LGBTQ History and Movements in Brazil

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Summary and Keywords

An Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer (LGBTQ) movement emerged in the late 1970s during the Brazilian military dictatorship (1964–1985), as the country slowly moved toward democracy. The "Homosexual Movement," as it was called at the time, along with feminist and black organizations that formed during the same period, fought for an end to discrimination, equality, and full rights. Since then, LGBTQ activists have challenged stereotypes about lesbians, gay men, and trans people and won some important victories, such as same-sex marriage, legal recognition of trans people's rights to legalize their gender identity, and constitutional protection against hate speech, although discrimination and violence against LGBTQ people is still widespread. The movement challenged traditional Catholic Church notions of homosexuality as a sin, medico-legal discourses that considered same-sex and nontraditional gender performances as sicknesses, conservative political ideologies that privileged the heteronormative family, and sectors of the Left that considered homosexuality a product of "bourgeois decadence." Built upon a long history of resistance to impositions of compulsory heterosexuality and normative gender roles, lesbians, gay men, and trans people formed diverse communities during the second half of the 20th century that offered important support networks. They also appropriated public spaces for dissident sexualities and gender performances. Carnival became a privileged site for subverting traditional gender roles. Gay activists pushed the government to change initial conservative policies dealing with HIV/AIDS, and Brazil became an international model for effectively combating the disease. Lesbians fought within the feminist movement for acceptance and against social norms that marginalized them. Trans people gained considerable respect and certain rights. The LGBTQ movement remains diverse in practice, composition, and ideologies. A recent reactionary backlash, which has united conservative Catholics, evangelical Christians, and right-wing political forces, is trying to undo the advances made since the late 1970s in favor of social toleration, respect, and equality.

Keywords: AIDS, Carnival, gay, homosexuality, lesbian, LGBTQ movement, transgender, transsexual, transvestite

Two very significant and intertwined processes took place among gay men, lesbians, and trans people during the twilight years of the Brazilian military regime, which came to power in 1964 and slowly transitioned to a democratic regime in the late 1970s and early 1980s. For the first time in Brazilian history, a politicized movement of sexual dissidents emerged in 1978 that gained enough internal-group confidence and social cohesion to directly challenge age-old social notions, which marginalized non-normative sexual behavior and gender performance.[1]

Almost simultaneously, the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which over time causes the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), infected a growing number of men who had sex with men, along with sex workers, people who had had blood transfusions, and those who improperly injected themselves with infected needles. For-

tunately, the movement preceded the virus by a few years. As a result, a small cluster of politicized gay men, no longer defensive about affirming publicly their sexual desires and romantic involvements, were among the first leaders of the effort to defend people living with HIV/AIDS and demand that the state respond to this new health crisis. As a result, Brazilian AIDS activism became a model worldwide.[2]

During this period in the late 20th century, new discourses and images of homosexuality began to replace traditional stereotypes. Politicized lesbians joined the feminist movement to push for both gender equality and to address the marginalization of women who had sexual desires for and deep emotional connections to other women. Over time, transgender and transsexual women and men gained space within the movement and more respect within Brazilian society. Positive cultural representations of same-sex eroticism expanded, and gradually social toleration increased.

By the beginning of the 21st century, there was a noted change in attitudes about homosexuality in the country. Same-sex marriage became legal in 2013. Legislators enacted laws prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation. Openly gay and trans politicians won seats in local, state, and federal elections. The Federal Supreme Court criminalized homophobia and transphobia. The São Paulo Pride march has become the largest in the world, with an annual estimated participation of two to three million.

These political, social, and cultural changes, however, generated a violent reaction from the political and religious Right, who appealed to traditional notions of the family and morality as they condemned those whom they considered deviated from sexual and gender norms. In 2018, Jair Bolsonaro, a far right former army captain, won the presidential election in a coalition that included, among many other forces, those who defend the military dictatorship (1964–1985) and conservative Catholic and evangelical Christians who are vehemently opposed to homosexuality. Bolsonaro has also filled cabinet positions with people who are overtly homophobic. Many of the advances that the LGBTQ movement have achieved since the 1980s are under attack.[3]

