Public policies for the LGBT population: a literature review

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Abstract

This article presents an exploratory literature review of scientific publications (from 2000 to 2020) to identify how public policies for the LGBT population in Brazil are being discussed. The findings indicate that this subject is still emerging in the field of public administration. The study identified two distinct approaches used in the literature: articles that rely on the stages of the public policy cycle and articles based on the queer perspective. The articles identified that the main barriers to LGBT public policies in Brazil were: the lack of laws to protect the rights of this population; miscommunication between the state and civil society; budget shortage for the plans and programs; and lack of political representation. In addition, it was possible to observe that the articles converge when they refer to the presence and advancement of conservatism, specifically when it comes to religious segments, characterizing it as a common barrier to enforce LGBT rights.

Keywords: Public policy. LGBT. Queer.

Políticas públicas para a população LGBT: uma revisão de estudos sobre o tema

Resumo

Este trabalho apresenta uma revisão exploratória da literatura sobre publicações científicas (entre os anos 2000 e 2020) a fim de identificar como as políticas públicas voltadas à população LGBT no Brasil estão sendo discutidas. O levantamento realizado aponta que tal discussão ainda se apresenta de forma emergente no campo de administração pública. Foi possível identificar no corpus da pesquisa dois eixos de abordagem sobre os quais os textos podem ser tipificados: aqueles com discussão centrada em etapas do ciclo de políticas públicas e outros com debate apoiado na perspectiva *queer*. Os principais pontos apresentados como entraves às políticas públicas LGBT no Brasil foram: a falta de leis que resguardem os direitos dessa população; falhas na interlocução entre Estado e sociedade civil; falta de previsão orçamentária para os planos e programas; e falta de representação política no meio LGBT. Além do já exposto, foi observada convergência entre os artigos ao se referirem sobre a presença e avanço do conservadorismo, especificamente aquele protagonizado por segmentos religiosos, caracterizando-o como habitual empecilho na efetivação dos direitos LGBT.

Palavras-chave: Políticas públicas. LGBT. *Queer*.

Políticas públicas para la población LGBT: una revisión de estudios sobre el tema

Resumen

Este artículo presenta una revisión exploratoria de la literatura de publicaciones científicas (de 2000 a 2020) para identificar cómo se están discutiendo las políticas públicas para la población LGBT en Brasil. Los resultados indican que esta discusión aún está en desarrollo en el campo de estudio de la administración pública. Fue posible identificar dos enfoques distintos que tipifican los textos en dos categorías principales: artículos que se basan en las etapas del ciclo de las políticas públicas y artículos basados en la perspectiva *queer*. Las principales barreras presentadas en los artículos a las políticas públicas LGBT en Brasil fueron: la falta de leyes que protejan los derechos de esta población; mala comunicación entre el Estado y la sociedad civil; escasez de presupuesto para los planes y programas; y falta de representación política en el entorno LGBT. Además, se observó que los artículos convergen cuando se refieren a la presencia y el avance del conservadurismo, específicamente cuando se trata de segmentos religiosos, lo que se caracteriza como una barrera común para hacer cumplir los derechos LGBT.

Palabras clave: Políticas públicas. LGBT. *Queer*.

INTRODUCTION

The history of the formation of the group composed of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transsexuals, and transvestites (LGBT) in Brazil goes back initially to the 1970s, with the Brazilian homosexual movement (MHB). Initially, the objective of the MHB was to resignify the perception that homosexuals were abnormal beings simply because of their sexual orientation, diverging from the pattern that instituted heterosexuality as the norm to follow (Sampaio & Germano, 2014).

This movement was initially composed of homosexual men, and over the years incorporated other groups, such as lesbians in the mid-1980s and bisexuals, transsexuals, and transvestites from the 1990s onwards, forming the current LGBT group. The intersection and cohesion point of these groups is the rupture with the heteronormative standard, although each segment that makes up the group has its demands and particularities (Facchini, 2002).

With the advent of the HIV/AIDS[1] epidemic in Brazil in the 1980s, the homosexual population was heavily impacted. At the onset of the outbreak, two out of five infected men had frequent sexual intercourse with other men, leading to the disease being initially called Gay Acquired Immunodeficiency (GRI) (Pelúcio & Miskolci, 2009). Even after being renamed AIDS, the stigma caused by the initial relationship between the disease and homosexuality remained, leading authors to characterize the period of the outbreak as a repathologization of homosexuality[2] (Miskolci, 2011).

While the HIV/AIDS epidemic has negatively impacted the MHB, from another perspective, this scenario has also allowed for an increase in the public visibility of homosexuality. Since the government's delay in carrying out measures to combat the outbreak was observed, the MHB partnered with the State to ensure better assistance to the homosexual population, later making Brazil a reference in HIV/AIDS treatment (Facchini, 2002; Sampaio & Germano, 2014).

