

Marriage in Prison: Identity and Marital Agencies in a LGBT Wing¹

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Abstract: This article discusses the conception of marriage in a wing for homosexuals, bisexuals, transvestites and transsexual women and their companions in a Brazilian male prison. Marriage is an emic term for the analysis of the field here understood as politic, both identity and conjugality-related. Grounded Theory was used as a methodological dimension, in order to make it possible to gain understandings about the strategic forms of agency in the prison territory engendered by persons imprisoned in this wing. Eight interviews of narrative character were carried out with people from the wing. The results indicate that this political process is associated with the experiences of violence, affection and resistance, forming a space for negotiation, whose meanings are strained daily.

Keywords: sexuality, gender, trans women, homosexuality, prison discipline

Casamento no Cárcere: Agenciamentos Identitários e Conjugais em uma Galeria LGBT

Resumo: O presente artigo discute a concepção de casamento em uma galeria direcionada a homossexuais, bissexuais, travestis e mulheres transexuais e seus companheiros em um presídio masculino. Casamento é um dos termos êmicos chave para a análise dos campos aqui compreendidos como políticos, tanto identitários como de conjugabilidade. Utilizou-se a Teoria Fundamentada como dimensão metodológica, de modo a possibilitar compreensões situadas acerca das formas estratégicas de agenciamento no território carcerário engendrado por pessoas em detenção. Foram realizadas oito entrevistas de caráter narrativo com pessoas da galeria. Os resultados apontam que os processos políticos se associam às experiências de violência, afeto e resistência, configurando um espaço de negociação cujos sentidos se tensionam cotidianamente.

Palavras-chave: sexualidade, gênero, mulher trans, homossexualidade, disciplina na prisão

Matrimonio en la Cárcel: Agenciamentos Identitários y Conyugales en una Galería LGBT

Resumen: En este artículo se analiza la concepción del matrimonio en una galería para los homosexuales, bisexuales, travestis y mujeres transexuales y sus compañeros en una prisión masculina brasileña. Matrimonio es un término émico clave para los campos de análisis aquí entendidos como políticos, tanto en término de identidad como de conyugalidad. Se utilizó la Teoría Fundamentada como dimensión metodológica con el fin de permitir entendimientos acerca de las formas estratégicas de agencia en el territorio de la prisión engendradas por las personas detenidas. Se realizaron ocho entrevistas de carácter narrativo con personas en la Galería. Los resultados muestran los procesos políticos están asociados con experiencias de violencia, afecto y resistencia, el establecimiento de un espacio de cambios cuyos sentidos están cotidianamente en tensión.

Palabras clave: sexualidad, género, mujeres trans, homosexualidad, disciplina en la prisión

Brazil has one of the fastest-growing prison populations in the world, involving a complex panorama related to issues involving race, age, gender and purchasing power (Freixo, 2016). The social mechanisms which seek to

maintain disciplinary order, such as the prison system, are engendered in perverse and selective mechanisms in relations to which they are the subjects preferentially capturable. These relationships are interconnected to social markers as in, for example, the discrepancy in terms of age (55.07% of the prison population is aged between 18 and 29 years old), race (61.67% is black or of mixed African and European descent), education (75.08% of prisoners have only been educated to junior high level) and gender (94.2% of prisoners are male) (Ministério da Justiça, 2014). The current situation of the prison population composes what may be termed as a certain “legislative vacuum” (Soares Filho & Bueno, 2016, p. 2000),

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a situation created by the failure to guarantee basic rights, although these are declared in the Constitution. The violation of rights, overcrowding and absence of individualization in sentencing are all factors recognized as being present in the Brazilian penal system. They are aspects that require contextual reading beyond the paths opened by authors such as Foucault (2014), who dedicated himself to understanding the systems of surveillance, control and scrutinizing of the incarcerated bodies.

The Brazilian panorama has acquired other traits, as one can see when one considers cissexism, that is, the process “resulting from sexual binarism or dimorphism, which is based in the stereotyped view that biological characteristics related to sex correspond to psychosocial characteristics related to gender” (Jesus, 2012, p. 28), which constitutes the prison system, either in its legal dimensions or in the material nature of the prisons. Some studies, accompanying forms of activism already being articulated, have pointed to how these discursive dimensions of heteronormativity and cishnormativity (normative dimensions based in the premise of “consistency”, whether heterosexual or in relation to gender-body relationships) actualize violences and links to the forms of normalization in the penal system (Ferreira, 2014). If the histories of intense suffering caused by prejudice and discrimination against people as a function of sexuality and identifications of gender cause one to pay attention to the meanderings of violence, in the prison system, these forms of asymmetry acquire other actualizations (Seffner & Passos, 2016). This is one of the faces of the selectivity of the prison system that, as part of the mechanism of criminalization, silences trespassers such as gender and sexuality. This is shown in the form of an essentialization of criminality – such as the association of the lives of transvestites and trans women as subjects of crime (Aguinsky, Ferreira, & Rodrigues, 2013), or of the failure to consider the poverty and fragility of access to goods and services for the trans population – related to the dissident experience of gender and sexuality (Pelúcio, 2006). One can understand, therefore, a complex system of relationships which are circumscribed by various social markers which allow one to understand both vulnerabilizations and fields of creation which are promoted in the gaps of the rules.

