Bisexual Citizenship in Portugal

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The pattern of recent decades, in so-called Western societies, has been one of the major advances in legislation on matters of sexual and reproductive equality and rights. As Liguori and Lamas (2003) mention, these advances demonstrate that issues of "acceptance" or "non-acceptance" are not related to an intrinsic essence based on biological differences between people, but rather on historically, culturally and politically attributed values. The canons of sex and gender established by the dominant patriarchal system have tended to consider some practices and expressions of sex/gender problematic because they do not conform to dichotomies such as nature-culture, sex-gender and man-woman, which, in turn, are deeply related to each other (Bornstein, 1994; Butler, 1999; Haraway, 1988). These sets of prescriptions, therefore, support social processes of regulation and control of subjects and their bodies (Butler, 1999; Miskolci, 2009).

In the particular case of processes of intelligibility of sexual and gender diversity, these dichotomies undergo social reinforcement by means of cultural, legal and institutional mechanisms (Bergstrand & Sinski, 2010; Emens, 2004), marked by heteronormativity (Warner, 1993),

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mononormativity (Pieper & Bauer, 2005) and the orientation of desire guided by monosexist principles (Caldwell, 2010). The upshot is that the life experience of those located outside the set of prescriptions constituting the social processes of regulation and control of bodies, as is the case of bisexuality,[1] is typically subject to prejudice and discrimination (Callis, 2013; Klesse, 2011). In this process, complex frameworks constituted by hegemonic beliefs, values, ideologies or languages create and sustain a discourse of truth that defines anything lying beyond this border as transgression or deviation (Santos, 2013).

References to processes of marginalization which arise from heterosexism appear in the literature in the first two decades of the twenty-first century (Herek et al., 1991; Yost & Thomas, 2012). There is, however, less emphasis on processes of discrimination marked by compulsory monosexuality,[2] which is especially problematic in terms of bisexuality (Prell & Træen, 2018).

Recent studies (FRA, 2020; ILGA Europe, 2021) have shown that bisexuality has a high rate of incidence of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, and the greater the openness regarding sexual orientation, the higher the risk of aggression and assault, which may be of a physical or sexual nature. On the other hand, the number of reports of episodes of discrimination for reasons of sexual orientation is low in the bisexual population, which implies that these experiences have become invisible (Maliepaard & Baumgartner, 2020; Monro, 2015). When compared to the rest of the population, bisexual men are less open about revealing their sexual orientation, quoting fear of threat, harassment or aggression (FRA, 2020). According to the same study, almost half the bisexual women surveyed report having been the target of harassment because of their sexual orientation, meaning that they less willing to reveal their sexual orientation when compared to lesbian women and gay men.

As regards sexual rights in the area of conjugality and parenthood in particular, these are guaranteed in many European countries, despite the worrying setbacks we have witnessed recently (Bálint & Sándor, 2020; Mulak, 2020). Despite the progressive European legal framework and,

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[1] A term used to describe people who are sexually attracted to men, women and people of different genders and/or identify as bisexual and/or engage sexually with men, women and people of different genders and/or identify with broader or more inclusive terms such as "sexually fluid" and "sexually flexible" (Fahs, 2009).

[2] This is at the base of biases arising from the binomial homosexuality–heterosexuality (Barker & Langdridge, 2010).

more specifically, the fact that Portugal is ranked the fourth most advanced country in terms of sexual and gender equality and diversity in Europe (Pacheco, 2021), bisexuality continues to be relegated to a subordinate position in Southern Europe (Nogueira & Oliveira, 2010). Furthermore, the so-called couple-norm (Roseneil et al., 2020) socially institutionalizes not only monogamy but also the idea of a fixed, monolithic sexual identity based on a mandatory regime of monosexuality (Caldwell, 2010). As such, it produces and reproduces exclusion that ostracizes those who do not fit this principle and other normativities that affect how gender, sex and desire orientation are conceived (Esterberg, 2002; James, 1996).