In the context of the country's re-democratization, the group pressured for discrimination of "sexual orientation" to be included in the new Constitution. However, due to pressure from conservative groups, the term was not included in the new Constitution. Thus, the group demanded public policies for citizens, first included in the government agenda through public health policies for the prevention and confrontation of HIV/AIDS (Facchini, 2002; Macrae, 1982). It is worth mentioning that this initial scenario was criticized because the homosexual population started to be assisted by the State through a stigmatizing bias, which classifies them as "dirty" subjects, with risky behaviors and a lack of sexual sanitization from a heterosexual standpoint and standard (Sampaio & Germano, 2014).

During the 1990s, LGBTs demanded measures from the legislative branch to guarantee their civil rights, but it was not until the early 2000s that their requests began to reach the government agenda. In this scenario, more specifically in 2004, a significant achievement of the group emerged: the promulgation of the "Brazil without Homophobia" initiative, aiming to promote homosexual citizenship and combat homophobia (Conselho Nacional de Combate à Discriminação, 2008; Mello, 2012).

However, the program did not satisfactorily achieve its aims, prompting the convening of the I National Conference of Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals, Transvestites, and Transsexuals in 2008 to discuss measures to implement the initiative. This conference resulted in the promulgation of the National Plan for the Promotion of Citizenship and Human Rights of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transvestites and Transsexuals (PNPCDH-LGBT) in 2009, which was not even formalized by decree or ordinance (Secretaria Especial dos Direitos Humanos, 2009). It also prompted the launch of the National LGBT Integral Health Policy in 2011, aimed at promoting the health of these individuals and training professionals to deal with LGBT (Ministério da Saúde, 2008).

Despite the aforementioned advances in public policies, their effectiveness and design have been questioned in the literature. This is because, although these policies are important for ensuring LGBT rights, some authors suggest that they risk contributing to the naturalization of a gay identity based on the irreducibility of anatomy and biological determinism (Sampaio & Germano, 2014). In other words, access to public policies based on a constructed and immutable identity may

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[1] According to the Ministry of Health (2020), HIV is the abbreviation for human immunodeficiency virus, which causes AIDS. AIDS is also an abbreviation for Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), a disease of the human immune system caused by HIV.
[2] "Homosexualism" was disregarded as a mental illness in Brazil in 1985, and the term is used to refer pathologically to physical and/or emotional attraction to people of the same sex (Lionço, Coacci & Carvalho, 2019).

not be able to serve all individuals who are not following the heteronormative standard, hindering assistance and making several individuals abject.

Faced with this problem, queer studies appear, bringing elements that put in check the hegemonic and stable notions of identity (Sullivan, 2003). According to Sampaio and Germano (2014), queer criticism warns how movements based on the notion of gay identity (and, therefore, the policies that result from these movements) are unable to contemplate all of the queer community, that is, the plurality of individuals and forms of existence that escape the heteronormative pattern. This is because queer studies understand sexuality as socially and culturally constituted, historically variable, in addition to a political issue rather than biologically determined (Butler, 1990). In this sense, these studies suggest the adoption of queer community policies, which, to be accessed, do not depend on sexual orientation or the identity of the subjects.

Other studies also focus on public policies aimed at the LGBT segment through the viewpoint that analyzes the process of preparing and implementing these policies. The work of Feitosa (2017), for example, deals with the intricacies of the constitution of LGBT human rights public policy from the Pernambuco State Center for the Fight against Homophobia. In this study, it is pointed out that the main challenges faced by LGBT public policies in Pernambuco are the prejudiced, chauvinistic and homophobic culture of this territory, the absence of specific legislation for LGBT, and the scarcity of educational policies, budgetary resources, state policy and political priority in the government agenda (Feitosa, 2017).

With that debate in mind, it is possible to raise questions about how to make and implement effective public policies that assist different target groups. With the introduction of queer studies, this problem is broadened by questioning the current manner of designing and implementing policies based on a previously constructed and considered stable identity. Thus, given the importance of public policies as a form of social intervention, it is important to explore how these policies aimed at the LGBT segment have been addressed in the literature and what contributions these discussions bring to the public administration.

Given the context presented, this paper presents an exploratory review of the literature on scientific publications (between the years 2000 and 2020) in order to identify how public policies aimed at the LGBT population in Brazil are being discussed. In this study, we intend to answer the following questions: i) what are the main discussions raised by the articles? ii) what are the main points raised as barriers to LGBT assistance? iii) what are the points of intersection and divergence in the texts analyzed?

