# QUEERING DEVELOPMENT – INCORPORATING SEXUALITY

**The problem of heteronormativity in the development paradigm**

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper explores the possibilities of broadening the scope of the 'gender and development' approach through a queer mainstreaming of development policies and programmes. The paper suggests that such a mainstreaming could bring attention to the problem of the unconscious reproduction of oppressive social norms by institutionalisation of a compulsive heterosexual order. The 'queering of development' establishes some ethical guidelines to the construction of sexual identities and conduct of identity politics. It also focuses on the freedom to choose between identities of gender, sex and sexuality. Finally, the living conditions of Latin American *travestis* will be brought to attention to illustrate the queer theory approach to sexuality in development policies, programmes and discourses.

# 1: Introduction – The Ninio Mirror

*"[Sexuality] matters because the norms that constrain and enable certain forms of social as well as sexual expression affect every single one of us. Rather than allowing these norms to define how development industry engages with sexuality, we need to build that engagement on a foundation of respect for difference, fairness and freedom – norms that should be at the heart of what most of us would like development to represent" (Cornwall & Jolly, 2009: 12)*

When the Poznan Zoo in western Poland bought their new elephant bull, Ninio earlier this year, they were in for a surprise. The bull that was expected to be the founder of the new elephant herd, turned out to be not quite so bull after all, as he preferred male over female lovers. Of course, in Catholic Poland, this kind of behaviour, even amongst friends in the animal kingdom, is unheard of. Though many species are known to show signs of diverging sexual behaviour, Ninio caused a lot of heated public debate in Poland and beyond (Borowski, 2009). The story of the legendary gay elephant shows how the discourse on human sexuality is extrapolated onto the animal kingdom: how heterosexual norms are guarding even the conduct of 'elephant sexuality'. Ninio himself is hardly aware of his aberrant behaviour, but his affection towards other bull elephants is seen in public discourse through the representationalist logic of sexual identities, thereby reflecting human constructions of sex, gender and sexuality.

In the public discourse heterosexuality is considered as the norm and other sexualities as deviant or abnormal. The 'straight' human being becomes pre-given or simply a matter of biology, and debates on development policy have tended to avoid discussions of sexuality beyond debates on population growth

and HIV/AIDS. As a result, many development agencies fail to contemplate the matter of sexuality in general, and allow an unconscious slip of social normativity into development policies and programmes. In doing so, they institutionalise heterosexual norms, where gender occurs in the form of two fixed categories: men and women. In the most severe cases, compulsive and oppressive heterosexuality even lead to persecution of sexual minorities; the murdering of transvestites in Mexico and the execution of gays and lesbians in Iran being only a few extreme examples of this (Jolly, 2000: 80).

It has been argued that the exclusion of sexuality from the development discourse suggests "the problematic assumption, that while in the North people need sex and love, in the South they just need to eat" (Jolly, 2000: 81). This view fails to recognize that sexuality is about more than having sex. It is about politics, religious ideologies, social norms and rules, economic structures, dress codes and gender socialisation (Pereira, 2009: 18). The right to control one's own body, no matter if it is to protect its integrity or to enjoy its pleasures, is one of the most basic of all rights. Thus, as Susie Jolly, a research officer at the Institute of Development Studies (University of Sussex), noticed in the opening quote, we need to engage with sexuality on a foundation of respect for difference, fairness and freedom. This approach is consistent with the basic idea presented by economist Amartya Sen in his book 'development as freedom'. Sen argues that development can be seen "as a process of expanding real freedom that people enjoy" (Sen, 2001: 3). This endorsement of overall freedoms, should help people "lead the kind of lives they have reason to value" (Sen, 2001: 10).

Sexuality is a complex field with no aetiological explanations. The mantra of traditional science (especially economy and political science) seems to be the ability to measure cause and effect, but because you cannot measure sexuality, the sciences have chosen more or less to ignore it (Cornwall & Jolly, 2006: 5). However, the issue of sexuality is important to many people because the societal expectations that surround sexuality reinforce unhelpful gender stereotypes. These stereotypes can be as problematic for heterosexual men and women, as they are for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) people (Cornwall & Jolly, 2006: 3). Nevertheless, reproducing social normativity in mainstream development policy can bring about political and social exclusion, and may even be contrary to human rights. Following the need to bring awareness to 'the problem of heteronormativity', I would like to consider alternatives for future development theory and practice, answering the question: *How is heteronormativity affecting development policies and programmes, and how do development agencies avoid the pitfalls of oppressive stereotypes that seem to discriminate by default?*

Using poststructuralist and queer theory, I will compose a critical view on the approaches to development that either operate with the man-woman/homosexual-heterosexual dichotomies, or work through some kind of identity politics, thereby overlooking or excluding 'unmarked' sexual minorities.

