
“I am gay, and the LGBTQI+ movement does not represent me”: Mapping the emergence of right-wing gay activism in Brazil

“Sou gay e o movimento LGBTQI+ não me representa”: mapeando a emergência de um ativismo gay à direita no Brasil

« Je suis gay et le mouvement LGBTQI+ ne me représente pas » : une cartographie de l'émergence d'un activisme gay de droite au Brésil

Rodrigo Cruz



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Rodrigo Cruz *

“I am gay, and the LGBTQI+ movement does not represent me”:

**Mapping the emergence
of right-wing gay activism in Brazil¹**

Brasília, June 17, 2008: another ordinary session takes place in the main plenary room of the Chamber of Deputies. The then federal deputy Clodovil Hernandes, a member of the Partido da República (PR), comes on stage to make a statement. He criticizes his colleagues in parliament for acting solely to advance their own interests, cites Jean Genet, Henry David Thoreau, and Machado de Assis, and talks about God, Mozart, and Leonardo da Vinci. At the end of his speech, he quotes Lord Byron: “[...] I love not Man the less, but Nature more.” The then federal deputy Jair Bolsonaro, from the Progressive Party (PP), asks to speak and addresses Clodovil: “If the Parliament had the purity of soul that Your Excellency has, Brazil would be much better. I did not want to overlook Your Excellency’s position that there is some discrimination towards you (from some deputies). Some of my colleagues are ashamed to talk to you or make a few jokes, but I respect your purity, your innocence. I am different from Your Excellency in many ways, but in purity, I confess, from time to time, I think like Your Excellency.”² Clodovil then thanks Bolsonaro: “[...] I appreciate your kindness very much.”³

* Centro Interdisciplinar de Ciências Sociais, Universidade Nova de Lisboa

1. The article includes excerpts from the author’s doctoral research, conducted with funding from the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia de Portugal (FCT). The final text is due to be defended in autumn 2022.
2. All transcripts of speeches, excerpts from interviews and quotations from documents included in this article were translated from the original Portuguese by the author himself.
3. Transcript of the Ordinary Session of the Chamber of Deputies on June 17, 2008. Available at:

What seemed at the time like a trivial dialogue between two parliamentarians turned out to be a document full of subtleties when analysed from a historical perspective. On the one hand, Clodovil Hernandes, the first openly gay person to be elected to the Chamber of Deputies, was known for his controversial statements after a lengthy career as a stylist and TV presenter. On the other, Jair Bolsonaro, a retired military officer serving his fifth consecutive term, but still far away from the anti-gender agenda and the “politically incorrect” statements about women, black people, and gay people, which helped propel his political career from 2011 onwards. However, the admiration of the current Brazilian President for his former colleague in parliament did have a reason. Although he suffered persecution for behaviour considered to be effeminate during the military dictatorship (1964-1985) [Quinalha, 2017], Clodovil sought to keep his distance from the LGBTQI+ movements in the decades that followed.⁴ He was against same-sex marriage, condemned pride parades, and claimed to have “no pride in being gay.”⁵ He died of a stroke in 2009, before reaching the end of his term as a parliamentarian. His only bill related to LGBTQI+ rights, which proposed to regulate civil unions between same sex couples, was never debated by the Chamber of Deputies.⁶

Clodovil’s political legacy remained relatively forgotten until recent years, when claims began to appear on social media by activists identifying themselves as gay and at the same time “right-wing”.⁷ Like the late deputy, they totally

<https://www.camara.leg.br/>. The excerpt quoted in this article was located thanks to the article “Gay de direita, Clodovil é lembrado por polêmicas no Plenário” by the journalist Danilo Thomaz published in *Época Magazine*, on June 18, 2018.

4. Although the Brazilian movement still officially uses the acronym LGBT (lesbians, gay bisexuals, travestites, and transsexuals), as adopted in 2008 as a resolution of the First National Conference of Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals, Travestites and Transsexuals in Brasília, this article will use the acronym LGBTQI+ to correspond to the thematic proposal of this dossier. The article seeks, whenever possible, to refer to the movement in the plural (“the LGBTQI+ movements”) to emphasize the plurality of identities, styles of activism, individuals, and organizations of which it is composed.
5. “Clodovil diz não ter orgulho de ser gay”, Politics, *O Estado de São Paulo*, March 22, 2007 [accessed November 25, 2020]. Available at: <https://politica.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,clodovil-diz-nao-ter-orgulho-de-ser-gay,20070322p28397>
6. Available at: <https://www.camara.leg.br/proposicoesWeb/fichadetramitacao?idProposicao=346155>
7. Throughout the text, terms such as “right-wing” or “right-wing gays” are presented in quotation marks, to indicate how the actors define themselves or how they have been named by the media. Likewise, the article takes the terms “liberal” and “conservative” as emic categories, that is, the political self-definition of the actors is assumed. In this way, we seek to explain how these categories are mobilized by activists in the different arenas analysed and how the latter articulates them with their sexual orientations. When referring to the right and its organizations, movements, and parties, the term “the political field of the right” is used in preference. This strategy seeks to account for the plurality of this political field (e.g., liberals, conservatives, interventionists, and “lava jatinhas”), and to differentiate between the position adopted by certain sectors at a given moment in the political process (e.g., “the right-wing opposition Dilma Rousseff’s government”),



"I AM GAY, AND THE LGBTQI+ MOVEMENT DOES NOT REPRESENT ME":
MAPPING THE EMERGENCE OF RIGHT-WING GAY ACTIVISM IN BRAZIL

or partially reject the ideas of the LGBTQI+ movement. In order to "exit the political closet", challenge stereotypes, and counter the supposed monopoly of the left and the LGBTQI+ movements in debates on gender and sexuality, they created pages, channels, and discussion groups on social media. After notable success on the Internet, they became recurrent figures in the mainstream media, attended in right-wing demonstrations, and put forward candidates for municipal and state parliaments, obtaining seats in 2016, 2018, and 2020.

International literature has addressed experiences of LGBTQI+ activism in liberal, conservative, or far-right movements for more than two decades [Rogers & Lott, 1997; Duggan, 2002; Cimino, 2007; Chouinard, 2015; Durand, 2018; Wielowiejski, 2020]. These studies have highlighted a diversity of mobilization logics related to the engagement of self-declared LGBTQI+ people in these movements: the increasingly common access to social institutions such as marriage, the free market and patriotism [Duggan, 2002], belonging to ruling classes, Christian affiliation, and racial identity [Rogers & Lott, 1997; Cimino, 2007; Chouinard, 2015], opposition to LGBTQI+ "milieu" and "militantism" through the adoption of an anti-gender discourse [Durand, 2018; Wielowiejski, 2020] and the incorporation of an anti-immigration rhetoric that opposes a supposedly "homophobic" and "retrograde" East to the ideal of an "advanced" and "tolerant" West [Wielowiejski, 2020].