This study is justified by the need to expand knowledge about the political process, especially that which is aimed at producing measures to assist the LGBT population, which has historically faced various obstacles to the fulfillment of its civil rights. It is also worth noting that from 2019 onwards, at the federal level, the government discourse aimed at this population has changed significantly, making it difficult to make further progress in assisting this segment. Thus, by carrying out this research, it will be possible to present subsidies so that future studies can evaluate such policies more judiciously. This might bring contributions that reflect on the current way in which the LGBT population has been treated in public policies, in addition to provoking considerations on possible directions that increase their reach and effectiveness.

METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

This work consists of an exploratory study, characterized by Gil (2008) as research developed to provide an overview of a certain theme, especially when under-explored, such as the discussion of Brazilian LGBT public policies. In order to guide this research, the integrative review model presented by Botelho, Cunha and Macedo (2011) is used, covering six stages, which can be seen in Figure 1. This method is recognized for being reproducible, transparent, and based on procedures with greater scientific rigor, which allow the selection bias of articles to be limited, evaluated critically and the selected studies to be summarized (Botelho et al., 2011; Cook, 1997).

Figure 1
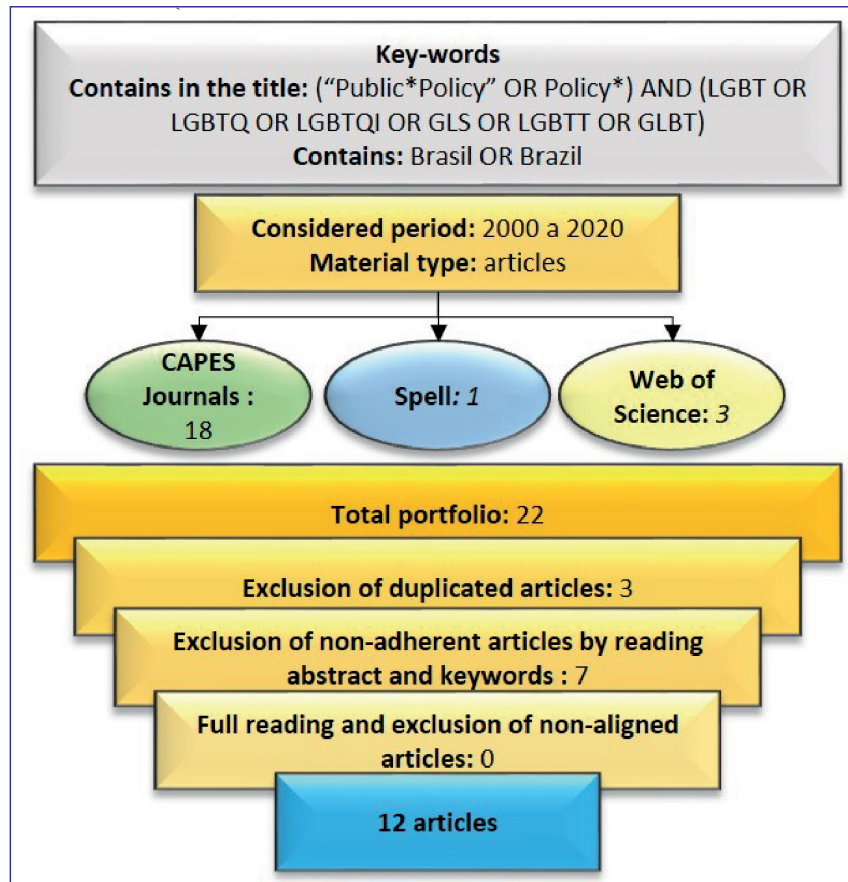**Model for conducting the exploratory literature review**
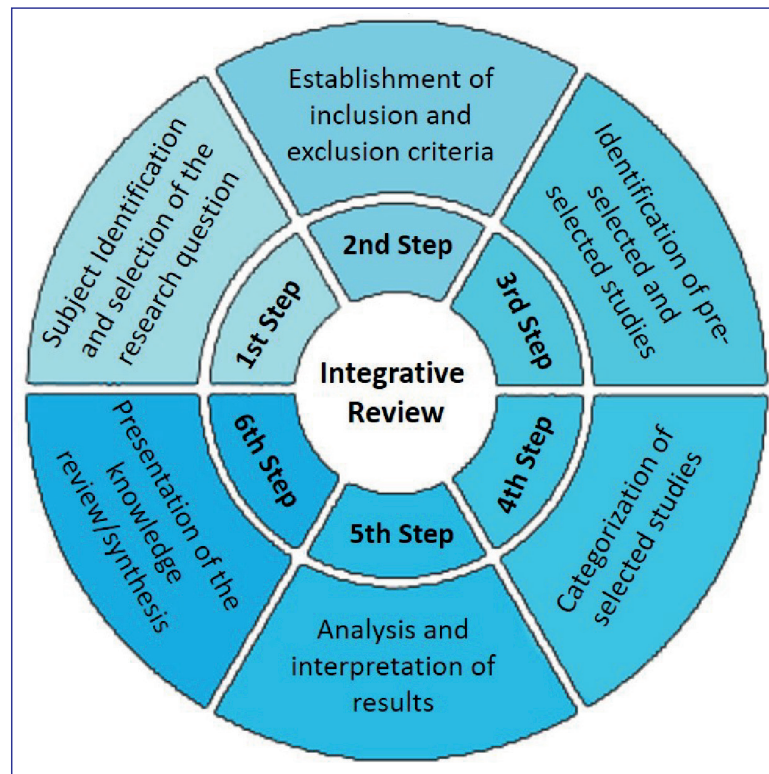
Source: Adapted from Botelho et al. (2011).