Historical Legacy

Negative attitudes toward male and female homosexuality and divergent gendered presentations run deep in Brazilian culture. Traditional Catholic beliefs condemned sodomy. Between 1587 and 1794, the Portuguese Inquisition, which also operated in Brazil, registered 4,419 denunciations of the “abominable and perverted sin.” Of those accusations, 394 went to trial. Thirty were eventually burned at the stake, three in the 16th century and twenty-seven in the 17th century. Those not executed were sentenced to hard labor on the king’s galley ships, or temporarily or permanently exiled to Africa, India, or Brazil. Often their property was seized, and they were subjected to public whippings.[4]

Traditional gender norms placed tremendous stigmas on effeminate men, who violated norms of masculinity by (assumedly) engaging in passive anal sex, whereas men with traditional masculine comportment who were “active” in these sexual encounters oftentimes did not suffer social ostracism. Women who seemed overly masculine could also be stigmatized for stepping outside the boundaries of strictly enforced gendered behavior.

There is evidence that same-sex sexuality existed among some indigenous groups in Brazil before Portuguese colonization, with one of the male partners assuming the social and gender roles of a woman in day-to-day activities.[5] Similarly, homosexual sex occurred among enslaved Africans, who were the mainstay of the Brazilian colonial

economy. When it took place between people of European origins and those of African and/or indigenous descent, the power relations were so unequal that it is difficult to consider that there was consent. Throughout the period from colonization until the establishment of the republic in 1889, records indicate that some male and female couples forged long-lasting relationships and even shared abodes, but this was not common and largely hidden.[6] In the 20th century, and perhaps before, the Afro-Brazilian religion *candomblé* was a space where male and female homosexuality was accepted.[7]

During the Brazilian Empire (1822–1889), sodomy laws were abolished that had condemned sex between men, but Catholic notions of sin and perversion and traditional gender norms remained hegemonic. Article 280 of the Imperial Penal Code of 1830 provided ten to forty days incarceration for public indecency, which offered officials significant leeway to control the presence of men or women in public spaces who didn't conform to heteronormative behavioral patterns.[8]

One of the few moments during the year in which men and women could defy these strictures was during the pre-Lenten Carnival festivities. Then, cross-dressing was allowed, and this offered many men, whether or not they engaged in sex with other men, to transgress strict gender binaries. The same was true for women, although social restrictions limited their free access to public space as compared to men.

Increased urbanization throughout the 19th century, which led to the creation of parks and other public spaces for recreational activities, offered men (and occasionally women) the opportunity to find same-sex partners for encounters. One of the most "notorious" places in the nation's capital was a park in downtown Rio de Janeiro, known as the Largo do Rossio or Constitutional Plaza during the empire, and Tiradentes Plaza after the end of the monarchy in 1889 and the founding of a republic. The park, located in the center of the city's entertainment district, was surrounded by bars, brothels, and bohemian sociability as well as theaters and other entertainment sites for all social classes. Men lingered on park benches near a monumental equestrian statue of Emperor Pedro I (1822–1831) seeking ephemeral pleasures or possible partners. Those without proper identification or proof of employment could be arrested for vagrancy or public affronts to decency. For those with financial means, a bribe to the arresting officer could prevent detention. Members of the lower classes might expect to spend a few days or a few weeks in jail. Although scholars have no real way to know the extent of male prostitution in this period, some boys or young men exchanged sexual favors for financial rewards.[9]

Medical-Legal Discourses

At the turn of the 20th century, medical and legal authorities who noted the increasing visibility in public places of effeminate men, pejoratively known as *frescos*, wrote medical treatises or legal opinions about their presence in Brazilian society. Some of this literature offers scholars insights into the social history of men or women with transgressive sexual and gender behavior that is absent from other sources. Legal scholar and judge Francisco José Viveiros de Castro, for example, in a volume entitled *Assaults on Modesty: Studies in Sexual Aberrations*, written in 1894, described how frescos in the 1880s "invaded Carnival balls in the São Pedro Theater located in Constitution Plaza."[10]

During this period, naturalist writer Adolfo Caminha published the novel *O Bom Crioulo* that told the tale of Amaro, an Afro-Brazilian runaway slave, who had joined the navy and fell in love with Aleixo, a young white cabin boy.[11] Detailing homosexuality with unabashed frankness, the novel, which came out in 1894, both presented

positive images of Amaro driven by his sexual passion and negative ideas about homosexuality drawn from medico-legal ideas prevalent at the time.[12] When Caminha's novel received strong criticism in the press, he responded by noting: "Which is more pernicious: *Bom Crioulo* in which homosexuality is studied and condemned, or those pages which are in circulation preaching in a philosophical tone the break-up of the family, concubinage, free love and all sorts of social immorality."[13]