In Brazil, although the presence of LGBTQI+ groups and candidates in the centre-right and right-wing parties have become a common phenomenon in recent years, the theme remains little explored in political and sociological literature. The few available references consist of short excerpts from the works of Barbosa de Silva [1958], Cruz [2015], Santos [2016], and Daniliauskas [2017]. The recent study conducted by Cruz [2020] approached this research agenda by examining the foundation of Diversidade Tucana, the sexual diversity sector of the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB), in 2006.⁸ The members of this group, however, rejected the reputation of "right-wing" or "conservative" imputed by other LGBTQI+ activists and left-wing militants, dedicating themselves to combat what they perceived at the time as the "partisanship of the movement" and its supposed co-option by the Workers' Party (PT).

This article seeks to describe the emergence of gay activism that has claimed a proud "right-wing" gay identity in Brazil since 2013, when 'right-wing gay'

whilst avoiding tight categorizations. Far from rejecting the analytical validity of the right and left dyad, the intention is to give greater depth to the analysis of a dynamic process full of particularities and, at times, quite self-contradictory.

8. The "Diversidade Tucana" is the "sexual diversity" branch of the Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB), a party generally classified as center-right by Brazilian political scientists. It is the first LGBTQI+ group founded in a political party outside the left-wing in Brazil.
9. All the excerpts from Portuguese-language articles and books cited in this article were translated by the author himself.

pages first appeared on social media. This activism differs from the experiences previously observed in the Brazilian context by promoting an explicit association between gay identity and belonging to the right, sometimes opposing, sometimes presenting itself as a political alternative to LGBTQI+ movements. The main argument asserts that this alliance became possible due to a context of political opportunities which favoured the mobilization of right-wing opposition groups to the Workers' Party (PT) government after the cycle of protests in June 2013. In contrast with the cases previously discussed in the literature, the Brazilian case offers the opportunity to analyse the phenomenon from the Latin American context, marked by the decline of the so-called "progressive governments" of the 2000s.

The article is divided into four parts. The first part presents the methodology. The second analyses the key factors of the post-2013 political and cultural environment which encouraged openly gay actors to become politically engaged in right-wing politics. The third retraces the emergence of this activism in online social media, observing how activists present themselves to the public at large. The fourth and final part explores the visibility achieved by activists in the press and discusses the way they are represented in the media. The conclusion seeks to identify the different styles of activism that appear to emerge from this process, and also presents some brief reflections on the challenges that the phenomenon represents for LGBTQI+ struggles in Brazil.

Methodological notes

In order to explain the emergence of this activism in the public domain, a longitudinal perspective was adopted in this research. The period analysed runs from June 2013, when the first pages dedicated to the topic appeared on the internet, until 2020 when some of these initiatives developed an offline counterpart.¹⁰ This trajectory was reconstructed through a triangulation of empirical data: news published on the main Brazilian news sites, data collected from an online ethnography [Hine, 2015], and semi-structured interviews with activists linked to these groups.

Regarding the news, sixty-three excerpts devoted to the topic throughout the period concerned (2013-2020) were chosen.¹¹ For this article, a smaller set of data was constituted, using news appearing in four outlets with national reach which differed from the others due to the volume of articles published (n=25)

10. Facts and political figures from before the period under analysis, such as Federal Deputy Clodovil Hernandes, who died in 2008, are mentioned to fill out the context.

11. These sixty-three records comprise news, interviews, and commentaries. The excerpts were selected because they refer to one or more individuals identified as "right-wing" LGBTQI+ or because they address this issue in the historical period analysed.



"I AM GAY, AND THE LGBTQI+ MOVEMENT DOES NOT REPRESENT ME":
MAPPING THE EMERGENCE OF RIGHT-WING GAY ACTIVISM IN BRAZIL

and the prominence given to the theme. These vehicles represent two different segments of the press: *Folha de S. Paulo/UOL* and *Grupo Globo/Revista Época*, two originally Brazilian press organizations, and *El País Brasil* and *BBC Brasil*, which are Portuguese-language versions of two international vehicles with offices in Brazil.¹²

The online ethnography was conducted between 2018 and 2020. The focus was on two online social media: Facebook, which hosted the first public pages dedicated to the "gay right-wing" from 2013 onwards, and Instagram, which started to attract a significant audience share from among this interest group as of 2018. This strategy allowed pages, groups, and key actors in this universe to be identified, in addition to enabling activists to be contacted and subsequently interviewed.

From the total of eighteen interviews carried out during the research, five were selected for this article: one with State Representative Douglas Garcia (a member of the "Movimento Conservador" group and the "Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro – PTB" party, from São Paulo), one with a "Right-Wing Gay" moderator (in Portuguese "Gay de Direita", a Facebook hosted page), two with members of the "Gays with Bolsonaro" group (in Portuguese "Gays com Bolsonaro", an Instagram hosted page) and one with a moderator from "Boteco Liberal LGBT" (a Facebook hosted page).¹³

Political Opportunities and Constraints

In recent years, the contentious political and legal battles surrounding the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and other (LGBTQI+) people has gained great prominence in Brazilian society. On the one hand, important legal achievements such as the recognition of civil unions for same-sex couples by the Supreme Court in 2011 [Santos & Melo, 2018], the significant mobilization of new generations of activists on social media, and

12. The Portuguese edition of the newspaper *El País* announced it was terminating its activities in Brazil on December 14, 2021.

13. The interviewees were selected to guarantee the diversity of the sample (age, place of activity, the role played in the group, affiliation to parties or right-wing movements). They are leaders (moderators) or regular members of online groups that serve as a basis for political discussion for content posted on Facebook fan pages or Instagram pages. They are self-identified male individuals who claim different sexual orientations such as gay, bisexual, or asexual. They live in different regions of Brazil and often have a previous or parallel experience in other groups, movements or parties associated with the political right. Interviews were given with informed consent, usually on the condition of anonymity. State Representative Douglas Garcia was selected for an interview due to the projection achieved after the public disclosure of his sexual orientation, in April 2019. Since then, his name has become a political reference in LGBTQI+ conservative social media. The interview with the deputy was granted with informed consent and without a confidentiality agreement.

the advent of new representations of homosexuality, bisexuality, and transgender identities in the mass media. On the other hand, the opposition to LGBTQI+ rights on the streets with the emergence of mobilizations against the so-called “gender ideology” [Facchini & Rodrigues, 2017], the increase in rates of violence and hate crimes with against LGBTQI+ people¹⁴, and the multiplication of legislative proposals in the National Congress aiming to suspend “resolutions, ordinances and any other normative acts issued by judicial and executive bodies or by professional associations that promote the rights of this population” [Santos & Melo, 2018, p.1].