Queer Theory is about more than sexual minorities. It is referring to all social norms and stereotypes and how they are connected to sex and sexuality. Jolly explains the notion of 'queer' in the following manner: "Formerly, with the use of the word 'homosexual', we had been defined in relation to heterosexuality. The labels 'lesbian' and 'gay' also marked us with supposedly bounded, static identities which could be clearly differentiated from 'straight'. The use of the word 'queer' constituted a rejection of the binary distinction between homo- and hetero-sexual, and allowed us to conceptualise our sexualities as non-essential and transitional" (Jolly, 2000: 84). Generally speaking, the 'queering of development' is not about influencing third world countries with our concepts of right and wrong. It is about supporting the already existing divergence in sexuality and gender identities.

The first part of this paper is mostly concerning theoretical matters. Here I am going to clarify the poststructuralist queer view on sexuality, and show how this is connected to the contemporary development paradigm. Following the queer critique, I will then establish some (ethical) guidelines for the theoretical assessment of development policies, programmes and discourses. These guidelines serve the purpose of unlocking the gates of heteronormativity in contemporary approaches to development, making them more inclusive and less antagonizing regarding sexuality.

I will then use those guidelines to further investigate the concept of gender mainstreaming, bringing attention to three main topics of sexuality in development: the structural violence in policies and programmes, the legal issues and the rights-based approach, and the language of discourse and cultural norms. Subsequently, I will give a few tangible illustrations on the implications of my theoretical arguments by 'zooming in' on the intersections between sexuality and development, considering the case of the *travesti* living in Latin America. Finally, in continuation of Sen's argument on freedom, I will briefly summarize the realisation of queer politics, proposing the concept of 'sexual freedom'.

## 2: A Queer Theory Approach to Sexuality

During the last 30 years, approaches to gender in the development discourse have progressed from 'women in development' (WID) to today's most prevailing conception: 'gender and development' (GAD) (Zwart, 1992: 16). This change is characterised by a shift from a relatively narrow focus on women's disadvantages in a male-dominated society, to a more politicised emphasis on power relations between women and men. The GAD holds that sex and gender can be distinguished as a 'biology><social construction' dichotomy (Zwart, 1992: 18).

In continuation of this argument, drawing on insights from poststructuralist and queer theorist, the Berkeley Professor Judith Butler, I am going to problematize the essentialist position this sex-gender dichotomy implies. Following this critique, I will show what constitutes the norm, and how this can lead to a

heteronormativity. Finally, I am going to discuss the alternatives to the heteronormative and essentialist positions, applying a code of ethics to the conduct of identity politics.

### 2.1: A queer view on 'gender and development'

The sex-gender dichotomy applied by GAD assumes a 'pure' biological body onto which the social ideas of gender are inscribed. By revealing the fact that gender is not fixed to the sex, the sex-gender dichotomy in GAD opposes the argument that the only morally correct sexuality is the one enabling procreation (Butler, 2007: 8). Nevertheless, as Butler reveals in her book 'Gender Trouble', this supposedly biological 'sex' is just another social construction, which is why it "would make no sense [...] to define gender as the cultural interpretation of sex, if sex itself is a gendered category" (Butler, 2007: 10). Furthermore, she shows how our bodies and identities are interactive, and how the society understands the apparent 'essence' of our bodies through our own ideas about sex and gender (Jolly, 2000: 84). Following Butlers reasoning, gender is only the discursive means "by which 'sexed nature' or 'a natural sex' is produced and established as 'prediscursive', prior to culture, a politically neutral surface on which culture acts" (Butler, 2007: 10).

Consequently, the discursive production of the two sexes gives the people in power the ability to define the contents of the two categories. This leads to an exaggeration of similarities between people of 'the same sex', ignoring the 'biological' diversity. Those who do not fit the categories of men and women are either physically transformed (operations on hermaphrodites at birth) or shamed into secrecy, hereby cleaning up the sexes to make them appear natural and absolute. By breaking down this essentialist stronghold in the perception of sexuality, the essential meaning of the biological sex loses its footing, allowing sexuality to become a matter of choice, not destiny (Jolly, 2000: 85).