Research on intimate citizenship, particularly in relation to bi+ identities,[3] calls on different disciplines of the social sciences, such as social psychology, to go into greater detail in their analysis of the role of institutions in the way sexual/intimate citizenship is formulated, enacted and lived (Andreouli, 2019). A critical approach to social psychology allows us to conceive of sexual citizens not as a status but as the "practices of everyday life of invoking one's rights and making rights claims that position oneself and others as (legitimate) political subjects but which may also exclude others from political life" (Andreouli, 2019, p. 7).

In this chapter, I set out to explore how people who identify as bisexual construct and express intimate citizenship within the Portuguese context. Emerging from an ongoing PhD research in social psychology,[4] my starting point is empirical analysis centred on the challenges and constraints which are faced by bisexual activism and which help to think about the constitution of bisexual citizenship in Portugal.

In the next section, I present the debate around bisexual citizenship, taking intimate citizenship (Plummer, 2003) as a useful analytical concept in uncovering the institutionalization of compulsory heterosexuality and monosexuality which are present in the daily lives of bisexual people. This will also be the key concept in considering the relationship between the

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[3] A designation which I have adopted, which always implies a plural and heterogeneous form in definition and practice, in line with contemporary debates on bisexuality (Maliepaard & Baumgarten, 2020; Galupo et al., 2014).

[4] With the thesis project "Invisible sexualities: Intimate citizenship and psychosocial well-being in bisexuality" under the Doctoral Programme in Psychology (ISCTE-IUL) from the European research project "INTIMATE—Citizenship, Care and Choice: The Micropolitics of Intimacy in Southern Europe", funded by the European Research Council (2014–2019) and undertaken at the Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra.

state and civil society with bisexuality in the Portuguese context, as part of the discussion on a model for citizenship applied to bisexuality.

I then present the empirical section in which I explore aspects of sexual and intimate citizenship with the voices of Portuguese bisexual activism. It will also be in this section that I approach some dimensions of analysis of bisexual citizenship that allow an extension of the relationship between the individual and collective levels.

Finally, the closing section presents issues that require attention if a solid project of bisexual (intimate) citizenship is to be constituted in Portugal and which implies redefining grammars and action repertoires of LGBTQI+ activism.

From Intimate to Bisexual Citizenship

In this context, changes in the way of living, individuality and interpersonal relationships of intimacy have undergone important transformations. My starting point, therefore, is the concept of intimate citizenship formulated by Plummer (2003) to think about bisexuality in theoretical terms. In this sense, intimate citizenship is the lens through which I will analyse how bisexual people dispute and construct the right to freely experience their intimacy, considering their various intersections (i.e. gender, gender identity and age) (Monro, 2015). Following that, I will examine the implications of visibility (or lack of it) in public terms and end by presenting the components for a proposal for bisexual citizenship.

Traditional conceptions of citizenship which are centred on political belonging have been expanded over time due to geopolitical and sociocultural changes brought about by globalization. This is the case of deterritorialization, the decrease in the autonomy of member states, policies for diversity and the existence of social identity movements (Cooper, 1993). Movements for sexual and gender equality and diversity played an important role in introducing transformations in what has been designated as the couple, family and intimacy, breaking with the constant pressure of cis/heteronormativity (Warner, 1993). These transformations in the sphere of intimacy have enabled the development of ways to overcome the conventional model of family and conjugality (Roseneil et al., 2020).

A different concept of citizenship can also be applied, with implications for the way we understand inequality. If we take the concept of citizenship as performative, this is related to the act of laying claim to rights and not so much as a condition of participation (Isin, 2019). In other words, one

is constituted as a political subject more by one's acts as a citizen than by one's status (Andreouli, 2019, p. 2).

The emergence and consolidation of the theoretical field of sexual citizenship has provided an interdisciplinary lens that can focus on theorizing about access to rights (guaranteed or denied) for different social groups based on their sexuality. This is particularly the case regarding sexual expression and identity (Kaplan, 1997; Richardson, 2000) and in relating these rights to sexual and bodily responsibilities, with an emphasis also on cultural, political and legal aspects (Hearn et al., 2011, p. 7). Furthermore, this theoretical field considers sexual citizenship as a concept which should be applied to refer to sexual rights (guaranteed or rejected) and to the way we are "entitled to express ourselves sexually" (Richardson, 2000, 2018).