This double visibility has to do with a set of changes that have taken place in the political environment since 2003. With the rise to power of a centre-left party historically allied with the LGBTQI+ cause, namely the Workers’ Party (PT), opportunities for the movement to participate in the institutional political power of the federal executive expanded significantly. In addition to implementing pioneering public policies such as the “Brazil Without Homophobia Program” [Irineu, 2014], the government of Luís Inácio Lula da Silva also contributed to strengthening parliamentary opposition to LGBTQI+ rights by establishing electoral alliances with dominant sectors, including representatives of different religious cults—with some protagonism of the Evangelical Parliamentary Front [Mazzilli Pereira, 2018]. This ambivalent policy began to show greater fragility during Dilma Rousseff’s first term (2011-2014), when religious groups allied with the PT gained more weight in the electoral coalition responsible for supporting the president. In exchange for parliamentary support, they began to pressure the executive to block any initiatives favouring the recognition of LGBTQI+ rights. Thus, in 2011, Rousseff chose to revoke the project “School without Homophobia”, which consisted of educational material aimed at combating discrimination among public school students. Around the same time, there emerged on the public scene a parliamentarian from Rio de Janeiro who had not yet begun to express his views at national level, namely the former army captain Jair Bolsonaro (at the time a member of the Progressive Party - PP), one of those responsible for giving the aforementioned project the nickname “gay kit.”

With the cycle of protests in June 2013, tensions within the government coalition led by Rousseff and the PT deepened. Initially, the protesters, mostly young students, took to the streets to denounce the increase in public transport fares. When the protests reached massive proportions, other movements and social sectors entered the scene, bringing with them claims related to living

14. As there is no official data on violence against the LGBTQI+ population in Brazil, this statement considers the data released by the “Annual Report of LGBTQI+ Deaths” by the NGO Grupo Gay da Bahia (GGB). This survey has been conducted for four decades based on news published in the Brazilian press and only counts homicides and suicides. Available at: <https://grupogaydabahia.com/relatorios-anuais-de-morte-de-lgbti>



"I AM GAY, AND THE LGBTQI+ MOVEMENT DOES NOT REPRESENT ME":
MAPPING THE EMERGENCE OF RIGHT-WING GAY ACTIVISM IN BRAZIL

conditions in large urban centres as well as the massive public investment in so-called "mega-events", such as the World Cup and the Olympic Games [Singer, 2013; Winters & Weitz-Shapiro, 2014; Alonso & Mische, 2016]. This environment of political instability was reinforced by the recurring allegations of corruption involving members of the PT government, especially after July 2013, when a new Federal Police operation began to investigate corruption crimes: Operation Car Wash (in Portuguese, "Operação Lava Jato"). This operation received wide media coverage, promoting a culture of "clean hands" on the part of the press and public opinion [Alonso, 2017, p. 53-54]. Kunrath (2018) notes that the conflict that emerged from this process caused a deep shock in Brazilian society. As a result, "routine patterns of political conduct were dissolved, usual cleavages faded and new connections, between social sectors distant from each other in social space, gained political expression." [Alonso, 2017, p. 53].

In October 2014, Rousseff's re-election signalled a new opportunity for mobilization to opposition groups on the left and right of the government, with greater emphasis on the latter, who at the end of 2014 organised the first demonstrations against corruption and for the impeachment of the president [Alonso, 2017, p. 54]. In 2015, when serious economic recession had set in, the president saw her popularity plummet. It started a new cycle of protests that would last almost two years, bringing together "mainly the middle and upper classes", who responded to the call for organizations created specially to intervene in this conjuncture [Tatagiba, 2018, p. 115]. The protesters took to the streets wearing the colours of the national flag (yellow and green), shouting their disapproval of the anti-poverty policies implemented by the PT governments, and advocating a minimal state, free enterprise, and free market. Regarding morality issues, they reiterated traditional values such as religion, patriotism, and family [Alonso, 2017] thus increasing the political reach of the anti-gender agenda in subsequent years.

In the short term, these mobilizations paved the way for the start, in December 2015, of Rousseff's controversial impeachment process, which resulted in her formal dismissal in August 2016. In the medium term, they made possible the public manifestation, on the part of broad layers of Brazilian society, of a proud "right-wing" political identity, a phenomenon that had not been observed since the end of the military regime in 1985. In other words, the once "embarrassed right" [Machado & Tarouco, 2010] regained a taste for protest repertoires [Tatagiba, 2018], without fear of being associated with the authoritarian character of the former military regime. At various moments, certain sectors present in the demonstrations even claimed this legacy.

In this context, activists who identified themselves simultaneously as homosexuals and "right-wing" gained prominence on the public scene. Unlike the Caucasian, wealthy and educated profile observed in the Anglo-Saxon literature

on the subject [Cimino, 2007], these activists were marked by a predominantly young, male, and working-class profile. In political terms, they present a strong anti-left, pro-capitalist and anti-minority political rhetoric that seeks to reject and/or rival LGBTQI+ movements.

As part of a broader political process, the increasing visibility of this new type of activism found material and symbolic incentives in an environment highly favourable to right-wing activism. Six elements of the political context were fundamental in changing these activists' perception of the political opportunities and constraints [Tarrow, 2009] for right-wing engagement. Firstly, the widespread discontent with the successive PT governments and with the left in general also attracted sympathy among the LGBTQI+ population. Although the Lula and Dilma governments advanced public policies aimed at the affirmation of sexual and gender diversity, they were not perceived by LGBTQI+ people as highly preoccupied with this agenda, given that many of the achievements observed in the period were obtained through decisions of the Supreme Court. At the same time, the progressive acquisition of rights (civil union, marriage, and adoption) changed the political perception of some LGBTQI+ people about the need for political engagement, which is why they began to consider the LGBTQI+ movement as "self-victimizing," "leftist," "noisy" or even "useless".¹⁵

Secondly, in the process of generational renewal of political cadres, the right-wing field recruited mainly young activists throughout the protest cycles of 2013 and 2014/2015 and 2016. This new generation identified the PT as a *status quo* party, unable to meet their expectations regarding quality of life and consumption [Alonso & Mische, 2016]. At the same time, reflecting a long and conflicting process of changing attitudes towards LGBTQI+ identities in Brazilian society, these young people were more open to the presence of openly gay individuals in their activist circles, creating a favourable environment for the re-framing of the gender and sexuality debate from a liberal and conservative perspective. Faced with the possibility of coming out without falling into political ostracism, young political figures such as São Paulo city councillor Fernando Holiday (at the time a member of the MBL – Movimento Brasil Livre) decided to be open about their sexual orientation,¹⁶ challenging the idea of an intolerant right in regards to homosexuality. Unsurprisingly, the coming out of these activists soon turned into a political strategy to question both the representativeness of the LGBTQI+ movements and the supposed monopoly of the left around identity politics.

15. In interviews conducted by the author, this perception was frequently reported by activists, as well as in statements made by them to the press.

16. Fernando Holiday, from the Free Brazil Movement (MBL), began to speak publicly about his homosexuality in mid-2016, when he was still a DEM party pre-candidate in the local elections in the city of São Paulo.



