ARTICLE

COMING OUT OF THE "IVORY TOWER": PREVENTING VIOLENCE BASED ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY AT THE UNIVERSITY[1]

ENAYTON PERASSOLI [1]
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4554-4004
<enayton@ufscar.br>
ALEXANDRE RODRIGO NISHIWAKI DA SILVA [1]
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4431-0062
<alexandrerns@ufscar.br>

[1] Universidade Federal de São Carlos (UFSCar). São Carlos (SP), Brazil.

ABSTRACT: Violence against the LGBTQIAPN+ population is a topic that touches countless people who do not fit into the socially established cisheteronormative pattern. Studies indicate that, as a part of society, the university reproduces this violence by not creating effective prevention and overcoming strategies. Supported by dialogic learning and Communicative Methodology, this article presents the results of an investigation with 18 undergraduate students that sought to point out how a public university in the state of São Paulo, Brazil, works to combat prejudice based on sexual and gender diversity in its spaces, identifying the excluding and transforming elements capable of promoting, preventing, and overcoming violence against LGBTQIAPN+ people. As the main result, this research indicates that the public positioning of the university management, the establishment of policies to combat violence, and training spaces on the subject for students, professors, and other employees throughout the academic environment, provided a more welcoming, respectful, and prejudice-free space for this people.

Keywords: violence prevention, LGBTQIAPN+, sexual diversity, gender, university.

SAINDO DA "TORRE DE MARFIM": A PREVENÇÃO DE VIOLÊNCIA BASEADA NA ORIENTAÇÃO SEXUAL E IDENTIDADE DE GÊNERO NA UNIVERSIDADE

RESUMO: A violência contra a população LGBTQIAPN+ é um tema que atinge inúmeras pessoas que não se enquadram no padrão cisheteronormativo estabelecido socialmente. Estudos indicam que a universidade, instituição inserida na sociedade, reproduz essa forma de violência ao não criar estratégias de prevenção e superação efetivas desse fenômeno em seu interior. Amparado pela aprendizagem dialógica e pela Metodologia Comunicativa, o presente artigo apresenta os resultados de uma investigação que procurou apontar, a partir da compreensão de 18 estudantes de graduação, o modo como uma

universidade pública do estado de São Paulo atua no combate ao preconceito baseado na diversidade sexual e de gênero em seus espaços, identificando os elementos excludentes e transformadores que sejam capazes de promover, prevenir e superar a violência contra pessoas LGBTQIAPN+. Como resultados principais, esta pesquisa indica que o posicionamento público da gestão dessas universidades, o estabelecimento de políticas de combate à violência, bem como a construção de espaços formativos sobre a temática para discentes, docentes e demais funcionários e funcionárias em todo o âmbito acadêmico, propiciam um ambiente mais acolhedor, respeitoso e livre de qualquer forma de preconceito contra essa população em questão.

Palavras-chave: prevenção de violência, LGBTQIAPN+, diversidade sexual, gênero, universidade.

SALIENDO DE LA "TORRE DE MARFIL": PREVENCIÓN DE LA VIOLENCIA BASADA EN LA ORIENTACIÓN SEXUAL Y LA IDENTIDAD DE GÉNERO EN LA UNIVERSIDAD

RESUMEN: La violencia contra la población LGTBQIAPN+ es un tema que alcanza a una infinidad de personas que no se encajan en el patrón cisheteronormativo socialmente establecido. Los estudios indican que la universidad, institución inserida en la sociedad, reproduce esta forma de violencia al no crear estrategias efectivas de prevención y superación de este fenómeno en su interior. Amparado por el aprendizaje dialógico y la Metodología Comunicativa, este artículo presenta los resultados de una investigación que buscó señalar, a partir de la comprensión de 18 estudiantes de pregrado, la forma en que una universidad pública del estado de São Paulo trabaja para combatir el prejuicio basado en la diversidad sexual y de género en sus espacios, identificando los elementos excluyentes y transformadores que son capaces de promover, prevenir y superar la violencia contra las personas LGTBQIAPN+. Como principales resultados, esta investigación indica que el posicionamiento público de la gestión de estas universidades, el establecimiento de políticas de combate a la violencia, así como la construcción de espacios de formación sobre el tema para estudiantes, profesores y demás funcionarios de todo el ámbito académico, proporcionan un ambiente más acogedor, respetuoso y libre de cualquier forma de prejuicio contra esta población en cuestión.

Palabras clave: prevención de la violencia, LGTBQIAPN+, diversidad sexual, género, universidad.

It's a characteristic of all universities: they try to protect their image by taking very wrong paths, taking permissive paths for violence to happen. We will not be able to change this scenario by protecting the aggressor. From the moment management does not take a public stance in preventing violence, it gives an image that it is okay for this to happen within the university (Roberta da Silva[2], 2021).

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, alarming rates of increased violence have been recorded in Brazil (Alfageme, 2019), a factor that directly affects socially vulnerable groups such as women, black people, indigenous peoples, and lesbian, gay, binary, trans people, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual/aromantic/agender, pan/poly, non-binary and more, called by the acronym LGBTQIAPN+. The university, as a space inserted in society and being directly affected by it, also reflects such social tensions and conflicts.

---

[2] Interview carried out on February 13, 2021, with a university student whose identity was preserved. Roberta da Silva is a fictitious identity for the student, as a way of paying homage to this transsexual woman who lived being homeless in the capital of Pernambuco, Recife, and who was murdered when she was 32, in the same year of the interview, with 40% of her body burned in a transphobic crime.

