

Dissident subjectivities: memory, resistance, and transmasculinities in Brazil

ARTICLE

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Abstract

This article revisits gender debates through the lens of transmasculine experiences, aiming to make visible the history of transmasculine movements in Brazil and to affirm dissident subjectivities. It is grounded in the understanding that cisheteropatriarchal norms and technologies structure society and politically and daily sustain the systematic erasure of transmasculine narratives. Through a theoretical-essayistic approach, articulated with diverse transmasculine experiences, we propose a critical analysis of the forms of subjectivity production, highlighting the role of memory as a political technology. Subjectivity is understood as an effect of power-knowledge relations, shaped by historical and social determinations, constituting diverse and situated subjects. The defense of a transmasculine memory politics is presented as a strategy of resistance against erasure, violence, and normativity.

Keywords: Transmasculinities. Subjectivity. Collective Memory.

Subjetividades dissidentes: memória, resistência e as transmasculinidades no Brasil

Resumo

O presente artigo revisita os debates sobre gênero a partir das vivências transmasculinas, com o objetivo de visibilizar a história dos movimentos transmasculinos no Brasil e afirmar subjetividades dissidentes. Parte-se da compreensão de que normas e tecnologias cisheteropatriarcais estruturam a sociedade e sustentam, política e cotidianamente, o apagamento sistemático das narrativas transmasculinas. Por meio de uma pesquisa teórico-ensaística, articulada com vivências transmasculinas diversas, propomos uma análise crítica das formas de produção de subjetividade, ressaltando o papel da memória como tecnologia política. A subjetividade é entendida como efeito das relações de saber-poder, atravessada por determinações históricas e sociais, constituindo sujeitos diversos e localizados. A defesa de uma política de memória transmasculina é apresentada como estratégia de resistência frente ao apagamento, à violência e à normatividade.

Palavras-chave: Transmasculinidades. Subjetividade. Memória Coletiva.

1 Introduction

The binary logic of gender – structured on cisgenderism – organizes bodies, behaviors and identities in order to serve a rigid norm that delimits male and female as opposing and excluding categories. This structure is not just a question of personal identity, but a political technology that regulates the legitimacy of existence and standardizes ways of being and living. In this context, cisgenderity is imposed as the hegemonic standard, erasing trans experiences and imposing crystallized models of men and women. Transmasculine people, therefore, emerge as dissidents who destabilize this logic by moving between genders in a way that challenges the binary and essentialist understanding of what it means to be a “man”.

Understanding transmasculine bodies beyond the representation of “man”, the dominant universal subject, implies rethinking the very basis of the concept of gender. Transmasculine experiences don’t have to be restricted to conforming to a normative masculinity, nor do they have to align with the named role of “man” as a dominant, homogenous figure. On the contrary, they can constitute forms of creative resistance, refusals to normativity and inventions of new ways of inhabiting the body and subjectivity. To understand this plurality is also to recognize that gender is a historical and political construction, and not a fixed or natural essence.

Let this be a tacit reading that allows freedom and life for gender and sexuality dissidence. However, today we see a hegemonic logic that compresses the possibilities of existence. For example, psychology has worked hard to create theories that justify the control of bodies, that guarantee the maintenance of neoliberalism and racist, transphobic, LGBTphobic, ableist and colonial ideologies, in favor of the oppression and exploitation of the working class, contributing to a hegemonic conception that there is a natural, true and cis gender.

These conceptions imposed the (cisheteronormative) norm and allowed life to materialize only for those whose bodies fit into the gender binary. We understand that

cisheteronormativity and cisheteropatriarchy are culturally founded processes in a context of globalized capitalism, subjectively constituting subjects. This implies that:

the consequences of this CISTem – as Nascimento (2021) calls the violent way in which society organizes itself, imposing cisgenderity on bodies and desires – are social humiliation, violence, exclusion and murder as a hegemonic social project (Costa *et al.*, 2023, p. 67).

Considering the ideological and colonial character of this “CISTem” is essential for analyzing collectives and individualities, since we consider subjectivity to be a dialectical process that is established in the subject’s relationship with society and the norms that govern it. This means that we see subjectivity as a process established in the interaction between the subject, their body and society, imbricated in the materiality of everyday life (Gonçalves; Rosa, 2022). Therefore, it is not a matter of the subject’s interiority, but rather a product and effect of the relationships that take place in the objective environment, in the relationships of knowledge and power that are established between individuals in a society.