In 1906, José Ricardo Pires de Almeida published *Homosexuality (Libertinage in Rio de Janeiro): A Study of the Perversion of the Genital Instinct*, which argued that homosexuality had remained unchecked. However, he opposed incarceration or hospitalization, arguing that moral education and close attention to childrearing would catch this "degeneration" in children before it was too late.[14]

Whereas these turn-of-the-20th-century studies were largely based on the seemingly arbitrary observations of their authors and were peppered with unverifiable anecdotes, since they rarely contained footnotes citing their sources, by the 1930s, doctors and criminologists conducted investigations that purported to be scientific. In 1932, Leonídio Ribeiro, a faculty member of the School of Medicine and the director of the Institute of Identification of the Federal District Civil Police, carried out a massive study of 195 male homosexuals who had been arrested to determine whether there were any physical or endocrinological explanations for their homosexuality.[15] Similarly, in 1938, a group of students from the Institute of Criminology studied "the customs, habits, nicknames, and slang" of male homosexuals in São Paulo, documenting some life histories that offer brief insights into the day-to-day realities of these men. Most of the "passive pederasts," who were the subject of the study, identified as feminine and had fallen in love or had had sex with men who seemingly identified as heterosexual, but this was not always the case.[16] There are records of men with masculine comportment who built relationships with men with a similar gender identity. At times, some homosexuals, whether effeminate or masculine acting, were subject to confinement in mental institutions by family members as an attempt to "cure" them of their sexual desires.[17]

Historians have had less luck in finding documents that can reveal something about the social life of lesbians in the first half of the 20th century. One source is the study by Antônio Carlos Pacheco e Silva, a professor of clinical psychiatry at the University of São Paulo and the Paulista medical schools, who wrote an article on "a curious case of female homosexuality." He described a black woman, who liked to dress as a man and actively sought out white women as her partners.[18] Like many of the studies of the period, the author tended to racialize his observations, drawing subtle (and sometimes not too subtle) connections between race and perversion.

Changes in Urban Culture

Intensified urbanization in the post–World War II period and the migration of many young men and women to state capitals, as well as to the nation's capital of Rio de Janeiro, in order to flee family and social ostracism and to seek out others who shared their sexual and gender identities led to the development of a clandestine subculture of homosexual men and women. Often times gay men and lesbians did not share the same social circles. Sometimes, however, gay and lesbian friends posed as heterosexual couples to ward off the meddling of others into their private affairs. Intimate parties and discreet social gatherings offered special spaces where people could talk freely about their lives and loves far from the traditional social sanctions of their families, work colleagues, or society as a whole, which remained intolerant toward homosexuality.

By the 1960s, bars and other semi-public sites became important "free zones" where people could enjoy the company of friends and possibly seek out sexual partners. Carnival, however, remained the privileged time of the year to cross-dress or go to balls that targeted a homosexual public. However, until the 1970s it was unusual for men to don women's clothes or vice versa during the rest of the year, since the police could arrest a person for wearing garments of the opposite gender if authorities considered them to be too audacious. Some transvestites performed in gay clubs, others cross-dressed among friends in private spaces or in gay bars and clubs, and still others became sex workers.[19] In the 1970s, hormones and other injections transformed many male bodies into simulacrum of idealized femininity; however, the first male to female sex reassignment only took place in 1998.[20]

The military coup d'état of 1964 did not have an immediate and direct effect on greater gay and lesbian sociability in the major urban centers of Brazil. However, the conservative, Catholic moral undertones of the generals in power and their supporters increased the efforts of the police and the armed forces to seek out "subversion," and censorship of the press and other media targeted positive expressions of homosexuality.[21] Ironically, at the same time, an expansion of the economy in the late 1960s and early '70s fueled the growth of the middle classes and urban consumption, which included a larger market for bars, clubs, and restaurants that catered to homosexual men and women. The loosening of strict gender norms in the 1960s also contributed to a certain toleration of homosexuality as some popular performers signaled their gender and sexual fluidity. Still, as new, dynamic gay and lesbian liberation movements developed in the United States, Europe, and Argentina in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Brazil was going through the worst years of government repression that precluded any serious consideration of forming similar groups.[22]