The concept of intimate citizenship has gradually replaced the concept of sexual citizenship, given its broader scope (Plummer, 2003; Roseneil, 2013). This is an approach that is related to the "decisions people have to make about controlling (or not) their body, feelings and relationships; access (or lack of it) to representations, relationships, public spheres, etc.; and with social choices (or not) about identities, gender experiences and erotic experiences" (Plummer, 2003, p. 27). For Plummer, therefore, it does not imply "a model, a pattern, a form", and intimate citizenship becomes a concept that "integrates a vast set of stories and public discourses about how to live one's personal life in a postmodern world, where we have to deal with an increasing number of options and difficulties about how to build our intimacy" (2003, p. 26). Therefore, aspects related to control, access and choice in relation to what he calls "zones of intimacy" inform and significantly affect one's personal life.

Although there are differences (in emphasis, design and terminology), the approaches to intimate citizenship aim to overcome the limitations of perspectives focused exclusively on issues related to sexual orientation. The aim is also to inform about the heterocissexism that characterizes the concept of traditional citizenship and results from the institutionalization of male, heterosexual, cisnormative privileges (Evans, 1993; Hines, 2009; Richardson, 2000). The ongoing debates thus allow us to ponder who is included in citizenship and who lies outside its boundaries; it shows that the resulting choices and problems, which are apparently personal and private, have very significant public and political implications (Yip, 2008).

Evans (1993) explored the notion of bisexual citizenship for the first time and highlighted self-nomination for free sexual expression, relating it to a set of rights, namely, the rights of sexual expression and consumption

and the importance of taking on responsibility and obligations. This debate thus highlights the way in which the exercise of citizenship is interconnected with the language that arises in issues of private life and intimacy. This author also highlights tensions between private and personal aspects and more universal or public contexts. This association between private decisions and public dialogue has emerged within debates in different disciplines and continues to do so (Barker, 2007, 2012; Suess, 2015).

It is crucial that the regime of intimate citizenship to be implemented includes the state and civil society and that it supports personal choices and agency in intimate relationships, such as respect and recognition of the dynamic and changing character of relationships over time. As argued by Roseneil et al. (2020), if there is room for transformation, the persistence and centrality of the couple-norm will be attenuated, with greater freedom and proximity to the full exercise of intimate citizenship.

Contemporary analyses of sexual and intimate citizenship (Richardson, 2018; Roseneil et al., 2020) continue to pay scant attention to bisexual citizenship, some exceptions notwithstanding (Maliepaard & Baumgartner, 2020; Monro, 2015). Gay and lesbian sexualities have become visible and legally recognized and have been complemented by growing public acceptance, and transgender issues have also gradually been protected with policies of equality (Davy, 2011; Hines & Sanger, 2010). Yet bisexuality continues to be viewed with ambivalence, misunderstanding and prejudice (Barker et al., 2012; Flanders, 2016; Maliepaard, 2015).

Proposed bisexual citizenship based on intimate citizenship draws us towards broader theoretical debates, such as that around the dichotomy between the public sphere and private sphere, in which the possibility of a plural, democratic and public intimate life is created (Monro, 2005). Therefore, an exploration of bisexual intimacies and deconstruction of the notion of the private as a social category are fundamental elements when aiming for a more democratized and emancipatory mapping of intimate life. The obstacles to achieving bisexual citizenship for this group of the population have not been sufficiently explored (Monro, 2015). Indeed, the specificities surrounding bisexual intimacies have been either ignored or simply assimilated into the lesbian and gay categories (Rust, 2000), suggesting the existence of negative attitudes towards bisexuality (Rust, 1995). As the normative sexual and gender order forms the basic assumption for a dichotomous conceptualization of sexual orientation (Fox, 1995; Rust, 2000), it means that the experience of bisexuality is defined in relation to gay and lesbian experiences and is not perceived as a valid,