Given that the individual is individualized through a historical process, through society, and society is the result of the actions and relationships of active individuals, we assume a complex dialectic that refers to diverse subjects (Gonçalves; Rosa, 2022). In other words, we are moving away from notions of universal subjects and proposing the existence of historicized and localized subjects, with multiple forms of existence.

Categorizing subjectivity in a dialectical way allows us to understand that, from the activity of the body, subjectivity will manufacture manifestations and performances in material life that are imbricated in the neoliberal norms that govern and control us as individuals in a society. However, although phenomena are determined by society, the determinations are multiple, since we are active subjects who produce our own determinations, which are in a dialectical and contradictory movement (Gonçalves; Rosa, 2022).

The category of contradiction makes up our research premise, since it expresses a characteristic of objective reality, its constant movement of transformation. According to Cury (1985, p. 30),

reality in its subjective-objective whole is dialectical and contradictory, which implies the centrality of this concept in the proposed methodology. Contradiction always expresses a relationship of conflict in the becoming of reality. This relationship occurs in the definition of an element by what it is not. Thus, each thing requires the existence of its opposite, as a determination and negation of the other. The properties of things derive from this reciprocal determination and not from relations of exteriority.

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Therein lies the subversion, because this way of analyzing phenomena and subjectivity in constant and contradictory movement implies the various possibilities for overcoming contradiction. Here, we propose the subversion of the binary norm, of stigmatizing concepts about subjectivity through an individualistic bias, of transphobic, racist and colonial notions that take away the legitimacy of subjects. We propose a historical analysis of the movement as a way of locating individuals in a given historical moment and, from the recovery of memory, defending the life and right of dissident subjectivities to exist and continue to tension the norm.

We therefore defend the recovery of memory as a way of subverting the norm, since this movement allows us to overcome the contradiction between the existence of multiple transmasculine identities and the systematic invisibility of these individuals and their bodies. The erasure systematically promoted to exclude transmasculine people from the media and from political activity, other than through social movements, is evident.

Factually,

Trans and transmasculine men who achieve a university chair, a political mandate or any other space of institutional power become the rule of the exception in the face of the social vulnerabilities present in the trajectories of their peers. When crossed by other social markers of difference, such as race-ethnicity, accessing and remaining in these places becomes a more arduous task (Santos; Santos; Dias, 2022, p. 4).

Faced with the erasure that, because it is so widespread, becomes almost palpable for those who actively seek transmasculine references, it is noticeable the gaps left by the absence of affirmative social policies, as well as the failure to recognize or allow these bodies on the public stage. It is therefore of great importance to recognize and value the social movements that are spaces for transmasculine care, working to guarantee rights, to

create spaces for recognition and identification, to fight for visibility, to combat transphobia and gender violence on a daily basis and, in general, to defend the right to life of transmasculine people with blood and sweat.

In addition to recognizing social movements, it is necessary to recover the memory and narratives of transmasculinity, especially the records that remain of the political struggles to demand rights and spaces led by transmasculine people in Brazil. In this work, and in the references that guide us, the remembrance of memory is not only a component of identity, but also portrays a social movement that is trying to dispute in the political field the need for democratic practices, access and guarantee of rights.

According to Neves (2023, p. 47),

Until the last quarter of the 20th century, the construction of memories of minorities was non-existent. Most historians of the nation focused on the stories of great men and national heroes. The other individuals, or ordinary citizens, invisible or uninteresting in the eyes of historiography, began to claim their identity, their forgotten history.

Thus, we defend the use of memory and narratives as a way of recovering this erased history, fostering discussions about subjectivities located in this history of the transmasculine movement in Brazil. We are talking about subjects, identities and subjectivities imbricated in the historical process and memory of transmasculinities, which carry with them the history of many generations of existence, political struggle and collective action. But beyond the role of memory in the production of identity, we highlight the power of this category to not only make the struggle for rights last, but also to enable us to glimpse other paths, or to continue walking along the same ones, towards emancipation, not just for transmasculinities, but for everyone.

In this article, we begin our journey of unveiling transmasculine identities by weaving a field of discussion on the category of gender, understanding what some of the disputes and tensions have been over the years regarding the category, with the aim of later grounding what cisgenderity and transgenderity are. After this introduction to the topic, we continue by locating (or not) transmasculinities in discussions about masculinity and

presenting the multiple ways of existing and identifying as a transmasculine person. Finally, we present a brief historical review of the transmasculine movement in Brazil as a historical process that develops on many fronts of everyday life.