The Founding of a Movement

In 1973, the military regime promised controlled liberalization. The next year an economic slump, in part due to a spike in international oil prices, as well as increased inflation, and ongoing arbitrary measures of the military regime caused middle-class disillusionment with the military government and increased popular support for political openings.[23] A broad-based, multi-class, democratic opposition to the dictatorship slowly coalesced. Dissidents pushed back against censorship, and left-wing forces began publishing weekly and monthly newspapers critical of the regime, as the generals with starts and stops continued the path toward political liberalization.

It was in this context that in 1978 a group of gay intellectuals founded the monthly newspaper *Lampião da Esquina*, headquartered in Rio de Janeiro, that sought to politicize homosexuality. Almost simultaneously, a group of gay men in São Paulo founded a group that would eventually take on the name Somos: Grupo de Afirmação Homossexual (We Are: Homosexual Affirmation Group). It was the country's first gay political organization. Initially, Somos was almost an exclusively male organization, but by 1979, lesbians began joining, eventually forming an autonomous group within Somos before breaking off in 1980 and establishing their own organization: Grupo de Ação Lésbica-Feministas (Lesbian-Feminist Action Group).[24]

Between 1978 and 1981, *Lampião* circulated nationally and could be bought in newsstands in the states' capitals and other major cities. Reporting on gay life, lesbians, and trans people helped forge an imagined community throughout Brazil. The founding of Somos, as an organization with an agenda to change social views on homosexuality, inspired the formation of similar groups throughout the country in what was called the Homosexual Movement. By the time of the first national gathering of activist organizations, which was held in São Paulo in 1980, there were fifteen organized groups nationwide.

One of the first actions of Somos was to protest the negative images of homosexuals, a term used by the movement at the time to include both gays and lesbians, in the tabloid press. When the editors of *Lampião* were investigated for violating the National Press Act and attacking "public morality," members of Somos conducted a petition campaign to obtain support from editors of left-wing journals and others in defense of the monthly. Somos activists also participated in demonstrations organized by the newly emergent United Black Movement, which was fighting against racial discrimination, stereotypes, and police violence, signaling an understanding of intersectionality, although the term itself did not yet exist.

One of the challenges of the early movement was its relationship to the organized Left, which formed the backbone of the opposition to the military regime. Most Marxist organizations, which operated underground at the beginning of the transition to democracy, still maintained conservative notions about homosexuality, considering it a product of petty bourgeois or bourgeois "decadence" that would disappear with a socialist revolution. This idea was layered over traditional notions of gender that these radical groups reproduced from Brazilian society, which included traditional Catholic teachings that still insisted homosexuality was a sin. Moreover, the international models for most left-wing Brazilians were the Cuban and Chinese Revolutions that instilled in their supporters an ethos of "revolutionary masculinity," which implied compulsory heterosexuality and the maintenance of traditional gender roles. Homosexual men and women were considered unfit to become revolutionary activists.[25]

These ideas combined with traditional Marxist principles about the primacy of the working class in any future revolutionary government. The new social movements of feminists, homosexuals, and people of African descent, who raised other issues, were considered by many leftists as defending proposals that divided the opposition to the military regime. As a result, most of *Lampião*'s editors and a minority of members of Somos considered that it was impossible to work with the Left. This debate came to a head in April 1980, when a majority of the core members of Somos, including the lesbian contingent, decided to participate in a May Day march and rally in the midst of a Greater São Paulo general strike in which metalworkers were challenging the wage and labor policies of the military regime. In a bold and pioneering effort, fifty gay men and lesbians marched behind a huge banner stating their opposition to the discrimination of homosexual workers. Those against participating in the day's events organized a picnic at the zoo.[26]

The editors of *Lampião* began to criticize the activism of groups around the country, especially those that were building links with other social movements. A significant drop in the publication's circulation as more overly sexualized gay publications started coming out, internal fights within the editorial board, and economic problems led to the closure of the journal in 1981. By the mid-1980s, due to an economic downturn, exhaustion of different groups' leadership, lack of financial resources, and other factors, most of the country's original groups had also ceased to function. In 1980, *Lampião* listed twenty-two gay and lesbian groups throughout Brazil. In 1985, only a handful had survived.[27]