According to the model in the first step, the research problem or question, the search strategies (keywords), and the databases must be defined. In the second step, the baselines are used, selecting the material from the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Then, in the third step, the articles' abstracts are read and the pre-selected studies are organized. In the fourth step, these studies must be categorized and critically analyzed. The fifth stage is characterized by the discussion of the results. Finally, a document describing the review in detail is created (Botelho et al., 2011).

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, a bibliographic survey pertinent to the subject was conducted on the following platforms: Capes, Spell, and Web of Science, as described in Figure 2. The first stage involved the selection of journals to compose the analysis, according to the availability of access to the platforms' content. As a keyword, the term "public policies" (allowing for variations in the term) was used, associated with the acronyms "LGBT", "LGBTQ", "GLS", "LGBTT" or "GLBT". The keyword "Brasil" has also been added to select only those articles referring to Brazilian LGBT public policies. The temporal delimitation was from 2000 to the present date (May, 2020).

Figure 2
Description of the stages of the exploratory study

Key-words
Contains in the title: ("Public*Policy" OR Policy*) AND (LGBT OR LGBTQ OR LGBTQI OR GLS OR LGBTT OR GLBT)
Contains: Brasil OR Brazil

Considered period: 2000 a 2020
Material type: articles

CAPES Journals : 18

Spell: *1*

Web of Science: *3*

Total portfolio: 22

Exclusion of duplicated articles: 3

Exclusion of non-adherent articles by reading abstract and keywords : 7

Full reading and exclusion of non-aligned articles: 0

12 articles

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The selection of articles to compose this analysis was based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, according to the second step proposed by the adopted model. In order to be included in the analysis, the article should include all inclusion criteria. On the other hand, if at least one exclusion criterion was observed, the article was disregarded in the analysis. The criteria used are described below.

Inclusion criteria:

a) Articles published and available in their entirety in scientific databases or printed versions;
b) Articles published since 2000 and already approved by the scientific community;
c) Articles that discuss the design and implementation of public policies aimed at the LGBT public in Brazil.

Exclusion criteria:

a) Articles that are not fully available in the searched databases;
b) Articles before 2000;
c) Articles that do not directly address LGBT public policies designed and implemented in Brazil from 2000 to 2020;
d) Articles that present only the need to elaborate on public policies, not actually discussing any of them;
e) Duplicate articles.

The selection was first made by reading the titles and abstracts of the works encountered, in accordance with the third stage of the proposed revision model. In case of doubt regarding the use of this study, a complete reading of the article enabled its inclusion or exclusion.

In the fourth stage, a frequency analysis of the words contained in the articles was carried out by building a word cloud[3]. From this analysis, two analytical categories were found that differed in their approaches to the subject of LGBT public policies, as well as a point of confluence between the texts. The following are the results obtained from the analyses carried out on the selected publications – stages 5 and 6 of the integrative review proposed by Botelho et al. (2011).

RESULTS

Characterization of publications and preliminary discussion

The search resulted in 12 articles that met all previously established requirements. In Box 1, these articles are presented and their main characteristics described.