Please improve! For dissident gender readings, now!

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According to transfeminist Caia Coelho (2017), the category of gender emerged in the field of biology to think about intersex subjects, but it was appropriated by feminist studies from Gayle Rubin's classic text in 1975: *The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex* (Rubin, 1975 *apud* Ferreira, 2021). In the text, Rubin proposes that formulations about sex are socially produced. From this work, the territory of transfeminist knowledge and queer theory becomes vital for a discussion on gender that goes beyond biologizing binarisms.

In the field of biological sciences, gender has always been closely linked to the sexual characteristics of the material body, i.e. a man had a penis and a woman had a vagina. For many years, gender was understood as essentialist attributions of female and male. However, as social sciences and anthropology have delved deeper into the subject, the concept of gender has developed into a social construct that establishes power relations, assigning hierarchies between individuals (Scott, 2019 *apud* Cardoso, 2022).

According to the author Judith Butler (2007 *apud* Braga; Gross, 2021), modernity has created a normative regime that defines which gender identities are intelligible and correct and, consequently, punishes and relegates those who don't fit in. Therefore, there are only two true sexual identities: male and female (Braga; Gross, 2021). For Butler, the heterosexist cultural matrix "demands that some types of 'identity' cannot 'exist': those in which gender is not a consequence of sex and others in which the practices of desire are not a 'consequence' of either sex or gender" (Butler, 2007, p. 73 *apud* Braga; Gross, 2021, p. 6).

On the other hand, the author points out that both sex and gender are discursively constructed categories, in other words, she calls into question the very naturalization of sex and, consequently, gender as a performance of biological sex. She then states that

“perhaps the very construct called ‘sex’ is as culturally constructed as gender; strictly speaking, perhaps sex has always been gender, in such a way that the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be absolutely nonexistent” (Butler, 2010, p. 25).

By understanding that sex is not something natural, gendered, pre-discursive and prior to culture, Butler positions both categories as socio-historical productions (Butler, 2010). While feminist discourses postulate that sex is the materiality of the body and gender is the cultural difference between bodies, Butler formulates that the matter of bodies is inseparable from the norms that regulate them and that dialectically govern their materialization (Butler, 2015 *apud* Ferreira, 2021).

In addition, the aforementioned author states that gender identity is performative, which implies that it only exists in and through a set of repetitive gender acts (Butler, 1988 *apud* Braga, 2021). The author believes that the subject reproduces a sociocultural script that defines the roles to be performed. It is on this basis that heterocisnormativity and gender binarism interfere in the current gender script.

In contrast to Butler’s position, the philosopher Paul B. Preciado says that gender is not only performative, it is “first and foremost prosthetic, that is, it takes place only in the materiality of bodies. It is purely constructed and at the same time entirely organic, it escapes the false metaphysical dichotomies between body and soul, form and matter” (Preciado, 2022, p. 40).

Thus, for the author, gender is a sophisticated technology that produces sexual bodies, responsible for giving the feminine and masculine genders their sexual-real-natural character, which acts in favor of a heterosexual machine. Human nature, then, would be the effect of a heterocentric social technology which reproduces – in bodies, spaces and discourses – that heterosexuality and cisgender are equivalent to what is natural (Preciado, 2022, p. 37).

Furthermore, Preciado (2022), in his book *Countersexual Manifesto*, points out that we live in a world where violent gender diagnosis is a legalized practice in all modern hospitals, imposing a gender assignment according to binarism. We live in a world of hegemonic racial and gender norms, in which trans, intersex, queer, non-white and

disabled bodies may lack political and anatomical existence, but still live “in and against the sex and gender binary regime” (Preciado, 2022, p.14).

Having seen the above, based on the criticism of binary conceptions of gender that attribute a natural character to female and male bodies, as pointed out by both Preciado and Butler, we can begin to think about the other side of the “CIStem”. Nowadays, we use the term “trans” as an umbrella term, to refer to people who go beyond something, those who are on the other side of it (Jesus, 2012). In other words, people who do not identify with the gender they were assigned and from which they were socialized. On the other hand, in a movement produced by trans people, the category of cisgenderity emerges, which refers to the one who is not trans, the one who is on this side (Jesus, 2012).

