and judiciary agents, as well as a surprisingly high rate of convictions in cases where the defendants were charged.

The research concluded that homophobia is expressed in a complex and subtle manner and has an impact on the representations of homosexuality maintained by the police, public prosecutors, judges and solicitors. This is not necessarily translated into acquittals or tolerant sentences, but in the use of clichés about homosexuality and the dynamics of relationships in the gay world. In addition to reiterating the idea that the victims contributed to their own deaths, engaging in a “risky lifestyle” or by being hostages of a certain “pathology”, such representations determine the direction of investigations and processes, even in those cases where a conviction is eventually handed down (Carrara

¹⁴ Sedating the victim with sleeping pills or other narcotic substances (“roofies”) in order to steal money and goods.

& Vianna, 2001). Carrara & Vianna's concluded that violence against homosexuals is more heterogeneous and complex than that stipulated by the classic model of hate crime. This conclusion established some distance from previous approaches that were more directly associated to activism and its strategies.

Research on GLBT Pride parades since 2003

In 2003, research centers and universities¹⁵ began a cycle of research at GLBT pride parades in Brazilian cities. Using structured interviews with open-ended questions about sociability, affectivity, sexuality, policy and rights and close-ended questions about violence and discrimination, the main characteristic of the project was the collaboration between research centers and activist groups.¹⁶

The project's starting point was the recognition that the parades, as well as being a most significant social and political urban phenomenon in Brazil, were events that brought together gays, lesbians, *travestis*, transsexuals and bisexuals who would otherwise be hard to reach by sociological researchers. The parades therefore represented a unique opportunity. It would be impossible to access this population's enormous diversity in any other social space (whether this be geared towards leisure, work, or even political activism), given generational, class and identity divisions. Moreover, the parades are organized precisely around a type of common denominator that covers this whole universe: the fight against discrimination and prejudice that targets different "sexual minorities". In this sense, the research carried out during the parades is a type of applied research and represents a new experience of collaboration between activism and academia.¹⁷

The project used a strategy termed "victimization research", that is, it attempted to measure the incidence of violent attacks and discrimination among the population interviewed. On the basis of the information gathered in the records of the DDH and the emergence of specific demands in each round of interviews, the research carried out at the parades opted to work with a categorization of *homophobia* dividing the experience into two broad categories: "discrimination" and "violence". In the *discrimination* category, we measured the experiences of "marginalization, exclusion or poor service" in several settings: work place, commerce, leisure, school or university, health services, blood

¹⁵ Entities involved in this project include: the Latin-American Center on Sexuality and Human Rights (CLAM) of the Social Medicine Institute of UERJ and the Center for Studies on Safety and Citizenship (CSESeC) of the University Mendes. To the extent to which the research took place in different localities, other centers became involved in the collaboration, such as the Nucleus for Research on the Body and Health (NUPACS) at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul in Porto Alegre, the Department of Anthropology at the University of São Paulo and PAGU – the Nucleus for Gender Studies at the State University of Campinas.

¹⁶ In Rio de Janeiro (2003, 2004), the research was carried out in conjunction with the Arco-iris group; in Porto Alegre (2004) with Nuances and in São Paulo with the Association Parada do Orgulho Gay GLBT de São Paulo.

¹⁷ The field researchers were volunteers recruited from universities and the gay movement. They were trained by researchers and activists from the groups involved in the project.

donation services, police stations, religious settings, family settings, and among friends and neighbors. In the *violence* category we measured experiences more often than not criminalized according to the current Penal Code: physical attacks; verbal threats or threats of physical attacks; sexual violence; blackmail, extortion and ploys such as “Goodnight Cinderella”.

The results show homophobia as varying greatly according to gender, sexual identity and age markers (and secondarily, according to professional qualifications and skin color). Research has confirmed the initial impressions obtained through the experience of the DDH: the relationship between homosexuality and violence is more complex and contradictory than the image portrayed by the media and the activists of the 1980s (Carrara, Ramos, & Caetano, 2004; Carrara & Ramos, 2005; Carrara *et al.*, 2006).

The general results show incidences of discrimination and attack which are quite consistent in the surveys carried out in Rio de Janeiro, Porto Alegre and Sao Paulo. It is surprising that some homophobic experiences recorded here, such as verbal attacks for example, are reported by more than 60% of the interviewees, independent of gender, age, skin color, or homosexual orientation. Another significant result, in striking contrast to the “landscape of mass visibility”, is the extremely small number of reports communicated to authorities or other public bodies—circa 10% of the interviewees reported incidents to the police. Reporting to the media and NGOs occurred in even smaller numbers, below 5%.

There is an obvious contrast between the high incidence of homophobic activities experienced by a significant proportion of the interviewees—which suggests a high incidence in the LGBT community as a whole, since the results were repeated in the various interview rounds—and the timid demands for safety and justice policies with a view to minimizing such incidents.