"I AM GAY, AND THE LGBTQI+ MOVEMENT DOES NOT REPRESENT ME":
MAPPING THE EMERGENCE OF RIGHT-WING GAY ACTIVISM IN BRAZIL

Thirdly, these activists had a prior engagement in online spaces of discussion, production and the dissemination of right-wing political propaganda. This universe made up of hundreds of groups, pages and channels hosted on online social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter provided symbolic resources for political debate and promoted the connection between geographically isolated individuals. This previous experience inspired the creation of specific spaces of discussion welcoming an LGBTQI+ public who identify with ideas and values considered liberal and/or conservative. These spaces allowed activists to think of themselves as part of a broader collectivity, as these discussions rarely found resonance in the LGBTQI+ "offline" movements and social territories (bars, parties, and groups of friends).

Fourthly, these same networks offered a transnational circulation of frames and repertoires of collective action of liberal and conservative inspiration on issues such as gender and sexuality. The visibility achieved by self-declared "right-wing" LGBTQI+ activists such as Milo Yiannopoulos from United Kingdom on Twitter and the American Blaire White on YouTube, in addition to the success of online initiatives such as "Gays for Trump" during the 2016 elections, served as inspiration for Brazilian activists to "come out of the political closet". In some cases, Brazilian activists are even said to have established direct contact with and US leaders through social media and messaging apps, as was the case for the moderators of the "Gays for Trump" and "Gays with Bolsonaro" page.¹⁷

Fifth, the so-called anti-gender discourse [Paternotte and Kuhar, 2018] emerged on the Brazilian political scene, and was responsible for transforming the LGBTQI+ movements into a public enemy of "family", "nation" and "Christian values". By focusing their fight on the demonization of the LGBTQI+ movement, the anti-gender mobilizations offered "right-wing gay" activists the discursive elements necessary for to distinguish between "LGBTQI+ activists"—allegedly interested in the misrepresentation of dominant moral values—and "normal" LGBTQI+ individuals, the so-called "non-activists of the cause". This distinction is often mobilized by these activists in their media appearances when they take the opportunity to reinforce their pro-family, anti-abortion and anti-gender positions.

Finally, in 2010 and 2014 the journalist and professor Jean Wyllys was elected to the Chamber of Deputies. Wyllys, a member of a left-wing party (the PSOL, Socialism and Liberty Party), became the first openly gay MP to defend the LGBTQI+ cause in the Brazilian parliament. His association with a socialist party signalled a threat to an LGBT audience identified with right-wing ideas and values. Embarrassed by the public link between the left and LGBTQI+ identities, they decided to show that there were also gays "on the

17. Information provided in an interview by one of the members of the "Gays com Bolsonaro" group.

other side". At the same time, the defamation campaign against Wyllys, through the dissemination of fake news on the Internet, contributed to wearing down his image as a legislator, transforming him into a kind of the antithesis of everything proposed by the emerging "gay right-wing" activists.

"Right-wing Gays" on the Internet

Several studies [Burris *et al.*, 2000; Caiani, 2009, Caiani & Parenti, 2011] have emphasized that, in contexts in which right-wing movements and their ideas became marginal, the internet contributed to connecting sympathizers, forming virtual subcultures, recruiting new members, and creating collective identities. Online discussion spaces also offer the necessary sensation of anonymity for groups that act on the border between legal politics and illegal practices [Fasanella & Grippo, 2009; Caiani & Parenti, 2011] such as intimidation of opponents, hate speech and the spread of fake news. Eventually, the success of mobilizations in the online environment can be the key for these groups to gain visibility and prestige in the eyes of public opinion. As Rocha [2019] demonstrated in his study on the emergence of a new generation of liberal groups in Brazil, the young activists behind the protests asking for the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff began their mobilisation to "dispute hegemony with the leftists" [Rocha, 2019, p. 1] in online forums on the former Orkut. Here they found organizational and financial support from a pre-existing network of pro-market organizations.

The first records of an online conversation on "gay right-wing" identification in Brazil date back to mid-2009, when an anonymous blog titled "Gays de Direita"¹⁸ was launched. The first publication, entitled "Our first message" consisted of a kind of manifesto by the editors, self-declared members of a group of "right-wing gay men". The text blamed the influence of the left for the "bizarre" and "dangerous" image socially attributed to gay people. They recalled that "left-wing governments around the world have killed hundreds of gay people throughout their history" and stated that this same left uses gays as a "tool to combat morality" to achieve its project of political domination. In the end, the manifesto seeks to lay the foundations for a new type of activism "better than a simple sexual riot":

"We do not have to turn our backs on God, ignore our religions and change who we are. We do not have to obey these people! We can prevent same-sex attraction from being used as an inhuman, unbearable, and hateful tool. We do not want to destroy a society of which we are a part" (Blog Gays on the Right, published May 10, 2009).

18. The blog remains online, although it has not been updated since October 2018. Available at: <http://gaysdedireito.blogspot.com/>



"I AM GAY, AND THE LGBTQI+ MOVEMENT DOES NOT REPRESENT ME":
MAPPING THE EMERGENCE OF RIGHT-WING GAY ACTIVISM IN BRAZIL

In visual terms, the blog was remarkable for its almost amateurish simplicity. The template in shades of white, beige and burgundy contrasted with the shocking images that illustrated the articles. In the upper right corner, a poster rejected the Brazilian Association of Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals, Transvestites, Transsexuals, and Intersex (ABGLT). Below, an animated sequence showed images of young men with bruises on their faces accompanied by the slogan "Gays with guns never get hurt". By clicking on the image, the reader was directed to an article on how to acquire a gun under the existing legislation. The recommended pages in the sidebar revealed the editors' political references: conservative gay groups such as the American "Log Cabin Republicans" and the British "Gay Conservatives", associations aimed at LGBTQI+ Catholic audiences, and national and international conservative political organizations.

Between 2009 and 2018, the blog published more than a hundred texts, both originals and reproductions from other liberal or conservative websites. The articles addressed a variety of topics such as the persecution of gay people in communist regimes and Muslim-majority countries, the relationship between homosexuality and the Catholic faith and conspiracy theories such as the PT's alleged "Gramscian strategy". A considerable number of publications aimed to attack the LGBTQI+ movements and their political agenda. "*I was never a fan of any kind of pride*", declared the anonymous author in one of the articles. The legislative proposal aimed at criminalizing homophobia, one of the main demands the Brazilian LGBTQI+ movements in the late 2000s, was criticized for its alleged legal ambiguity. "*What are the criteria for determining what is really homophobic?*" asked the editors. In the comments section, readers' reactions range from outrage to admiration. A self-declared straight visitor says: "*I am happy to know that not all gay people in Brazil are revolutionary.*"

Although it remained a marginal page on the political scene at the time, the "Blog Gays de Direita" can be considered a remarkable initiative in many ways. First, the association between a non-proud gay identity and proud identification with the right differs from the perspective observed in LGBTQI+ groups housed in Brazilian right-wing and centre-right parties in the 2000s. These groups sought to act within the political frameworks of the movement (pride, visibility, and rights), seeking to consolidate the LGBTQI+ agenda within the parties. Second, the blog anticipated several themes and concerns that would become central to this type of activism in the years to come (defence of capitalism, anti-left sentiment, and systematic critique of LGBTQI+ movements). And, finally, a remarkable pioneering venture from an aesthetic point of view: the preference for shocking images, pixelated photographs, illustrations with *kitsch* aesthetics and disruptive language, the latter very close to what Rocha and Medeiros [2020] called "politics of shock". This visual programme makes the blog a kind of precursor to the pages of "right-wing gays" that would appear on online social networks in the following decade.