The cisgender category emerges in an attempt to oppose the naturalization of binary genders and, consequently, opposes a relationship of inferiorization and extermination of bodies that are at odds with cisnormativity (Vergueiro, 2016). According to psychologist and researcher Sofia Favero (2020, p. 175), terms such as biological, natural and true men and women result in the existence of an incongruous and dysphoric gender, displacing trans identities to a defective place, since “the norm is not named”.

However, cisgender is not based exclusively on the way the subject identifies, but also “as normativity about bodies and genders” (Vergueiro, 2016, p. 25), requiring us to think of cisgender as something normalized and idealized as an appropriate category to be followed. Therefore, cisgender will be located alongside the categories of whiteness and heteronormativity, “making it useful for thinking about the ways in which relations of power and continuity between sex, sexuality, gender, desire and sexual practices are maintained” (Favero, 2020, p. 177).

As opposed to the cisgender category, when we think about the scientific and academic records on trans people, for many years the medical and psy-sciences (psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis) perspectives dominated. These fields of research and practice claimed that a person of a certain sex who socially recognized themselves as a member of another sex had a mental disorder (Almeida, 2013).

As Preciado puts it,

The dominant psychoanalytic narrative and its binary genital economy can be understood as the clinical device that accompanies the heteronormative colonial regime, defining pathological instances and seeking a normalizing treatment for the anxiety and psychic pain generated by the epistemology of sexual difference and its regime of power-knowledge (Preciado, 2022, p. 15).

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Therefore, thinking about trans experiences and narratives involves recognizing that this category was historically taken as the exclusive object of medicine in the 19th century, which defined pathological instances whose cure came only from individual treatments. The gender construction of trans people has become culturalized in such a way that it is equivalent to the existence of gender dysphoria (Tenório; Palhano, 2022). This means, then, that the political and social nature of the trans experience was not taken into account in the research.

However, conceptions of trans identities have changed, thanks to the efforts of trans people and transvestites to guarantee their rights. So today, being trans is no longer considered a pathology, at least in the case of adults. Within the research field, the topic has also undergone changes, as has the concept of gender and sex. The most recent productions aim to revisit trans and transvestite narratives and stories, as well as thinking about new care technologies for this population.

According to Guilherme Almeida and Daniela Murta (2013, p. 382), “transsexuality is not an extraordinary topic in the field of gender studies, but one among others that enables theoretical-conceptual revisions of the field itself, such as the definitions of what gender and sex are”. Therefore, in view of the possibilities for revisions in the field of gender, it is of the utmost importance to revise our essentialist and naturalizing knowledge of trans identities and, in this research, especially with regard to transmasculine people.

That said, when we talk about transmasculinities, we cannot succumb to generalizing, essentializing and naturalizing discourses about how transmasculine people understand gender and sex, as well as their experiences. UERJ professor Guilherme Almeida, in a text written for *Revista Cult*, states that:

In the last decade, male transsexuality has acted as a hothouse of possibilities on the Brazilian scene. In this scenario, it has been possible to see the emergence of individuals who claim masculinity without wishing to be recognized as men. It was also possible to see non-binary trans men, trans men proudly carrying a vulva refuting the psychiatric paradigm of aversion to their own genitalia, trans men who are pregnant without giving up their affirmation of paternity, trans men adhering to the contemporary formulation of close, affectionate and caring paternity, feminist trans men, trans men who affirm themselves as gay or bisexual, trans men who are sex workers, trans men who have emotional and/or sexual relationships with trans women and transvestites, as well as heteronormative trans men. All of these characteristics contribute to a myriad of possibilities when it comes to transmasculinities (Almeida, 2019, p. 50).

This implies that all these characteristics will construct what transmasculinity is, making it impossible to discuss universalizing concepts about transmasculine identity, since their experiences are also crossed by other social markers, such as race, class, regionality and so on. Thus, the aim here is not to appropriate this social category in an essentialized and unique way, but in some general terms (Almeida, 2012).

Transgressive masculinities: transmasculinities

In view of the aforementioned, when dealing with the subject of transmasculinities, we are also encompassing the field of masculinities, making it important for us to understand what this category is. Studies on masculinity emerged with the development of the feminist movement in the mid-1960s. Discussions, which had previously been restricted to the social role of women, gradually broadened into debates about the genders and the inequalities produced between them (Cardoso, 2022).