The notable advance in the democratization of access to Brazilian universities has given rise to new movements within higher education institutions (HEIs) and, with this, new demands. The struggles to guarantee student access and permanence to respect diversity and differences, the understanding of other epistemologies, the promotion of spaces for dialogue, and the construction of specific policies for different social groups, among others, transformed the university space, contributing to a new, more colorful, and diverse spectrum. On the other hand, this inclusive process, induced by important public policies, also generated many conflicts. After all, there are many reports of violence, attempts to circumvent the vacancy reservation system, isolation, and various prejudices, an increase in cases of suicide and illness, among other factors that occur in academic spaces.

In the specific case of prejudice and violence experienced by the LGBTQIAPN+ population, we highlight that, even with the advances driven by public policies in Brazil[3], this debate still requires specific studies that highlight the recurrent types of violence, as well as the most efficient actions to overcome and prevent it. This is justified because prejudice based on sexual and gender diversity, and violence, are important categories in understanding the sociopolitical dynamics experienced by this population in all areas of society.

In this research, violence is understood as any attack that aims to cause damage, whether institutional, psychological, sexual, physical, or material to groups or certain institutions (Krug, 2002, p. 4). In the scope of this study, it is the university.

Also, violence against LGBTQIAPN+ people can be defined as the grouping of some desires, such as disgust, fear, discomfort, anger, etc. (Junqueira, 2007). These people suffer such violence in different social spaces – from their homes, religious centers, streets, and schools to sectors of public power (Mott, 2006). We highlight that it is in these same spaces of social coexistence that people are socialized and formed, that is, they become citizens, which leads us to reflect on the impact of structured prejudices in force in the formation of individuals under the stigmas of racism, machismo, cisheteronormativity, etc.

Mentioning the academic sphere, the discussions and scientific research centered on homosexuality initiated by Alfred Kinsey (1948, 1953) and his team were notorious. The so called "homosexual behavior" was highlighted as a more recurrent phenomenon than was recognized at the time. These innovative investigations enabled a broad understanding of sexuality, resulting, above all, in the action of the World Health Organization (WHO), in 1990, to remove homosexuality from the list of mental illnesses (Nishiwaki Da Silva, 2020). In this sense, recent studies stand out that elucidate the growing dialogue between LGBTQIAPN+ themes and current society, as well as in the context of health (Smalley et al., 2017; Gallardo-Nieto et al., 2021), religiosity (Hunt, 2016), technologies (Siebler, 2016), the sociology of work (Williams; Dellinger, 2010) and even the perspectives and challenges of carrying out research focusing on the LGBTQIAPN+ population (Serrano Amaya; Ríos González, 2019). According to Serrano Amaya and Rios González (2019), LGBTQIAPN+ issues have become a subject of greater visibility for international research, and this was mainly due to the demands of various movements for social transformation.

However, for the construction of this study, the previous bibliographical survey we carried out allowed us to identify the incipience of work that points to effective actions to prevent and overcome violence against the LGBTQIAPN+ population. In this aspect, presenting the discussion of this topic, at a challenging time and with threats against LGBTQIAPN+ people – given the growing presence of far-right governments and movements in recent years –, becomes urgent and fundamental. At a national level, for example, many conservative demonstrations recently used the term "gender ideology" to stop and invalidate advances focused on the social rights of the LGBTQIAPN+ population and that had significant repercussions in the educational sphere. In this article, we seek to analyze in a communicative and dialogical way violence against the LGBTQIAPN+ population and its overcoming and prevention in university settings, considering that this group is the target of numerous rights violations.

---

[3] As is the case with the Brazil Without Homophobia program, from 2004, and the creation of the National LGBT Council, in 2010, extinguished by the government of former president Jair Bolsonaro (elected by the PSL, currently PL).

THEORETICAL REFERENCE

Contemporary society allows individuals multiple options and choices, as well as new possibilities of life and behavior, making them protagonists in their biographies (Giddens, 1993). Thus, pre-determined patterns of action in the world become questionable, and society is forced to create inclusive alternatives that can overcome individualistic models, with new forms of social relations based on dialogue and arguments (Flecha; Gómez; Puigvert, 2001). This new configuration is the starting point for reflections on education and overcoming violence against the LGBTQIAPN+ population.

In this context, education constitutes a central element, as it can enable a new form of socialization based on dialogue (Gómez, 2004). Different social agents and education professionals have strived to develop theories and new practices that can contribute to discussions around the democratization of society, in general, and schools, in specific. Within this framework, dialogical learning is found, a theoretical reference of this paper.

Dialogical learning has an interdisciplinary focus and is based on the main theories and scientific investigations at an international level. This theoretical perspective analyzes social challenges and seeks alternatives to overcome them through a consistent critique of the current global context and the establishment of supportive and egalitarian practices. Dialogical learning, based on Habermas (1987), understands that arguments must be based on claims to validity, overcoming relationships based on positions of power. In this way, it assumes that social relations need to be anchored in communicative actions in which decision-making is the result of a dialogue between all people involved in the process since all individuals can reflect on their lives and the context in which they are inserted to transform it.

Dialogical learning is a conceptual paradigm that gives rise to a transformative way of learning, both inside and outside schools, pointing out ways for a society that is also capable of overcoming social inequalities (Mello; Braga; Gabassa, 2020). This approach is based on seven principles: equal dialogue; cultural intelligence; transformation; creation of meaning; solidarity; equality of differences; and the instrumental dimension. In this sense, it applies a transformative character to scientific practice, called by Freire (2008) as praxis.

METHODOLOGY

Consistent with the theoretical framework, we use the Communicative Methodology, which seeks to reconcile scientific knowledge and concrete possibilities for transformation with individuals involved in various social processes (Gómez et al., 2006). This methodology comprises and organizes the process and scientific knowledge, involving, in addition to the researcher, the individuals participating in the research in the process of reflection, data analysis, and elaboration of results, who must be committed to the transformation of the social reality in which they are included (Gómez et al., 2006).