Box 1
Characteristics of the articles selected for the study

Year	Title	Authors	Journal	Citations
2012	Where are the public policies for the LGBT population in Brazil?	Mello and Maroja	Sociedade e Estado	99
2012	Public policies for the LGBT population in Brazil: notes on scope and possibilities.	Mello, Brito and Maroja	Cadernos Pagu	74
2014	Public policies and queer criticism: some questions about LGBT identity.	Sampaio and Germano	Psicologia & Sociedade	27
2014	Public security policies for the LGBT population in Brazil.	Mello, Avelar and Brito	Revista Estudos Feministas	32
2015	Public health policies for the LGBT population in Brazil: sexual identities and new areas of exclusion.	Broilo and Akerman	Cadernos de Gênero e Diversidade	1
2015	The LGBT movement and gender and sexual diversity education policies: losses, gains and challenges.	Vianna	Educação e Pesquisa	44
2016	Sexualities and public policies: a queer approach to times of democratic crisis.	Motta	Saúde Debate	11
2017	The National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Integral Health Policy and Access to the Transexualization Process in the Single Health System (SUS): advances and challenges.	Popadiuk, Oliveira and Signorelli	Ciência & Saúde Coletiva	35
2017	Barriers to ambition and political representation of LGBT population in Brazil.	Pereira	Revista Ártemis	0
2017	Public Policies and the Health of the LGBT Population: An Integrative Review.	Prado and Sousa	Tempus, actas de saúde coletiva	12
2018	Public policies and LGBT citizenship in Mato Grosso: A decade of advances and setbacks (2007-2017).	Aragusuku and Lopes	Sexualidad, Salud y Sociedad- Revista Latinoamericana	3
2019	Social Participation in LGBT Public Policies: The Experience of the State Center for Combating Homophobia in Pernambuco.	Feitosa	Revista Brasileira de Políticas Públicas e Internacionais	0

Note: The titles of the articles were translated into English.
Source: Elaborated by the authors.

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[3] Resource that allows the creation of a visual representation of words from those that appear most frequently in a text or text bank. Retrieved from https://www.wordclouds.com

From the analysis of the selected articles, it was possible to identify that the LGBT public policy discussion has gained strength in recent years, more specifically from the year 2012 onwards. In this scenario, Luiz Mello is characterized as a prominent author by being one of the pioneers in discussing LGBT public policies and also by participating in the authorship of three of the articles selected for this research, with a significant number of citations in comparison to the others.

It is also possible to visualize the interdisciplinary character of the journals in which the selected articles were published, which brought relevant discussions to the area, even though they are not mainly dedicated to the public administration field. In fact, only one article from the survey (Feitosa, 2019) was published in a journal in the public administration field, signaling the emerging discussion on LGBT public policies in this field, and also suggesting a possible silencing of the subject by journals focused on discussions in this area.

To gather evidence about the main discussions raised by the articles, a frequency analysis of the most commonly used terms in the selected articles was performed. The word most used among the articles was the acronym LGBT itself, followed by the terms: politics (*política*), population (*população*), public (*pública*), Brazil, actions (*ações*), gender (*gênero*), rights (*direitos*), social (*social*), national (*nacional*), health (*saúde*), and identity (*identidade*). Figure 3 shows the word cloud made up of the terms most frequently used in the selected articles.

The appearance of the words "policies", "public" and "Brazil" indicates that the study has yielded results in line with the above-mentioned keywords, with the academic discussion on LGBT public policies in Brazil being the central focus of this work. The terms "rights" and "social" may indicate that the discussion of the texts is based on the rights of the LGBT population, specifically in the pursuit of their effectiveness. The term "health" shows that many discussions touch upon this issue, due to the first actions aimed at the HIV/AIDS combat and prevention segment, and to the specific demands of the movement, such as the transsexualization process and the distancing of this population from health-promoting institutions.

The terms "gender" and "identity" also appeared significantly, as the discussion surrounding LGBT identities involves distinct conceptions. On the one hand, some articles point out that public policies aimed at the segment assume an LGBT identity with stable and permanent characteristics. On the other hand, articles based on queer studies suggest the adoption of an identity perspective that understands the subject as an unfinished being, under constant construction (Sampaio & Germano, 2014). These two perspectives have emerged in this collection of articles, and each one signals a different way of thinking and designing public policies.

Another important point highlighted by the word cloud (Figure 3) was the mention of issues related to religion and conservative segments, which can be associated with the term "against". Such segments are often associated because they advocate against the recognition of LGBT identities and their rights to citizenship. The texts analyzed also highlight that efforts to achieve the rights of the LGBT population are, on several occasions, curtailed by conservative interests.

Once this preliminary discussion was carried out, it was possible to identify two distinct argumentative axes: an approach that deals with the consequences of the political process of elaboration, implementation, and evaluation of public policies; and a perspective based on queer studies. Finally, it was also possible to find an intersection point between the texts, based on criticisms raised by the respective authors about the influence of conservative segments on the achievements of the LGBT population. The discussion of these points will be detailed in the following topics.

Figure 3
Most used words in the collection of articles

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Approach based on the public policy cycle

The main analyses relating to LGBT public policies are largely based on criticisms that range from the arrival of the issue on the government agenda to its implementation and unfolding into public policies. In this sense, the work of Aragusuku and Lopes (2018), Feitosa (2019), Mello et al. (2012, 2014), Mello and Maroja (2012), Pereira (2017), Popadiuk et al. (2017), Prado and Sousa (2017) and Vianna (2015) converge in analyzing and reflecting on the process of building, preparing and implementing government initiatives starting with Brazil without Homophobia. The articles recognize the importance of public policies aimed at the LGBT segment, although they criticize their effectiveness.