According to sociologist Raewyn Connell, throughout the 1970s there was an explosion of writings on the “male role”, explicitly criticizing role norms as the source of men’s oppressive behavior. On the other hand, it was through the gay liberation movement that a sophisticated analysis of the oppression of men, as well as oppression by men, developed. It was this movement that initiated an analysis of the hierarchy of masculinities.

Connell also understands masculinity as “[...] a configuration of practices organized in relation to the structure of gender relations” (Connell, 1995, p. 188). In other words, it

distances itself from binary conceptions that associate masculinity with sex, but categorizes it as a set of practices, not a fixed entity embodied in the body or personality of individuals, which can differ according to the relationships that are established in a social setting (Connell; Messerschmidt, 2013).

From this, she develops the concept of hegemonic masculinity, which is understood as a pattern of practices that has made it possible for men to dominate women. This hegemonic masculinity has been consolidated in a different way to other subordinate masculinities. “Hegemonic masculinity is not assumed to be normal in a statistical sense; only a minority of men may adopt it. But it is certainly normative” (Connell; Messerschmidt, 2013, p. 245).

However, hegemonic masculinities can be constructed, since they are mutable and historical, susceptible to transformation through the social scenario in which they are found, so they don't correspond to the life of any real cis man. Even so, these models express widespread ideals that offer models of relations with women and answers to the problems of gender relations (Connell; Messerschmidt, 2013).

The fundamental characteristic of the concept is the plurality of masculinities and the hierarchy between them. Studies that discuss hegemonic masculinity have identified a diverse set of patterns, as well as stating that “certain masculinities are more socially central or more associated with authority and social power than others” (Connell; Messerschmidt, 2013, p. 262). Furthermore, Connell points out that the hierarchy of masculinities is a pattern of hegemony, based on cultural consensus, discursive centrality, institutionalization and the marginalization or delegitimization of other marginalized masculinities (Connell; Messerschmidt, 2013).

Given the undoubted nature of the hierarchy between masculinities, we can identify transmasculinities as marginalized and subordinate figures, given that, in Brazil today, hegemonic masculinity consists of masculinities that use cisgenderism, as well as other markers such as whiteness, to establish a hierarchy in relation to other masculinities and to establish and preserve the subordination of women.

But he's not a man? Just call him a man! Transmasculinities resist!

The term “transmasculinities” was chosen in plenary at the first National Meeting of Trans Men (ENAHT) as an umbrella expression to refer to trans people who identify with masculinity. According to Bernardo Mota Lopes (2022, p. 39), a transmasculine researcher, the term came to be used to encompass multiple identities that “shared the experience of having been designated as women/people of the ‘female sex’, but who identified and constructed their identity within the male spectrum”.

Within this umbrella term, there are people who recognize themselves with multiple identities and terminologies, such as trans men, transmen, transmasculines, *boycetas*, demi-boys, non-binary, among others (Lopes, 2022). The term “transman” began to be used a lot by João Nery and, according to him, by displacing the term “trans” from its place as an adjective, emphasis is placed on the trans gender identity, which overlaps with the male gender (Nery, 2018 *apud* Lopes, 2022). In other words, people who identify on the spectrum of masculinity, but don't necessarily identify as trans men or binary people.

Considering the dynamics of gender and the political disputes that surround it, different names have begun to emerge in recent years that aim to challenge binary conceptions. Like the term “boycetas”, which is now used mainly by non-binary people, who previously defined themselves as transmasculine, as a separate gender possibility, beyond identification with the category of man and woman, claiming a masculinity that does not evoke the idea of a man (Vicente, 2020). The term demi-boy, on the other hand, refers to demigender people, i.e. people who identify with two genders, one of which is male.

2 Methodology

This article is a qualitative study, using the theoretical essay as our method. Based on a review of different theoretical materials, we sought to construct an essay on transmasculine memories and narratives in Brazil, especially in the city of São Paulo. We chose to use the theoretical essay as a method, since this construction allows us to

understand reality through alternative means to those used by science in its traditional way of producing knowledge. This creates research that values the qualitative changes that occur in the objects and phenomena studied (Meneghetti, 2011).