stable and socially and culturally differentiated sexual identity (Flanders, 2016). The existence of an epistemic and political project to erase bisexuality has been alluded to by several authors (Breetveld, 2020; Yoshino, 2000) and is transversal, with different nuances, to academia (Monro et al., 2017; Petford, 2003), gay and lesbian communities (Gurevich et al., 2007; Weiss, 2003) and conventional media (Hayfield, 2020; Barker et al., 2008). Hence, disruptive processes of current sociopolitical structures and personal processes such as coming out are compromised (McLean, 2007). Furthermore, the bisexual population receives less family support and support from peers and friendship networks when compared to lesbian and gay populations (Jorm et al., 2002). It is not surprising, therefore, that it generates increased levels of psychological stress, taking into account biphobia (Jorm et al., 2002), and the dual discrimination that it faces, applied by both the heterosexual population and the lesbian and gay population (Jorm et al., 2002). Recent studies show that cisgender people who identify as bisexual women and men have lower levels of self-acceptance when compared to gay men or lesbian women (FRA, 2020; ILGA Europe, 2021). Shame, embarrassment and difficulty in assuming one's sexual orientation are the reasons most frequently mentioned by the respondents to explain why cases of physical and/or sexual violence are not reported. This is why the debate on the intimate citizenship of bisexual people is crucial.

Bisexuality makes it possible to develop discursive practices that contravene the private notion of intimacy and tools to redesign intimacy as a public discourse and practice, in addition to its private structures. Thus Monro's (2015) formulation of bisexual citizenship is important in recognizing the notion of public intimacy in policies for the rights of "sexual minorities", for human rights and for the legitimization of "radical" identities such as sexual identities non-heteronormative and non-binary such as BDSM, bisexual and transgender. The author proposes a reform of the model of intimate citizenship which includes aspects related to sexual fluidity and multiplicity. This, on the one hand, allows it to be normalized and, on the other, enables the rigidity of identification with heterosexuality to be questioned. Thus, one of the characteristics of thinking about a model of bisexual citizenship seems to be the observation of overlaps with other populations outside the heteronormative spectrum and with mainstream citizenship (Monro, 2015, pp. 136–146) and specific issues that bisexual people face, affirming a position on differentiated citizenship (Maliepaard, 2017).

One of the possible departure points for the path to this formulation could be to reclaim previous works on sexual citizenship and monosexual identities. Into these could be incorporated different elements for a proposal of bisexual citizenship that considers relevant aspects in the case of bisexual identities, such as the notion of mutable sexuality, fluid desire and multiple relations (Monro & Richardson, 2012). Thus, the application of the feminist theory of citizenship, trans theory and citizenship studies can enrich the theorization of bisexual citizenship given the presence of gender diversity in this population group (Monro, 2015, p. 152). Characteristics of the author's proposal are accepting sexual desire as multiple and fluid, recognizing bisexual identity and validating polyamorous relationships, thus favouring the queerization of the normative model of sexuality by questioning the identification with heterosexuality as the norm and, consequently, biphobic attitudes and behaviours (Monro, 2015, pp. 152–153).

Coming out of the closet as a bisexual continues to be a difficult task (FRA, 2020), and there is a continuing need to design specific policies for bisexuality (Maliepaard & Baumgartner, 2020). Exploring the way in which political struggles around bisexuality are perceived, negotiated and/or contested can help the debate on bisexual citizenship continue (Eadie, 1993) and allows us to think about the possibilities of overcoming difficulties arising from biphobia and obligatory monosexuality.

In the next section, we will look closely at the experiences of bisexuality in terms of organizing and collectively mobilizing to build a bisexual policy. More specifically, I will focus on the discourses produced by bisexual activists in the Portuguese context and examine perceptions of bisexual activism, as well as the role of LGBTQI+ activism in ensuring care and promoting well-being. I will thus ponder how bisexual citizenship is constructed, negotiated or contested, not just at the level of citizenship regimes themselves (Andreouli, 2019), by examining the micro-contexts in which bisexual citizenship is "performed" (Isin, 2017) and discursively constituted as well as the ideological resources anchored to these constructions of citizenship.