Data collection took place through the procedures provided for in the Communicative Methodology called the communicative life report[4] and the communicative discussion group[5]. Due to the need for social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic, the steps were carried out remotely, recorded, and transcribed in full.

Therefore, we interviewed undergraduate students to map the forms of violence against the LGBTQIAPN+ population at the university, as well as the measures that guarantee the prevention and overcoming of violence and prejudice based on sexual and gender diversity. The research was submitted in April 2020 to the Research Ethics Committee (CEP) of the Federal University of São Carlos (UFSCar), linked to the National Research Ethics Committee (CONEP) of the National Health Council, and approved in June 2020 with opinion number 4,076,285. Initially, 18 students who declared

---

[4] This resource aims to provide a detailed understanding of the world of life and the interpretations of the individuals about their daily life based on a dialogical relationship – with the interpretative function shared between participant and researcher. We seek, through these reports, the way people live, act, and reflect on their lives and actions.

[5] Space developed for dialogue between equals on different topics, implying the participation of the researcher in an already existing group. It must be formed by natural groups, be carried out in one of the participants' usual communicative situations in spaces where they naturally coexist, with the participant being investigated becoming part of it. The communicative discussion group is a collective interpretation of reality.

LGBTQIAPN+ participated in the research, responding to an online form that was sent to the entire student body of a degree course[6]. After accepting the free and informed consent form and completing the questions on the form, 10 of the 18 people agreed to participate in the subsequent phases.

In the table below, it is possible to notice the diversity among the people who agreed to continue with the research.

Table 1 – General information about the participants

Identification[7]	Sexual orientation and gender identity	Year of entry into the degree course	Previous completion of another higher education course
Roberta da Silva	Bisexual/Female	2016	-
Harvey Milk	Gay/Male	2016	-
Diego Vieira Machado	Gay/Male	2017	-
Lindolfo Kosmalski	Gay/Male	2017	Yes
Matheusa Passareli	Bisexual/Female	2017	-
Gisberta Salce Júnior	Pansexual/Female	2018	-
Vanessa Santos	Bisexual/Non-binary	2019	-
Laerte Coutinho	Bisexual/Female	2019	-
Erica Malunguinho	Bisexual/Female	2020	-
Marielle Franco	Bissexual/Female	2020	-

Source: Created by the authors (2022).

The choice of the HEIs was because of the role that this university assumed in the construction of affirmative actions, having approved, in 2016, a document that broadly deals with the "Policy of Affirmative Actions, Diversity, and Equity" (PAADE - *Política de Ações Afirmativas, Diversidade e Equidade*), which proposes guidelines for groups socially marginalized by society and who, with the advancement of public inclusion policies, have entered this higher education institution.

PAADE was approved by the University Council (Consuni)[8], the highest deliberation body of the academic community, to reaffirm the institution's commitment to valuing diversity and promoting equity through actions that enable the construction of a fair and equitable environment. In this sense, the university was one of the first Brazilian HEIs to propose consistent and effective protection actions for vulnerable populations such as the LGBTQIAPN+ community, even in an adverse context[9].

This document shows a historical overview of ethnic-racial relations, inclusion and accessibility, gender and sexual diversity, and proposes guidelines for these groups, aimed at both the student and teaching communities as well as male and female employees who work in the various spaces within the institution and/or beyond.

Finally, we highlight that the identification and description of the practices and processes investigated through two dimensions were incorporated into the categories of analysis of the data

---

[6] This course offers 90 places annually, divided between morning and evening periods, and lasts five years.
[7] The people interviewed had their identities preserved and were identified with the names of LGBT rights activists – Vanessa Santos, Erica Malunguinho, Harvey Milk, Laerte Coutinho, Marielle Franco –, or people who had their lives interrupted because of homophobic and transphobic crimes – Gisberta Salce Júnior, Matheusa Passarelli, Lindolfo Kosmalski, Roberta da Silva and Diego Vieira Machado.
[8] It is important to highlight the role of the student movement within this university, which worked not only in 2016, but throughout the history of the institution with marginalized groups, demanding the rights of students.
[9] During the period in which PAADE was approved, Brazil suffered the discontinuity of previously mentioned policies regarding the LGBT population.

obtained: exclusionary dimension and transformative dimension. These categories allow the results obtained to point out the limitations and possible transformations in the face of social challenges, "ensuring the social usefulness of the study carried out" (Flecha, 2004, p. 47). This is because we start from the assumption that the way people move in the world reveals their understanding of social processes, which must be radically included in research. Thus, academic knowledge is an important instrument for understanding social facts, but it cannot be considered as the only legitimate path.

RESULTS

The study lasted one year, between 2020 and 2021. Of the 18 people who were initially interested in contributing to the research, 10 agreed to carry out the communicative discussion groups and, later, the communicative life reports. After transcribing the speeches, we analyzed and classified the data into four main axes: 1) violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity suffered and/or witnessed; 2) knowledge or not of PAADE; 3) university as a space to promote and/or prevent violence against the LGBTQIAPN+ population; and 4) instrumental dimension as a tool for overcoming and preventing violence against the LGBTQIAPN+ population at the university.

Violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity suffered and/or witnessed

In the first axis, we identified that 70% of the people interviewed reported having already suffered and/or witnessed some form of violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity within the university. These forms of violence range from prejudiced comments by fellow students, teachers, Technical-Administrative employees (TAs), and other male and female employees, as we can see in the following excerpt:

> *One day, in a second-year course, we were doing work on a different topic, and a group did work on same-sex adoption, one person in that group refused to research this topic because she believed that same-sex couples couldn't adopt because they are not worthy of forming a family* (Roberta da Silva, 2021).