Considering the panorama of these discursive dynamics of the complex system of control and violence in Brazilian prisons, it is appropriate to analyze how these are materialized in the experience of certain collectives. In the light of this discussion, we can see that the Central Prison of Porto Alegre (*Presídio Central de Porto Alegre*) (PCPA) has been an important target in discussions on the issue of imprisonment in Brazil. Based on the creation of the 2009 report of the Parliamentary Commission's Inquiry into the Prison System (*Comissão Parlamentar de Inquérito do Sistema Carcerário*), which stated that the PCPA was the worst prison in Brazil, various social effects were noted, both in relation to media aspects and political-party-based aspects in the state government (Seffner & Passos, 2016). At this point, a certain visibility of the transvestites in the PCPA became possible. As an effect of the exposure in the media and of the need for

changes on the part of the prison's senior management, various movements within the PCPA became the target of inspecting mechanisms, in particular of the ‘Igualdade’ (‘Equality’) NGO (a Non-Governmental Organization founded in 1999 that has important political representativity with the LGBTTT social movements). This process, that involves what Seffner and Passos (2016) understand as a social phenomenon of “transvestite-victim coupling” – that is, the discursive establishment of the production of transvestite identity as invariably related to the position of victim, influencing the process of this subject's (re-)humanization – is characterized in Wing 3 of the H as a form of normative response on the part of the prison. Based on this field of tensionings, the Wing 3 of the H was inaugurated, set aside for the population of transvestites, trans women, gays and “husbands”. This happening was made possible by the partnership established between the Central Prison of Porto Alegre, the Secretary of State for Justice and Human Rights, the senior executives of the Prison Service, and the Association of Transvestites and Transsexuals of Rio Grande do Sul.

Bearing in mind the State's function of maintaining the lives of prisoners, this Wing was created under the logic of the qualitative fractionation of persons deprived of liberty. In the Central Prison, the subdivision by factions, gangs, families and other organizations relates to the form of distribution in groups in the respective buildings and areas. Operating under this strategy of separation – which actualizes both the protection through the affirmation of certain identities, and the disciplining of these in the Prison's system – Wing 3 of the H (or the “LGBT Wing”, as it has recently been re-baptized) is limited within the perspective of the identities located outside the cisgender and heterosexual benchmark.

The experiences in the Wing may be treated as a specific process, although not yet individualized due to markers of gender, sexuality, class, race and aesthetics (Ferreira, 2014), whose dynamic has been shown to be highly linked to relationships of the field of the conjugalities. Currently, the Wing holds men who have relations with transvestite people in or outside the prison system, and homosexual men. In the case of the transvestites' companions, there are reports that these must declare a stable relationship to the Military Police's security team in order to obtain the right to be allocated or transferred to Wing 3 of the H. In the light of this panorama, this study proposes to analyze aspects linked to the practice of the “marriage”, valuing the emic dimension of this term, in the affective and sexual fields – which are (re)designed in the prison routine. The term emic, or “internal”, is a concept originating in Anthropology. Notions originating in the field of research are taken as a way of listing understandings developed in a specified cultural benchmark.

This phenomena occurs bearing in mind that the sexual and gender identifications are social-historical, unstable, and fed by a productive investment of the subjects in relations of power (Scott, 1986), which makes possible forms of resistance and re-signification of the conjugal relationships in the social fabric (Pocahy, 2016) and, in particular, in prison contexts (Bassani, 2011; Ferreira, 2014; Seffner & Müller, 2012). “Marriage” is an emic term with a specific use in the Wing (and in the Central

Prison) that indicates and moves fields, here understood as the politics of identity and of conjugality. Thinking of certain uses and achievements of the sexual and gender identifications as political makes it possible to place emphasis on their gaps, which seem to conduct the action to power.

For this, we take the perspective of Rancière (2014), for whom policy resides in this specific relationship, in this taking part, whose meanings and conditions of possibility are questioned by the subjects' tensions of everyday life. It is in the failure to meet – the strife – that the signs necessary for the recognition itself of the *alter* as a political being are produced. The strife is not confrontation of interests or opinions. Rather, for Rancière (2014, p. 148), it is “the manifestation of a distance, of a disparity of what is sensitive to itself”. It is this political manifestation that visibilizes what had no reason to be seen, it is to make public the private world – to transform the person into a subject-operative of a private mechanism for subjectivation of the dispute, a tension through which the political exists. Therefore, the law presents the concepts of marriage as a strategic form of agency i.e. people being held in a wing specifically for homosexuals, bisexuals, transvestites, transsexual women and their companions in a male prison.

Method

Considering this study's objective, a methodological perspective was selected which allowed analyses focusing on the routine processes in the Wing. We used Grounded Theory to summarize the experience investigated, in combination with narrative interviews and ethnographic strategies (by constructing field diaries). These perspectives, in a critical theoretical-conceptual framework, made it possible to analytically value the discursive traversings in the production of the practices on the rites of conjugality.