Brazil without homophobia

According to Vianna & Lacerda (2004), “recognition of the specificity and, simultaneously, of the diversity of forms of violence against homosexuals is the justification for the creation, by the Federal Government, of the ‘Brazil Without Homophobia’ program against violence and discrimination and for the promotion of homosexual citizenship, launched in May 2004” (Brasil, 2004). According to its authors, “the program was developed by a commission of the National Anti-Discrimination Council and the Health Ministry, with the participation of several activists and activist organizations”, such as the ABGLT. In its ten points, the program sets out a number of broad interventions, focusing on the policy for lesbian women and the link between the fight against racism and homophobia. Among these actions, we highlight:

1. Actions to provide capacities for the State to act in a non-discriminatory manner, especially schools, the police and the judiciary and health and labor inspections. These capacities may be created by changing practices, or through the creation of new mechanisms such as DDHs and referral centers within the state secretariats of public safety, specially designed to prevent violence and discrimination;
2. Actions encouraging the participation of movement leaders in the Federal Government's different councils and mechanisms of social control;
3. The production of knowledge regarding homophobic violence and discrimination and regarding the health conditions of gays, lesbians and transgender people;
4. Support for Brazilian initiatives at the international level, aiming at recognizing and protecting GLBT rights and the creation of an Inter-American Convention on Sexual and Reproductive Rights.

Some of the directives of the program have been put in place, strengthening collaboration between the state and civil society. In mid-2005, the General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic announced a public competition, open to non-governmental organizations, for projects regarding the prevention of and fight against homophobia through legal and psychosocial support to the victims, guidance and the referral of crime reports, training in human rights and the mediation and conciliation of conflicts. At the end of 2005, one of the selected organizations in this competition—*Estruturação*, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Group of Brasilia—signed an agreement with the Federal Government's Special Secretariat for Human Rights for the establishment of an LGBT Referral Center which would provide services to victims of discrimination. Also in 2005, the Ministry of Education announced a competition for training projects aimed at educational professionals on issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity. Of the 84 projects submitted, 36 were led by NGOs, mostly LGBT groups, 24 by governmental organizations (town halls, municipal and state secretariats of education) and six by universities. Of these projects, 48 were recommended and 15 were selected. Among those selected, 12 were submitted by NGOs (of which seven were LGBT groups), two were created by universities and only one originated in a governmental body (a municipal secretariat of education). It is apparent that the Ministry's tendency is to mostly support those projects submitted by activist groups and non-governmental organizations.

Homophobia and public policy: prospects for the current decade

The gay movement is now facing a dilemma which will demand careful consideration. While, on the one hand, the collective representation of homosexuals as “victims” of homophobia has been corroborated by the research on violence, it is also a fact that these experiences vary according to sex, sexual orientation, age, class and race. In regards to most types of discrimination and violence, *travestis* and transsexuals are at one extreme of the scale of victimization and young bisexuals, lesbians and gays at the

other. Moreover, a statistically significant contingent of the community does not report any experience of victimization at all (between 30% to 40% of those interviewed at the different parades).

In comparison with other identity movements (such as the women's and black movements), the gay movement has been slow in developing demands for integrated public policies to respond to homophobia. The movement focused a great deal of its time and energy on a stereotyped model of "violence against homosexuals" (murders) that, ultimately, correspond only to part of the diverse daily dynamics of violence suffered by gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people. In this sense, activist discourses on "homophobia" have had a limited impact, not only upon the gay community itself, but also on the government and the media.

Initiatives such as DDH and the research developed over the last decade have demonstrated that, in contrast with the dynamics of gender violence and racist violence (which allow for a focused response, since they are more homogenous), homophobia operates within many variables and includes different phenomena, from discrimination within the domestic sphere to for-profit crime. For this reason, the strategies used to face these phenomena and the discourses produced by the gay movement must recognize this complexity and mobilize specific demands against different types of violence. The DDH initiative has shown, for example, that to counter blackmail, extortions, "Goodnight Cinderella" schemes and armed robbery motivated by sexuality, it is necessary to have: a) systematic increase in police reports; b) police investigation and imprisonment of criminals and gangs, including those constituted by police agents and ex-police agents; c) publication of successful "exemplary cases" in the print media; d) information campaigns led by the LGBT movement, targeting the community; and e) monitoring of results by the security secretariats.

Additionally, responses to the dynamics of discrimination within the family sphere and within circles of friends demand not only specific campaigns, but also individual services for the victims, articulated through a support and protection network following the model pioneered by the women's movement in relation to gender violence. The high rates of homophobia reported in schools, for example, demonstrate the need for more research and the creation of special programs involving educational authorities, teachers and pupils. Conjugal violence, which is especially serious and invisible among lesbians, is a topic the LGBT movement must also face, taking into account the specificities of the different sexual identities in play.

Another challenge is the set of representations of homosexuality "competing" with the idea that homophobia is part and parcel of the gay experience. Images linked to pride and affirmation—and even to beauty, happiness and consumerism—are championed by the media and the market, which attempt to turn them into hegemonic representations of homosexuality. We can discern a certain tension between these representations

and those created by activists, although so far there has been a relatively peaceful coexistence between these two models during the pride parades (Ramos, 2005).

All the above factors show the need for an even greater effort to incorporate *travesti* and transsexual organizations within the LGBT movement, since these groups experience the most serious types of violence and, therefore, should play a decisive role in the development of demands of policies and direct participation in prevention practices, such as those which happened in the response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Brazil.

Lastly, two of the present dilemmas of the movement can be summarized as follows: the movement must demand respect, but without losing its sense of irreverence and its affirmation of sexuality; it must demand the criminalization of homophobia, but not the regulation of sexual diversity. Experiences of public safety and respect by police authorities (for example, the right to “cruise” in safe environments that are also extortion-free) can be indicators that it is possible to “be a victim” and “be proud” in a creative and pro-active relationship with public policy on security.

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