The first point that draws attention in the word frequency analysis was the issue of LGBT rights. Mello and Maroja (2012) point out that it would be more promising to formulate, implement, monitor and evaluate public policies aimed at the LGBT public if the Legislative and/or Judiciary defined the legal basis that recognizes the civil rights of this population. In this sense, the criminalization of homophobia was mentioned as fundamental to overcoming prejudice and discrimination suffered by this group (Aragusuku & Lopes, 2018; Mello et al., 2012, 2014; Mello & Maroja, 2012; Popadiuk et al., 2017; Prado & Sousa, 2017). Aragusuku (2018) illustrates the discussion by exemplifying that some LGBT assistance laws were passed in Mato Grosso, but only at the municipal level. The statewide bills failed to make progress in the Mato Grosso Legislative Assembly - following the example of Bill no. 760/2007 and PL no. 117/2008, which dealt with the creation of the state day to combat homophobia and the criminalization of homophobia, respectively.

Another important point highlighted in the work was the dialogue between the State and civil society. Some authors suggest that there is a significant gap between what is proposed and what is actually executed, and signal that a greater inter-locution between policy makers and implementers could increase scope and effectiveness of public policies (Mello et al., 2012, 2014; Mello & Maroja, 2012; Vianna, 2015). In this sense, the politicization of the debate on LGBT rights in public spaces can have a positive influence on this scenario, following the example of the I and II National Seminar on Public Security and the Fight against Homophobia (2007 and 2010), the I and II National LGBT Conference (2008 and 2011) and the National Conference on Public Security (2009). Mello, Avelar and Brito (2014) argue about the positive aspects of these initiatives:

> From the discussions held in these forums comes a growing number of initiatives in the field of public security for the LGBT population, which make it possible to name situations of violence and present proposals that may, in the medium term, result in State actions that meet the requirements of public policies, in terms of legal support, budget forecasting, continuity and social control (Mello et al., 2014, p. 316, translated).

As pointed out at the end of the excerpt, the question of budget forecasts was also significantly mentioned in the selected articles (Feitosa, 2019; Mello et al., 2014; Mello & Maroja, 2012; Vianna, 2015). It is discussed that the Brazil without Homophobia Program (BSH) had scarce resources at the time of its launch, which made its dissemination almost impossible (Vianna, 2015). Mello and Maroja (2012) add that in 2008 the III Training Seminar was held in Brasilia for the Human Rights Reference Centers for Preventing and Combating Homophobia and the Nuclei for Research and Promotion of LGBT Citizenship, to assess the progress of the actions set out in the BSH. The deliberations at the seminars were to discontinue the work at the centers and nuclei, given the scarcity of resources and, consequently, the difficulty of sustainability.

Furthermore, on the financial issue, Mello and Maroja (2012) also spoke about the "National LGBT Plan", alleging that it was not known where the budgetary resources needed to implement most of the actions set out in the Plan would come from, given the lack of a legal provision and the difficulty of raising funds from parliamentary amendments. To illustrate this scenario, an activist interviewed by Mello and Maroja (2012) comments about the "National LGBT Plan", "The Plan is still a fallacy, right? It has not yet taken to the streets, it has not yet appeared in society, because for you to implement the Plan you need resources and the resources are often not allocated, the resources are often even boycotted by some political groups and we know this" (Mello & Maroja, 2012, p. 303, translated).

Finally, the discussion about the political representation of LGBT also came to light in one of the texts. According to Pereira (2017), the scarcity of material and symbolic resources, linked to the violence faced by the segment, hinders LGBT political ambition. Thus, what is perceived in this scenario is the over-representation of segments and interests to the detriment of excluded groups. According to the author, this phenomenon is closely connected to the lack of LGBT assistance measures and can also be pointed out as a cause of the lack of policy effectiveness already stated.

Queer Approach

The analytical queer lens has emerged as a discussion on how to think and implement LGBT public policies. Of the 12 articles selected, 4 of them were based on the queer studies in order to question such policies and the public administration itself (Broilo & Akerman, 2015; Motta, 2016; Pereira, 2017; Sampaio & Germano, 2014).

What can be seen from these texts is that the criticism that emerges enables a confrontation that reveals the contradictions and power relations that surround the LGBT population, both internally and externally. In addition, Pereira (2017) characterizes queer activism as a more radical and disruptive way of viewing the LGBT problem.