According to Adorno (2003 *apud* Noyama, 2009), the essayistic form is presented as a way that, in addition to exempting the text from surrendering to scientific and academic traditions (deductive and inductive), allows for an unfragmented analysis of the phenomenon from the matrices of the problem, in other words, the “essay begins from and in complexity, it starts from what should traditionally be an end: it begins at the heart of the problem; its cover letter is its own knot” (Noyama, 2009, p. 3). In view of this, using the theoretical essay as a tool for understanding reality, this article has attempted to experiment with our object of analysis, memory, in its multiple possibilities within a totality, which need not and probably will not be known (Meneghetti, 2009). We would also like to emphasize that history is not used as a research objective, but is constructed during the movement of thinking about transmasculine memory in the midst of the production of subjectivity.

3 Results and Discussion: revisiting memory, a historical look at transmasculinities in Brazil

As mentioned before, it is impossible to describe the experience of transmasculine people as something universal, that is, to infer that each individual’s experience will be the same. However, we can trace the history of the transmasculine movement, which has never ceased to exist and fight for its rights, recovering a memory systematically erased by conservative sectors.

Transmasculine people have always existed in Brazil, even without announcing themselves as trans. According to Leonardo Tenório and Luciano Palhano (2022), it was possible to find some newspaper articles from the 20th century that had reported the existence of trans people, however,

In almost all journalistic texts in the first half of the 20th century, trans people were portrayed in a sensationalist way, with flashy headlines intentionally written to attract attention to the controversial event of “sex change”, or the public recognition of the existence of “women” who “passed for men” or “wanted to live as men” (and vice versa) in society (Tenório; Palhano, 2022, p. 82).

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In 1982, the book *A Queda para o Alto* was published, written by Anderson Herzer, popularly known as Bigode, which recounted the poet’s experiences as a person forced to the margins. The author recounts negative experiences involving harassment, abandonment, mistreatment and his internment in Febem (the name given at the time to the total institutions responsible for detaining adolescents), while also recounting positive aspects of his life, such as his love of poetry. Despite not being the focus of the work, the author does at times touch on the subject of sexuality and gender, recounting the first time he was recognized as a boy, among other testimonies. Unfortunately, Bigode committed suicide in May 1982, before the book was published (Tenório; Palhano, 2022).

A few years later, in 1984, João W. Nery released the book *Erro de Pessoa: Joana ou João?* in which he recounts his life story and his experiences of gender. It’s important to note that, during the Military Dictatorship, sex reassignment/transgenitalization surgery was a clandestine activity in Brazil, but there are records of transmasculine people who had already made some body changes, such as João W. Nery (Almeida, 2019).

Despite the great reverberations caused by the books, it wasn’t until 1992 that the Association of Transvestites and Liberated People (Astral) was founded in Rio de Janeiro, led by Jovanna Baby, encouraged by the actions and projects aimed at combating the HIV and AIDS epidemic, funded by international organizations. In 1993, the First National Meeting of Transvestites and Liberated People working in the fight against AIDS (ENTLAIDS), which became one of the most significant meetings of the trans and transvestite population in Brazil (Carvalho; Carrara, 2013). In this political context, Alexandre Peixe, a transmasculine activist who, for many years, acted as the only representative of the transmasculine identity in LGBT activism (Lopes, 2022), played an important role in the transmasculine movements – which were still to come – acting for many years as the only transmasculine representative of broader LGBT organizations.

In 1997, the Federal Council of Medicine issued CFM Resolution No. 1,482/1997, which from then on allowed transgenitalization surgeries for transsexual people under the psychopathologizing prerogative. That is, it was necessary to confirm a psychiatric diagnosis of transsexualism, which was considered a disease. In 2002, the Federal Council of Medicine also issued CFM Resolution No. 1,652/2002:

Compared to the 1997 Resolution, the 2002 Resolution overcame the experimental nature of neocolpovuloplasty transgenitalization surgery and complementary procedures related to the gonads and secondary sexual characteristics. However, the experimental nature of the neophalloplasty surgery and complementary procedures for the gonads and secondary sexual characters was maintained (Almeida, 2019, p. 4).

However, even with the reformulation by the CFM, the concept of “transsexualism”, i.e. a pathology, still persisted. According to the Council, there were certain medical criteria that conditioned the diagnosis, including:

1) discomfort with natural anatomical sex; 2) an expressed desire to eliminate the genitals, lose the primary and secondary characteristics of one's own sex and gain those of the opposite sex; 3) permanence of these disorders continuously and consistently for at least two years; 4) absence of other mental disorders (Conselho Federal de Medicina, 2002, p. 2).