By refusing the essentialist illusion that only the existence of objective cross-cultural categories enables a sexual orientation, a better understanding of the many variations in sexuality across cultures is permitted. Examples of this could be the *hijras* in South Asia, the *travestis* in Latin America, and *tommy boys* in Africa (Harcourt, 2009: 2). Most importantly, by challenging the hierarchies of 'natural' and 'unnatural', it creates a concrete foundation for sexual pluralism as democratic value (Corrêa & Jolly, 2008: 23).

On the basis of this conception, queering development becomes a process of reformulating GAD, thus including marginalised sexualities and gender-categories that lack the power to challenge heteronormativity (Jolly, 2000: 85). The queer struggle, on this part, is not only aiming at tolerance or equal status, but challenges the fundamental institutions and social norms (Warner, 1991: 6). Nonetheless, this challenge entails in itself the dangers of formulating a new normativity, a danger that calls for certain

ethical considerations. This problem will be confronted later in this paper but first, I wish to explain my understanding of normativity and heteronormativity in particular.

## 2.2: What is heteronormativity?

Norms, in general, consist of meaning, values and beliefs that guide our way of action. They constitute and regulate their subjects and are ultimately about the workings of power (Pereira, 2009: 21). This power is "always-already present, constituting that very thing which one attempts to counter it with" (Foucault, 1998: 82). This means that we always subscribe to and challenge norms simultaneously, without the ability to separate the performance of norms from the internalisation. Normativity thus becomes a belief in the truth of the norm, the perception that the norm is describing how things should be.

Heteronormativity refers to norms related to gender and sexuality that reinforces existing power structures of compulsory heterosexuality as well as other systems and ideologies, e.g. religious fundamentalism, casteism, the class system, etc. (Sharma, 2009: 53). In the development industry, this can appear as an institutionalisation of heterosexual norms that risks excluding people, whose sexualities do not conform to the norms, from the benefits of development (Cornwall & Jolly, 2009: 7). In this heteronormative view, as indicated earlier, gender is fixed to the two supposedly 'biological' sex categories, men and women, and the possibility that gender identity can be something fluid and more plural is never accepted (Cornwall & Jolly, 2009: 6).

The discourse of heteronormativity hereby produces what Butler calls "The linguistic fiction of 'sex'", in the attempt to "restrict the production of identities along the axis of heterosexual desire" (Butler, 2007: 36). This compulsory gender normativity has the effect of discriminating all those who fail to obey the normatıve expectations of gender expression, irrespective of their sexual preferences (Cornwall, Corrêa & Jolly, 2008: 12). Thus, as the founder of the term heteronormativity, Michael Warner, remarks, "even when coupled with a tolerance of minority sexualities, heteronormativity has a totalizing tendency that can only be overcome by actively imagining a necessarily and desirably queer world" (Warner, 1991: 8).

## 2.3: The problem of identity politics

From Butler we have so far learned that the subject does not exist prior to political and social structures, but is constituted in the interaction with those. In other words, the formation of sexual identities is always intertwined with the formation of cultural and institutional norms, or as Butler puts it: "There is only a taking up of the tools where they lie, where the very 'taking up' is enabled by the tool lying there" (Butler, 2007: 199). Amartya Sen stresses that the importance of a particular (constructed) identity depends on the social context. For instance, "...when going to a dinner, one's identity as vegetarian may be rather more

crucial than one's identity as a linguist" (Sen, 2006: 25). Thus, when faced with oppression and violence, the queer identity becomes even more crucial than in 'free' and liberal societies.

As already indicated, these identities are multiple themselves, and allow for an unlimited number of identity-categories (such as gender, age, sexual orientation, nationality, etc.) to traverse and combine (Seidman, 1994: 173). This is also the reason why the assumption that the category of 'woman' denotes a common identity is highly disputed (Butler, 2007: 4). Consequentially, the fluidity of peoples sexual identities defy the easy categorisation traditional LGBT politics depend on, which is why claiming rights for LGBT-groups in particular can be very problematical (Cornwall & Jolly, 2009: 10).

In spite of the problematical assumption of a 'common identity', the most popular strategy for fighting sexual hierarchies and gender normativity is what has come to be known as 'identity politics' (Heckert, 2005: 10). The intention of identity politics is to emphasise the articulation of a diversity and multiplicity of sexual and gender identities (bisexuals, transsexuals, drag queens, etc.), expanding contemporary politics on sexuality beyond the hetero/homo opposition (Namaste, 1994: 230). The only problem is that those identity categories can be mobilised and politicised as instruments of regulatory regimes, either as normalising categories of repressive structures or as rallying points for contesting political views. In other words, identity politics "always remain threatened by the prospect of identity becoming an instrument of the power one opposes" (Butler, 2007: xxviii).

