

Crafting a Revolution, Creating a Generation: Sexuality, Sexual Expression, and the Youth in Cold War Brazil

Flavia Fernandez-Pita



University of
St Andrews

Supervised by Dr. James Fortuna
School of History, University of St Andrews
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On the ninth of August 1978, the newspaper *Lampião da Esquina* was the subject of a report by Rio de Janeiro's Delegation of Political and Social Order. The report condemned *Lampião's* publishing of immoral content and 'inciting homosexuality'.¹ *Lampião* was the first gay alternative newspaper that discussed politics, coming out of the closet and the gay scene in Brazil. Despite its short run, being in print only from 1978-1981, *Lampião* became one of the most important queer publications and was instrumental in the development of the Brazilian LGBTTT Movement, or the Homosexual Movement as it was called at the time. *Lampião*, its writers, readers and content were seen as deviant as they went against the regime's traditional, Catholic, and heterosexual cultural ideology.

This paper will examine the LGBTTT Movement in Brazil and the threat that it posed to Brazil's dictatorial government. Scholars like Cowan, Langlard and Brito view sexuality, and therefore homosexuality and the Homosexual Movement, as an 'active' threat. These authors explicitly state that sexual transgressiveness was a political, not just cultural, threat to the government.² On the other hand, there are academics that view sexuality as a 'passive' threat. Academics such as Cowan, Langlard and Brito argue that homosexuality was not a political or direct challenge to the regime. However, they might argue that it was a cultural threat to the regime. This cultural threat is what I would call 'passive' resistance. This type of resistance encompasses a person or community's apathy to, and their disengagement from, the government or ruling population's ideology or policies. Essentially, people who do not

¹ 'Perseguição Aos Homossexuais, Nas Artes, Na Administração E Até Nos Quartéis', *Documentos Revelados*, 1 February 2021, < <https://documentosrevelados.com.br/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/lampiao.pdf> > [accessed 9 June 2025].

² Academics that view sexuality as an active threat include: Antonio Mauricio Freitas Brito, "Um verdadeiro bacanal, uma coisa estúpida": Anticomunismo, sexualidade e juventude no tempo da ditadura', *Anos 90*, 26 (19 December 2019), pp. 1- 22; Benjamin Cowan, 'Sex and the Security State: Gender, Sexuality, and "Subversion" at Brazil's Escola Superior de Guerra, 1964-1985', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 16: 3 (2007), pp. 459-481; Benjamin Cowan, "Why Hasn't This Teacher Been Shot?" Moral-Sexual Panic, the Repressive Right, and Brazil's National Security State', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 92: 3 (1 August 2012), pp. 403-436; Victoria Langlard, 'Birth Control Pills and Molotov Cocktails: Reading Sex and Revolution in 1968 Brazil' in Gilbert M. Joseph, Daniela Spenser and Emily S. Rosenberg (eds.) *In from the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter with the Cold War*, (New York, 2008), pp. 308-349.

subscribe to their government's vision for the country, but do not actively do anything against it. The idea of 'passive' resistance is based on Yuri Fraccaroli's article "Dissidentes sexuais e de gênero e a ditadura civil-militar brasileira" where he hints at this type of resistance.³

Academics like Fraccaroli argue that this was the type of resistance that the LGBTTT community posed to the regime.⁴

The purpose of this paper is to bridge these two concepts together. The Homosexual Movement posed an active threat to the regime as sexual transgressiveness was a political threat to the military dictatorship. However, the LGBTTT movement's passive resistance was also a political threat, not just a cultural one, as it prevented the government from achieving Gramscian cultural hegemony, thus putting the regime's dominance at risk. For Gramsci, cultural hegemony refers to how the ruling class's culture and ideology serve to consolidate their rule, making it appear 'natural'.⁵ The existence and politicisation of the LGBTTT community posed a threat to the Brazilian military dictatorship as it went against the ruling class's values and worldview, thus preventing the regime from fully consolidating its power.

The research for this paper has focused around five main topics: the size of the Homosexual Movement, whether or not the queer community was politicised, the alienation of the Homosexual Movement from the wider democratisation movement, and the political and cultural threat the Homosexual Movement posed to the regime. There will also be a discussion on how American influence affected the LGBTTT Movement. The development of sexuality among the youth was central to the regime's actions, repression and it created a

³ Yuri Fraccaroli, 'Dissidentes sexuais e de gênero e a ditadura civil-militar brasileira: entre a memória política e as memórias cotidianas', *Revista Uruguaya de Ciencia Política*, 31:1 (2022), pp. 25-53.

