Experiences of discrimination: the case of sexual orientation

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Abstract

This article focuses on the specificities of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and its implications for equality policies. It begins by presenting relevant data on equality policies in the European Union. It goes on to reflect on the pervasive invisibility of lesbian and gay sexualities in public spaces. The emphasis then moves to questioning how the cycle of invisibility of sexual orientation relates to social discrimination by presenting a case study to illustrate discrimination as a lived experience. In reflecting on the specificities of sexual orientation it concludes by highlighting the implications of the findings for equality policies.

Key words: sexual orientation, equality policies, public space, social identities

Introduction

To address the specific case of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation we have to understand that sexuality is a process of power relations which mediates our everyday interactions, rather than a feature of private life (Valentine, 1993:246). The public expression of non-normative identities, such as those of lesbians and gays, is one example of these power relations. The public visibility of these sexualities disrupts and therefore exposes the way in which the street is commonly produced as "naturally" or "normally" a heterosexual space (Bell, 2001; Valentine, 2001).

The intimate connections between the systematic production of power and the production of space have been uncovered and studied by a diverse range of researchers. In particular spaces, there are dominant spatial orderings that produce moments of exclusion for particular social groups (Massey, 1999; Mitchell, 2000; Smith, 1991; Valentine, 2007).

The power-laden spaces in and through which life is experienced are highly contingent on the way particular identities become salient or foregrounded at particular moments. Individuals maintain multiple identities in different spaces and in one space but at different times. Social identities are neither stable nor passively received understandings of social differences; therefore it is not possible to explain inequalities through a single framework. Intersectionality, as spatially constituted and experienced, supports the understanding of the

intimate connections between the production of space and the systematic production of power (Valentine, 2007).

Discrimination and social exclusion have received significant social science research attention. Investigators in areas as diverse as geography, psychology and sociology, have widely researched and theorised about discrimination on diverse grounds, such as gender, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation, as well as the particular intersections between them (Cooper, 2004; Crenshaw, 1989; Lombardo and Verloo, 2009; Hancock, 2007; Valentine and Waite, 2011; Verloo, 2006).

However, the study of the interrelations of space and sexuality is fairly recent. In the specific case of geography, the study of sexuality and sexual preference was neglected for a long period of time, despite the recognition that marginalised groups and the influence of class, ethnicity, age and gender shape social geographies (Bell, 1991). The first geographical works on sexualities and specifically on homosexuality focused on mapping "gay ghettos", regions and neighbourhoods in contemporary western cities. These studies have been criticised for their moralistic and heterosexist approach to lesbian and gay social and sexual relations (Bell and Valentine, 1995). In the 1990s an increasing number of writings on sexualities, space and place started to emerge with a positive perspective, utilising ethnographic methods and integrating the perspectives of lesbians and gays. In recent years, new interpretations of space and sexuality have emerged based on queer theory, challenging the disembodied nature of geographical knowledge, and reasserting the value of the social and the material in theorizing about embodiment and queer identities (Bell, 2001). This is a more political approach which explores the relationships between the national state, globalization and sexual dissidence (Binnie, 2004). Notwithstanding these new perspectives and approaches, it is important to stress that the academic work on sexuality has focused on gay, white and urban men in western countries, to the detriment of research on women, the under-paid, unprivileged or non-white (Browne et al., 2009).

When based on the understanding that sexuality is a process of power relations which mediates our everyday interactions (Valentine, 1993), research on the experiences of lesbians and gays may contribute to better understand social exclusion and discriminatory processes. However, research within the field of social sciences has paid relatively little attention to the specificities of sexual orientation, namely the cycle of invisibility and its relation to social

discrimination (Bell et al., 2011; Binnie, 1997; Forbes et al., 2002; Harrison, 2005; Sedgwick, 1990).

This article starts by presenting relevant data on equality policies in the European Union, and based on original empirical research it reflects on the pervasive invisibility of lesbian and gay sexualities in public spaces. The presentation of a lived experience supports the analysis of the interrelations between the cycle of invisibility of sexual orientation and social discrimination. The emphasis then moves to highlight the implications of the specificities of sexual orientation for the design and implementation of equality policies.