The ethnography conducted on Facebook between 2018 and 2020 identified a set of twenty-four fan pages aimed at the LGBTQI+ “right-wing” audience, among them feature pages (such as “Gay de Direita” or “Gay de Direita, Gay Direito”) and profiles of public figures such as São Paulo city councillor Fernando Holiday. The first pages appeared in 2013 but two surges of activity occurred subsequently in 2015, at the time of the protests for the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff, and in 2018, in the wake of the election of Jair Bolsonaro as President of the Republic.

From this set, the page “Gay de Direita” (in the singular) appears as the first fan page hosted on Facebook to explicitly establish the association between the categories of “gay” and “right.” This page, which was created on June 29, 2013, following the cycle of protests that was taking to the streets of the country at that time, has several similarities with the “Blog Gays de Direita”. As with the blog, the authorship of the contents is initially anonymous. The publications cover all kinds of subjects, emphasizing the defence of the family, the homeland, and Christian values. The creation of specific laws to protect LGBTQI+ people is seen as “a new form of segregation”, while the left is accused of authoritarianism. The *kitsch* aesthetic is now present through political memes, usually shared from other conservative pages. They serve to ridicule opponents, such as the then MP Jean Wyllys, and exalt old references, such as the former MP Clodovil Hernandes.

At the top of the page, profile photos pay tribute to right-wing political leaders like Jair Bolsonaro and Venezuelan Juan Guaidó, but prominence is given to openly LGBTQI+ figures like Alice Weidel of the far-right Alternative for Germany party (AfD), and United States Veteran and Republican Rob Smith. In this environment, one of the main intellectual references is the self-proclaimed Brazilian philosopher Olavo de Carvalho. According to one of the moderators, although the use of the category “gay” in the title of the fan page refers to a certain “typical left-wing” identity politics, the page was created with the aim of “showing society that homosexuals can be right-wing, can be conservative, they can be liberal, they can be anarcho-capitalist (...), they can be whatever they want”.¹⁹

Though at first, most fan pages advocated conservative positions, from 2015 onwards there have also been pages with a liberal profile, such as the “Movimento Liberdade e Diversidade (MLD)” and the “Boteco Liberal LGBT”, the latter founded in January 2018.²⁰ These pages defend the free market, the minimal state and freedom of expression, praising figures of the liberal métier such as businessman João Amoedo and economist Milton Friedman. Political memes also play a prominent role. They criticize the supposed “ideologization”

19. Information given in an interview with one of the moderators of the “Gay de Direita” page.

20. In the Brazilian context, the term “boteco” refers to a commercial establishment, usually a bar, where drinks, appetizers, cigarettes, and other essential items are sold. It is a meeting place with tables and chairs, known for its simplicity and fluidity.



"I AM GAY, AND THE LGBTQI+ MOVEMENT DOES NOT REPRESENT ME":
MAPPING THE EMERGENCE OF RIGHT-WING GAY ACTIVISM IN BRAZIL

of the LGBT cause, by both the left and the right, and consider issues related to individual freedom as being agendas of liberal origin. Space is also reserved for longer texts that seek to develop the political positions of the moderators. In one of them, a distinction is proposed between "the LGBTQI+ movement" and "LGBTQI+ individuals" and an appeal is launched to put an end to the association between sexual orientation and political preference:

"We need to stop seeing LGBTs only as a movement and see them as individuals. We need to stop associating sexual orientation or gender identity with partisan bias, political vision has nothing to do with sexual orientation. There is no agenda to be followed other than the freedom of thought supported by the Brazilian constitution" (Boteco Liberal LGBT, published on June 20, 2020).

Throughout the publications, activists seek to escape the right/left dyad, presenting liberalism as a "neutral" political "centre". According to one of the moderators, the attempt to escape political polarization is in fact a key element of the DNA of "Boteco Liberal LGBT": "*The Boteco was created precisely to house these moderate people, who say No, I don't like Bolsonaro, I don't like Lula [...] I don't like the left, I like policies that work.*"²¹ Although less numerous than conservative pages (n=19), liberal pages (n=5) tend to reach a wider audience, often exceeding the 10,000-follower mark. The figures for conservative pages, on the other hand, tend to be lower.

Another important piece of data concerns the private discussion groups reserved for the LGBTQI+ conservative or liberal audience on Facebook. Although fewer in number (just over five were identified over the course of two years of research), these groups play a key role in maintaining fan pages such as "Gay de Direita", linked to the group of the same name, and "Boteco Liberal LGBT", linked to the "Liberals LGBT" group. To join these groups, prospective members must be recommended by an acquaintance or meet an extensive list of requirements. The private group "Gay de Direita", for example, used to insist that new members should support a list of agendas such as the defence of the free market, the military police, "homonationalism",²² life from the moment of conception and "the traditional family" (nuclear, monogamous, and straight) as a "model" to be followed.

The private environment allows moderators and page supporters to discuss several topics, exchange information and organize "activist work" [Simões &

21. Information given in an interview with one of the moderators of the "Boteco Liberal LGBT" page.

22. Although the use of the term "homonationalism" by activists in online social networks lacks a conceptual framework, we can say, after conducting the interviews, that its use does not share the critical approach proposed by Puar [2012] in the book *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. "Homonationalism", in this specific case, seems to refer in a general way to homosexual adherence to a certain nationalist sentiment, position or movement.

Campos, 2016], which includes the selection of content that will be shared on fan pages with a wider audience of followers. In this context, men who identify as gay constitute the majority of the participants, although other identities are present, including lesbian, trans and intersex people. These groups bring together people from all over Brazil, connecting activists who were previously geographically isolated from each other. In cities like São Paulo and Fortaleza these connections resulted in face-to-face meetings for leisure and political training, participation in protests and even the creation of formal activism groups, as in the case of “Boteco Liberal LGBT”.²³

Although it played a significant role in structuring right-wing gay activism in Brazil, Facebook was not the only social network on which activists concentrated their efforts to spread their ideas. To a lesser extent and for different purposes, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter also housed similar channels and pages. Between 2013 and 2019, conservative and openly gay activist Smith Hays became famous on YouTube for publishing videos in which he exposed controversial opinions on topics such as family, sex education in schools and “gender ideology”. In 2014, also on YouTube, São Paulo lawyer Tiago Pavinatto, the founder of “Diversidade Tucana” and a member of “MBL – Movimento Brasil Livre”, reached more than one million views in a week with the video entitled “*Why gay people should distrust Jean Wyllys*”. The video has become a “classic” in online right-wing media and is often mentioned by young gay activists as a source of inspiration for assuming a “right-wing” political identity.