⁴ For academics who view sexuality as a passive threat, see: Fraccaroli, 'Dissidentes sexuais e de gênero e a ditadura civil-militar brasileira'; James N. Green, *Beyond Carnival: Male Homosexuality in Twentieth Century Brazil* (Chicago, 1999); Rodrigo Meirelles and Aurea Maria Zöllner Ianni, 'O preventivismo e os homossexuais no contexto da ditadura militar brasileira: uma análise a partir das contribuições de Sérgio Arouca', *Interface*, 24 (Botucatu, 2020), 1-16; Durval Muniz de Albuquerque Jr., Rodrigo Ceballos and Laurence Hallewell, 'Urban Trails, Human Traps: The Construction of Territories of Pleasure and Pain in the Lives of Male Homosexuals in the Brazilian Northeast in the 1970s and 1980s'. *Latin American Perspectives* 29: 2 (2002), pp. 139-162.

⁵ Antonio Gramsci, "State and Civil Society", in A. Sharma and A. Gupta (eds) *Anthropology of the State* (Oxford, 2006) p. 78.

firmly established insecurity in their power. This insecurity would be heightened as the democratisation movement gained force and with it the LBTT Movement.

As the Homosexual Movement grew, so did its potential to undermine the regime, however, the type of threat this was is subject to debate. Cowan is perhaps the historian most adamant in seeing sexuality as an active threat to the Brazilian dictatorship. Cowan argues that the regime, especially the Escola Superior de Guerra [Higher War College], believed that the youth's sexuality posed a threat to national security as it created communists, social and moral degeneration which made it an enemy of the state. He also argues that sexual transgressiveness was a direct threat to the civil-military dictatorship.⁶ Thus, he sees sexuality and sexual transgressiveness as having been an active threat to the regime.

Langlard argues similarly to Cowan as she believes that revolutionary activities stemmed from deviant sexuality, in particular women's sexuality. Langlard argues that the left and female sexuality posed an equal threat to the government.⁷ Despite Langlard focusing on women's sexual liberation rather than homosexuality, it is part of the same phenomenon of sexual deviance as at the time what defined a white, middle-class woman (the main focus of her article) was sexual purity, and sexual liberation posed a real threat to this ideal. This relates Muniz de Albuquerque Jr., Ceballos and Hallewell's argument that homosexuality threatened the much revered 'macho' stereotype of a Northeastern man.⁸ In this way, homosexuality and women's sexuality both posed a very significant threat to the regime. Langlard argues that the regime linked female sexuality and their political activities as a way to discredit and silence their political activism.⁹ Essentially, she makes the connection between sexuality and the state explicit. Brito argues similarly to Langlard, that the regime and media's over-emphasis on the sexual activity of young activists discredited leftist

⁶ Cowan, 'Sex and the Security State', p. 464; Cowan, "'Why Hasn't This Teacher Been Shot?'" p. 410-411.

⁷ Langlard, 'Birth Control Pills and Molotov Cocktails' p. 309 and p. 344.

⁸ Muniz de Albuquerque Jr., Ceballos and Hallewell, 'Urban Trails, Human Traps', p. 147.

⁹ Langlard, 'Birth Control Pills and Molotov Cocktails', p.344.

demonstrations.¹⁰ Thus, placing Brito, alongside Cowan and Langlard in seeing sexuality as an active threat to the regime.

Despite Muniz de Albuquerque et al. arguing somewhat similarly to Langlard, they fall into the category of sexuality being a passive threat. The authors view homosexuality as a cultural threat, especially in a conservative region like the Northeast but they do not see the LGBTT movement as a political threat. They claim that militant gay groups had only appeared in a few state capitals, like Rio and São Paulo, implying that the movement was not as strong in the Northeast.¹¹ There is some truth in this statement, there were more militant gay groups in the Middle South, however, one of the biggest and most prominent groups, the Grupo Gay da Bahia (GGB), was from the Northeastern Region. The GGB had connections with international militant gay groups as it was a member of the International Gay Association (IGA) and of the International Association of Black and White Men Together (IABWMT).¹² Therefore, the argument that the Homosexual Movement was not as strong in the Northeast is not accurate. Muniz de Albuquerque et al.'s also article missed an opportunity to discuss how homosexuality was a threat not just because it opposed the stereotypical Northeastern male, but also because it was seen as something foreign that was being imposed on the Northeast by the more progressive state capitals of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

Finally, Green, who is perhaps the most prominent scholar of the Homosexual Movement in dictatorial Brazil, views the LGBTT Movement as a 'passive' threat to the regime. This is seen in his book *Beyond Carnival*. In the chapter "*Down with Repression: More Love and More Desire, 1969-1980*", Green argues that the reason behind the strict

¹⁰ Brito, "Um verdadeiro bacanal, uma coisa estúpida", p.4, 16 and James N. Green, "Who Is the Macho Who Wants to Kill Me?" Male Homosexuality, Revolutionary Masculinity, and the Brazilian Armed Struggle of the 1960s and 1970s', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 92: 3 (1 August 2012), p. 450.

¹¹ Muniz de Albuquerque Jr., Ceballos and Hallewell, 'Urban Trails, Human Traps', pp. 143-147.