Among them was Grupo de Ação Lésbica-Feminista (GALF), which had split off from Somos in 1980 to form an autonomous group made up exclusively of lesbians and was intervening within the feminist movement, among other undertakings. The group published a newspaper entitled *Chanacomchana* throughout the 1980s.[28] Among their activities was organizing an August 19, 1983, protest at Ferros Bar, a traditional São Paulo meeting place for lesbians, whose owners had prohibited GALF activists from selling their newspaper on the premises. Among the important leaders of the lesbian movement and a key organizer of the Ferros Bar protest was Rosely Roth, who died in 1990. Since 1996, the date of the demonstration has been commemorated as the National Day of Lesbian Pride.[29]

Another vital organization is the Gay Group of Bahia (GGB), which is the longest surviving gay political association in Brazil. Founded and led by anthropologist Luiz R. B. Mott in 1985, the group spearheaded a campaign that convinced the Federal Council of Health to abolish the classification that categorized homosexuality as a treatable "sexual deviance." GGB under Mott's leadership was crucial for maintaining the movement's visibility at a time that it was in flux during the late 1980s and early 1990s.

A third significant group was Pink Triangle, founded by João Antônio Mascarenhas in Rio de Janeiro in 1985. In 1987–1988, Mascarenhas led the campaign to convince the Constituent Assembly that was writing a new constitution to include an article prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation. Although the proposal received unanimous support from the left-wing representatives of the Constituent Assembly, it only managed to obtain votes from one-quarter of the members of the body, with conservative Catholics and evangelical Christians at the forefront of the opposition to the measure.[30]

AIDS Activism

In the early 1980s, the Brazilian media began reporting the first cases of AIDS in the country. Panic swept through the gay community, and society in general responded with prejudice and discrimination. Soon thereafter, an alliance with some of the surviving gay groups, public health officials, and other allies began to forge a response to the government's inaction and indifference. Among the new groups that formed to fight the disease and social discrimination surrounding it were the Grupo de Apoio a Prevenção à AIDS (Support Group for the Prevention of AIDS, GAPA) and the Associação Brasileira Interdisciplinar de AIDS (Interdisciplinary Brazilian AIDS Association, ABIA), founded by Herbert de Sousa, a former revolutionary activist and hemophiliac, who had been infected with HIV through a blood transfusion.

In 1987, Herbert Eustáquio de Carvalho, known as Herbert Daniel, joined ABIA. Daniel was a former guerrilla fighter, who had been involved in the 1970 kidnappings of the German and Swiss ambassadors to demand their exchange for the release of 110 political prisoners lingering in Brazil jails after undergoing torture. Never arrested, Daniel went into European exile in 1974 and returned in 1981 to live in Rio de Janeiro where he engaged in left-wing electoral politics. After an unsuccessful run for a Rio de Janeiro State Assembly seat in 1986, defending a program that spoke against the discrimination of gays, lesbians, and trans people, among other issues, he joined ABIA, where he quickly developed a critical attitude toward the government's AIDS policies. In 1989, when he learned he had AIDS, he formed Grupo PelaVidda (Grupo pela Valorizaçõ, Integração e Dignidade do Doente de Aids, Group for the Valuing, Integration, and Dignity of those Sick with AIDS), the first Brazilian organization for people living with HIV/AIDS. Until his death in 1992, he carried out a tireless battle against the government, which refused to address the disease with adequate funding and support.[31]

In the 1990s, a coalition of nongovernmental organizations and public health specialists leveraged support in the government to obtain $90 million in domestic funds and $160 million from the World Bank to address the disease in Brazil. A second funding round of $370 million came through between 1998 and 2002, which radically curtailed the spread of the disease, although in 2020 an estimated nine hundred thousand people in the country were infected with HIV.[32]

With tremendous pressure from AIDS activists, in 1996 the Brazilian government passed a law guaranteeing the universal distribution of free antiretroviral drugs. Although opponents of this policy argued that it would be too ex-

pensive, it is estimated that the Brazilian government has saved $200 million by carrying out this policy.[33] In another move to guarantee universal accessibility to drug treatments, in the early 2000s the Brazilian government successfully defied international pharmaceutical companies, threatening to break patent agreements if they were not allowed to produce less expensive generic drugs.[34]