In addition, reports of moral and psychological harassment from both peers and teachers were also presented, in person or virtually – via social networks –, capable of generating the victim insecurity in reporting or exposing such actions, in addition to fear of exposure of their image, embarrassment and/or academic persecution by professors due to their hierarchical position at the university. The following excerpt explains one of these situations:

> *There was a professor who saw me taking part in bisexual activism and asked me to do a Scientific Initiation [CI], and I was very happy because I thought he wanted to invite me to a CI, but the conversation with him got more and more bizarre, in a way that I would consider harassment. If I put, for example, something funny about flirting on Facebook, something that everyone shares without taking it seriously, and he did not interact, but he saved what I shared, sent it to my private conversation, and tried to develop a topic with it, you know? And he kept asking where I lived, and he kept flirting between the lines with things like: "So, are you bi?", "Have you ever done this and this…?" Anyway. He was a university professor, you know? It wasn't cool. Then I abandoned the idea... I was very happy to have gotten a CI, but I abandoned it...* (Vanessa Santos[10], 2021).

We also highlight that 60% of the total students interviewed stated that they had suffered violence from their peers, both in the classroom and in other university spaces, especially people who identified as female. They are about 66% of those who reported having been victims of this violence. This gender profile within the LGBTQIAPN+ population shows that within this group rejected by society and which has been fighting for equality, respect, and rights for years, women are fighting an even greater struggle in combating prejudice based on sexual and gender diversity due to the machismo in

---

[10] Vanessa Santos, or simply Catu, was born in 1995 in Paraíba and lived for many years in the capital of São Paulo. He was a student of Biology at the Federal University of São Carlos (UFSCar) and was active in the Popular Youth Uprising (*Levante Popular da Juventude*). He passed away in March 2021, at the age of 26.

society, as already pointed out in previous studies[11].

Knowledge or not of PAADE

In the second axis, we observed that the 18 participants indicated that they did not know which bodies to turn to in case of violence, except for the circles of friends that they consider a support network, as shown in the following excerpt:

> *I realize that at university I also feel more welcomed by the friends I made, but I also notice some jokes that are homophobic, and I realized that this is what happens most. I have never suffered physical violence, but psychological violence, like these jokes. And overall, that's it. If you asked me where I should turn if I suffered something, I wouldn't know how to answer* (Diego Vieira Machado[12], 2021).

We also questioned whether they knew PAADE. In response to the form, they all indicated a prior lack of knowledge about the document with guidelines and regulations for socially marginalized groups – including the LGBTQIAPN+ community – regarding accessibility, permanence, and support for these groups, which demonstrates the lack of disclosure and commitment by the university investigated in the topic addressed here.

In this sense, after obtaining responses to the form and completing the interviews, we sent PAADE via email to the students who participated in this research, explaining the section aimed at the LGBTQIAPN+ community so that they could familiarize themselves with the document and, if necessary, claim rights that are due to them within the university. Such action is aligned with the theoretical framework present in this study, aiming to denounce actions or lack thereof – as in the case of university management which, when launching the document, should also commit to its announcement and its propagation within the academic community –, providing participants with access to a document that seeks to transform specific realities.

University as a space for promoting and/or preventing violence against the LGBTQIAPN+ population

Because of this lack of commitment to which we referred previously, in this third axis, it was evident from all the people interviewed that the university institution acts in a contradictory way, that is, it acts both in promoting violence and in overcoming it. This is because it does not seek to prevent prejudice based on sexual and gender diversity in its spaces, because, concerned about its reputation, it does not create sanction measures that could inhibit the aggressors – ranging from students to professors and other employees.

The following statement evokes the need for the university to make a commitment to social transformation within and beyond its walls:

> *One thing that is very important and I defend is that the university leaves the "Ivory Tower" and is increasingly in contact with people, with society, because only in this way will society see the value and importance of the university. There are many LGBT people in the slum, for example, going through different problems, in churches out there, with psychological problems... In this sense, we must ask ourselves what the university, what research groups, and other initiatives can do too by society that is distant from the knowledge it produces. That's why I'm very much in favor of partnerships, this relationship: public authorities, universities, and civil society* (Lindolfo Kosmalski[13], 2021).

---

[11] This is the case of the research by Montrone et al. (2020), entitled Gender violence at a Brazilian public university: leaving invisibility (*Violência de gênero numa universidade pública brasileira: saindo da invisibilidade)*, which highlights the fact that, in HEIs, women, black women and homosexuals are six times more likely to suffer some form of violence than white men and heterosexuals.

[12] Diego Vieira Machado was a black, homosexual boy and Literature student at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), murdered at the same university in 2016 for a crime of homophobia.

[13] Lindolfo Kosmalski, of peasant origin, was an LGBT activist, postgraduate student at the Federal University of Paraná (UFPR) and activist in the Landless Workers Movement (MST - *Trabalhadores e Trabalhadoras Sem-Terra)*. The boy was brutally murdered in 2021, at the age of 25.

The expression used by the interviewee, which makes up the title of this article, is a term commonly used to designate groups of intellectuals and scholars who seek to raise questions dissociated from social reality. In this sense, we associate our object of investigation, in specific, and the university institution, in general, with the Ivory Tower, elucidating that, despite being a producer of technological innovations and scientific knowledge, the university often remains oblivious to the phenomena that occur inside. This situation, as highlighted in the interview excerpt, reinforces that the lack of commitment from university management towards marginalized groups on its campus is a factor that requires urgent attention. Therefore, it is not enough to say that violence is being mitigated and ignore the attacks on the LGBTQIAPN+ community: there must be institutional and collaborative actions that result in a public stance, resulting in effective prevention and overcoming measures that end all forms of violence through appropriate sanctions.

Instrumental dimension as a tool for overcoming and preventing violence against the LGBTQIAPN+ population at universities.