¹² Curitiba, O Centro de Documentação Prof. Dr. Luiz Mott (CEDOC), Grupo Gay da Bahia (GGB), Boletim do Grupo Gay da Bahia - nº 8 - Ano III - Janeiro de 1984, 1984.

ensorship of homosexuality in the arts but seeming tolerance of gay spaces like bars and steam houses was that the regime did not see these places as a direct challenge to the regime as they were enclosed spaces.¹³ However, he disregards very significant acts of violence against the LGBTT community within these enclosed spaces. For instance, in November 1980 police commissioner José Wilson Richetti launched Operação Sapatão, which saw the mass-detention of Lesbian women who frequented bars like Ferro's Bar, Bixiguiha and Cachação, all lesbian bars in São Paulo.¹⁴ This was a large-scale act of queer repression that shows that the government did see these enclosed spaces as significant to the safety of the state and regime. Therefore, his book can easily be placed in the 'passive' threat category.

Therefore, academics are divided on how to accurately describe the way the LGBTT Movement endangered the regime. Historians that view the movement as an active threat include Brito, Cowan and Langlard. They view sexual liberation and the Homosexual Movement's militancy as being able to jeopardize the regime politically and culturally, whereas historians like Fraccaroli, Green and Muniz de Albuquerque Jr., Ceballos and Hallewell view the Movement's threat as only cultural. A notable gap in the research is the lack of an explicit link between the cultural and political threats. They are treated as separate issues when the cultural threats were a political threat to the regime. This paper will aim to fill this gap in the research on the LGBTT Movement in dictatorial Brazil.

Primarily, the paper aims to explore the relationship the LGBTT Movement had to the state in dictatorial Brazil. This required extensive research into existing secondary literature on the LGBTT Movement, the left and the state. The primary material discussed in this paper are exclusively digitised sources. As such, the question was approached through a thorough analysis of newspaper articles from publications like Folha de São Paulo, Manchete, Lampião

¹³ Green, *Beyond Carnival*. pp. 248-249.

¹⁴ Curitiba, O Centro de Documentação Prof. Dr. Luiz Mott (CEDOC), Grupo Somos de Afirmação Homossexual, Carta Aberta a Imprensa e a População, 1980.

de Esquina and Capadô, as well as digitised archival documents from a wide range of LGBTT political organisations. These archival documents are from the CEDOC online archive and they range from bulletins to public letters to the press and government. These sources were used to investigate how the Homosexual Movement interacted with the regime, and how the different groups within the Movement were able to express their opinions to the government, thus giving valuable insight on the relationship between the two. From this discussion emerged questions such as how far did the LGBTT Movement threaten the regime and the extent of the LGBTT community's politicisation.

Many of these primary and secondary sources argue that the LGBTT community was not very politicised because gay groups were small or stagnant.¹⁵ While individual groups within the Homosexual Movement movement might have been small, this is not entirely relevant as the movement still had a significant impact on politics and the groups were very interconnected. The groups within the Movement were well connected as they were constantly collaborating with each other and with other groups from the civil rights movement. After Operação Sapatão, fifteen groups signed an open letter to the press, among them were the Lesbian-Feminist Action Group or GALF, Somos: grupo de afirmação homossexual (the first and biggest gay political group) and a variety of other feminist groups. Furthermore, in June 1980 LGBTT, Black Lives Matter, Feminist and Leftist groups came together to protest an increase in police brutality in major cities.¹⁶ Moreover, multiple gay groups within the movement, like the GGB and Nos Também had international ties, thus

¹⁵ Muniz de Albuquerque Jr., Ceballos and Hallelwell, 'Urban Trails, Human Traps', pp. 143-147; Curitiba, O Centro de Documentação Prof. Dr. Luiz Mott (CEDOC), GD.III. 0742, Dr. Luiz Mott, Convênio entre a BEMFAM e o Grupo Gay da Bahia, 1989; Curitiba, O Centro de Documentação Prof. Dr. Luiz Mott (CEDOC), Grupo Ade Dudu, Programação do II EBHO - 13 a 15 de janeiro de 1984, 1984; Curitiba, O Centro de Documentação Prof. Dr. Luiz Mott (CEDOC), Grupo Ade Dudu, Convocatória e proposta para o II EBHO-1983, 1983; Nascimento, M. and F. Brandt, 'Terra Maria- Opção Lésbica', *Corpo*, November 1980, p.3. < <https://cedoc.grupodignidade.org.br/wp-content/uploads/tainacan-items/12625/12647/Somos-Boletim-Corpo-no-0-Experimental-Novembro-1980.pdf> > [accessed 9 June 2025].

¹⁶ Curitiba, O Centro de Documentação Prof. Dr. Luiz Mott (CEDOC), Grupo Somos de Afirmação Homossexual, Carta Aberta a Imprensa e a População, 1980; Curitiba, O Centro de Documentação Prof. Dr. Luiz Mott (CEDOC), Grupo Somos de Afirmação Homossexual, Ato público contra a repressão policial, 1980.

showing that they were part of a wider movement for LGBTT rights.¹⁷ The interconnectivity and cooperation between these groups and even with international groups means that the size of the individual groups was not particularly damaging to the movement.