Additionally, recognizing the legitimacy of a specific group identity that differs from the larger society, and urging minorities to subscribe to it, risks imposing a 'totalising' sameness within that group. While finding a forum for political expression, people marching under the banners of homosexuality are also sending a message saying "this is who we 'really are'" (Heckert, 2005: 13). Of course, to 'the gay businessman' and 'the gay anti-globalisation activist', this idea of sameness could not be further from the truth.

The sameness imposed by identity politics may end up constructing LGBT identities as equally monolithic to their heterosexual counterparts. Furthermore, the resulting 'within group solidarity' may even cause friction between groups (Sen, 2006: 2). Thus, this strategy runs contrary to its own goal, reproducing the notion of a singular heterosexual majority, and reinforcing the LGBT/straight binaries rather than attempting to deconstruct them (Heckert, 2005: 13). For that reason, social movements relying solely on identity politics seem to be complicit in the production of oppression (Heckert, 2005: 1).

Thus, identity appears to be double-sided. It can become a source of strength and confidence as well as a source of violence and terror (Sen, 2006: 4). Queer theory presents an alternative: a radical 'politics of difference' that aims to expose the exclusionary and disciplinary effects of heteronormativity and identity politics (Seidman, 2001: 358). This does not mean that identity formulation cannot be used as a strategy

against heteronormativity, but the argument stresses the importance that it remains permanently unclear precisely what the different identity categories contain (Butler, 2001: 333). By simultaneously contesting and subscribing to the categories of sexual identity, formulating politics becomes more pragmatic, negotiable, and related to concerns about situational advantage (Seidman, 1994: 173).

### 2.4: Resisting orientation – the anti-respresentationalist ethics of queer politics

Queer politics are critical of any political strategy that settles for a redrawing of the borders of morality in order to include diverging identities within the practice of 'normality'. As stated above, queer politics constantly seek to challenge regulatory power and the reign of heteronormativity (Seidman, 2001: 358). Nevertheless, this approach is not without problems, as the way in which a group is defined, affects how it will be addressed in public discourse, mobilized, represented and legislated for (Warner, 1991: 15). Consequently, the object of an alternative political strategy will be to distance itself from group formation and to constantly deconstruct the idea that there is such a concept as 'normal'. This strategy will reinforce the idea that everyone is different; that human diversity is valuable (Heckert, 2005: 13).

There is sometimes a tendency in queer theory to focus more on the diverging categories of sexuality than on heterosexuality. This tendency is rooted more generally in the sociological tradition and is based on the researcher's interest in the deviant or 'marked' categories, leaving the 'unmarked' category of heterosexuality still to be explained (Heckert, 2005: 54). Queer politics should seek to transcend the slippery ground between marked and unmarked, and create cultural resources, organisational forms, relationships and networks, which support and enable new realities (Heckert, 2005: 56).

It is a constant danger that one form of oppression can be replaced with another in the battle against heteronormativity. This means restraining from identity-markings that include or exclude on the basis of a sense of belonging, given that this kind of divide is what we fight in the first place (Butler, 2001: 337). The visibility of identity can never become a political strategy in its own right. Categorisation must always be contested and called into question in order to allow more flexible and open ended norms to emerge. Accordingly, queer politics cannot be based on at total denial of identity representation. Thus, we should regard the negotiation of gender norms as a process, not as a quest to overturn the normative with the non-normative (Sharma, 2009: 55).

The American sociologist Steven Seidman calls this kind of queer politics a "communicative sexual ethics" (Seidman, 2001: 358-359). This ethical principle is in line with a key principle to which poststructuralism is committed: the principle that "practices of representing others to themselves – either in who they are or in what they want – ought, as much as possible, to be avoided" (May, 1994: 130). This anti-representationalist ethical principal states that the power to represent people to themselves is oppressive,

since the mechanism of telling people who they are and what they want has a tendency to create a gap between them, and who/what they can create themselves to be (May, 1994: 131).

Consequently, the goal of the ethical principles of queer politics is not to resist representation in general, but to resist those certain kinds of representation that seek to 'normalise' sexuality (May, 1994: 132). The fact that we are trapped between constructions, limited in choice by our own imagination, does not denote an essential belonging, and does not string us up to a certain identity category (Sen, 2006: 35). We still posses the ability to kayak between the ferries of identity politics. Thus, the mission of queer ethics is to constantly shake up social normativity, and to simultaneously build and break identity categories, rendering it impossible to freeze society in the image of any compulsive sexual order.