A National Movement

In the early 1990s, there was a second wave of organizing reflected in the formation in 1995 of the ABGLT, a national association known as the Brazilian Association of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transvestites, Transsexuals, and Intersexed People. The association organized a major campaign, Brazil without Homophobia, during the presidential administration of the left-wing former trade union leader and Workers' Party leader Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003–2010), that sought to develop government policies to combat discrimination. The program attempted to create links between activists from nongovernmental organizations and the state in order to promote discussions about homophobia and encourage LGBTQ people to claim full civil and social rights. In 2008, the First National Conference of Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals, Transvestites and Transsexuals was held in Brasilia, which was attended by President Lula da Silva. That same year, the Brazilian Ministry of Education established "School without Homophobia" and designed pedagogical material to address discrimination and bullying within public education. A Ministry of Education–funded survey found violence and humiliation of LGBTQ people in 501 public schools.

During the government of Lula da Silva's left-wing successor, Dilma Rousseff (2011–2016), also of the Workers' Party, a controversy erupted when evangelical Christians mobilized against the sex education and anti-bullying materials designed for educators and prepared by the Ministry of Education, calling it a "gay kit." During the 2018 electoral campaign, right-wing candidate Jair Bolsonaro resuscitated false claims that the Left intended to promote homosexuality within the public schools.

Civil and Legal Rights

The growth of the LGBTQ movement in Brazil in the first decade of the 21st century brought significant victories in the legal arena. In 2011, the Federal Supreme Court voted in favor of granting same-sex couples the same legal rights as married heterosexual couples. Two years later, the National Council of Brazil, an organ of the Brazilian judicial system, legalized same-sex marriages in the entire country. An additional ruling from the Federal Supreme Court held that government officials cannot continue to refuse to "perform a civil wedding or the conversion of a stable civil union into a marriage between persons of the same sex."[35] Surveys conducted in the late 2010s indicate growing toleration of homosexuality, among nearly 75 percent of those polled.[36] Nevertheless, violence against LGBTQ people, especially trans sex workers, remains unabated. Since the early 1980s, the Grupo Gay da Bahia has been tracking murders of LGBTQ people, and estimated that a Brazilian LGBTQ person is murdered or commits suicide every twenty-three hours.[37]

Public officials have also come under threat. On March 14, 2018, gunmen linked to a paramilitary organization assassinated Marielle Franco, an Afro-Brazilian political activist, lesbian, and city council representative in Rio de Janeiro from the Party of Socialism and Liberty (Partido de Socialismo e Liberdade [PSOL]).[38] Franco was likely murdered because of her firm denunciation of police and militia violence.[39] After the election of Jair Bolsonaro in

October 2018, Rio de Janeiro Congressman Jean Wyllys faced a life-or-death decision. The first openly gay activist elected to Congress, and also a member of PSOL, Wyllys vociferously defended LGBTQ rights during two four-year terms in office. However, throughout his time in Congress, Jair Bolsonaro, then a congressman from Rio de Janeiro, and his backers organized systematic social media campaigns employing fake news that consistently falsified Wyllys's political positions and defamed his character. When the press revealed that staff members of Senator Flávio Bolsonaro, the president's son, were involved in Rio militias that may have been linked to Franco's assassination, Wyllys no longer could trust the security forces assigned to him by the government. Reluctantly, he left the country. He was replaced by David Miranda, another openly LGBTQ politician, who was a runner-up in the 2018 congressional elections.[40] To date, government authorities have not determined who ordered the killing of Marielle Franco.

Pride Parades

The first major public protest of LGBTQ activists against police violence occurred on June 13, 1980, when an estimated eight hundred to one thousand people took to the streets of São Paulo to protest against a campaign by the police to arrest gay men, lesbians, trans people, and prostitutes in downtown São Paulo.[41] In 1995, at the closing of the Seventeenth International Conference of the International Lesbian and Gay Association, held in Rio de Janeiro, two thousand paraded down Atlantic Avenue in the seaside neighborhood of Copacabana, marking the first Pride Parade in Brazil.[42] In 2020, there were an estimated two hundred parades annually throughout the country. In 2006, the São Paulo Pride Parade entered the Guinness Book of Records with 2,500,000 people reported present, making it the largest LGBTQ celebration in the world.