The LGBTT community as well as the wider movement was politicised. LGBTT groups like the GGB and BEFAM stated that there was a lack of political consciousness among the LGBTT community, which was not entirely true.¹⁸ While there was definitely space for growth and more activism, the community that was 'out' seems to have been politicised. Despite there being very few Lesbian groups, with GALF being the most important one, these groups were still really successful and were able to rally support from their community. On the 23rd of July, 1983, a handful of GALF activists walked into Ferro's Bar, a lesbian bar in São Paulo, to sell their magazine *Chana com Chana* when they were thrown out of the bar and told they could not sell their magazine there. In a matter of hours, the group was able to rally a mass of over thirty people inside of the small bar, including a lawyer and a politician.¹⁹ The capacity to organise so quickly is indicative of the politicisation of the Lesbian community. Lesbian groups were also internationally connected as GALF had a direct line of communication with the National Organization for the Advancement of Lesbian and Gay Couples in California, which shows that there was exchange of ideas and news between Lesbian groups in Brazil and the United States.²⁰

LGBTT groups in general, but particularly in the United States were aligned to the left. The development of nuclear weapons meant the USSR could not directly attack the United States and the West in general during the Cold War. Instead the Soviets opted to

¹⁷ Curitiba, O Centro de Documentação Prof. Dr. Luiz Mott (CEDOC), GD.III.0949, Boletim do Grupo Nos Também 1, October 1981.

¹⁸ Curitiba, O Centro de Documentação Prof. Dr. Luiz Mott (CEDOC), GD.III. 0742, Dr. Luiz Mott, Convênio entre a BEMFAM e o Grupo Gay da Bahia, 1989.

¹⁹ Curitiba, O Centro de Documentação Prof. Dr. Luiz Mott (CEDOC), De olho no pedaço, 1983; Curitiba, O Centro de Documentação Prof. Dr. Luiz Mott (CEDOC), Carlos Brickmann, A noite em que as lésbicas invadiram seu próprio bar, 1983.

²⁰ Curitiba, O Centro de Documentação Prof. Dr. Luiz Mott (CEDOC), Associação Galf - Informativo de julho, 31 July 1987.

encourage the development of communist parties and groups inside Western countries to overthrow their democratic governments. This led Western governments, including Brazil, to believe that groups that would jeopardize their rule would come from within one's nation.²¹ This fear was stronger in the United States as they were directly involved in the conflict, however, because the Brazilian regime's coup d'état was backed by the United States, the connection between GALF and other groups like the GGB to American leftist groups would have been very threatening to the regime. Furthermore, the low number of Lesbian groups compared to political groups for gay men, indicates that the Lesbian community was less interested in politics. Thus, the rapid organisation of Lesbians during Ferro's Bar indicates that the LGBTT community was very politicised as even the least politically involved faction of the community was able to rapidly rally support for their cause.

Another criticism of the Homosexual Movement was that it was not a nation-wide movement as it was restricted to the Middle South.²² This is partially correct as in 1980 there were twenty-two gay groups in Brazil, and over a quarter of them were in São Paulo alone.²³ However, this is to be expected as São Paulo was the biggest city in Brazil, but it does not mean that the movement was only prevalent in São Paulo as the LGBTT Movement was present throughout Brazil. Groups existed in other areas like the Northeast, which has historically been the most conservative and traditional region in Brazil. The most important of these groups was the GGB which, alongside Somos, happened to be one of the most important groups in Brazil. Furthermore, Nós Também, a gay group, was founded in 1981 by students and professors of the Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB) located in the Northeast.

²¹ Maria Helena Moreira Alves, 'Cultures of Fear, Cultures of Resistance: The New Labor Movement in Brazil' in Juan E. Corradi, Patricia Weiss Fagen and Manuel Antonio Garretón (eds.), *Fear at the Edge: State Terror and Resistance in Latin America* (Berkeley, 1992), p. 188.

²² Muniz de Albuquerque Jr., Ceballos and Hallewell, 'Urban Trails, Human Traps', pp. 143-147.

²³ O Centro de Documentação Prof. Dr. Luiz Mott (CEDOC), GD.III. 0742, Dr. Luiz Mott, Convênio entre a BEMFAM e o Grupo Gay da Bahia, 1989; Nascimento, M. and F. Brandt, 'Terra Maria- Opção Lésbica', Corpo, November 1980, p.3. < <https://cedoc.grupodignidade.org.br/wp-content/uploads/tainacan-items/12625/12647/Somos-Boletim-Corpo-no-0-Experimental-Novembro-1980.pdf> > [accessed 9 June 2025].