BISEXUALITY THROUGH THE LENS OF BISEXUAL ACTIVISM: NOTES FROM AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

This chapter is the result of a study, the aim of which was to understand how bisexual citizenship is negotiated and built in daily life in the Portuguese context.

In terms of the socio-historical context, the authoritarian, autocratic, nationalist and corporatist state political regime that prevailed in Portugal for a large part of the twentieth century should be borne in mind. The so-called Estado Novo (1933–1974) created conditions to affirm a morality and a set of values based on the Judeo-Christian religion, and it conditioned the way in which Portuguese society looks at issues related to intimacy and sexuality (Cascais, 2020; Santos, 2018).

Despite these constraints, a significant increase has been observed in the capacity of the LGBTQI+ movement to mobilize and implement Portuguese policies and legislation based on issues of sexual citizenship (Cascais, 2006, 2020; Ferreira, 2015; Santos, 2013).

In 1996, two large organizations in the LGBTQI+ political sphere emerged in Portugal: *Associação ILGA Portugal—Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Intervention* and *Clube Safo*, the first organization for lesbian rights in the country. With regard to the organization of a bisexual community, two collectives appeared for the first time in 2010—*Ponto Bi* and *Associação B Visibilidades*, representing the beginning of public visibility for this population, although their existence was fleeting. Later, in 2013, a collective exclusively concerned with answering the issues faced by people who identify as bisexual was created, *Actibistas—the collective for bisexual visibility*. It had a strong online presence and has participated in events and demonstrations of LGBTQI+ Pride in recent years and continues to do so. Since then, groups with varying degrees of institutionalization have emerged throughout Portugal, or bisexuality activists who are part of other groups, revealing the intersectionality that surrounds bisexuality.

In methodological terms, the study on which this chapter is based was oriented around a qualitative approach and focused on the discourses and perceptions of eight bisexual activists/bisexuality. Their focus is situated on the perceptions around their perceptions of the constitution of bisexual activism, from the negotiation of the position of bisexual activism in LGBTQI+ activism to the role of the state in guaranteeing bisexual citizenship. To this end, individual semi-structured interviews were carried

out in the cities of Lisbon and Porto, with occasional use of digital media. Those interviewed were aged between 23 and 59 years of age and had a history of LGBTQI+ activism, being involved at the time of the interview or earlier in different groups, associations or support networks for LGBTI people, located in the cities of Lisbon, Porto and Braga. The selection of participants encompassed diversity in terms of age, gender, gender identity and geographic location.

The information was then analysed using the thematic analysis method (Braun & Clarke, 2006), in which data were grouped into three macro-themes related to the sociological literature on intimate citizenship and bisexuality studies: internal perceptions of bisexual activism, perceptions about the relationship with LGBTQI+ activism and perceptions about the relationship with the dominant culture and with state/laws.

Internal Perceptions of Bisexual Activism

According to the literature (Bowes-Catton, 2007; Maliepaard, 2018; Van Lisdonk & Keuzenkamp, 2017), the creation of a bisexual policy is defined according to collective organization around legislative, political and social demands. The quote below shows the difficulty of a cohesive bisexual community existing in the Portuguese context.

> It is necessary to understand what you do with the few people you have, with the limited availability, with the few people that you have who are politically active, with the limited availability (…), it is difficult to know where to start. (Cis woman, 30–34 years old, Lisbon)

Without the development of a specific policy that flags and resists the obstacles that bisexual people face, it will be difficult to guarantee bisexual citizenship (Monro, 2015). The low number of bisexual activists has a collective effect in consolidating the political agenda of this activism and in the lack of public visibility of the issues that affect bisexual people. These effects are felt at the individual level, in everyday life, since the presence of people who publicly present themselves as bisexual is still limited.