In December 2000, in the city of Curitiba, the National Transvestite, Transsexual and Transgender Articulation (Antra) was created, a national network of transvestite and transgender NGOs. In 2013, it had more than 80 affiliated organizations, making it the largest network of transvestites and transsexuals in Latin America (Carvalho, 2013).

The first LGBT conference took place in 2008, with the theme “Human Rights and Public Policies: the path to guaranteeing GLBT citizenship”. During the conference, Alexandre Peixe advocated for sexual and reproductive rights, as well as highlighting the importance and difficulties faced by transmasculine people when seeking hormone therapy and surgeries such as mastectomy (Lopes, 2022).

Also in 2008, the Ministry of Health issued Ordinance No. 1,707, responsible for regulating the initial version of the Transsexualization Process in the SUS. However, a

short time later, in 2013, a second version was approved, Ordinance No. 2.803, decentralizing the surgery of the assistance policy, which, in addition to dealing with surgical procedures, discusses pharmaceutical treatments (Favero; Machada; Freitas, 2022). In agreement with Sofia Favero, Paula Machada and Rafaela Freitas (2022), this second version, which is still in force today, made it possible for transmasculine people – given the experimental nature of surgeries such as mastectomy, hysterectomy and neophalloplasty at the time – and transvestites to access care through the SUS.

Despite this major advance, which made it easier for transgender people to access healthcare, and viewed the care policy as “de-genitalized”, the diagnostic nature of transsexualism still persisted. Also in 2013, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) “transformed the diagnosis of ‘gender identity disorder’ into ‘gender dysphoria’ – a process that was even presented by some portals as one of the first steps towards the depathologization of transsexuality” (Favero; Machado; Freitas, 2022, p. 6).

In the field of the visibility of transmasculine people, Tenório and Palhano (2022, p. 88) state:

In the early 2010s, it wasn't easy to list common characteristics among trans men beyond the desire for mastectomy and the use of testosterone. People didn't know we existed, not even trans women and transvestites, often not even the activists themselves. Socializing among ourselves was so rare that getting a group of three trans men together was something we only managed once a year. We didn't even know each other. There was no symbolic repertoire to explain or express our subjectivity. Many of us lived suffocated and were completely invisible.

However, in 2011, following the revision and reissue of João Nery's 1984 text, released under the title *Viagem Solitária: Memórias de um transexual trinta anos depois* (Nery, 2011), trans men began to receive greater visibility. This was mainly due to the great attention given to João Nery during 2011 and in the following years, appearing in newspapers, television channels, at universities and especially on the internet.

Thus, it was in 2011 that transmasculinities began to be discussed with greater fervor and visibility. According to Tenório and Palhano (2022), the internet has been the main tool and instrument for exchanging experiences and information between

transmasculine people, through Orkut, YouTube, blogs, websites and forums created by them. These spaces served to meet the demand for information on various subjects, such as surgery, the use of testosterone, contacts and addresses of the few services that catered to the population, as well as other things (Tenório; Palhano, 2022).

In the early 2010s, the first transmasculine researchers also emerged in the academic world. The first article on trans men was published by professor and social worker Guilherme Almeida, a transmasculine person, in 2012, entitled “Homens trans: novos matizes na aquarela das masculinidades?” (Trans men: new shades in the watercolor of masculinities?). Also in 2012, the Brazilian Association of Trans Men (ABHT) was created, chaired by Leonardo Tenório, an important transmasculine activist, who was active predominantly in the Northeast of the country. As pointed out by Lopes (2022, p. 47), “in 2013, the ABHT organized the First Meeting of Trans Men, with representatives mostly from the North and Northeast. The event was funded by the AIDS Department/Ministry of Health”.

In the same year as the aforementioned meeting, in 2013, the Brazilian Institute of Transmasculinities (IBRAT) was founded during the XX ENTIL AIDS (Carvalho, 2018). The institute’s goal was to create centers in every state in the country, in order to meet the demands of all transmasculines throughout Brazil. This goal was achieved in 2015, the same year that IBRAT organized the First National Meeting of Trans Men (ENAHT), held at the University of São Paulo.

The mid-2000s were a period of major demonstrations and political disputes in Brazil, and several laws were introduced to protect LGBTQIA+ people, demanded by activists organized by trans, transvestite, non-binary, lesbian, bisexual, queer and intersex people, among others. We highlight some of these achievements:

in 2016, Federal Decree No. 8.727 was published, which regulated the use of the social name at the federal level; in 2018, the Federal Supreme Court (STF) unanimously decided on the right of transgender people and transvestites to change their civil registry without having to go to court or use medical reports to prove their transsexuality (Lopes, 2022, p. 54).