In the fourth and final axis, when asked about possible ways of preventing and overcoming violence against the LGBTQIAPN+ community at the university, all people interviewed pointed out the need – and urgency – for properly structured knowledge that can effectively prevent violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity in university spaces, as the following excerpt points out:

> *Prejudice arises from ignorance, or from what you don't know about others, or from what you don't know about yourself. If there is something that you repudiate, behind it there is some ignorance at some level. I think that when you bring people closer to the knowledge that we have already talked about [about LGBTQIAPN+ issues], this can be a source of reducing violence* (Diego Vieira Machado, 2021).

Also,

> *When I emancipate myself, I must lead others to emancipate themselves too. In addition to being a student in this course, I am already an information professional, so information is an element of liberation. We lack a very large information deficit in various areas of the country. I am in favor of schools providing their students with information about human rights so that students have minimum knowledge about constitutional rights so that people feel like they are subjects of law, we are all subjects of the right to knowledge, and by knowing this we can claim our rights* (Lindolfo Kosmalski, 2021).

When asking the participants about what this knowledge would be, they pointed out examples such as: a) training for students, teachers, TAs, and other employees on ways of welcoming LGBTQIAPN+ people; b) preparation of lectures, events, and conferences on the topic; c) offering Curricular Integration, Teaching, Research and Outreach Activities (ACIEPEs - *Atividades Curriculares de Integração, Ensino, Pesquisa e Extensão*[14]), outreach courses or optional subjects that specifically deal with the LGBTQIAPN+ theme, the history of the movement, its struggles, etc.

Regarding optional subjects, the researchers found that, in one of the departments responsible for the course at the investigated university, there is an optional subject that addresses topics such as sexuality and gender, as well as their relationships with Education. However, none of the people participating in the research mentioned this subject, making it possible to demonstrate that addressing the LGBTQIAPN+ theme optionally and generically may not even attract the LGBTQIAPN+ population or contribute to the prevention of violence against this group at the university. We also highlight that, for the training of people who will train other people, as is the case in undergraduate courses, which must be attentive to the fight against violence and its prevention from childhood, the LGBTQIAPN+ theme must be a commitment that goes beyond offering of a specific optional subject, but a decisive commitment from the institution to students and, consequently, to society as a whole.

Furthermore, both in the communicative discussion groups and in the communicative life reports, most people (70%) pointed out the importance of creating a support network – organized by

---

[14] ACIEPEs are complementary curricular activities, included in the curricula of undergraduate courses.

students, such as an LGBTQIAPN+ collective – that operates within the university and/or in related spaces. They argued that the construction of a group, based on sexual and gender diversity, tends to contribute to discussions, reflections and actions not only to promote the visibility of this population but also to the construction and collection of specific data that present factors that are inclusive or exclusive of LGBTQIAPN+ people at the university, providing effective policies capable of building a university that is both free from discrimination and prejudice and safe for all people.

DATA ANALYSIS: BEYOND THE WALLS

The four axes mentioned above point to relevant paths to preventing and overcoming violence against the LGBTQIAPN+ population in HEIs.

The data obtained in the first axis – violence based on suffered and/or witnessed sexual orientation or gender identity – converge with surveys carried out in research on violence in the university context, which demonstrate that female students are the main victims in the most varied ways of violence, including sexual and physical harassment and violence, coercion, and even intellectual disqualification (Scavone; Alvarez, 2015). Furthermore, a more recent study highlights that, in universities, female people, who identify as black and homosexual, are up to six times more likely to suffer some form of violence than male people identified as white and heterosexual (Montrone, 2020).

In the second and third axes – knowledge or not of PAADE and the university as a space for promoting and/or preventing violence against the LGBTQIAPN+ population –, we note how the role of university management is fundamental in the face of cases of violence based on sexual diversity and gender in HEIs. International studies point out that the lack of applicability of protocols and sanctions in cases of such violence, as well as the lack of monitoring by the institution when these cases are reported, not only favor the perpetuation of such violence but also place the victim in a situation of revictimization (Blanco; Spataro, 2019).

Regarding the breakdown of the fourth axis – referring to tools for overcoming and preventing violence – 88% of people responding to the online form demonstrated that they had never participated in or known anyone who participated in events, lectures, and/or specific disciplines in the course schedule or optional options that directly address the LGBTQIAPN+ theme. At the same time, this same percentage expressed that one of the most effective ways to combat prejudice based on sexual and gender diversity would be to structure knowledge focused on the issues of this population, capable of bringing to the academic community and, consequently, its surroundings, instruments that could provide people with information to combat this form of prejudice and violence. The following statements express this concern:

> *I realize that past generations did not have the opportunity to understand differences, and diversity: they were taught to hate, taught to be repulsed, to have aversion... And the most difficult thing about learning something is unlearning it because deconstructing it is a process that hurts and no one wants to touch a wound, no one wants to touch their ego. Therefore, when we provide information in a well-structured way, with appropriate, qualified speech, I believe that people can learn. I believe that Education can be one of the prevention tools, it is not the main responsibility but through it, we can change people's reality, based on good information, structuring all this knowledge, and providing a language that reaches people but without imposing things on others, because this is the big problem, there has to be dialogue with society, and often we don't have dialogue with the community* (Gisberta Salce Júnior[15], 2021).

In the theoretical scope, we highlight that egalitarian dialogue, critical reflection and the knowledge historically accumulated by humanity are essential instruments for people. In addition to a more comprehensive understanding of the realities in which each person is inserted, the individual also develops a more critical and, therefore, transformative thinking (Aubert et al., 2018). Furthermore, the research data indicates that egalitarian dialogue, by including the contributions of all people based on the validity of their arguments and not on the position of power that everyone occupies, contributes to the

---

[15] Gisberta Salce Júnior was a transsexual woman and Brazilian immigrant, brutally murdered in 2006 in Porto, Portugal, at the age of 45. Her death encouraged the creation of laws regarding gender equality and the way the country began to treat transgender women.

process of reflection and decision-making on issues related to violence. In this sense, all people are included with the intention of consensus and conflict resolution (Elboj et al., 2002). Thus, egalitarian dialogue promotes the radical democratization of society, as it allows the participation of all people in the community.