Participants

The criteria for including participants were that these should be detained in Wing 3 of the H in the PCPA, identified as belonging to the LGBTT community, and who stated that they were in a conjugal relationship. Although the wing contains only gay and bisexual men, transvestites and transsexual women, the use of the term “LGBT Wing” came to be used by its inhabitants and, recently, by the wider prison community. Of the universe of 32 persons held at that point, 10 – who were in conjugal relationships – were invited to participate. Of these, 8 participated, of whom 6 were indicated by the local leadership (called *plantão* in the lexicon of the Prison) and two insisted on participating. All had been sentenced to imprisonment in high or medium-security prisons.

Instruments

Besides constructing field diaries for the entire process of incursion in research – elaborated concomitantly by two of the researchers – eight individual interviews were held, following the narrative perspective. According to Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2002), the narrative interview

is a form of in-depth interview which requires the least influence on the participant's account. Planning the guiding question which will provide flow to the account is one of the fundamental processes (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2002). In the present study, the question formulated, subject to an approximation to local terms, was: how do relationships take place in Wing 3 of the H? No specific time was established for the interview, as indicated in the specialized literature (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2002). However, the interviews had a mean duration of 50 minutes.

Procedure

Data collection. Interviews were held by the first author, who had already undertaken university extension activities in the research locale. The place where the interviews were held was a room set aside for this purpose by the Central Prison's management, with appropriate environmental conditions and allowing confidentiality. The interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed, with the participants being given fictitious names.

Data analysis. An approach inspired by Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2009) was used. According to Charmaz (2009), this allows the construction of localized theories, focused in three steps. Firstly, one undertakes the *Description*, in which everyday aspects are ordered so as to systematize sensations, images, scenes and occurrences. Later, the elements are grouped in *Conceptual Orderings*, that is, an organization of these according to their characteristics. The third point is of *Theorization*, in which the researcher seeks to systematize the ideas and elaborate a theory of a specified reality. The main characteristic of Grounded Theory – that is, to have the analytical field focused on the field experience – was followed in this study, bearing in mind that accompanying the activities in Wing 3 of the H allowed an understanding that the conjugal relationships were shown to be an important axis of the experience in this prison space. The Atlas.ti software, version 7.0, was used throughout this process.

Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary and met the ethical precepts postulated by CONEP Resolution 466/2012, following approval by the formal bodies of the prison, by the University's Committee for Ethics in Research with Human Beings (CAAE 54729816.6.000.5336) and the Wing's local leadership. It is important to be aware that the researchers already had contact with the Wing through activities with a psychosocial nature undertaken previously, such that possible embarrassment was minimized.

Results

Characterization

The wing was implemented as a result of articulations and political interventions from social movements, represented by an NGO that historically has been committed to ensuring the

rights of the transvestite population within a logic of political and care-related fairness. At the time of this study, however, a change was observed in the configuration of the Wing. Previously, this was known as the “Transvestite Wing”, and came to be recognized as the “LGBT Wing”. This discussion transcends the meanings of each letter which make up the acronym, and came to represent a space which encompasses institutionally a range of identities, that is, of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transvestites and Transsexual women.

The same action that strengthened the undertaking of the creation of this space, under the leadership of the NGO, gave a space for other forms of resistance. These tensionings could be heard in many accounts in the Wing. Tensionings, as expressed by the person known as Plantão, referring to previous times: “the other one came and only helped the transvestites, but didn’t give any help to the people like me”. Although this is not an issue of establishing a hierarchy of better or worse management of the Wing, which does not concern a study of this scale, the way in which these issues are enunciated in the routine of Wing 3 of the H makes it possible to problematize the “Transvestites’ place”. While the NGO was mediating actions and agreements with the Wing, the transvestites occupied a position of leadership, the position of *plantão* being necessarily taken by a transvestite. Later, with the withdrawal of the NGO’s activities, and with the justification that in this way there was an excluding movement, the figure of *Plantão* took other forms. The game of strengths which operated in this topic could be perceived at various points, and is summarized in Alex’s account below:

The Wing was considered to belong to the transvestites, to the extent that in the supervision, you arrived: ‘You are going to the transvestites’ wing’. If you were gay, you were already 10 degrees less than the others. I went through this too, and felt pretty much obliged to use women’s clothes, to use makeup, to be a little more respected.

Among the 32 people who lived in the Wing at the time of the study, eight individual interviews were held – in a scenario where there was an “LGBT” composition, no longer centered on transvestites. The process of invitation took place through the person responsible for the on-duty roster, who chose, initially, who would participate in the activity. The first six interviews, therefore, including the person responsible for the on-duty roster, were with people who self-declared as male. Of the six participants, two stated that they considered themselves to be gay (Alisson, 40 years old, male, in prison for three years, in a relationship for one and a half years, partner residing in 3H; Alex, 30 years old, male, imprisoned for two years, in a relationship for one and a half years, partner residing in 3H), while the other four participants stated themselves to be “husbands” (Noah, 33 years old, male, in prison for three years, in a relationship for 8 months, partner outside; Anael, 29 years old, male, “Husband”, single, in prison for eight years. Ariel, 19 years old, male, in prison for 2 years, in a relationship for 1 month, partner residing in 3H; Olive, 33 years old, male, in prison for 1 year-9 months, in

a relationship for 1 month, partner residing in 3H) . For the two last interviews (Cecil, age not given, female; Dagmar, 23 years old, female, in prison for 6 months, in a relationship for 6 months, partner in 3H). It was necessary to undertake an intervention, in the form of a conversation with *Plantão*, so that the transvestites would be able to participate in the study. In this case, after an agreement, three names of transvestites were forwarded to the operational department of the Military Police, indicating which ones would be called for interview. One of the transvestites withdrew from participation.