When Facebook began to intensify the fight against the spread of fake news in Brazil in 2018, it removed a hundred pages and profiles linked to the right-wing movements, and part of this audience began to migrate to Instagram. Although owned by the same company, Instagram has a different moderation policy, which punishes content several times before banning the user. This social network is characterized by its focus on publishing photos, videos and conducting live broadcasts, instead of publication of long texts and discussion groups. On this platform pages such as “GLS (gays, lesbians, and sympathizers)²⁴ à Direita” and “Gays with Bolsonaro” appeared, the latter anchored by a WhatsApp group with about fifty participants which gave rise in 2020 to a homonymous movement with members in several Brazilian states.

23. Information provided by activists during interviews. The virtual ethnography that supports this stage of the work did not include the observation of private groups in any social network.

24. This category, which is not in current use in the Brazilian context, was created in the mid-1990s by sectors of the business community to designate the nascent market aimed at the gay public in Brazil. According to João Silvério Trevisan [2000], “GLS” was a successful way of “introducing the American idea of gay-friendly in Brazilian context”. França [2007] notes that, by including the so-called “sympathizers”, this designation also aims to encompass consumers who do not identify as homosexuals, but who somehow participate in this universe, expanding the borders of the “ghetto”.



"I AM GAY, AND THE LGBTQI+ MOVEMENT DOES NOT REPRESENT ME":
MAPPING THE EMERGENCE OF RIGHT-WING GAY ACTIVISM IN BRAZIL

"Right-wing Gays" in the press

After achieving prestige and visibility on online social media, it was not long before "right-wing" gay activists drew the attention of the mainstream media. The way this phenomenon came to be portrayed by the press is particularly interesting to analyse for several reasons. Firstly, because the media are, par excellence, the sphere of political representation where the various positions in the public debate are expressed [Miguel & Biroli, 2009]. "It is a privileged sphere of production of forms of recognition which constitute the symbolic capital and of confirmation or refutation of the hierarchies present in society, especially in the political field" [Miguel & Biroli, 2009, p. 37]. Second, media coverage contributes to consolidating the *politics of visibility* [Milan, 2015] created by activists in online social media, producing leaders, amplifying certain voices, and shaping the political debate. Thirdly, because of the media spotlight, these activists are no longer seen as mere members of an online subculture, but as mainstream political actors.

A survey carried out on the main Brazilian news websites places the first record of "right-wing gay youth" activism on June 8, 2016, the day when the *BBC Brazil* website published an article entitled "*What gays who support Bolsonaro and reject Jean Wyllys think*".²⁵ With an air of novelty, the article featured young gay and lesbian activists dissatisfied with the supposed predominance of "leftist thinking" in LGBTQI+ movements. These activists, who were also supporters of Jair Bolsonaro's presidential election campaign, found in social media a kind of "safe space" to express opinions considered dissident in the LGBTQI+ milieu. The report was illustrated with pictures of the activists, many of whom posed amicably alongside Bolsonaro. One of the interviewees questioned the validity of the LGBTQI+ movements: "*LGBT struggles maybe once served for something, but today there is no need for it. A gay parade only has promiscuity.*"

The reinforcement of the antagonism between Bolsonaro and Jean Wyllys as highlighted in the title of the report had contextual reasons. In April 2016, a few weeks before the publication of the BBC article, when the Chamber of Deputies voted to impeach Dilma Rousseff, Wyllys had spat on Bolsonaro after he had insulted him. The episode ended up in the Ethics Committee of the Chamber, sparked off wide repercussions in the press, and contributed to reinforcing the image of the opponent (Bolsonaro) and defender (Wyllys) of the LGBTQI+ cause to which both had been linked over the years. Although this approach served to feed the political polarization in vogue at the time, it also obfuscated the divergence between the many different positions present on both sides of

25. "O que pensam os gays que apoiam Bolsonaro e rechaçam Jean Wyllys", *BBC Brazil*, June 8, 2016 (accessed June 8, 2016). Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/brasil-36475717>

the conflict. Not only did the emerging LGBTQI+ activism on the right not have a consensus around Bolsonaro's name, but the left itself and the LGBTQI+ movements diverged at various times from the political positions of former deputy Jean Wyllys.

Another important aspect of the report published by the BBC was the introduction of figures who would become, in the following years, the main interlocutors of "right-wing gay activism" in the press. Two emblematic examples are the activists Smith Hays and Karol Eller. Following their initial success on platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, the two "influencers" have made regular media appearances in recent years, often posing next to Jair Bolsonaro.²⁶

However, it was in the run-up to the 2018 electoral cycle that the issue came back into the spotlight. In June 2018, *Revista Época*,²⁷ a publication edited by *Editora Globo*, one of the most important weeklies in Brazil, dedicated a cover story to young "right-wing gay activists".²⁸ The text presented the biography of five self-declared right-wing gay men, some already known to the public such as activist Smith Hays and São Paulo city councillor Fernando Holiday. This approach revealed key details about the socio-economic profile of the activists: working-class young guys, born or raised in peripheral neighbourhoods, Catholics and from families linked to the army. Although the title "*Right-wing gays: what young conservative homosexuals think*" might suggest that the interviewees were all proponents of conservatism, some of them declared a greater affinity with sectors of political and economic liberalism. This report had major repercussions on social media, generating reactions ranging from sheer enthusiasm to complete rejection.

In April 2019, the *Folha de São Paulo* newspaper also addressed the subject. At the time, the newly elected São Paulo state deputy Douglas Garcia (from the PSL, the Social Liberal Party) caused controversy during the discussion of a bill that proposed "establishing biological sex as the only criterion for defining the gender of competitors in official sports matches in the state of São Paulo".²⁹ In

26. In 2018 Hays ran for state deputy for the Social Liberal Party (PSL) of São Paulo at the invitation of the Bolsonaro family, but his attempt was unsuccessful. In 2019, Eller accepted a public position at the Empresa Brasil de Comunicação (EBC), a public agency acting for the federal government, which was being run at the time by Bolsonaro.

27. *Época Magazine* has a current circulation of around 360,000. Of these, just under 190,000 copies correspond to subscriptions, and the rest are sold individually at newsstands and bookstores. Between December 2016 and February 2017, *Época*'s online subscriptions rose from 50,000 to 94,000, in line with the trend towards digitalization currently observed in other printed vehicles. Source: Media Ownership Monitor (MOM). Available at: <<https://brazil.mom-rsf.org/br/media/detail/outlet/epoca/>>.

28. "Gays de direita: o que pensam os jovens homossexuais conservadores", *Revista Época*, June 18, 2018 (accessed June 20, 2018). Available at: <https://epoca.globo.com/politica/noticia/2018/06/gays-de-direito.html>.

29. The bill was proposed by the Republican Party deputy Altair Morais, linked to the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God.