In this sense, we consider that the results reinforce one of the seven principles of dialogic learning, the instrumental dimension. This principle aims to guarantee people humanistic and technical tools, essential elements that enable the individual to live in their context (Aubert et al., 2018). As the data presented in the previous section and the highlighted report indicate, it is necessary to break the false dichotomy between the humanistic dimension and the instrumental dimension so that we can overcome violence promoted based on sexual orientation or gender identity. We also highlight that the international scientific community has been indicating for some years the relationship between the instrumental dimension and overcoming educational and social inequalities (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Apple; Beane, 1997). From the perspective of dialogical learning, the humanistic dimension and the instrumental dimension must be worked on mutually, and the reinforcement of each of them contributes to overcoming violence. Thus, if we recover the other principles of dialogical learning for the analysis of violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity, we realize that the instrumental dimension is directly related to egalitarian dialogue and cultural intelligence through promoting the diversification of interactions, as well as the creation of new meanings through dialogue that favor the prevention of violence.

In this way, having access to specific knowledge on the LGBTQIAPN+ theme – such as the history of the struggles of the LGBTQIAPN+ population, statistical data on violence and death, information about the treatment of transvestites, transsexuals and non-binary people, etc. – highlights the transformative perspective of systematized knowledge and, more than that, that knowledge about the LGBTQIAPN+ community, propagated by the institution or in courses and training spaces, is a fundamental element for preventing violence.

Also, access to knowledge produced in HEIs guarantees important and indispensable tools for social transformations. In this study, we observed the absence of transgender and transvestite people responding to the form, which reinforces the estimate that this group represents only 0.1% of a total of 420 thousand students at federal universities, as pointed out by the survey carried out in 2018 by the National Association of Directors of Federal Higher Education Institutions (Andifes - *Associação Nacional dos Dirigentes das Instituições Federais de Ensino Superior),* in partnership with the National Forum of Pro-Rectors for Community and Student Affairs (Fonaprace - *Fórum Nacional de Pró-reitores de Assuntos Comunitários e Estudantis)* (Gomes; Faheina; Ker, 2019). We highlight that the absence of this group in university spaces tends to marginalize them and make access to the job market and other experiences that guarantee the necessary tools to transform their reality even more difficult, especially in Brazil, where the homicide rate of this group is the largest globally (Dos Santos, 2019; Mendes; Silva, 2020). On the other hand, in recent years we have observed the movement, albeit gradually, of some federal universities in adopting quotas and specific policies to make the access of transsexual and transvestite people to higher education in Brazil effective (Ribeiro, 2020; Dos Passos, 2022).

Based on the data obtained, after transcribing the communicative discussion groups and communicative life reports, it was possible to survey the elements that act both in promoting, preventing, and overcoming violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the university context. The table below lists these elements, classified as exclusionary and transformative (Gómez et al., 2006), as well as the incidence in which they appear in the participants' speech.

Table 2 – Excluding and transformative elements in the promotion,
overcoming and preventing violence against the LGBTQIAPN+ population at universities

Elements		Number of incidences
Excluding Elements	Lack of public positioning by the management	8
	Lack of reception for victims	6
	Lack of effective institutional policies	5
	Lack of sanctions for aggressors	3
Transformative Elements	Structured knowledge about LGBTQIAPN+ themes	10
	Offer of training spaces	9
	Creation of an LGBTQIAPN+ support network, group, or collective	7

Source: Created by the authors (2022).

When looking at Table 2, it is possible to identify that university management[16] is identified as the main exclusionary element in promoting violence against LGBTQIAPN+ people. The following statement qualifies a diagnosis that is common among all people participating in the research:

> *It all starts with management. I think that whoever is responsible for this dialogue if that person boycotts this [reports in case of violence], it weakens any other force that tries to do something. If management embraces this group [LGBTQIAPN+], it will make things much easier. There is a lack of publicity to show that things exist, to show that things are being put into practice. In cases of violence, we don't know where to turn... We naturalize it because if it doesn't appear then it's because it doesn't exist. This happens outside the university too. Several laws and decrees should facilitate or bring social improvements but are not put into practice. Therefore, publicity and the support network must come from management…* (Diego Vieira Machado, 2021).

Therefore, in the absence of actions by university management aimed at welcoming LGBTQIAPN+ people, sanctions measures for aggressors, and support for victims – as pointed out by 70% of participants –, the need arises for a group that acts as a support network for LGBTQIAPN+ people within the university. In this aspect, because of this study, we initiated an articulation with the participating people, to analyze the forms of organization and which actions could be promoted by an LGBTQIAPN+ group building a support network that deals with the issue and act to prevent and overcome violence against this population at the university. However, the construction of this group does not minimize or transfer the obligation of university management, which must act in favor of the entire academic community, aiming not only at institutional recognition at an international level or the quality of its teaching but also at well-being, safety and equity of the people who work there.

The denaturalization of violence and prejudice based on sexual and gender diversity is another factor that deserves to be highlighted in the fight against violence against LGBTQIAPN+ people in HEIs. Recent international studies, such as that by Gallardo-Neto et al. (2021) and Dueñas et al. (2021), point out that universities tend to naturalize violence against LGBTQIAPN+ people, especially in classrooms, and this violence often occurs in the presence of professors, when they are not exactly the ones who commit this aggression. A statement from one of the interviews carried out shows this issue:

> *I don't feel safe at university, I don't feel safe being with other people or taking classes with certain professors, because when I was harassed, I was in a circle of students and with the professor who harassed me, and it all happened very quickly, I didn't even realize what happened, I realized it only later and I did not react. I was in the classroom at nine o'clock in the morning! I keep thinking: to what extent do these aggressors feel free from any guilt, free from the fact that nothing will happen to them?* (Gisberta Salce Júnior, 2021).

