



While the end of the military dictatorship in 1985 led to an increase of LGBTQ rights in Brazil, legalizing gay marriage less than 30 years later, homosexual, queer and transsexual people are still targets of acts of violence. Here's an overview of what it's like to be gay in the country.

1) Violence as a norm

Let's start with some statistics.

- Brazil has the highest rate of crimes against LGBTQ people in the world. (*Association nationale Transgenre*)
- 2680 gay people were murdered because of their sexuality in Brazil between 1980 and 2006, according to activists (*BBC News*).
- Trans women are the first victims of these murders, and have a life expectancy of 35 years old as against 74,9% for the rest of the population (*Le Monde*).

To prevent these crimes to happen and provide a safe place for all people in danger, associations must be very discreet and can only count on themselves. Indeed, having legal rights do not protect LGBTQ people from daily aggressions and crimes. In 2005, the Centro Latino-Americano em Sexualidade e Direitos Humanos found out 65% of the people surveyed during the pride parade claimed they had suffered from homophobic violence. The laws meant to protect these people are thus ineffective, as the religious and traditional mentality remains very strong on society debates around sexuality.

2) Back to the Middle Ages

Psychiatric treatment for homosexual people are back. Since 2017, Brazilian health professionals owe the right to treat homosexuality as a mental illness. While these methods had been withdrawn in 1999 because of the terrible consequences they had on patients' mental health, the government decided gay people should have the right to heal. Brilliant. How about the right to live? You see, the people who voted for this law to pass (mainly the judge Waldemar) claimed it would be silly to prevent gay people from sexually "converting" if that's what they wished for. The thing is, in the overwhelming majority of cases, the people asking for sexual conversion aren't the patient themselves, but the families. The decision of Waldemar has obviously been contested by mental health organizations and other politicians such as David Miranda, who told the Guardian: "This decision is a big regression to the progressive conquests that the LGBT community has had in recent decades. Like various countries in the world, Brazil is suffering a conservative wave". As a matter of fact, Bolsonaro was elected one year and a half later.



3) The Bolsonaro effect

Unlike what the new overtly homophobic president would have wished for the start of his term, the election of Bolsonaro led to a high increasement of same-sex marriage demand. Because of the fear of the removal of this fundamental right, that organizations struggled to pass for years, homosexual couples are now in the rush to get married (*France Inter*). And their fear is legitimate. In 2011, the president proudly said: "I would be incapable of loving a homosexual son... I would prefer my son to die in an accident than show up with a

mustachioed man". Oh, what a great dad. (If you wonder, he has got three sons. Yeah I know.)



The future is obviously not that bright on this side, but we can still notice some progress. Activists do their best to stand up together on social media, and Sao Paulo's parliament just saw its first transgender woman being elected. Her name is Erica Malunguinho, and takes office one year after the murder of the lesbian and feminist activist Marielle Franco. In the current context, her election is remarkable and gives hope for the LGBTQ community. It is fundamental not to forget that in many countries still, queer people are threatened, disowned by parents, tortured or murdered for being born this way. Homosexuality is not a disease, nor a choice. And if you have a problem with two men holding hands, you're probably the one who needs therapy.