Nós Também lasted until 1983, but its impact was very significant as it introduced the topic of homosexuality to academic and public spaces. They hosted Tjerk Von Den Berg, a Danish queer rights activist which shows that even smaller groups from the Northeast, not just the GGB, had international connections, which is indicative of a high level of political organisation and international exchange.²⁴ Clearly, the LGBTT Movement was not limited to the metropolitan areas of the Middle South.

The movement was not only geographically widespread, it was also capable of organising effective campaigns. In 1981 the Homosexual Movement launched a campaign to remove Paragraph 302.0 of the INAMPS Health Code. Paragraph 302.0 stated that homosexuality was a mental deviation and disorder.²⁵ The paragraph was revoked after successful gay activism in 1985. The GGB was at the forefront of this fight as they started campaigning for the removal of Paragraph 302.0 in July of 1981, at the annual conference of the Sociedade Brasileira para o Progresso da Ciencia [Brazilian Society for Scientific Progress]. In a week, they managed to get 5000 signatures in favour of the paragraph's removal. As of 1984 they had 16,222 signatures from people throughout Brazil. Among the signatories, there were 288 politicians and the old president of the Bar Association of Brazil. Among the politicians there were five that were in senior positions: one governor, one vice-governor, two mayors and a senator.²⁶ Therefore, the movement was able to rally upper and middle-class supporters from professions the regime would have seen as 'respectable', like politics and law, showing the Movement's success in gaining support outside of the queer community.

²⁴ Curitiba, O Centro de Documentação Prof. Dr. Luiz Mott (CEDOC), GD.III.0949, Boletim do Grupo Nos Também 1, October 1981.

²⁵ Curitiba, O Centro de Documentação Prof. Dr. Luiz Mott (CEDOC), Grupo Gay da Bahia (GGB), Boletim do Grupo Gay da Bahia - nº 8 - Ano III - Janeiro de 1984, 1984.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

Yet, support from organisations outside the LGBTTT Movement was not always consistent. The left's homophobia alienated queer people and activists, which made it difficult for the LGBTTT community to feel accepted in leftist organisations and made the left hesitant to work with the LGBTTT Movement. The left wanted to separate itself from the Homosexual Movement for ideological reasons as Marxism linked homosexuality with bourgeois behaviour.²⁷ Another, perhaps more important reason was the LGBTTT Movement's international connections which have already been discussed at length in this paper. The influence that American-based organisations like the IGA and the IABWMT had on the movement helped alienate the LGBTTT Movement from the leftist and the democratisation movement.²⁸ Green argues that the left alienated the Homosexual movement due to the left's anti-imperialist sentiment as homosexual behaviour was allied to foreign (mainly American) influences.²⁹ Similarly, Brito argues that anti-communist sentiment was fuelled by the moral outrage present in Brazilian politics as a result of the seemingly 'foreign' cultural, and sexual, revolution of the 1960s.³⁰ The movement's foreign ties alienated them from the wider democratisation movement, thus making the movement appear as separate from it when in reality they fought a similar battle. The formation of the LGBTTT Movement as a socio-cultural political opposition was what the regime was worried about, and why the movement was a threat.

However, the most important reason behind the LGBTTT Movement's isolation from the left was that the right would use the youth's sexual promiscuity to discredit leftist organisations and the democratisation movement. The regime constantly linked immorality with expressions of sexuality and the LGBTTT Movement.³¹ Luis Carlos Maciel wrote a

²⁷ Green, 'Who Is the Macho Who Wants to Kill Me?', p. 450.

²⁸ Curitiba, O Centro de Documentação Prof. Dr. Luiz Mott (CEDOC), Grupo Gay da Bahia (GGB), Boletim do Grupo Gay da Bahia - nº 8 - Ano III - Janeiro de 1984, 1984.

²⁹ Green, 'Who Is the Macho Who Wants to Kill Me?', p. 450.

³⁰ Brito, "Um verdadeiro bacanal, uma coisa estúpida", p. 7.

³¹ Cowan, 'Sex and the Security State', p. 481.

column for the newspaper *O Pasquim* about psychologist Wilhem Reich's view on sexual perversion. This was a thinly veiled attack on the government's commentary on the sexual revolution. Maciel used Reich's work to criticise not only the older generation's puritanical ideas, but also the regime as they linked immorality with sexual liberation.³² The column was published two years before the start of the dictatorship, however it is still relevant to this research as it shows that the connection between homosexuality and immorality was deeply rooted in Brazil's government structures. The right's association between sexuality, the left and immorality made it possible for the right to discredit and reduce the number of leftist and anti-dictatorial organisations as the label of 'immoral' likely prevented more traditional and religious communities from joining the fight for democracy.³³ The left further attempted to eradicate the connection between itself and sexuality and sexual promiscuity by ensuring that their revolutionaries' actions aligned with the stereotypical male revolutionary, which was hyper-masculine and heterosexual. Atencio refers to this framework as a "heteronormative strait-jacket".³⁴ The alienation of the LGBTTT Movement was, therefore, also a pragmatic decision as the inclusion of queer or sexually active individuals into the political realm was seen as capable of undermining the leftist movement, thus showing how significant a threat homosexuality and the youth's sexual expression were thought to be.