In this sense, we understand that, in the fight against violence against LGBTQIAPN+ people at universities, the public positioning of university management is crucial to preventing violence against this population in their spaces. Gallardo-Neto et al. (2021) highlight that it is necessary to promote the

---

[16] During the period of development of this research, the management mandate of the investigated university was changed. Therefore, the research period included the end of one administration and the beginning of another.

training of students, educational agents, and other employees on the subject to effectively combat prejudice based on sexual and gender diversity in the university context, in addition to awareness-raising measures that can guarantee respect for diversity.

Also, as Milkman (2017) points out, HEIs, in the last five decades, have served as instruments of awareness for various struggles regarding class, race, gender, etc., leading people, especially self-declared LGBTQIAPN+, to conform as leaders of social movements inside and outside university walls, as is the case of the American anti-sexual assault movement on campus, in which lesbian, bisexual and trans women are overrepresented as leaders, and the Black Lives Matter movement, founded by three black women, two of whom are members of the LGBTQIAPN+ community.

Therefore, we realize that, in addition to its relevant role in the production of knowledge, the university is the scene of various struggles and resistances. Once university management is aligned with the demands of the LGBTQIAPN+ population, together they will be able to prevent violence that permeates classrooms, and relationships between peers, professors, TAs, and other male and female employees, Also they will establish, through education, the commitment to providing all people with properly structured knowledge and information based on scientific evidence that can overcome violence and prejudice against this population, which have their roots in ignorance.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

With the democratization of access to higher education in Brazilian universities, new groups and, consequently, new social challenges became part of the reality of these spaces, which present the contradictions that permeate the social, political, and economic reality of the country. We know that the university is not free from forms of oppression and violence and, in this sense, through the case study of a public university that was one of the pioneers in the development and implementation of equity and diversity policies, we seek to understand the ways of preventing and overcoming violence and prejudice based on sexual and gender diversity present in the university context.

The research showed that the lack of knowledge and information is one of the main factors that promote violence and prejudice towards LGBTQIAPN+ people at universities. Furthermore, the neglect of university management in propagating knowledge of institutional policies on equality and equity for socially excluded groups shows that its elaboration does not become effective since it is still far from the daily life of the academic community.

Therefore, in this research we seek, together with the participating individuals, to understand in a broader way the violence suffered by the LGBTQIAPN+ population, who have fought with their lives to achieve the advancement of rights that are common to all people. Focusing on the university environment, we seek to identify and build tools that are effective in combating violence based on sexual and gender diversity, to make this space a safe and equal place. The data indicate that, while the discussion on the LGBTQIAPN+ theme decreases, cases of violence against this community increase, indicating that the absence of discussions that deal with LGBTQIAPN+ experiences, inside and outside university spaces, creates barriers, builds prejudices, and stops the engagement of the academic community and management in the fights for equality and the end of prejudice.

Although this case study was limited to presenting data that reflect violence against the LGBTQIAPN+ population, focused only on the student body and did not include professors, TAs, and other male and female employees who are also victims and/or spectators of violent actions and prejudiced in academic spaces, it is essential that in future research, such as the ones we are developing, there is the joint participation of the university community to contribute even more effectively to the identification of tools and strategies that can overcome and prevent violence against the LGBTQIAPN+ population in universities.

We highlight that the preparation of this investigation triggered the research entitled Prevention of Violence against the LGBTQIAPN+ community in Brazilian Universities (*Prevenção de Violência contra a comunidade LGBTQIAPN+ nas Universidades Brasileiras*), financed by the *Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico* (CNPq), selected in Call CNPq/MCTI/FNDCT No. 18/2021 – Universal 2021, process nº 409811/2021-1, to continue with this research agenda, aiming to identify how

Brazilian public universities act to prevent and overcome prejudice based on sexual and gender diversity in their spaces.

It is important to highlight that the area of Education – which in the last period has suffered numerous budgetary and ideological attacks from the Brazilian government – plays a fundamental role in the transformation of society because it is an area that produces studies on forms of teaching, learning, structuring and effective systematization of knowledge. It is up to it, together with other areas of knowledge, to collaborate so that the world becomes a place of dialogue and equality of differences, where there can be respect, solidarity, and constant transformation.

REFERENCES

ALFAGEME, Ana. Morrer Por Ser Gay: O Mapa-múndi Da Homofobia. *El País*, 22 mar. 2019. Disponível em: https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2019/03/19/internacional/1553026147_774690.html. Acesso em: 15 set. 2022.

APPLE, Michael W.; BEANE, James A. *Escuelas democráticas*. Madrid: Morata, 1997.

AUBERT, Adriana *et al. Aprendizagem dialógica na Sociedade da Informação*. São Carlos: EDUFSCar, 2018.

BLANCO, Rafael; SPATARO, Carolina. Con/contra las estrategias institucionales: percepciones de estudiantes universitarios ante iniciativas contra violencias sexistas. *Nómadas*, n. 51, p. 173-189, 2019.

DOS PASSOS, Gladston Oliveira. Uma luta pelo direito à educação: Pessoas trans e o ingresso nas universidades públicas. *Estudos em Ciências Humanas e Sociais*. 1. ed., v. 9, p. 6, 2022.

DOS SANTOS, Aline Cristina. A Violência do Encarceramento da População Trans no Brasil. *In*: EVINCI-UniBrasil. *Anais* [...], v. 5, n. 1, p. 76, 2019. Disponível em: https://https://portaldeperiodicos.unibrasil.com.br/index.php/anaisevinci/article/view/4631. Acesso em: 15 set. 2022.