A note on equality policies

According to the 2010 update on the report on *Homophobia, transphobia and discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity*, produced by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA, 2010), awareness of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons has been growing within the European Union (EU) in recent years. Progress identified in a number of Member States includes: a) a widened range of legal protection against sexual orientation discrimination; b) the enjoyment of freedom of assembly and expression for LGBT people, as well as protection from violence motivated by prejudice, incitement to hatred and expressions of prejudice and discrimination against LGBT people, and c) the opening up of marriage for same-sex couples.

The Treaty of Lisbon strengthened the framework of non-discrimination legislation, and the now binding Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union provides in a single text, for the first time in the European Union's history, the whole range of civil, political, economic and social rights of European citizens and all persons resident in the EU. Furthermore, the Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5[1] of the Committee of Ministers to member states, adopted on 31 March 2010, was a significant step toward combating discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

In spite of this optimistic portrait, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA, 2009) reports that LGBT persons continue to experience harassment, bullying and discrimination across the EU, identifying hate speech on the Internet and by public figures as a particularly worrying phenomenon. The European Commission 2010 Report on the Application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (European Commission, 2011:46), states that, although in most Member States LGBT people can freely exercise their right of freedom of assembly,

bans or administrative obstacles have created problems for the organisation of peaceful public LGBT demonstrations in some Member States and that organised attacks against such demonstrations have taken place in others.

The Eurobarometer Discrimination in the EU in 2009 (European Commission, 2009), shows that discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation is still a widespread reality in EU countries. One consistent significant finding across the three waves of this study is that diversity in one's social circle is the factor with the most positive influence on people's attitudes. For instance, the survey reveals that only a quarter of Europeans (27%) would feel totally comfortable with the idea of having an LGBT person holding the highest political office in their country, but Europeans with LGBT friends are much more open to the idea than Europeans without LGBT friends.

Although the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2010 update report on *Homophobia, transphobia and discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity* clearly states that all citizens have the right to receive unbiased information about LGBT persons and their relationships, to live in an open and inclusive environment, to be respected, protected, promoted and fulfilled across the EU (FRA, 2010: 9), there are still European countries that ban the dissemination of information on homosexuality to minors and restrain LGBT expression in the public sphere. Lithuania is one of the most recent examples of an attempt to use the law to maintain the invisibility of LGBT people (FRA, 2010).

According to European equality policy anti-discrimination laws are not sufficient; it is crucial to present LGBT experiences in a respectful and understanding way, and to actively promote the public acceptance of LGBT identities, conduct and relationships, among EU Member States (FRA, 2010). Several examples of best practices have recently come to light, including: a) in Germany the distribution by the Federal Centre for Health Education of a manual called 'Heterosexual? Homosexual?'[2] and the 'School without Homophobia – School of Diversity'[3] supported by the Land of Nordrhein-Westfalen; b) in France the recommendation[4] of the French Equal Opportunities and Anti-Discrimination Commission (HALDE) to incorporate homophobia in school curricula, and to provide training for teachers and National Education Service staff; c) in The Netherlands the resolution[5] adopted in December 2009 by the Lower House of Parliament to include sexual diversity in the main objectives of primary and secondary education and the adoption of a comprehensive LGBT Policy Document for the period 2008-2011 (Simply Gay[6]), which constitutes a national action plan to encourage social

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acceptance and empowerment of LGBT citizens; and d) initiatives in the United Kingdom to improve the National Curriculum will make it compulsory for all schools to teach 14 to 16 year olds about same-sex relationships.

Despite these isolated examples, the pervasive reality in most European countries is far from optimistic (FRA, 2010). Recent examples of persistent antagonism to campaigns for public acceptance of LGBT identities, conduct and relationships, include the refusal of the Portuguese Ministry of Education to officially support a campaign organised by an LGBT youth organisation REA (www.rea.pt) on homophobic bullying, and the negative reaction of the Italian Secretary of State for family policy to an IKEA advertisement with the picture of two men holding hands and the text "We are open to all families".

The specific needs of LGBT persons were formally acknowledged by the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence[7] of April 7th 2011 with the inclusion of gay men, lesbian women, bi-sexual and transgender persons in the group of people made vulnerable by particular circumstances and that require positive action to ensure that any preventive measures specifically address and take into account their specific needs.