One of the main justifications raised by these studies for exploring the queer approach was illustrated by the changes that have occurred in recent years in the acronym LGBT, which reveal the fragility of a political movement that bases its relationship with the State on a stable notion of identity, and which also represents a limited universe of recognized identities (Broilo & Akerman, 2015; Sampaio & Germano, 2014). Pereira (2017) corroborates this view by pointing out that the definition of the LGBT movement is open, inconclusive, and in dispute, whether within activism or within academia itself. And Sampaio and Germano (2014) suggest the adoption of the terminology "queer crowd politics" when referring to all those who resist the norms.

However, texts with such an approach leave several questions open about the adoption of such a perspective in the way public policies are designed and treated. Due to its more radical character (and perhaps for this reason sometimes classified as more "powerful"), the approach may broaden the possibilities of viewing public policies and dealing with them, opening paths in the search for greater comprehensiveness and effectiveness.

Conservatism and LGBT assistance

The debate on LGBT public policies often raises questions about the effectiveness of policies already adopted in favor of the segment and the possible elaboration of new initiatives. One of the themes commonly reported in the selected articles associates the actions of conservative segments (often limited to religious groups) as agents who make it difficult to obtain rights or who impose setbacks to the struggle of the LGBT population to exercise their citizenship. Among the 12 articles selected, 10 directly mentioned the activities of conservative groups and their possible pressure to prevent LGBT rights. The two articles that did not address this issue (Broilo & Akerman, 2015; Sampaio & Germano, 2014) focused mainly on the discussion that might be applied to the political process, perhaps for this reason they did not cover this issue either.

According to Mello et al. (2012), soon after the enactment of the 1988 Federal Constitution, the LGBT movement concentrated its efforts to demand measures from the Legislative Branch to enforce its sexual and reproductive rights. However, there was great resistance to these measures, especially due to the actions of parliamentarians linked to religious groups. Mota's vision (2016) corroborates this scenario by saying that the inter-locution between the State and civil society can become "foggy" since it is precisely the group least permeable to the LGBT agenda that becomes the formulators and implementors of public policies. Thus, in the author's view, the rise of conservative and neo-conservative groups "blurs" the possibilities of inter-locution between the state and the LGBT segment.

Another example of this phenomenon can be seen in Bill no. 122 of 2006, which provided for the criminalization of homophobia. It is discussed that there was great resistance to the project, expressed mainly by religious authorities linked to evangelical groups, which in turn prevented the project from advancing in the legislative chamber (Mello et al., 2014). In fact, once the vulnerability of the LGBT population was acknowledged, the criminalization of homophobia was approved only 13 years later, in 2019, by the Federal Supreme Court (STF) [4], since the other state bodies omitted to legislate in this regard (Barifouse, 2019). In the words of Mello et al. (2014),

> All this illustrates the strength of religious conservatism which either controls or decisively interferes in the debate about sexual rights in Brazil and the world, compromising the constitutional secularism of the Brazilian State. This has impeded the implementation of more effective public policies in the field of human rights, especially concerning the rights of the LGBT population (Mello et al., 2014, p. 316, translated).

With specific regard to the school environment, identified as a space for recurrent bullying practices and other types of homophobic violence, the School Without Homophobia program was conceived in 2010 by the Ministry of Education in partnership with the Ministry of Human Rights. It aimed to propose initiatives to make this environment more receptive to LGBT people, as one of the developments of the Brazil without Homophobia Program. The project provided for educator training to deal with gender and sexuality issues, in an attempt to mitigate prejudice and homophobic violence in the school environment. This program gained publicity with the tension generated over the so-called "gay kit"[5] and, after pressure from religious groups in Congress, President Dilma Rousseff vetoed the material in 2011, under allegations of inadequacy, followed by the cancellation of the project (Mello et al., 2012; Pereira, 2017; Vianna, 2015). About problems like this, Mello, Brito and Maroja (2012) point out that

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[4] The STF Justices ordered that homophobic actions be punished based on the Racism Law (Lei nº 7.716, de 5 de janeiro de 1989), which today provides for crimes of discrimination or prejudice by "race, color, ethnicity, religion, and national origin" (Barifouse, 2019).

[5] A pejorative name coined by parliamentarians who disagreed with the educational material, which was prepared through a partnership between the Ministry of Education and civil society organizations. This educational package consisted of a notebook with classroom activities for teachers, six bulletins for discussion with students, and three audiovisuals, which systematically addressed homophobia and aimed to promote citizenship and human rights in the LGBT community (Vianna, 2015).

> In the context of the struggle to define what constitutes legitimate sexuality and which people are socially authorized to exercise it, even states with a long democratic tradition, at one time or another, have their secularity explicitly called into question, and this is a particularly worrying phenomenon in democracies with fragile traditions, such as those in Latin America, where debates on sexual and reproductive rights are marked by very strong religious opposition (Mello et al., 2012, p. 413, translated).