In 2019, the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) published the category of gender incongruence, represented in the previous version of the manual (1993) with the code F.64.0, referring to “transsexualism”. This means that this was the first time that adult transgenderism, and only adult transgenderism, was no longer considered a pathology (Favero; Machado; Freitas, 2022). Although we no longer talk about the depathologization of the category today, it is extremely important to point out that trans people are still experiencing the consequences of an extremely late depathologization.

With Bolsonaro’s government, there have been several attempts to criminalize trans and transvestite bodies, as well as the deinstitutionalization of LGBT policies in Brazil (Lopes, 2022). His government was marked by numerous cases of aggression against LGBT people, especially black trans people (Antra, 2020). According to Iazzetti (2021, p. 157), during the electoral period in 2018, despite the domination of stories of violence, “counter-narratives emerged with the creation of possible collectivities and resistance as their guiding principle, taken up by the motto ‘no one lets go of anyone’s hand’”.

In 2019, Bolsonaro, then president of Brazil, signed a Provisional Measure that excluded the LGBTQIA+ population from the list of policies and guidelines aimed at promoting human rights, however, in the face of criticism, the Ministry backtracked and informed that the current Directorate for the Promotion of the Rights of LGBTQIA+ People would be maintained in the National Secretariat for Global Protection. Also in 2019, Decree No. 9.759/19 was enacted in order to revoke several instances of social participation, including the National Council to Combat Discrimination and Promote the Rights of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transvestites and Transsexuals (CNCD), the collegiate body in charge of holding the Fourth National LGBT Conference, which had been called in 2018, still under the previous government, and which never took place (Lopes, 2022).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many trans people’s social movements, which were already being weakened and struggling to secure basic rights for the Brazilian population, promoted solidarity campaigns, instigated by the concern that trans people were in situations of social vulnerability and without state support (Lopes, 2022). However, even if some social movements in Brazil still remain empty and others are restructuring

after Bolsonaro's government and the rise of fascism in Brazilian politics and the bourgeoisie in recent years, in 2023 we could see a significant leap in trans representation in government positions, as well as greater visibility for social organizations and institutions and the recognition of various trans artists and activists.

In 2024, on January 28, the First National Trans Visibility March took place in Brasília, in front of the National Congress, organized by Antra and IBRAT. On March 3, the First São Paulo Transmasculine March took place, also organized by IBRAT, starting in front of Masp. However,

the achievement of some civil guarantees and the greater social representation of the trans population was accompanied by a growth of sectors opposed to human rights agendas throughout the country, under the pretext of combating "gender ideology" right-wing groups and/or religious fundamentalists stimulated a political agenda against the rights of LGBT people and women (Lopes, 2022, p. 54).

This means that there are still many disputes to be fought for the full citizenship of trans people, especially transmasculine people, who still don't have the visibility they should. This invites us to join forces in the fight against the oppression and exploitation of trans people and to move towards the emancipation of all, a path that has already been traced by social movements led by transmasculine, transfeminine, transvestite and non-binary people for years.

4 Conclusions

This work sought to carry out a survey and a historical and sociocultural analysis of transmasculinities, understanding the importance of locating subjectivities in a historical context, given that it is constituted amalgamated with social norms and society as a whole, in a dialectical and contradictory way. We also sought to recover transmasculine memory and narratives as a way of envisioning the expansion of rights and democratic practices that protect the lives of these people.

As health researchers, we do not intend our results to be interpreted as universal characteristics of transmasculinity, since we are referring to a complex range of transmasculine identities. It is necessary to build encounters between listening to demands, building knowledge and stories exclusively from transmasculine people, in order to think of services that are culturally sensitive to territories and transmasculine populations, considering the multiple identities that make up this category in Brazil.

As individuals, it is essential that we create potential spaces to break through the colonial, racist, cisheteronormative systems that erase subjectivities and memories. In addition, we need to invoke reparation processes that guarantee the most diverse forms of transmasculine existence, guaranteeing them dignity and autonomy. We hope that the publication of our results will contribute to the implementation of policies and practices that guarantee the care of transmasculine identities in the most diverse areas of life. We need to understand that talking about recovering memory and narratives as a political act requires a commitment to everyone's emancipation.

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