The pervasive invisibility of lesbian and gay sexualities in public spaces

A recent research project on the visibility of lesbian and gay sexualities in public spaces in Portugal (Ferreira, 2011) provided original empirical data on the interrelations of sexual identities and space. This study focused on behaviours (same-sex public displays of affection) rather than on identity discourses. This approach made it possible to stress the significant relations of sexual orientation disclosure with space, and to uncover some examples of dissonance in the self - identity discourse of lesbians and gays. Public displays of affection are rather common in the Portuguese socio-cultural context, a fact which offers a special opportunity for exploring how lesbians and gays negotiate same-sex displays of affection in public spaces.

The research results (Ferreira, 2011), based on semi-structured interviews and an online survey, indicate that same-sex public displays of affection are not frequent for the homosexuals and bisexuals that participated in this research. The main reasons the participants identified for refraining from public displays of affection, are: a) the feeling of "not being safe" / fear of discrimination; b) the understanding that people in general are not

prepared to deal with same-sex public displays of affection and that homosexuals and bisexuals should not confront others (which can be identified as internalized homophobia[8]); and c) the need to take into consideration their partners' attitudes towards same-sex public displays of affection. Only a small percentage of the respondents reported feeling that they have the right to express their affection regardless of other people's reaction or society's respect for diversity. Most of the respondents reported an ever-present feeling of a lack of safety associated with same-sex public displays of affection and the understanding that these behaviours imply the disclosure of one's sexual orientation.

Analysing the results according to age did not reveal any differences. Due to the significant increase of LGBT associations and comprehensive legal changes which have occurred in Portugal since 1996 (Ferreira and Silva, 2010) we would expect a higher percentage of younger lesbians, gays and bisexual persons having same-sex public displays of affection. The Eurobarometer on discrimination in the EU (European Commission, 2009) can contribute to better understand these results, as it reveals that the younger citizens perceive the discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation as being more widespread than the older citizens. A greater awareness of the risk of being discriminated can contribute to a more cautious/defensive behaviour in public spaces.

Another noteworthy result is that some of the interviewees who had previously "come out" to their families, friends or co-workers, also reveal avoiding public displays of same-sex affection. The process of "coming out" is a complex and difficult process in which individuals negotiate space/time strategies such as deciding not to have same-sex public displays of affection (Valentine, 1993).

This research (Ferreira, 2011) also explored the relation of the characteristics of public spaces with same-sex displays of affection. Most of the respondents identify isolated public spaces away from "other people's eyes" as safer for same-sex public displays of affection. Public spaces are constructed around particular notions of appropriate sexual comportment, reflecting and reproducing heteronormativity, as they exclude non-normative sexualities, such as lesbian and gay sexualities (Hubbard, 2001). Another clear idea stands out: proximity to place of residence or work limits same-sex public displays of affection given that most of the respondents do not want to be identified as lesbians or gays by people with whom they interact daily. On the other hand, spaces identified as LGBT friendly, like some nightlife areas in large cities characterized by a sense of anonymity, are facilitators of same-sex public

displays of affection. An analysis of space/time contexts is interesting. Lesbians and gays may feel comfortable in public spaces that they usually do not consider friendly, but that at specific times become so, such as during Pride events or LGBT film festivals. The presence of visible lesbians and gays can transform a heteronormative space into a homo-friendly one (Bell, 2001; Valentine, 2001).

The research results (Ferreira, 2011) point out that if we were to draw a map of friendly public spaces to same-sex public displays of affection, we would have to draw as many maps as individuals; the importance of residence and workspaces dictates the need for personal maps of lesbian and gay visibility; there would be no single map that would meet the specificities of each individual; probably only some nightlife areas in large urban areas would be common spaces to all personal maps.

Research on the experiences of being lesbian, gay or bisexual contributes to improve our understanding of sexuality as a process of power relations which mediates our everyday interactions.

A lived experience of discrimination

The lived experience of Ana (pseud.), a mixed-raced, twin sister, bisexual, catholic, young woman, is our starting point for reflecting on the ways in which the diverse grounds for discrimination are experienced.

The interview occurred within the context of a research on the public visibility of lesbian and gay sexuality in Portugal, in June 2010. Invitations for participation were distributed via LGBT Portuguese mailing lists. This specific young woman was recruited on the mailing list of an LGBT youth organization. One of the criteria for selection for interview was self-identification as lesbian, gay or bisexual. The interview lasted approximately two hours, was conducted online using Windows Live Messenger (MSN) audio facilities, and digitally recorded using the program vEmotion (http://www.voiceemotion.com). The online interview format was selected due to the geographical distance between the interviewer and the respondent.