"I AM GAY, AND THE LGBTQI+ MOVEMENT DOES NOT REPRESENT ME":
MAPPING THE EMERGENCE OF RIGHT-WING GAY ACTIVISM IN BRAZIL

response to an intervention from the trans deputy Érica Malunguinho (from the PSL) against the draft bill, Garcia stated in plenary that, if he found a transgender person in the bathroom frequented by his mother and sister, "he would slap the person's face and kick them out".³⁰

Two days later, Garcia was "taken out of the closet" at his request by his party colleague Janaina Paschoal, who took to the tribune of the Legislative Assembly in a bid to reverse the negative repercussions of the case. The decision to make his sexual orientation public corresponded to a strategy of "upstream defence": in addition to the imminence of a lawsuit in the Ethics Commission for breach of parliamentary decorum, the deputy had to face pressure from some of his former partners who condemned his speech and now threatened to expose him in the press.³¹ Instantly, the focus of the debate turned to Garcia's sexual orientation and the intersection with the other social markers of difference (Brah, 2006) that catapulted his political career. "*Gay, black and favelado*."³² *That's it, I'm the combo of Brazilian victimism*," he told *Folha de São Paulo*³³ a few days after coming out, without, however, renouncing the discriminatory positions that put him in the spotlight in the first place.

Garcia, a member of a political organization called Movimento Conservador (formerly Direita São Paulo), was not exactly a newcomer to the media spotlight. Six months earlier, he had been featured in a report by the same *Folha de São Paulo* about the young and peripheral profile of Jair Bolsonaro's electorate in the 2018 elections.³⁴ A few weeks after the controversial episode that resulted in his coming out, the deputy posed smiling in a suit and tie in the corridors of the Legislative Assembly for an interview with the newspaper *El País Brasil*.³⁵ "*On the right, there are more gays than on the left*", said the deputy, in a quote which also became the title of the article. When asked about the issue of violence against the black and LGBTQI+ population in Brazil, Garcia defended typical solutions

30. "Alesp: deputado do PSL diz que tiraria 'a tapa' trans de banheiro feminino", Politics, *Portal UOL*, April 3, 2019 (accessed on April 10, 2019). Available at: <https://noticias.uol.com.br/politica/ultimas-noticias/2019/04/03/alesp-deputado-do-psl-diz-que-tiraria-a-tapa-trans-de-banheiro-female.htm>

31. Interview with Deputy Douglas Garcia held in São Paulo, on November 26, 2019.

32. The term "favelado" is a pejorative expression used in Brazil to refer to a resident of a favela.

33. "Deputado do PSL revela ser gay após atrito com deputada trans na Assembleia de SP", Poder, *Folha de São Paulo*, April 5, 2018 (accessed May 1, 2019). Available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2019/04/deputado-do-psl-revela-ser-gay-apos-atrito-com-deputada-trans-na-assembleia-de-sp.shtml>

34. "Direita avança nas periferias a reboque do "conservadorismo da favela", Poder, *Folha de S. Paulo*, October 2, 2018 (accessed October 2, 2018). Available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2018/10/direita-avanca-nas-periferias-a-reboque-do-conservadorismo-da-favela.shtml>

35. "Douglas Garcia: Na direita existem mais gays do que na esquerda", Politics, *El País Brasil*, April 18, 2019 (accessed May 22, 2019). Available at: https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2019/04/15/politica/1555345804_199159.html

of the conservative agenda, saying, *“Guns can help gay people fight homophobic violence. I see no better option than to combat violence by nullifying it at its source.”*

The media coverage around the coming out of deputy Douglas Garcia marked a turning point in the way in which “right-wing gay” activists were represented in the press. Although they had initially been presented as eccentric figures who supported politicians that always insulted them, a “new phenomenon”, belonging to “a constantly expanding group of people on the internet” that “defied common sense”, they were now represented by a figure of authority, posing as a well-known personality totally at ease in the spaces of power. What had once seemed contradictory now took on the air of a political project: the right, whose rise to power had been anchored in anti-gender positions, was now also seeking to protect gay people. But with guns. The deputy’s statement about the abundant presence of gay people in the right-wing political field could not be more illustrative of the new reality in Bolsonaro’s Brazil, where the right is at pains to embrace the moral agenda and, at the same time, refuses the label of ‘prejudiced’. To handle this intricate combination, they now have the support of increasingly expressive sectors of the LGBTQI+ population.

Conclusion

This article sought to map the emergence of right-wing gay activism in Brazil from 2013 onwards in two arenas: online social networks and social media. This genealogical comment was made in the light of an analysis of the environment of political opportunities and restrictions, identifying the contextual elements that favoured the emergence of the phenomenon. The scenario of the degradation of the Workers’ Party’s (PT) image allowed the right to operate a process of re-signification of its political identity, detaching it from the “embarrassing” posture associated with the memory of the military regime. This process has found resonance among right leaning LGBTQI+ individuals who created online social media pages, channels, and discussion groups intending to give public expression to their political preferences. At the same time, they engaged in protests, campaigns, and political organizations with a liberal and conservative profile, achieving considerable visibility in the media. The press became interested in the “novelty” represented by these activists, choosing those who would become their usual interlocutors and relegating others to the background. This was the case of liberal activists who, in a context marked by the political rise of Jair Bolsonaro, ended up receiving less attention from the media or even being confused with conservatives. Part of this “confusion” was related to the internal dynamics of the liberal movement itself, which mostly supported Bolsonaro’s campaign to prevent the Workers’ Party from winning the 2018 elections.



"I AM GAY, AND THE LGBTQI+ MOVEMENT DOES NOT REPRESENT ME":
MAPPING THE EMERGENCE OF RIGHT-WING GAY ACTIVISM IN BRAZIL

By analysing the emergence of this activism within the two arenas, it was possible to reconstruct the process through which it appeared on the public scene, while also identifying some of its distinctive features. Two of them are particularly noteworthy. Firstly, the idea that LGBTQI+ movements do not represent or have become unable to politically represent people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and others. This conception gives rise to a dispute over LGBTQI+ political identities, opposing "moderate" activists, who do not intend to confront either capitalism or the *status quo*, against an LGBTQI+ movement systematically accused of being "radical," "leftist," "self-victimizing" and an "enemy of the family". Secondly, the use of provocative language by the right-wing movements that emerged in Brazil in the same period. Through the *kitsch* aesthetic anchored in the "political meme of corrosive humour" [Santos & Chagas, 2018] these activists reinforce their attachment to "right wing" circles while distancing themselves from the symbolic universe of the LGBTQI+ milieu, even if symbols of the movement, like the rainbow flag, are sometimes mobilized.

Two styles of activism emerge from this process. One identified with conservatism and nationalist discourse, focusing the discussion on moral, anti-corruption and pro-armament agendas. Another with a liberal profile bent on defending individual liberties, the minimal state, and the free market. The latter claims a position of neutrality in an attempt to escape the right/left dyad, even though many of its members are linked to movements, parties, and organizations with a tradition in the political field of the right. Despite the differences, these two styles of activism also have their affinities. They come together on topics such as the defence of capitalism, anti-communism, and sympathy for several aspects of so-called anti-gender discourse.