Marriage

Marriage is an emic term in the context of Wing 3 of the H, allowing one to elaborate understandings on what was conceptualized, in this study, as a political, identity and conjugality-related field. The issue is not that these social dimensions are separated in the routine dynamics, but rather to allow an analytical possibility of how the rite of *marriage* and the maintaining of forms of conjugality allow one to outline paths between strategies and affections experienced in the space. Considering the summary elaborated, grounded in the narratives and observations, we have a structure which allows us to describe the main aspects related to these axes (identity and conjugal) (Figure 1).

Marriage in this wing of the PCPA was shown to be intrinsically articulated with processes of legitimation of the relationships possible and existing in the space. In the narratives on these relationships, emic terms are found, which evidence an identity-based dynamic in the configurations of couples. The use of the terms “husband” and “gay”, for example, indicate this functioning, as they were narrated with the meaning of distinct positionings, although complementary, in the formation of the couples. The identity category “*transvestite*” was present in the narrative of the entire prison context, not only in the Wing, and was associated with the identifying of female gender, marked in the body through the use of codes which were representative of the female field, such as, for example, clothes, makeup, long hair and painted nails. The term *homosexual*, on the other hand, was used in the Wing as a possibility of reaching a wider range through covering all the other categories, apart from the husbands, men who self-declared as heterosexual. As Anael indicates in his interview:

Anael: [In the Wing] there are gays who walk like a man, there are the *bichas* (faggots) who dress like women, and there are the transvestites, who have silicone implants.

P: And your ex-partner is a transvestite?

Anael: He was an effeminate gay man. Effeminate . . .

P: And what do you consider yourself to be? May I ask you that?

Anael: A man! A man. Ah, that is what I am!

P: You mean that you’re in any of the three categories that you mentioned?

Anael: No, I’m the active one.

P: Ah, I get it.

Anael: In this case, homosexual, you know. But I am a man. I am only active, in this case. Nothing enters *me* from behind.

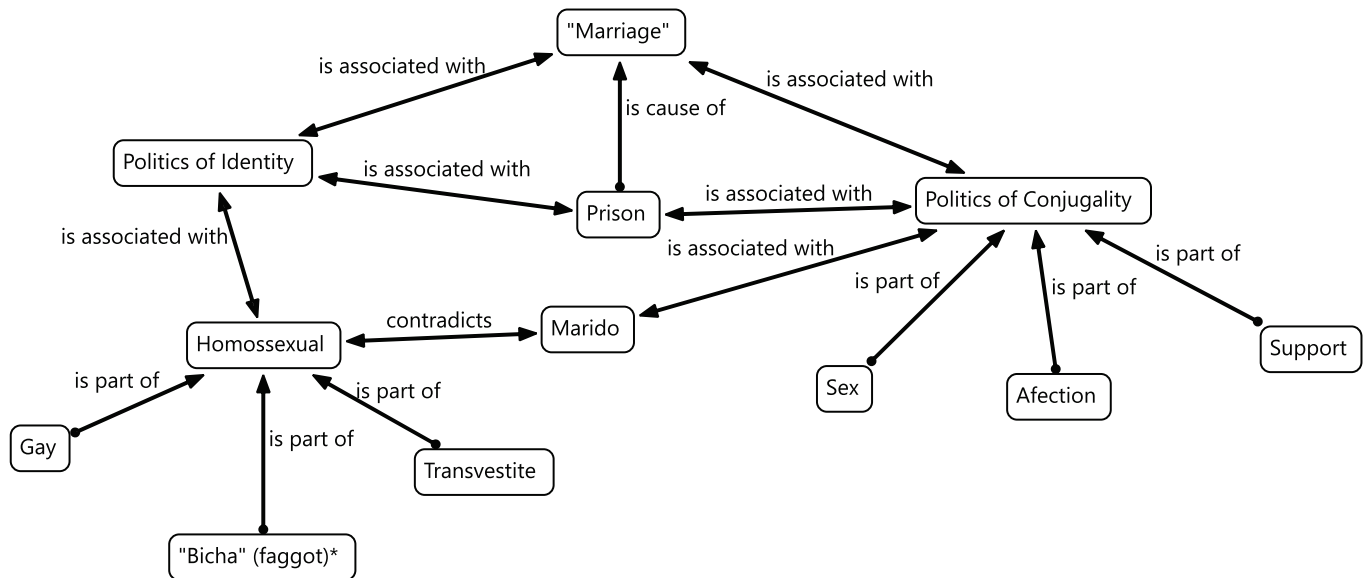


Figure 1. Summary grounded in the interviews.