There were some exceptions to this alienation as some leftist organisations collaborated with groups within the Homosexual Movement. The most striking example is the *Convergencia Socialista* [Socialist Convergence] as they had a homosexual faction. Another example is the gay group *Beira de Esquina* who hosted a debate with a

³² Maciel, Luis Carlos, 'Finalmente, Wilhelm Reich', *O Pasquim*, Rio de Janeiro, 1962, pp.28-29. <https://memoria.bn.gov.br/docreader/DocReader.aspx?bib=124745&pagfis=324> [accessed 06 June 2025]

³³ Brito, 'Um verdadeiro bacanal, uma coisa estúpida', p. 7.

³⁴ Rebecca J. Atencio, 'Struggle at the Margins: Intersections of Gender, Race, and Sexuality in Brazil's Literature of Revolution' in Amanda Holmes and Par Kumaraswami (eds.), *Latin American Literature in Transition 1930–1980*, (Cambridge, 2022), p. 89.

representative of the Workers' Party.³⁵ However, these collaborations resulted in frustration from the LGBTTT Movement and the politicised queer community as very often political parties would use queer people to campaign for them, but in return the heterosexual members of leftist movements would not advocate for queer rights, nor publicly denounce or fight against homophobia.³⁶ In fact, James N. Green, who was as a part of Somos and the Convergencia Socialista's homosexual faction, argues that the left was relatively hostile to the Homosexual Movement.³⁷ The political alienation from the left was complex as there were some elements of the left who were open to collaboration, but acceptance and public support from the left was more rare.

The LGBTTT Movement's alienation from the wider democratisation movement meant that the Movement was a separate, organised grouping, which was capable of challenging the regime. Like the left, it was a political threat to the regime. Somos, in an interview to the newspaper *Capadó* continuously stressed that it was a political organisation. They said that students and teachers held 'congress' and said that they too held congress, putting it at the same level as more mainstream, dissident movements like students and professors, but still maintaining that they were separate from these movements.³⁸ The Homosexual Movement purposefully presented itself as separate from the left as the connection between left wing or socialist parties and the LGBTTT Movement was seen as something undesirable.³⁹

³⁵ Curitiba, O Centro de Documentação Prof. Dr. Luiz Mott (CEDOC), GD.III.0952, Movimento homossexual na Paraíba.

³⁶ Penteadó, Darcey, 'Bichinhas sonhando com o poder', *Lampião da Esquina*, July 1980, p. 2. https://cedoc.grupodignidade.org.br/jornal-lampiao-da-esquina-1978-1981/25-ed-jornal-lampiao-da-esquina-junho1980-2/?perpage=48&order=ASC&orderby=date&pos=26&source_list=collection&ref=%2Fjornal-lampiao-da-esquina-1978-1981%2F%3Fperpage%3D48%26view_mode%3Dcards%26paged%3D1%26order%3DASC%26orderby%3Ddate%26fetch_only%3Dthumbnail%252Ccreation_date%252Ctitle%252Cdescription%26fetch_only_meta%3D

³⁷ Green, 'Who Is the Macho Who Wants to Kill Me?', p. 440; James N. Green 'The LGBTTT Movement, the Brazilian Left, and the Process of Democratization', in Luis Felipe Miguel, and Vladimir Puzone (eds.), *The Brazilian Left in the 21st Century* (Cham, 2019), pp. 187-8.

³⁸ Pombas, Ora. 'Nos estamos em homossexualidade', *Capadó*, São Paulo, August 1980, p.1-5. accessed [10 June 2025].

³⁹ 'Autonomia dois anos depois', *O Corpo*, São Paulo, December 1982 to January 1983, p. 5. [accessed 10 June 2025].

Additionally, the GGB was adamant in aligning themselves and supporting the party which would provide them with the most benefits.⁴⁰ This pragmatic thinking shows that groups within the Homosexual Movement were not necessarily affiliated with socialist parties or leftist ideology even if, in practice, the left would be more open to working with the LGBTT Movement than right-wing parties. Overall, the Homosexual Movement was not a subsection of the leftist movement as it was a movement in its own right with committed activists.