At the beginning of the interview the only information about Ana was that obtained by the recruitment method, namely her sex, age and sexual orientation. Any other characteristics, such as the colour of her skin, were unavailable unless she decided to disclose them. This is a

relevant aspect, since it resembles, to some extent, the possibility of the individual to maintain his/her sexual orientation invisible.

The first part of the interview focused on the process of disclosure of her sexual orientation. This was a subject that she felt comfortable talking about. Most of her life, she had identified herself as heterosexual. Although she acknowledged having had some erotic feelings towards other girls, the possibility of being a lesbian or bisexual had never occurred to her. Given the heteronormativity of the socio-cultural context and her affective/sexual relationships with boys, it was a rather slow and sometimes puzzling process. It was not until she was 19 years old, when she had an affective/sexual relationship with a girl, that she first questioned her sexual orientation, and considered the possibility of being bisexual.

> *As far as I am concerned I was always hetero until I was fairly old, ... not that I am very old (laughs) well ... but basically I was hetero until I was 18 or 19 years old, I had some thoughts and feelings towards some of my female friends but I never realised that I could be bisexual or even that I could also love someone of the same sex* [9]

The following years were a process of self-discovery, mainly a time of questions, uncertainty and doubts. The lack of positive role models of homosexuality or bisexuality led her to search for others that may be experiencing similar situations, in order to understand and contextualize same-sex emotions and feelings and overcome the negative stereotypes. The contact with an LGBT youth organization was crucial for Ana's process of forming her identity as a bisexual. The group that she participates has a highly active online forum, where young people can share their stories, doubts and anxieties. Through these online conversations, young people get acquainted with ideas and concepts that support the process of sexual orientation identity development (Buckingham and Willett, 2006).

> *In REA (an LGBT youth organization) there are some local groups where we can talk and also the online forum, you meet other people who share their stories, their coming-out, and it all helps. At first I joined the REA and only afterwards I decided to talk to my parents.*

One of her main concerns about the sexual orientation identity process is the acknowledgment that "coming out" is a difficult, sometimes painful, and always unfinished process (Thompson and Morgan, 2008). Although she has finished her studies, has a job, and is living in her own house, the relationship with her close family, parents and sisters, is still very significant. Her parents struggle between resignation and reluctant acceptance, but are still a long way from

offering positive support. And in her specific case, being a twin brought particular difficulties into the relationship with her sister. Their close relationship together with the identity issues characteristic of twins, made the disclosure of Ana's bisexuality a difficult question for her sister to cope with. It is something that they are still working on.

> *It was not easy, not easy at all. If anyone says it is easy, he or she is lying. It is still a process; I don't know if it will ever stop being a process, for my parents it still is very difficult. For my twin sister it is complicated, we always shared everything and we were very close, and suddenly, for her it was sudden, when I came out it was very odd, how was it possible? We are so alike. I think that only time, maybe, can help.*

At the present time she is an LGBT activist, actively participates in Pride marches and organizes sessions about LGBT issues in high schools, which all imply disclosing her sexual orientation in diverse spaces and contexts. Nevertheless she prefers a strategy of invisibility at work and in some social activities, negotiating space/time strategies of her "coming out" process (Ferreira, 2011; Valentine, 1993).

Ana does not express her motivations for shielding her bisexuality in terms of heteronormative socio-cultural contexts and discrimination of non-normative sexualities. She argues that as heterosexuals refrain from discussing their sexual orientation, so does she. This is particularly interesting given that, as an LGBT activist, she is undoubtedly aware of the pervasive heteronormativity and the inequalities that LGBT endure (FRA, 2009). But when she reflects upon her personal experience she does not acknowledge the burden of discrimination.

> *There are many friends, mainly at work, that don´t know about my sexuality. In my work we don´t talk about each other's sexuality, it is not a topic of discussion, I mean ... hetero people don't go around talking about their sexuality, why should I?*

Ana has an aunt that is a lesbian, and although everyone in the family knew about it, her aunt kept her sexual/affective relationships with women private. It was only when Ana's aunt started to engage in public displays of affection with her partner that the family's negative reactions became more frequent and severe. This had a major impact on Ana's understanding of her own situation: her bisexuality would not be a problem for her family as long as she kept it private.