> The perception I have is… [laughs] It's not. It's not, because I almost don't see activism being done. In Portugal there are, like, two collectives. Two collectives if that many, but they have been sleeping, so at least I don't see

much work being done (. …) In terms of individual people, um, well, I don't see much being done either (…). (Trans male, 25–29 years old, Porto)

The fragile situation of bisexual activism exacerbates the need to develop a specific agenda which is differentiated from the LGBTQI+ population as a whole. If we look at the urgent challenges facing bisexual activism, the interviews point to the recognition of the existence of biphobia in LGBTQI+ spheres/groups.

The experiences of non-acceptance of the demands of bisexual activism are many and different in nature, leading to the appearance of spheres that I term "spheres of resistance". They are biphobia-free groups/spheres where it is possible to organize actions that respond to the needs of those who identify with the bisexual cause. In parallel, bisexual activism supports other struggles linked to feminism and gender diversity, seeking collective and intersectional responses to individual urgencies.

Despite the fleeting and now defunct existence of "biphobia-free spheres", the interviews reveal the importance of awareness raising for bisexuality to be more visible. Participating in events, establishing networks between collectives and using props (badges, stickers) and/or symbols (flags) represent an act of resistance to what has been called epistemic and political injustice (Breetveld, 2020; Yoshino, 2000), lending visibility to these bodies and experiences. This resistance not only recognizes bisexual identity but occupies a political terrain with bisexual voices that publicly contribute to the dismantling of heterocisnormativity and compulsory monosexuality (Ault, 1996). As regards the actions carried out, they include the nomination of bisexuality in LGBTQI+ spheres and groups and the organization of activities that raise awareness and clarify specific issues such as bi+ identities and experiences in the public sphere.[5] Thus, in a kind of unique everyday activism, bisexual activists become agents of awareness and education.

As for the development of visibility in LGBTQI+ communities, there is evidence of a process of coming out which is distinct from so-called monosexual identities, presenting themselves as "non-heterosexual" and "non-homosexual". For these reasons, this indicates for me that the idea of a

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[5] The presence of *Bandeirão Bi* in the 19th LGBTI+ Pride March in Lisbon, 2018, and the 13th LGBT+ Pride March in Porto, in 2018, or the gathering entitled "bisexuality" organized in Porto by the Blergh collective, in 2017.

bisexual political project is in the "pre-project" phase in the Portuguese context.

The diversity of experiences that are associated with bisexuality makes it difficult to establish a notion of stability and internal coherence which characterize dominant perceptions about sexual orientation, highlighting the monosexist assumptions underlying normative conceptions of sexual orientation (Caldwell, 2010). The quote below illustrates the relevance of raising awareness of the fluidity and non-binarity of the orientation of desire that goes hand in hand with these identities and for the deconstruction of normative conceptions of sexuality.

> What I started to do in the association [generic LGBTI+ association to which he previously belonged], of always making the letter B visible, it's something I bring and that I do whenever I can. Whenever I'm in an LGBT sphere, I either bring the letter B, or I bring a badge, or I say, actively say I'm bi. Get out of the sphere and make sure that people know that a bi person is there, that it is something that exists, and that it is there. (Cis male, 30–34 years old, Braga)

Negative attitudes and direct and indirect discrimination towards bisexuality are the greatest concerns voiced in the discourse of the people interviewed.

> There is little love for bisexuals (. …) What comes to me is that these people are the unloved… poorly understood, on both sides. In fact, heterosexual people had various questions regarding bisexuality and I would say that LG people would have many more. (Non-binary person, 42 years old, Lisbon)

From the data collected, it can be ascertained that fostering recognition and identification with bisexuality contributes to breaking away from the public/private binomial and helps build a bisexual movement. It would be difficult to ensure active participation in matters of sexual policy in any other way. Placing bisexuality in the public sphere is thus fundamental in constructing a policy to combat discrimination against people who identify as bisexual.