The movement's drive to include homosexuality into academic spaces highlights how it was a separate political threat as universities were focal points for anti-government activism. The inclusion of queer political activism into academic spaces cemented the LGBTT Movement's anti-dictatorial position, they were not just demanding gay rights, they were demanding an end to the dictatorship. In 1982 the group Dialogay, the first gay group from the state of Sergipe in the Northeast, collaborated with the GGB and with student groups like the Diretório Central dos Estudantes, Ascom, Proest and Cultart to create an academic conference to deliver lectures such as the history and anthropology of homosexuality, communication and homosexuality and political parties and homosexuality.⁴¹ The group Dialogay also invited politicians to discuss homosexuality, proving that the movement was promoting active participation between queer activists and politicians which the regime would have undoubtedly seen as dangerous as the LGBTT community was coming out of enclosed spaces and into an area where the regime thought they had ultimate power: mainstream politics. Langlard goes so far as to argue that the left and sexuality were equally alarming to the press and the regime.⁴² Her discussion of middle-class femininity as defined by whiteness and sexual purity can also be said of homosexuality as the masculinity and virility that defined the conservative man came in opposition to the stereotypical gay

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p. 5.

⁴¹ Curitiba, O Centro de Documentação Prof. Dr. Luiz Mott (CEDOC), Grupo Dialogay, Dialogay promove ciclo de palestras, 1982.

⁴² Langlard, 'Birth Control Pills and Molotov Cocktails' p. 309.

man, who was seen as effeminate and weak.⁴³ Therefore, the blending of academic, queer and political arenas would have been threatening to the regime.

The most important political threat that the Homosexual Movement's posed to the regime was that it demanded change from the Brazilian government and a space for the LGBTT community. In 1983, the GGB became the first gay group to be legally recognised as a "sociedade civil" or a non-governmental organisation. There was a strong opposition to granting the GGB the recognition of "sociedade civil" despite it being a constitutional right for an organised group like the GGB to be granted that legal recognition. Yet, the group was able to successfully force the registry office to legally recognise and register their organisation as a "sociedade civil" via a court order.⁴⁴ Similarly, when the Constitution was being drafted, constituents resisted adding protections for the LGBTT community such as making discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation illegal.⁴⁵ This is evidence of the relative success of the Homosexual Movement in demanding change as gay rights were being discussed in Parliament. Despite the constitutional amendment being rejected, the possibility of introducing said amendment and the debate that was had in Parliament and society at large is evidence to the movement's resilience and determination. These examples, as well as the removal of paragraph 302.0 of the INAMPS shows that the Homosexual Movement had an influence on politics and the government. Therefore, the view that the LGBTT Movement was a political threat to the regime is accurate as the movement accomplished their goal of bringing discussions about homosexuality into the open. This went against the regime's plans as they wanted to keep homosexuality in enclosed spaces, as Green argues.⁴⁶

⁴³ *Ibid.* p. 320.

⁴⁴ O Centro de Documentação Prof. Dr. Luiz Mott (CEDOC), GD.III. 0742, Dr. Luiz Mott, Convênio entre a BEMFAM e o Grupo Gay da Bahia, 1989. p. 3.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* p. 2.

⁴⁶ Green, *Beyond Carnival*. pp. 248-249.

The cultural plan the regime had created for Brazil actively rejected the queer community. The LGBTTT community went against the regime's ideas for society as homosexuality went against the nuclear family. Furthermore, Catholicism saw homosexuality as a sin and despite the dictatorship not being Catholic, it still used Catholic moral teachings as a base for their 'ideal' society. This can be inferred from one of Antônio Chysóstomo's articles for *Lampião*, which is an account of two gay men at the club Sótão, in Rio de Janeiro. This couple are frequently seen at the club, always together, and were being subtly physically affectionate with each other. Chyóstomo highlights how one of the men was rich, studious, hard-working, as he was studying and working simultaneously, and family-oriented as he would frequently skate with his brother.⁴⁷ A main purpose of the article is to disprove the regime's idea that was imposed onto the population that queer people were all sexually promiscuous and that their relationships were adulterous and only based on lust, when they could be monogamous and filled with love. The purpose of this article, therefore, is indicative of how the regime framed the LGBTTT community, showing that they viewed the community in opposition to the ideals of family and monogamy that the regime so clearly upheld. These ideals were also threatened by the regime's view of communism, where the nuclear family and Catholic traditions were seen as something to attack. Therefore, the communist and the homosexual threat were seen similarly and thus sexuality was a security risk, much like communism.

The regime saw the movement as a cultural risk as the government saw homosexuality as as a moral and therefore a cultural threat to the regime and the Brazilian population at large. Government officials framed themselves as the guardians of public morality and claimed that they were protecting the population from the deviant queer

⁴⁷ Antônio Chysóstomo, 'Algumas historias de amor', *Lampião da Esquina*, 25 June to 25 July 1978, p. 3.

community.⁴⁸ In a wave of arrests of transgender people in Salvador from January 1980 to May 1981, the police's justified their arrests by claiming they were guilty of 'public indecency' when they were in fact just existing in a public space.⁴⁹ This shows that the LGBTT community leaving these 'enclosed' spaces was seen as dangerous, making it a threat. Furthermore, Darcey Penteado wrote for *Lampião* that those who claim that homosexuality is immoral and bad for society at large are prejudiced and, most importantly, ignorant.⁵⁰ This is indicative of the regime's claim that the queer community was immoral, and thus a public enemy. Penteado discussed morality, which is what the government used against the LGBTT community, in order to make a subtle attack on the regime and government officials. The LGBTT community was a security risk because they passively resisted the regime by existing in public spaces, and it was also an active threat as members of the community like Penteado and Maciel attacked the government through thinly veiled commentary articles.