The transfer between the gender identifications mixes with the sexual practices, based on the models of codes culturally conceded to masculinities and femininities. These dimensions are not disconnected, and cross each other discursively, marking a series of identificatory processes which involve associations between gender and practices based, often, on normative social benchmarks. Anael elucidates a differentiation of the types of relationships, making comparisons with other experiences inside and outside the prison, as well as referring to the homo- and heterosexual dimensions. Besides this, in his history of “marriage” in the prison, Anael told not only of the suffering caused by the separation, but also the distinction operated in the meanderings of gender and sexuality:

P: How were things after she was freed?

Anael: It is different, as we had a strong relationship, for real, with one another. For me, getting involved inside with another is not the same thing. It is just a pastime. With me and her, it was really different. And they say that the love between two men is stronger than between a man and a woman.

In another narrative, the participant *Noah* reported his involvement with a person allocated to “Wing 3 of the H” after they knew each other. It follows that he came from another wing in the PCPA. In referring to his ex-partner’s heterosexuality, *Noah* then reflected on a logic of belonging to the space marked by the homosexual identity: “When the person comes to our Wing and gets involved with one of us, it is just that, once the person is in the Wing, he is already part of the homosexual group”.

The legitimization of the *marriage*, in the first place, is seen within the prism of the rite, a means of publicizing the union and the power of institutional control of this in the lives and bodies of the people in the Wing. It is possible to understand,

in the narratives, that regarding this public scene, the rite of union of couples underwent changes over time. Since the construction of the third wing of the H began, in 2012, there have been modifications, related to the demands made by the person in charge (*Plantão*) of the space. As was described by *Noah*, who experienced two distinct management periods, previously the event was characterized more formally.

In front of everybody from the corridor, you went from the entrance door, up to the end of the Wing, and gave a kiss to seal the commitment. There were no rings – it was sealed with a kiss. From that moment on, if I saw some gay or transvestite hitting on him, I could complain to the person in charge (*Plantão*), because from that moment on, he was married – and those people knew that he was married.

Currently, the relationships considered stable in the Wing are announced as marriage and the union is sealed based on a communication to the person in charge (*Plantão*) of the Wing. This person authorizes and legitimates the couple’s union, and publicizes the news of the marriage to the other members of the space. After this, it is agreed in which cell the couple will live: “I call everybody into the corridor and I warn them: so-and-so is married to so-and-so now, I don’t want anybody talking with him, because now he is married, so the husband won’t have sex with others” (*Alisson*). The aim of this rite, according to the research participants, is to maintain the organization in the Wing and the fidelity in the relationships, and to exercise control over people’s sex lives, as it is not accepted for married people to have sexual relationships with people apart from their partners.

This procedure is controlled by the person known as *Plantão* and justified by the same because he had become a leader in that space: “so they thought about making me the second assistant of the Wing, because I was . . . very serious,

reserved, married properly, properly in terms of character, in terms of dignity, this business, you know, I have never been promiscuous in my life” (Alisson). In this context, the system of rules, although imposed by the person who is on duty, must be complied with by all members of the Wing. This space, however, does not happen without conflict. The rule is that in the case of an argument among a couple, other people must not interfere – except for the person who is responsible for order in the Wing: “If it is a couple’s argument, you cannot intervene. Absolutely not. The only person who can intervene is *Plantão*. Mind you, nobody can intervene in her rows. Bah!” (Anael).

Some of the rules which dictate coexistence in the Wing are recorded explicitly in a list placed on one of the walls. Besides these, there are other regulations which circulate as oral agreements. According to reports from the people who participated in the present study, the rules which are not described on the list, in general, are precisely those which refer to affective or sexual relationships which are not within the *marriage*. When we asked *Plantão* about the reason why these rules were not provided in a clear form on the list, the answer was: so that the “people of the Wing won’t be exposed” (Alisson). One example mentioned by the participant *Plantão* (Alisson) shows that, if two single people wish to have sexual relations, they must request authorization. If authorized, which involves a control of the quantity and variability of relations per person, permission to sleep in the same cell may be valid – for a maximum of three nights. Should the pair wish to continue with their relationship, a marriage must be announced via *Plantão*. The term “freeze” is part of the internal language of the PCPA. The police “freeze” the corridors to interrupt the transit of detainees when some situation of risk is identified – for example, fights in the corridors or meetings of rival factions, among other situations. In the 3rd wing of the H, the term was attributed to other situations, such as prohibition of access of people who do not live in the cells, or in order to identify people who are prohibited from having relationships, on the orders of “*Plantão*”. These rules were made clear in the interview with Alisson:

P: And you came up with strategies, this one of freezing cells was one of your ideas?”

Alisson: It was.

P: To control who?

Alisson: The promiscuity, when we went down to the yard, you would get four of them in a bunk, for all four to have sex.

P: At the same time?

Alisson: At the same time, because we were in the yard, one stays there taking care of the door, is paid to stay there taking care of the door, that is how it used to be, one kept look-out so that the others could be up to no good, that is how it was!