Both the influence of the Brazilian movement and international shifts in attitudes toward LGBTQ people manifested itself in increasingly favorable cultural production that treated homosexuality as yet another sexual orientation. In the 21st century, the popular evening soap operas integrated gay and lesbian characters into the plot without showing sexual affection among couples. Finally, in 2014, a broadcast of the series *Amor à Vida* (Trail of Lies) showed two male characters kissing, generating elation among the LGBTQ viewing audience. Later in the year, a female couple exchanged kisses in *Em família* (Within the Family). Although rather symbolic, these public signs of affection in Brazil's most widely viewed media signaled greater social toleration although they tended to trail shifts in public attitudes toward same-sex relations.

The Conservative Backlash

The 2018 presidential election of Jair Bolsonaro brought to power a right-wing, anti-Left coalition of neoliberal economic reformers and conservative Catholics and Protestants, with the support of large sectors of the middle classes who were disillusioned with the charges of corruption against the Workers' Party's governments that were in power from 2002, when Luíz Inácio Lula da Silva was elected president, until the 2016 impeachment of his successor, Dilma Rousseff. A former captain in the army, Bolsonaro went from a seat in the Rio de Janeiro City Council, where he served one term, to become a member of the Chamber of Deputies, Brazil's lower house, where he served for twenty-seven years. Known from his polarizing and aggressive language against women, people of African descent, environmental activists, and the LGBTQ community, during the impeachment deliberations of

President Dilma Rousseff, he praised the military dictatorship and the army officer who oversaw the torture of Rousseff, who had been imprisoned in 1970 for participation in the radical resistance to the military regime.

Since assuming office in January 2019, his anti-LGBTQ comments have created tremendous anxiety among the LGBTQ community. He reorganized the Secretariat of Human Rights under a new Ministry of Women, the Family, and Human Rights, and placed Damares Alves, an attorney and evangelical pastor in charge of the portfolio. Her comments soon after being chosen that "blue is for boys and pink is for girls" set the tone for her ideas about gender.[43] Bolsonaro has spoken out against Brazil as a destination for gay tourism and has ordered the government not to fund films with LGBTQ themes.[44] He has also commented that if one of his sons were gay, he would rather he be dead.[45] However, in spite of this conservative offensive attempt to pushback against the advances achieved by the movement since the late 1970s, in June 2019 the Federal Supreme Court ruled overwhelmingly that homophobia and transphobia can be considered crimes.[46]

Discussion of the Literature

Sociologists and anthropologists were among the initial scholars to present a positive treatment of homosexuality in their research. Perhaps the first such work was the pioneering study of homosexuality, produced by José Fábio Barbosa e Silva, a young sociologist. In the late 1950s, he interviewed gay men in São Paulo and captured their social world in a lengthy study that touched on their sexual desires, companionship, emotional security, and different types of relationships. At the time, only a short article on his research appeared in a Brazilian academic journal.[47] The entire thesis was scheduled to be published in 1964, but the military takeover that year disrupted Barbosa e Silva's academic career in Brazil, and he ended up teaching in the United States. The work was finally published in 2005 in an edited collection.[48]

Censorship and an extremely conservative political and cultural climate during the first decade of military rule prevented any realistic possibilities of carrying out serious academic scholarship on homosexuality. One of the first works was by the anthropologist Carmen Dora Guimarães, who studied a group of middle-class gay men in Rio de Janeiro and pointed to the fact that many of them did not conform to traditional gender binaries.[49] Another important early work was authored by Néstor Perlongher, a leading activist in the Homosexual Liberation Front of Argentina in the early 1970s, who was forced into exile in Brazil soon after the military in his native country took power in 1976. Perlongher carried out an in-depth study of male prostitutes in São Paulo, building in part on Barbosa e Silva's work from the 1950s.[50] A third important anthropological project was conducted by Edward MacRae, who was a member of Somos, between 1978 and 1980. MacRae carried out a meticulous and insightful participant-observant study of the group, which was published a decade later and reissued in 2018.[51] Two anthropological studies of sex workers are Don Kulick's study of trans women in Salvador, and a book about international sex tourism by Gregory Mitchell.[52]