Sexuality and homosexuality was therefore an important barrier to the regime's control of the population, making them both cultural as well as political risks. Alves argues that the dictatorial regime achieved control through both physical coercion, or force, and psychological repression. The regime aimed to make people, especially dissidents, feel "uninformed, separate, fragmented, and powerless".⁵¹ This is seen in Operação Sapatão as the women arrested were not engaging in any sort of political action, they were merely existing in a queer space. The police's justification for the incarceration of these women was that they were 'sapatão[s]', a Brazilian slur for Lesbian.⁵² This undoubtedly made the women feel

⁴⁸ Green, 'Who Is the Macho Who Wants to Kill Me?', p. 447; Cowan, 'Sex and the Security State', p. 481.

⁴⁹ Curitiba, O Centro de Documentação Prof. Dr. Luiz Mott (CEDOC), Grupo Gay da Bahia (GGB), Guia Gay da Bahia, 1980

⁵⁰ Penteado, Darcey, 'Homossexualismo: que coisa é essa?', *Lampião da Esquina*, 25 June to 25 July 1978, p. 2.

⁵¹ Maria Helena Moreira Alves, 'Cultures of Fear, Cultures of Resistance: The New Labor Movement in Brazil' in Juan E. Corradi, Patricia Weiss Fagen and Manuel Antonio Garretón (eds.), *Fear at the Edge: State Terror and Resistance in Latin America* (Berkeley, 1992), pp. 189-190.

⁵² Curitiba, O Centro de Documentação Prof. Dr. Luiz Mott (CEDOC), Grupo Somos de Afirmação Homossexual, Carta Aberta a Imprensa e a População, 1980.

alienated, scared and powerless at the situation as they had not been actively doing anything illegal, rather their mere existence was seen as dangerous to public morality and the regime. This large-scale act of queer repression shows that the government saw the mere existence of Lesbians, and thus the entire LGBTTT community, as a significant threat. They were not being politically threatening to the regime, rather they were a cultural threat as they went against the society the regime had 'sketched out'.⁵³ They were passively resisting the regime, which threatened the status quo and the regime's consolidation of their power. Thus, the queer community's passive resistance was threatening enough to the regime, making political action or defiance unnecessary.

Sexuality, homosexuality and the LGBTTT Movement threatened the regime's idea for society in the same way that communism did. The movement was an active agent in the democratic movement. By perpetuating the idea that the movement and sexuality were insignificant in not only dissidence but also in the process of democratisation, academics risk hindering an historical understanding of the regime and the democratisation movement. Acts of government violence like Operação Sapatão and the incarceration of eighty-two *travestis* in Salvador shows that the government saw homosexuality as a threat. Homosexuality was in direct opposition to the regime's cultural ideology as it was seen as the antithesis of the nuclear family. The queer community was seen as promiscuous because their sexual activity would never result in reproduction. This impossibility of reproduction in same-sex relations made the government view the LGBTTT community's sexual activities as driven purely by lust, one of the Catholic Church's deadly sins. This threatened the regime as LGBTTT people were seen to be immoral and their existence in public or private spaces was seen as dissident. Similarly, the LGBTTT Movement's robust international connections, as well as their ability to collaborate with politicians and some leftist organisations shows that they were also a

⁵³ Gramsci, 'State and Civil Society', p. 81.

political threat. The Homosexual Movement did not have to be the most politically threatening movement to be seen as a liability and dangerous.

Even within the democratisation movement homosexuality was rejected as it was thought of as anti-revolutionary. A gay man, or the left's view of him, went against the revolutionary macho ideal, and thus was threatening to the left's cultural, as well as political ideology. The regime's homophobic ideals also contributed to a strained relationship between the LGBTTT Movement and the rest of the democratisation movement as the Homosexual Movement was seen as capable of undermining the leftist cause as it was perceived to be too foreign and too different from the status quo. In labelling the left as queer and therefore immoral, the regime alienated the left from a substantial part of the population such as the more religious sectors of Brazilian society. This created resentment from the left towards the LGBTTT Movement. The state and homosexuality were in a constant altercation, even if it did not always erupt into violent repression.

Researching the LGBTTT Movement in Brazil is more than compensatory history. The Movement played an important role in democratisation and in how the regime responded to anti-dictatorial groups. Homosexuality went against the very foundations of the regime as it was seen to attack religion, the nuclear family and thus the traditional way of life the regime aimed to impose onto the population. The youth's sexuality prevented hegemony and ideological domination which resulted in an insecure rule that had to rely on violence and thus helped render the regime a failure.

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