In the same way, there is an agreement regarding separation of couples. As a result, when there are breaks in conjugal relationships, the person in charge is informed, following which, one of the two people is reallocated to a different cell. Besides this, in the case of couples who have

been married for a longer time period, when they separate, the two people are *frozen* in the Wing – that is, they are forbidden from having sexual relations with other people for a period of one month, although this is rarely achieved.

The reasons for the constitution of the marriage, in spite of a certain linearity in the rules of conduct observed and described, are multiple. Among those which figure in the interviews were: attempts to satisfy needs for tenderness; exchanging affection; and the possibility of protection and support in the prison space, besides the concession of everyday sexual practices. Noah confirms that this scenario is articulated with an actualization of the values of care and protection linked to his conception of family, not without crossings referent to the field of sexuality: In that space where I am, the people sleep together, one cares for the other, one prepares food for the other, things that it is very difficult to build in prison. This reminds one of a family a little.

In a different way, the marriage can be structured as a strategy for support and safety within the prison. These negotiations may be established in the triage, as Alex reports:

... This guy told me that there was the Male Whores’ Wing, and then he asked if I would stay with him – he could see, I think, that I was scared of being in prison. It was the first time that I was entering a wing, and I imagined that I would suffer all sorts of aggression, every type of violence, and I think he saw that. And he kind of used this as a way of inducing me to have a relationship with him – he said: ‘Look, if you turn up married, nobody will mess with you’.

The emic term “Male Whores’ Wing” was, in particular, used in the context of the Central Prison among the pejorative statements about Wing 3 of the H. The use of this expression illustrates the cisexist and heteronormative contents which figured there, actualizing discursive dimensions that described forms of violence in terms of gender and sexuality. The above fragment – which supports this expression – indicates the use of the strategy of marriage as a protection factor within the prison space. However, one situation of coercion is reported, in which one detainee offered the possibility of ‘marriage’ in exchange for a guarantee of safety for the person who was entering the prison system for the first time. This excerpt leads us to think about the negotiation in which the policies of conjugalities may be experienced in this context – not excluding the aspects of production of affects and violences which are engendered.

Discussion

Prison, historically, has been constituted under the auspices of control, reclusion and social hygiene (Foucault, 2014). Since its origins, it has been a place that links, in its functioning, discourses of degeneracy and danger, articulating the disciplinarization of the bodies as a normative resource of these systems (Foucault, 2014). In order to understand the effects of these systems, Foucault (2014) indicates as an analytical field that which denominates technologies of power, which makes it possible to understand forms of control via

examination and surveillance. These analyses and conceptual operators may be related to what can be observed and heard in the experiences in prison and regarding Wing 3 of the H, as they allow us to list some institutive aspects of this prison territory and its forms of exercising of power – such as the architectural layout, the division of the Wings in the Central Prison, conducts of surveillance, and verticalization of the forms of power.

Although – in Brazil and legally speaking – the law regarding prison organizations is geared toward the objective of making a specified prisoner appropriate for “social coexistence”, various factors of the Brazilian penal context show the inadequacy of the materiality of the prison establishments in relation to these prerogatives. However, Wing 3 of the H, as a prison-related event (Seffner & Passos, 2016), denotes particularities. The creation of the Wing consists of a dynamic of segregation, control, and forms of liberty exemplified in the possibility of agency on the part of transvestite persons in the present context. In the light of a discursive complex that actualizes, in the prison, associations of the transvestite with dangerousness, delinquency, robbery, criminality and violence, the space of the Wing emerges promoting movements.

Although there exists the possibility of gaps in the rules of the prison system, the provision of the Wing in the architecture of the Prison does not allow one to forget control and discipline. Founded in the same building where people who committed sexual crimes are allocated, Wing 3 of the H seems to be born as a material consequence of the logics of degeneracy and control of sexuality. The inspection and scrutinizing of the bodies, meticulously applied in the prison, require economy of spaces and distributions of the populations. A certain logic of efficiency and control of space does not seem to be unlinked from the discursive production regarding sexuality. These mechanisms, as indicated by Seffner and Passos (2016), also occur through the segmentization of the prison population, such that the constitution of the smaller groups, with supposedly common needs, becomes useful for the organization. This form of strategy, which constitutes aspects of the territorial marker in the prison experience, meets both disciplinary principles and principles for managing internal risk (Seffner & Passos, 2016).

This architecture of the powers, manifested in the division of the spaces, is also materialized in the position occupied by the person Plantão and in the division of the attributions of leadership within the Wing. The modification of the context of privilege of the transvestites for a LGBT decentralizing reflects the difficulty of having transvestites as interlocutors in this study. However, this context does not occur unilaterally or monologically, and presents the actualization of a discourse in which the transvestites are considered “not suited” for protagonism – even that of being an interlocutor in the present study. These forms of understanding, which are closely related to the social strategies which constitute certain more or less respectable lives, circumscribe possibilities within this system and transversalize distinct experiences. In the panorama of the Wing, one finds specific conditions of possibility in the maintenance of the “*Transvestites’ Wing*”, “*LGBT Wing*”, “*3rd of the H*”, or “*Male Whores’ Wing*”, as this space was termed at different points of the study. Of the dimensions understood

as important aspects for discussion in this political-identitary space, *marriage* emerges as a powerful analytical axis.