João Silvério Trevisan, one of the founders of Somos and a prize-winning author, wrote the first encyclopedic history of homosexuality in Brazil in the 1980s. *Perverts in Paradise* makes many sweeping claims and contains many criticisms of the Brazilian Left.[53] It has been republished in several Portuguese-language editions and is widely read in Brazil.[54] In 1999, historian and activist James N. Green, the author of this article, published *Beyond Carnival: Male Homosexuality in Twentieth-century Brazil*, which is the first social and cultural history of same-sex sexuality and sociability among men from the late 19th century to the rise of the movement in the 1980s, fo-

cusing on São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.[55] He has also worked closely with Brazilian scholars and activists to produce five Portuguese-language coedited collections on homosexuality and the LGBTQ movement in Brazil.[56]

Richard Parker has been a groundbreaking scholar on (homo)sexuality in Brazil and has produced many volumes about the country's sexual culture and HIV/AIDS.[57] Political sociologist Rafael De la Dehesa offers a comparative study of LGBTQ political activism in Mexico and Brazil, arguing that the Brazilian movement's strategy of building alliances with left-wing politicians and seeking resources from the state placed limitations on the success of its policy goals.[58] Historian Benjamin Cowan has studied the heteronormative and moralistic ideologies that underpinned the 1964 military coup d'état, including ongoing anxieties about homosexuality as a national security risk.[59]

The study of homosexuality during the military dictatorship is the focus of an anthology of leading LGBTQ scholars and activists that was published in conjunction with a chapter on the repression of homosexuality during the authoritarian regime that appeared in the official report of the National Truth Commission.[60] This was the first time that a report on the repression of LGBTQ people has been included in any commission that has focused on transitional justice and the human rights abuses of authoritarian and dictatorial regimes.

Much less has been written about lesbians. Anthropologist Andrea Allen's excellent work on lesbians in Salvador, Bahia, looks at intimacy and violence as important lenses through which to study how women cope in a lesbofobic environment.[61] Historian Lígia Bellini pioneered the study of women who loved women in colonial Brazil with her study of inquisitional records, while Nadia Nogueira captured the love story between architect Lota Macedo Soares and US poet Elizabeth Bishop during their complicated romance in Brazil in the late 1950s and '60s.[62] Studies published in the 2010s about the creation of homo-affective families have documented the quickly changing contours of lives for Brazilian lesbians.[63] Two autobiographic volumes tell the story of a former nun who came out as a lesbian, and the life of João Nery, the first person in Brazil to medically transition from female to male.[64] A definitive social history of Brazilian lesbians is yet to be written.

Primary Sources

There are still very few archives in Brazil that collect material on LGBTQ topics. Rarely do individuals donate personal papers, and families of those deceased are usually very reluctant to allow the public to learn about the homosexuality of a departed relative. Thus, historians have had to rely on a creative use of general archives to find information about the lives of lesbians, gay men, and trans people prior to the emergence of the movement in the late 1970s. Oral histories have been an important tool for capturing memories of the past.

The best collection of materials on the Brazilian LGBTQ movement is housed at the Edgard Leuenroth Archives at the State University of Campinas (UNICAMP). It contains the records of Somos: Grupo de Afirmação Homossexual, Grupo de Ação Lésbica-Feminista,

Grupo Gay da Bahia, Triângulo Rosa, Identidade—Grupo de Luta pela Diversidade Sexual, Grupo Outra Coisa—Ação Homossexualista, Turma OK, and a complete collection of *O Snob*, a mimeographed newsletter or bulletin covering the years 1962–1968 produced by a social group of gay men living in Rio de Janeiro.

Lampião da Esquina has been digitized by Grupo Dignidade in Curitiba, Brazil, and is available online. Historians James N. Green and Ronald Pólito have put together a small collection of documents on male homosexuality from the 1870s until the 1980s.[65] The Office of the US Library of Congress in Rio de Janeiro has been systematically

collecting and microfilming printed materials from the LGBTQ movement under the subject heading "homosexual and bisexual" and making them available in the Brazil's Popular Groups 1966–1986 Collection with supplements for 1987–1989, 1990–1992, and annually thereafter. The documentation includes "newsletters, house organs, reports, posters, collections of clippings, brochures, resolutions of congresses, educational manuals, independent news services, catalogs of publications and handouts."[66]

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