Perceptions of the Relationship Between Bisexual Activism and LGBTQI+ Activism

The relationship between bisexual activism and LGBTQI+ communities has not been tension-free. Analysis of the interviews reveals that the LGBTQI+ struggles have tended to treat bisexuality as a secondary issue and that there is a perception of a certain instrumentalization of bisexuality in carrying out of the movement's broader agendas, which seems to be in line with previous theoretical reflections (Van Lisdonk & Keuzenkamp, 2017). The following quote shows the lack of inclusion of bisexual issues in the movement's political agenda:

> I think it's super cynical, we've had all the letters together for years: LGBT; but sometimes I think we only count as a statistic; when it comes to embracing our scene no one ever asks us; we don't even appear in the manifestos. Nobody asks us "What do you need? What are your needs? What are your struggles?"; I feel that no one ever asks us this; we have to come out and sign everyone's manifestos, but for us… (Cis woman, 30–34 years old, Porto)

Spheres of LGBTQI+ activism carry the marks of contradictions in terms of care, revealing that there is also violence directed at bi+ identities. Confusion with heterosexuality and denying the existence and legitimacy of a bisexual identity seems to exist in these spheres. The interviews suggest that the gay and lesbian population tends to view the bisexual group as allies, thus depriving them of legitimacy and questioning their membership. The discrediting of bisexual identities within LGBTQI+ activism thus opens the debate over who constitutes the "true" LGBTQI+ community, which gives an essentialist idea of the community itself, as well as of who has the power to define it.

The context of LGBTI+ activism is revealed as a field of dispute, where episodes of biphobia reveal different types of biphobic violence present in everyday life, with echoes in interpersonal relationships, particularly in relationships of friendship:

> (…) and the jokes were so constant that I no longer felt comfortable there; (…) it was what led me to distance myself from these people, but on the one hand that's a good aspect, because I didn't feel, I couldn't fully be myself around those people, you know? Feeling that you could only say things up to a certain point, but that if you were talking about the other spectrum,

nobody valued it; it was an unpleasant feeling in your group of friends. (Cis woman, 30–34 years old, Porto)

There are also micro-aggressions expressed in the form of jokes or condescension from LG activists, questioning the legitimacy of attending LGBTQI+ spheres.

Perception of the Relationship with the State and Society

The interviews reveal an advanced legislative context in terms of equality and rights of the LGBTI+ population; it is considered to be positive, especially regarding conjugality and parenthood. However, gaps can be identified in terms of specific measures to answer the needs of the bisexual population and to combat invisibility, thus countering the assimilation of bisexuality into the lesbian and gay categories, and these end up reproducing themselves:

LGBT people, not bi people? [laughs] (…) the question, in fact, is that the measures, the improvements that we've seen in recent years in Portugal end up benefiting people too, although they don't talk about bi people, and they couldn't care less about them when they make laws, because they basically don't know they exist, or deny that they exist. (Cis woman, 30–34 years old, Lisbon)

The absence of public policies that answer the needs of bisexuality suggests a lack of commitment from the state in deconstructing prejudice and creating measures that break with the normative frameworks on which the notions of sexuality and gender are based. This lack of protection (political and legal) has implications, particularly at the institutional level.

There is an urgent need to transmit the demands produced by bisexual activism into the realm of the social. The absence of public policies that respond to the problems of the bisexual population reveals the monosexist assumptions that characterize the conception of sexual rights and the status of intimate citizenship in Portugal:

(…) if you don't say it, it's not a possibility, either you're a lesbian or you're straight. And in my opinion, that's also a form of invisibility, and it might seem like nitpicking, maybe, perhaps, I've had debates like "ahh but is this

really that important?" For me it is, because I think the needs, or rather the issues that bisexual people struggle with are different, you know? Invisibility annoys me. (Cis woman, 30–34 years old, Porto)

The state must therefore adopt a broad perspective of sexual and gender diversity, welcoming aspects such as relational and sexual fluidity and multiplicity, which inform decision-making in this matter in all spheres of public intervention. An example of this missing commitment is in the area of education for diversity, as one interviewee pointed out:

(…) if we can now marry whoever… all these prohibitions in the law were falling down, and if in fact there is nothing wrong with liking women or men or women/or men, or people—whatever combination you want—then why not… a truly massive commitment to children's education. (Nonbinary person, 40–45 years old, Lisbon)

FINAL THOUGHTS: PROTESTING FROM THE SIDELINES

Taking perceptions of bisexual activism as my starting point, the aim in this chapter was to explore bisexual collective organization in Portugal and what challenges it faces today, as well as the implications for guaranteeing bisexual citizenship. Setting out from a political conception of identity, I tried to understand the components that characterize the bisexual activism and dynamics that are generated with the LGBTQI+ community, as well as the role of the state in guaranteeing full bisexual citizenship.