Marriage has been a cultural practice, historically characterized by economic, political and affective negotiations, and has undergone modifications since its emergence as a historical record through to the present day. The family, the construction attached to the ideology of marriage – as understood in the Eurocentered West – is an institutional force that engenders regulations and concessions in relation to gender and sexuality. Through marriage, rules are articulated which are conceptualized as legitimate specified practices, in particular those which have as their prerogative the reproductive function of sex and the maintenance of the family (Therborn, 2006). In this context, the idea of the romantic couple is grounded in the idea of the reciprocal choice and is based in feelings of mutual affection, and is characterized by the progressive knowledge of the partners (in contrast with other, more pragmatic models from the past, for example, in which strategies for management of assets or power could be the motivator) (Peixoto & Heilborn, 2016). In the cast of “significant others”, the couple becomes privileged, around which the other relationships are reconfigured (Peixoto & Heilborn, 2016).

This social ideal of conjugality produces a hegemonic standard of happiness “*a deux*” linked to the rules of social interaction idealized by society – that normalize the stable partnership (the couple). When the discussion on marriage and conjugality, however, comes to be understood as a political field (micro- – but not only that), the performativities tension the discursive games in the production of the difference, as Silva (2007) defines. After all, acknowledging oneself as “husband of” or as gay, *bicha* (faggot) or transvestite (using the identity significations used in this study) can be both resistance and a form of reflecting the subjection in the discursive regimes of homonormativity. It is important to illustrate these identity significations in order to problematize how the practices allow the articulation of gender and sexuality in the construction of the identities characterized and disseminated in the contexts of sociability (Pocahy, 2016), as prison may be understood.

Practices such as conjugal unions, as well as rituals of *marriage* with a view to legitimization in the prison context have already been described in other studies (Bassani, 2011). Furthermore, the literature reiterates the possibility of constituting stable relationships by transvestites and their companions, when both are held in the prison system, moreover, guaranteeing conjugal visits in the case of just one member of the couple being detained (Ferreira, 2014). The rules of marriage in the 3rd of the H contribute, according to the interlocutors, to maintaining the space, controlling possible acts of violence – to a large extent caused by conflicts in the conjugal relationship. According to the operational team from the Military Brigade (Police), there were often complaints due to the poor behavior (fights, discussions, in the local language), aspects which were reiterated in the interviews in the Wing, in which arguments were reported involving violent aggression. However, the forms of violence associated with the marriages do not figure only as internal to the relationships. While the arguments between couples are linked more to romantic discourses and discourses related to fidelity, outside of the context of the Wing,

being identified as a resident can represent an important risk and lead to conflicts of another order. While people identified as LGBT may suffer aggression outside the space of the Wing, the husbands, who do not identify as participants in this identity context are also subject to reprisals.

Internally, in the Wing, the constitution of attributions of conduct referent to the forms of maintaining the relationships, for example, indicates dynamics of this field. Fidelity during the “marriage”, an aspect reiterated in written and oral form in Wing 3 of the H, is circumscribed within a logic of good conjugal conduct, as is the end of the partnerships. When the end of a “marriage” takes place, as indicated beforehand in the results, there is a period of abstinence from sex, established by the person Plantão. One should pay attention, however, to the fact that, in spite of the moral aspect that circumscribes this practice, the difficulty resulting from the end of the relationship – under the scrutiny of Plantão – also serves to discourage the intense exchanging of partners (which relates to maintaining prison order).

Having as a perspective the notions of gender and sexuality as transitive and temporary processes within which is understood as an identity field (Louro, 2008), one can consider that the relational dimensions which operate in the Wing are also circumscribed in a pedagogy of sexuality and gender (Louro, 2008). There are no single ways, therefore, to recognize heterosexual/homosexual, cisgender/transgender or male/female, just as the game of strategic identifications is complex in the context of the Wing. Recognizing oneself or being recognized as transvestite, in the specified historical context of the 3rd of the H, was an important marker which was articulated to the political demands and, therefore, to the possibilities of exercising power in the locale. Likewise, the *husbands* occupy a place in which this notion of difference and negotiation engenders various pedagogies – of making oneself present and intelligible in that space – in particular, intelligible via conjugality.

Essentialist symbols of femininity and masculinity, reiterated in the forms of conjugal relationship, are actualized in the narratives. In relation to the *husbands*, references are not uncommon to sexual practices (in a dynamic of passivity and activity) as a way of producing masculinities. Pelúcio (2006) reiterates this social construction, affirming that the relationships between transvestites and their companions may also be oriented by essentialist perspectives, manifested in the attribution of roles referenced in traditional standards of “masculine” and “feminine”. Benedetti (2005) draws attention to the fact that, on the part of transvestites with whom he undertook research, marrying a husband who had characteristics socially recognized as masculine was desirable. Differently, Seffner and Müller (2012), in a study on conjugalities, identified an investment on the part of transvestite people in affirmation of the heterosexuality of their partners. There is much evidence in the literature of the reproduction of a heteronormative pattern in the relationships between transvestites and their husbands. However, other references of conjugation figure in the Wing which also draw attention to normative standards. As some references in the area indicate (Costa & Nardi, 2015; Miskolci, 2007; Pelúcio, 2006), the romantic ideology – or of Modern marriage – operates through reiterating and re-signifying

conjugal possibilities between gay and trans people, such that we see these normative dimensions articulating practices and identifications of gender and sexuality.