> *I think that I am afraid of negative reactions. I think that this is the main reason why I am so cautious in public. I have an aunt who is a lesbian, everybody knew about it but*

no one would talk about it, she kept it rather private, until one day she had a girlfriend with whom she started to be more visible, holding hands, and so on ... and the family reaction was awful, they completed rejected her, no one supported her. It was a shock for me.

During the interview process Ana only admits feeling discriminated when same-sex public displays of affection are mentioned. She considers that having same-sex public displays of affection might disclose her sexual orientation and increase the risk of being discriminated against. She also acknowledges that she adopts different displays of affection in public spaces with boyfriends and girlfriends.

Even though I am not a very affectionate person in public I have to admit that with boyfriends I don't even think about it, and with girlfriends I always have a moment when I think that someone might be watching.

Later in the interview she reflects about her bisexuality, on the experience of being neither homosexual nor heterosexual, somewhere in the middle, in a blurred territory. This was the reason for mentioning the colour of her skin. She is a mixed-race, her father is Caucasian and her mother is from Cape Verde. Ana contrasts the experience of being discriminated against on grounds of sexual orientation and ethnic origin, focusing on the option of invisibility regarding sexual orientation. The colour of her skin is something that she has had to deal with on a daily basis in every context of her life ever since she was a little girl.

It is somehow like racism, only that race is something that you can see and homosexuality is not something visible. Homosexuality you can hide, the colour of your skin you cannot hide, and other people cannot just ignore it, they just have to deal with it.

Another relevant aspect of sexual-orientation based discrimination is the changeable/unchangeable characteristic of any social identity over time. Sexual orientation is neither stable nor unchangeable; the development of this identity is a distinct, varied, and ongoing process (Thompson and Morgan, 2008). In contrast, it would be impossible to grow up to be 19 years old before realizing that you are mixed-race. The two identity processes are highly distinct.

Moreover, the complex set of processes of racial socialization that shape the interactions and relations of ethnic minority young people, prepare them to cope with a discriminatory world. However, most LGBT young people do not have a social context to facilitate socialization

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into their sexual orientation. They grow up in families and social contexts that perceive and expect them to be heterosexuals, lacking the opportunity to learn how to cope with the hostilities that exist around them and to understand that these hostilities are not caused by their individual characteristics but rather are a consequence of a heteronormative social context (Russell, 2011).

Religious belief is a very important part of Ana's life. She identifies herself as a Catholic, and, in a country where Catholicism is the predominant religion, she does not face discrimination on grounds of her religious belief in most contexts of her life. However, she does experience discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation in her religious practice. She is aware of the position of the Catholic Church position regarding sexual orientation and acknowledges that she cannot be visibly bisexual in her church community.

> *This is quite interesting aspect of my life, sometimes I wonder how is it possible that I can feel comfortable in a place that denies my own existence, or at least does not support my sexuality. The church is supposed to be a place of peace and love, but it is at the same time a place that discriminates people. Sometimes it is not easy to deal with it.*

Simultaneously, she does not feel comfortable disclosing her Catholicism in the LGBT community, because of the existing tension between the Catholic Church and the LGBT associations, which is particularly strong in Portugal. In some way she experiences another type of discrimination on grounds of a potentially invisible aspect of her life: her religious beliefs. However, it is important to point out that this type of discrimination is not as pervasive in her life as the discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation.

The analysis of Ana's lived experience illustrates a case of discrimination on diverse grounds and highlights the specificities of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation.

Conclusion

The Portuguese reality of lesbians and gays has undergone tremendous change in recent years. A consistent and significant set of legal measures has been adopted: from the decriminalization of homosexuality in 1982 to same-sex marriage law in 2010. It is a remarkable change, framed by the revolution of 1974 that ended a long period of dictatorship and brought noteworthy social change to Portugal in diverse areas of life, including sexuality. Portugal's accession to the EU in 1986 was a significant stimulus to national equality legislation. Notwithstanding these significant legal changes towards equality, social

discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation remains a pervasive reality (European Commission, 2009). Lesbian and gay visibility in public spaces remains limited, and individuals still endure a great deal of distress. One of the most pervasive forms of social discrimination is the strong societal pressure to confine and to hide lesbian and gay sexualities within private spaces (Valentine, 1993).