DUEÑAS, Jorge-Manuel *et al*. Identifying violence against the LGTBI+ community in Catalan universities. *Life sciences, society and policy*, v. 17, n. 1, p. 1-10, 2021.

ELBOJ, Carmen *et al. Comunidades de aprendizaje*. Transformar la educación. Barcelona: Graó, 2002.

FLECHA, Ramón. Investigar desde la igualdad de las diferencias. *In*: FLECHA, Ramón. *Conocimiento e identidad:* Voces de grupos culturales en la investigación social. Barcelona: El Roure, 2004. p. 34-50.

FLECHA, Ramón; GÓMEZ, Jesús; PUIGVERT, Lidia. *Teoría sociológica contemporánea*. Madri: Espasa Libros, 2001.

FREIRE, Paulo. *Pedagogia do Oprimido*. 47. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 2008.

GALLARDO-NIETO, Elena María *et al*. Sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression-based violence in Catalan universities: qualitative findings from university students and staff. *Archives of public health*, v. 79, n. 1, p. 1-13, 2021.

GIDDENS, Anthony. *A Transformação da intimidade*: sexualidade, amor e erotismo nas sociedades modernas. Tradução de Magda Lopes. São Paulo: Editora UNESP, 1993.

GOMES, Bianca; FAHEINA, Caio; KER, João. No ensino superior, o espelho da exclusão de pessoas trans. *Estadão*. São Paulo, v. 5, 2019. Disponível em:

https://arte.estadao.com.br/focas/capitu/materia/no-ensino-superior-o-espelho-da-exclusao-de-pessoas-trans. Acesso em: 15 set. 2022.

GÓMEZ, Jesús. *O amor na sociedade de risco:* uma tentativa educativa. Barcelona: El Roure, 2004.

GÓMEZ, Jesús *et al. Metodología Comunicativa Crítica*. Barcelona: El Roure, 2006.

HABERMAS, Jurgen. *Teoría de la Acción Comunicativa.* Vol II: Crítica de la razón funcionalista. Madrid: Taurus, 1987.

HUNT, Stephen (Ed.). *Contemporary Christianity and LGBT sexualities*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2016.

JUNQUEIRA, Rogério Diniz. Homofobia: limites e possibilidades de um conceito em meio a disputas. *Bagoas-Estudos gays: gêneros e sexualidades*, v. 1, n. 1, 2007.

KINSEY, Alfred C.; POMEROY, Wardell B.; MARTIN, Clyde E. *Sexual behavior in the human male*. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Co., 1948.

KINSEY, Alfred C. *et al. Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Co., 1953.

KRUG, Etienne G. *et al. World report on violence and health*. Geneva: World Health Organization, 2002.

LADSON-BILLINGS, Gloria. But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory into Practice*, v. 34, n. 3, p. 159-165, 1995.

MELLO, Roseli Rodrigues; BRAGA, Fabiana Marini; GABASSA, Vanessa. *Comunidades de Aprendizagem:* outra escola é possível. 2. ed. São Carlos: EdUFSCar, 2020.

MENDES, Wallace Góes; SILVA, Cosme Marcelo Furtado Passos da. Homicídios da população de lésbicas, gays, bissexuais, travestis, transexuais ou transgêneros (LGBT) no Brasil: uma análise espacial. *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*, v. 25, p. 1709-1722, 2020.

MILKMAN, Ruth. A new political generation: Millennials and the post-2008 wave of protest. *American Sociological Review*, v. 82, n. 1, p. 1-31, 2017.

MONTRONE, Aida Victoria Garcia *et al*. Violência de gênero numa universidade pública brasileira: saindo da invisibilidade. *Revista Gênero*, v. 21, n. 1, p. 6-23, 2020.

MOTT, Luis. Homo-afetividade e direitos humanos. *Revista Estudos Feministas*, v. 14, n. 2, p. 509-521, 2006.

NISHIWAKI DA SILVA, Alexandre R. A homossexualidade é doença ou algum tipo de doutrinação? *In*: ROVAI, Marta Gouveia de Oliveira (Org.). *Revisionismos*: a universidade esclarece. 1. ed. Mentes Abertas, 2020. p. 175-184.

RIBEIRO, Beatriz Joaquim. *Destinação de cotas para pessoas trans em Universidades Públicas*: Percepções de transgêneros, travestis e transexuais participantes da Associação LGBTTQI da Associação dos Municípios da região da Laguna (AMUREL). Monografia (Bacharelado em Direito). Tubarão: Unisul, 2020.

SCAVONE, Míriam; ALVAREZ, Larissa. *Violência contra a mulher no ambiente universitário*. São Paulo: Data Popular/Instituto Avon, 2015.

SERRANO AMAYA, José Fernando; RIOS GONZALEZ, Oriol. *Introduction to the Special Issue:* Challenges of LGBT research in the 21st century. 2019. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0268580919856490

SIEBLER, Kay. *Learning queer identity in the digital age.* Berlin: Springer, 2016.

SMALLEY, K. Bryant *et al.* (Eds.). *LGBT health:* Meeting the needs of gender and sexual minorities. New York City: Springer Publishing Company, 2017.

WILLIAMS, Christine L.; DELLINGER, Kirsten (Eds.). *Gender and Sexuality in the Workplace.* Bradford: Emerald, 2010.

AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

Author 1 - Survey and collection of data, active participation in the preparation and analysis of data and results, preparation and writing of the text.
Author 2 - Project coordination, active participation in data analysis and discussion of results, and review of the final writing of the text.

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

As this is an investigation of human beings, this research was submitted by the Research Ethics Committee (CEP) of the Federal University of São Carlos (UFSCar) and approved by it on June 8, 2020, with opinion number 4,076,285.

FINANCING

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest with this article.