This study allowed elements to be identified that provide an outline for future paths for the LGBTQI+ movement in Portugal. Situating bisexual activism at an early stage and considering its heterogeneity, the discourses obtained seem to reveal that the normative system of gender and sex is present in the way political priorities are established and the relevance of a legitimate and "quasi-ethnic" sexual identity to the detriment of others who are equally centred on self-identification and self-determination (Bowes-Catton, 2007). This tension coexists with a queer agenda that resists dichotomous conceptions of sexuality and that presents bisexuality more as an attraction, regardless of gender[6] (Maliepaard & Baumgartner, 2020).

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[6] The definition preferred by the majority of participants.

The attempt to overcome the idea that identity and sexual orientation are rigid, fixed and immutable social categories throughout life is present in some of the discourse. This idea of a multiple, permeable bisexuality which is in transit and fluid challenges the normative frameworks that shape the way we look at issues of sexual and gender diversity. Being sensitive and open to listen to bisexual calls can be the first step in committing to bisexual citizenship and in reflecting on the LGBTQI+ movement in Portugal.

The interviews reveal that LGBTQI+ spheres are places of (re)production of biphobic violence, exposing the paradox in which these spheres are found and inviting people to reflect on the role which these communities play in guaranteeing the intimate citizenship of people who identify as bisexual. The resistance encountered in the context of LGBTQI+ activism ends up perpetuating regimes of invisibility, condemning bisexual people to silence and returning them to the private domain, in a kind of place with which no one wants to be associated. This erasure of bisexuality is paradoxical as it appears to be the largest population in the LGBTQI+ spectrum (Big Eye Agency, 2021). Fighting monosexism and biphobia within LGBTQI+ communities, specifically with the lesbian and gay community, and deconstructing essentialist views about non-heteronormative sexual identities and who can "inhabit" these spheres, is fundamental for recognizing experiences and guarantee of intimate citizenship.

A view of diversity that recognizes the differences and intersectionality of these identities and/or experiences makes the differences more visible and gives a voice to being different (Ghorashi & Ponzoni, 2014; Richardson & Monro, 2012). Hence, Portuguese bisexual activism today has a difficult task of survival—if it is not able to organize itself politically, it runs a serious risk of being a dispersed group with no ability to influence new public policies (Maliepaard, 2018), particularly regarding the recognition of the demands of bisexual activists.

Since the experiences of bisexual people are marked by intersectionality (e.g. gender, gender identity, relational orientation), finding alliances with other groups that share experiences of both exclusion and transgression of normativity can be a useful strategy to show paths which have not been traversed. Retrieving the formulation proposed by Richardson (2000), despite the advanced legal framework in Portugal, sexual rights directed at aspects of identity and relations are not completely guaranteed. This therefore compromises the status of citizenship, as it seems to be related to how others view us and recognize us and how, on the other hand, we exercise

the right to be citizens (Richardson, 2000). It should also be remembered that, if the ability to establish a political agenda around bisexuality is precarious and is not translated into demands and collective organization, the concept of citizenship as a performative act formulated by Isin (2019) seems to be compromised. The state should thus involve itself in the fight against the restriction of bisexual citizenship and the fight against inequality and the marginalization of identities, sexual and gender expressions and relational orientations. This needs to be done outside a normative framework which results from limiting assumptions. In this way, the state can participate in guaranteeing bisexual citizenship.

As the interviews show, bisexual activism is struggling to see its demands attended to both within and outside LGBTQ+ communities in Portugal. In this desideratum, measures are recommended that allow for fluidity and multiple relations, perhaps in coordination with mainstream citizenship, diluting the normative weight of heterosexuality and mandatory monosexuality.

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