In spite of the actualization of these rules, in the present study, the context of exercising the attributions of gender and sexuality was shown to be dialogical and plural, such that the organization of the domestic tasks in the cell – commonly shared – and the exercising of protagonism in the relationship – which can be manifested in the arguments in which the transvestite differs from the traditional ideal of femininity – are examples which differ from the linear readings. The identity categories, on the one hand, are materialized as linked to the possible relationships in the Wing, attached to the life trajectories – as in the case of the people who performatize aspects of sexuality and gender which are not normative. Differently, these also make it possible for there to be other strategies of desire and positionings within the Prison. The affective and/or sexual relationships, at the same time as they promote forms of agency, are related to the logics of control and security and take place with the notion of *marriage* as an important nodule in the relationships.

Regarding the transvestites, for example, the aesthetic care as an approximation with traditional ideals of femininity constitutes this identity field plurally. In the routine of the Wing, aesthetics is an important social marker. Studies have already pointed to this relationship, indicating the importance of forms of bodily investment (Benedetti, 2005; Ferreira, 2014). Aspects such as the materialization of the characteristics associated with the feminine – depilated skin, makeup, clothing – are shown in specified points of management in the Wing as an important point of access to privileged positions, as well as a means of escaping from situations of violence, when the identity expectations do not match performance in terms of gender and sexuality. This aspect is indicated in Alex’s account: I felt pretty much obliged to use women’s clothes, to use makeup, to be a little more respected. Although the space was able to offer a field for exercising power for a vulnerabilized population, as the transvestites are in the present system, this modification does not take place without generating other effects.

The scenario of violence prior to imprisonment constitutes, concomitantly, a factor for possible reprisals and investment in the marriage. It is not uncommon for marriage to appear as a possibility, to the husbands, for fleeing from conflicts with factions in other Wings. This form of constitution of oneself as a *husband*, in spite of the varying motives for these bonds, does not take place without violence – consistent with the discourses regarding the conjugalities, which permeate the prison. However, besides the husbands’ strategies for fleeing, related to the factions, these policies of conjugality take place in negotiations which are also affective.

At many points, the marriage, planned before the entrance to the Wing through meetings in the triage, corridors and windows of the Prison, or internally within the group of the 3rd of the H, responds to a context of insecurity and solitude. Besides this, the situations of coercion, in which the possibility of “marriage” in exchange for guarantee of safety is offered, provoke one to think about negotiation in which the policies of conjugalities may be experienced. The meeting

of needs for tenderness, the possibilities of protection and support, besides everyday sexual practices, are articulated with an actualization of the values of care and protection. Equally, the freezings, which may be taken as mourning, reiterate the same field of performative exercise of conjugalities outside the prison system. In this context, there emerges the function that “marriage” has – a possibility for resistance to forces that, routinely, are not represented in the networks of power.

Jail encourages particular possibilities for configurations of conjugality which only exist in this place-time, produced by networks of care, support and generating social bonds. Although it operated various disciplinary strategies, as well as strategies of control and subjection, the space of the Wing made it possible for there to be a field of political dissension, both in the (hyper-) identity relationships, and in the conditions of possibility of expression and experience of affective-sexual relationships. These experiences are “others”, that is, they are not totally linked to the rules (whether these are external or their caricatures in the jail) nor totally subversive. A dialogic field is created which optimizes, but does not determine, living with desires which are embedded (but prescribed, by the identity field) in the ideals endorsed by society, in a way that links new and old interdictions, but keeps open the possibility of reinvention. Conjugality and marriage do not take place freely and are not totally controlled. They make possible means of external resistance to the Wing, in the sense that they promote affective bonds in the light of life stories and of a prison organization permeated by violences linked to male chauvinist, sexist, hetero- and cisnormative discourses, and resistances internal to Wing 3 of the H, as they make possible a different strength in the light of the verticality of the institutional figures.

This research was presented registered in a critical conceptual and methodological perspective. This particularity draws attention to certain characteristics of the study which are not seen only as limitations – as the theoretical-critical benchmark causes them to be held as objects of analysis. This point is perceived due to the difficulty of interviewing transvestites and trans women which, analytically, indicated to us a strategic field of strengths for maintaining the new leadership in the locale (in, for example, the form of Plantão and change in the Wing’s name) and updating of asymmetries based in normative discourses. It is important to note that these modifications do not take place dislocated from the institutional meanderings of the Prison, an articulation between management and detainees that, even though not this investigation’s object of study, indicated to us an interesting field for future analysis.

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