The results of the research project on the visibility of lesbian and gay sexualities in public spaces in Portugal identified the existence of hidden, subtle, implicit and non-verbalised codes of behaviour in public spaces that discriminate same-sex public displays of affection. These hidden and non-explicit codes of behaviour are one of the most pervasive and strongest expressions of heteronormative power structures inscribed in socio-spatial landscapes. In such a context, people can decide not to disclose their non-normative sexual orientation, leading to the pervasive invisibility of lesbian and gay sexualities in public spaces. Concurrently, such invisibility reinforces the power inequalities, reinforcing the heteronormative socio-spatial landscape.

To analyse a lived experience of discrimination, such as the one of Ana, can contribute to an enhanced understanding of the specificities of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation. Although all social identities, such as class, gender, sexuality and race, are socially constructed, not taken for granted as given or fixed (Valentine, 2001), there are some specific characteristics of sexual orientation. In what concerns the social categorization of people based on perceived physical characteristics, such as skin colour, people cannot choose not to disclose their skin colour; there is no option of invisibility. Racial discrimination is based on a stigma that is visible in all but exceptional cases (Sedgwick, 1990). As far as sexual orientation is concerned, the scenario is completely different; there is the option of whether or not to disclose one's sexual orientation, negotiating the space/time contexts of the "coming out" processes (Valentine, 1993). Furthermore, it is the disclosure of one's sexual orientation that will possibly generate discrimination.

Equality policies should consider the specificities of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, such as the pervasive reality of social discrimination, the possibility of not disclosing one's sexual orientation, and the widespread invisibility of lesbian and gay sexualities in public spaces.

In addition to non-discrimination laws, it is crucial to promote the expression of lesbian and gay sexualities in the public sphere in order to break the cycle of invisibility and to advance

significant social change. If equality policies do not actively promote the public visibility of homosexuality and bisexuality, the main burden of making visible lesbian and gay sexualities will be on the shoulders of individuals who have to deal with prejudice and discrimination. Equality policies should provide a wide set of measures that effectively support lesbian women, gay men and bisexual persons in their individual struggle to gain public visibility.

Some equality policies might include: a) school curricula related to the diversity of sexualities; b) openly representation of lesbian women, gay men and bisexual persons on documents produced by governmental organizations in all areas of public life, such as education, health, justice, security and so on; c) official recognition of the diversity of sexualities in all official statements, discourses and documents; d) the implementation of an inclusive approach to people of all sexual orientations in all public services without assuming that everyone is heterosexual.

Visual images are an important and ever-increasing means through which social life happens (Rose, 2007); and it would, therefore, be of particular importance if governmental organizations were to promote the regular public display of images of lesbian and gay sexualities.

The heteronormative socio-spatial landscape potentiates the cycle of invisibility, enforcing people's decision not to disclose their sexual orientation and leading to a pervasive invisibility of lesbian and gay sexualities in public spaces, which concurrently reinforces the heteronormative socio-spatial landscape.

Providing unbiased information and actively promoting a positive image is important for combating all forms of discrimination. In regards to sexual orientation, however, it is imperative if we are to guarantee that lesbian women, gay men and bisexual persons can live in an open and inclusive environment with the guarantee of being respected and with the real possibility of achieving fulfilment.

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[1] Recommendation CM/Rec (2010)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity, available at https://wcd.coe.int/wcd/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1606669

[2] http://www.bzga.de/infomaterialien/aidsaufklaerung/heterosexuell-homosexuell/?uid=241cc89d7e0c9801cf4013d37304fe8d

[3] http://www.schule-der-vielfalt.de/index.htm

[4] Délibération relative à la prévention des discriminations et du harcèlement discriminatoire à raison de l'orientation sexuelle au collège et au lycée n° 2009-14 du 12/01/2009 http://www.halde.fr/IMG/pdf/4328.pdf

[5] Netherlands/Parliamentary Documents Lower House (2009-2010) 27017, Nos. 59 and 66

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[6] http://www.dayagainsthomophobia.org/IMG/pdf/Simply_Gay_engelstalige_versie_Hnota.pdf

[7] Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, CM(2011)49 final, available at https://wcd.coe.int/wcd/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM(2011)49

[8] Among lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals, internalized sexual stigma (also called internalized homophobia) refers to the personal acceptance and endorsement of sexual stigma as part of the individual's value system and self-concept. It is the counterpart to sexual prejudice among heterosexuals (Herek et al., 2009).

[9] All quotations are direct transcripts of oral language, translated from Portuguese to English.

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