Also on political discussions about gender and sexuality in the educational sphere, Vianna (2015) cites the project to train education professionals in the public school system of São Paulo to deal with these issues. According to the author, the contradiction between the information acquired in the course and the solidified values derived from religion caused a "devastating tension" in the educational environment, preventing the course information from being understood and internalized. Moreover, according to the author, another aggravating factor is the growth of religion in the day-care centers and public schools, impelled by the education professionals themselves, adherents of conservative beliefs - especially of Catholic and Evangelical origin (Vianna, 2015).

Concerning the Third National Human Rights Program6, which contained guidelines directly linked to LGBT assistance, Mello and Maroja (2012) say that its launch was the object of strong resistance from conservative sectors of society and the government itself. In relation to sexual rights, the religious group strongly advocated against the civil union between same-sex people and also against the adoption rights of homosexual couples. The authors reiterate that one cannot ignore the historical influence of the Catholic Church in the regression or impediment of actions in LGBT assistance, especially in Latin America, since it has delivered for centuries an ultraconservative and repressive discourse about gender, sex, reproduction and family issues (Pecheny & Dehesa, 2010 as cited in Mello & Maroja, 2012). Feitosa (2019) complements by saying that, apart from the Catholic Church, the evangelicals also play a relevant role in Brazilian religious conservatism in the current scenario.

The advances of conservative segments, in addition to possibly curtailing achievements of LGBT assistance, may also bring about setbacks. As an example, Popadiuk, Oliveira and Signorelli (2017) state that the insecurity encountered by the transgender population today lies in the fact that ordinances can be revoked at any time, promoting setbacks in terms of assistance to the transsexualization process, currently supported by the Single Health System (SUS). According to the authors (Popadiuk et al., 2017, p. 1511, translated), "This is a challenge for Brazil, which has a culture rooted in conservatism that is compounded by recent advances in religious fundamentalism in democratic spaces, which delegitimize LGBT agendas, putting at risk the principle of state secularity".

Finally, Aragusuku and Lopes (2018) bring to light the emergence of the term "gender ideology", which is the main discursive strategy of conservative groups against gender and sexuality policy in Brazil. Formulated in the late 1990s by members of the Catholic Church, it is a conservative discourse in moral and political-sexual terms, which in the legislative sphere legitimizes discourse for the implementation of "repressive" public policies based on a biological conception of sex (Aragusuku & Lopes, 2018). Thus, corroborating the view of Prado e Sousa (2017), it is possible to suggest that religious beliefs along with the "biologization" of sexuality - from a conservative discourse - may limit factors in guaranteeing sexual rights, and not overcoming this scenario may end up perpetuating a hetero-normative and discriminatory culture.

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6 The National Human Rights Program (PNDH-3) was a document created by the Special Secretary of Human Rights of the Presidency of the Republic, established by Decree No. 7.037 (Decreto nº 7.037, de 21 de dezembro de 2009), to expand the promotion of human rights in Brazil (Secretaria Especial dos Direitos Humanos da Presidência da República, 2010).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The objective of this work was to identify how public policies aimed at the LGBT population in Brazil are being discussed, through an exploratory review of scientific publications (from 2000 to 2020). The results indicate that this discussion is still emerging in the field of public administration, with approaches that revolve around a focused look at the political process that involves LGBT public policies, and discussions based on queer studies.

The main obstacles to LGBT public policies until now are the lack of a legal framework, specifically the lack of laws that protect the rights of this population, failures in the dialogue between the state and civil society, lack of budget forecasts for plans and programs, and lack of political representation in the LGBT community. The foundation of these policies is the perception of stable identities, which may generate new segregations. The adoption of queer crowd policies might lead to more far-reaching policies, although studies based on this perspective leave room for questioning on how such policies can actually be made operational. An axis of convergence observed between the texts also points to the advance of conservatism (specifically that led by religious segments), which is characterized as a frequent barrier to the conquest and realization of LGBT rights.

To make the study feasible, the present assessment was limited by the number of platforms on which the search was carried out, possibly not contemplating the universe of all the texts published on the research object. Another limitation was the research cut-off, which focused only on discussions of Brazilian public policies, to study this specific reality. Thus, the analysis of the reality of other countries in terms of public policies directed at the LGBT population is suggested as future work.

This study was closely based on the discussion that the selected articles raised on this topic. Thus, the exploration of other perspectives on the consequences of the political process for the LGBT community becomes interesting. In this sense, since the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) has been observed in this process, they should be listened to, in order to provide important information for a better understanding of LGBT assistance in Brazil.

Finally, it should be noted that this work did not intend to suggest a supposed incompatibility between religion and the LGBT population. Despite being a relationship historically permeated by tensions, the Queer Theology field has recently gained notoriety, and its dissemination may signal a resignification of paradigms, which could perhaps mitigate these tensions observed between religious segments and the LGBT population.

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