While they were initially resistant to the creation of specific activist groups outside of social media,³⁶ this scenario has changed. In 2020, the "MBL - Movimento Brasil Livre" announced the foundation of their "version" of LGBTQI+, the "MBLGBT", created to discuss solutions for the LGBTQI+ population, based on liberal ideology.³⁷ The initiative came while members of the "Boteco Liberal LGBT" page (now entitled "Boteco Liberal") began to organize their first "offline" meetings. In the same year, the "Gays with Bolsonaro" group, originating from an Instagram page, adopted a more formal status, took to the streets with customized shirts (with a "B" for Bolsonaro in

36. "Conservative" gay activists, for example, often say that they do not make sexuality a political flag, despite publicly identifying themselves under the "gay" category.

37. "MBL cria movimento para reunir pessoas LGBTQIA+ que não sejam de esquerda ou bolsonarista", Panel, *Folha de S.Paulo*, May 10, 2020 (accessed May 10, 2020). Available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/colunas/painel/2020/05/mbl-cria-movimento-para-reunir-pessoas-lgbtqia-que-nao-seja-de-esquerda-ou-bolsonaristas.shtml>

the colours of the rainbow) and attended a meeting in Brasília with the Minister of Women, Family and Human Rights Damare Alves. The meeting aimed to discuss the Bolsonaro government initiatives for the LGBTQI+ population.³⁸

The fact that these activists found some acceptance in the political field of the right, and later the government, provides crucial elements for reflection from a theoretical point of view. Going against the idea that the right constitutes an impermeable opposition to gender and sexuality issues, these activists re-frame the historical demands and debates of the LGBTQI+ movement as seen through a liberal and conservative prism. The proposal of carrying guns as a solution to the problem of violence motivated by sexual orientation and gender identity, raised by deputy Douglas Garcia, suggests that these sectors do not only intend to undermine the credibility of the LGBTQI+ movements, building a kind of opposition “from inside,” but also aim to dispute a political agenda.

Right-wing leaders recognize the importance of this strategy and seek to validate it with symbolic gestures. In 2019, federal deputy Carla Zambelli (from the PSL), a well-known ally of Jair Bolsonaro, presented a bill to baptize Annex II of the Chamber of Deputies as the “Deputy Clodovil Hernandes Plenary Building”.³⁹ On this occasion, she declared, “Clodovil was an important figure in Brazil. Not only for his work as a stylist but (...) even though he was a gay person, he promoted the family. He was able to live his life and intimacy as he wanted, but respecting the family, respecting other people’s religion, and way of thinking.”⁴⁰

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38. Information provided by activists from the “Gays com Bolsonaro” group during interviews conducted in December 2020.

39. Draft Resolution No. 122/2019 is available for consultation at: <https://www.camara.leg.br/>

40. “O inesquecível Clodovil, o primeiro deputado federal declaradamente gay do Brasil”, tele report available on the *Jornal da Cidade Online* channel, a site aimed at “patriotic, conservative and liberal” audiences, November 2019 (accessed December 1, 2020). Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HnzSovI1IAc&t=30s>



"I AM GAY, AND THE LGBTQI+ MOVEMENT DOES NOT REPRESENT ME":
MAPPING THE EMERGENCE OF RIGHT-WING GAY ACTIVISM IN BRAZIL

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"I AM GAY, AND THE LGBTQI+ MOVEMENT DOES NOT REPRESENT ME":
MAPPING THE EMERGENCE OF RIGHT-WING GAY ACTIVISM IN BRAZIL

ABSTRACT

"I AM GAY, AND THE LGBTQI+ MOVEMENT DOES NOT REPRESENT ME": MAPPING THE EMERGENCE OF RIGHT-WING GAY ACTIVISM IN BRAZIL

The article seeks to map the emergence of right-wing gay activism in Brazil in recent years, particularly since 2013 when online activism initiatives based on a proudly right-wing gay identity started to spread on social media. Firstly, it seeks to identify the elements of the political environment that favoured this type of engagement. Then the emergence of this collective actor is analysed in two arenas (online social media and press) based on a triangulation of empirical data (virtual ethnography, documentary research in the press, and interviews with activists). Finally, the different styles of activism that appear to emerge from this process are analysed, thus identifying some challenges the phenomenon represents for the future of the LGBTQI+ struggle in Brazil.

RÉSUMÉ

« JE SUIS GAY ET LE MOUVEMENT LGBTQI+ NE ME REPRÉSENTE PAS » : UNE CARTOGRAPHIE DE L'ÉMERGENCE D'UN ACTIVISME GAY DE DROITE AU BRÉSIL

L'article vise à cartographier l'émergence d'un activisme gay de droite au Brésil ces dernières années, notamment à partir de 2013 lorsque les initiatives d'activisme en ligne basées sur une identité gay de droite revendiquée se sont multipliées sur les réseaux sociaux. Dans un premier temps, il cherche à analyser les variables de l'environnement politique qui ont favorisé ce type d'engagement. Ensuite, l'émergence de cet acteur collectif se reconstitue en deux arènes (réseaux sociaux et médias) à partir d'une triangulation de données empiriques (ethnographie virtuelle, recherche documentaire dans la presse et entretiens avec des militants). Enfin, les différents styles d'activisme qui semblent émerger de ce processus sont analysés, ainsi que certains des défis que cela représente pour la poursuite de la lutte pour les droits des LGBTQI+ au Brésil.

RESUMO

"SOU GAY E O MOVIMENTO LGBTQI+ NÃO ME REPRESENTA": MAPEANDO A EMERGÊNCIA DE UM ATIVISMO GAY À DIREITA NO BRASIL

O artigo busca mapear a emergência de um ativismo gay à direita no Brasil nos últimos anos, particularmente a partir de 2013, quando se multiplicaram nas redes sociais iniciativas de ativismo online baseadas em uma identidade gay orgulhosamente de direita. Em um primeiro momento, busca-se analisar as variáveis do ambiente político que favoreceram esse tipo de engajamento. Em seguida, a emergência deste "ator coletivo" é reconstituída em duas arenas (redes sociais online e meios de comunicação social), a partir de uma triangulação de dados empíricos (etnografia virtual, pesquisa documental na imprensa e entrevistas com ativistas). Ao final, são analisados os diferentes estilos de ativismo que parecem emergir deste processo, bem como alguns dos desafios que este fenômeno representa para a continuidade da luta pelos direitos LGBTQI+ no Brasil.

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KEYWORDS

- LGBTQI+
- Brazil
- right-wing gay activism
- conservative activism
- liberal activism

MOTS-CLÉS

- LGBTQI+
- Brésil
- gays de droite
- activisme conservateur
- activisme libéral

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

- LGBTQI+
- Brasil
- ativismo gay de direita
- ativismo conservador
- ativismo liberal