## 3: Queering Development

Mainstream development policies and programmes have mainly focused on clinical issues of sexuality. Yet when it comes to political, economic and social implications of sexuality, ultra-conservative forces have framed clear policies and deployed considerable resources to further their heterosexual views on sexuality and gender (Cornwall, Corrêa & Jolly, 2008: 8). They cut off funding to those who work with sex workers without the idea of prostitution. They promote abstinence, and repress homosexuality, and thereby deny sexual realities and sexual pluralities (Cornwall, Corrêa & Jolly, 2008: 18). Thus, forces within the development industry seek to strengthen oppressive heteronormativity, and action is needed to counter this oppression. A queer mainstreaming is intending to fulfil this need.

Queering development means engaging in mainstreaming of development policies and programmes according to a queer ethics, on issues stretching from promotion of sexual rights and sexual education, to fighting norms and oppressive cultural values.

I will begin the following section be specifying the concept of queer mainstreaming. Following this clarification, I will consider the matter of *travestis* in Latin America, presenting a queer politics from the minority point of view. Finally, following Sen's conception of freedom, I will propose the concept of 'sexual freedom'.

### 3.1: A queer mainstreaming

In principal, mainstreaming incorporates all aspects of development, and as such, it is not possible to perform an exhaustive description of queer mainstreaming. For this reason, the ethics of queer politics is a very important guideline for all considerations on sexuality and gender in development work. In this paragraph, I will mainly be focussing on three areas; Structural violence that can be alleviated through

policies and programmes; Legal issues concerning violations and rights and; Norms of compulsive heterosexuality that can be challenged through rights and policies as well as public discourse.

Institutions are involved in defining and regulating our intimate lives, thus, development policies work as methods of constructing and legitimising identities. Struggles for interpretive power over development policies may end up excluding non-normative individuals or family units due to rigid heteronormative policy formulations (Lind, 2009: 35). Consequently, the obligation of the policy formulation will be to use a language that does not presume heterosexuality, and in this way avoids discrimination by default. Targeting HIV-prevention policies specifically at homosexuals may for instance have the side-effect of excluding 'men who have sex with men' but do not define themselves as gays or homosexuals. Of course there is also the possibility of addressing sexuality in more direct way through development programmes that work with sexual education and the experience of sexual pleasure. Educating people on the matter will improve their capacity to make choices regarding body and sexuality (Armas, 2008: 214).

An often used approach when working with sexuality in development is the rights-based approach. It is argued that sexual rights lie at the core of all rights, as they concern bodily freedom and autonomy (Corrêa & Jolly, 2008: 39). Sexual rights are often promoted in combination with human rights, and are said to enable the demand for accountability from power holders, empower people, increase inclusion and representation, and make discriminated groups more visible. Thus, sexual rights can be used as a strategy to tackle poverty as well as oppression of sexuality (Armas, 2008: 211).

Following the previous discussion on identity politics, the rights-based approach seems to suffer from a strong tendency to employ identity categories. Because the use of these categories only includes specific (and often narrowly defined) identities, there is a risk of enforcing normative standards on sexuality altogether (Corrêa & Jolly, 2008: 33). As a result, such an approach would jeopardise effectively addressing the rights of people who do not fall into these categories (Cornwall, Corrêa & Jolly, 2008: 9). This is especially apparent when working to include sexual rights within a human rights framework based on the positive definitions of those protected against discrimination (Donnelly, 1999: 95).

Jack Donnelly suggests solving the problem of categorisation (specifically LGBT-categories) by using the term 'sexual minorities', thereby including present and future minorities, not constraining individuals to specific categories (Donnelly, 1999: 97). First of all, this definition might be too broad to give strong protection within the rights-language. Second, this language might be better than LGBT-categories for the protection of the sexual minorities, but what about heterosexuals suffering under the strong gender norms of compulsive heterosexuality? Hence, the problem of categorisation and representation remains. Donnelly also stresses the right of all adult human beings to have 'personal autonomy', thus, one might consider

framing this (non-)category instead (Donnelly, 1999: 107). "We need to seek rights for people in all our diversity, including the diversity in each individual; make universal claims to rights that recognise the cultural variation in sexual identities" (Corrêa & Jolly, 2008: 40).

The struggle of sexuality not only points in the direction of positive rights. Perhaps more crucially, this struggle is also faced with the obstacle of laws criminalizing same-sex relations and sexual diversity, often leading to a state-sanctioned violence against sexual minorities (Cáceres, Aggleton & Galea, 2008: 49). But even if sodomy laws and the like are deleted, and legislative action is taken towards guaranteeing sexual rights, these actions will not take us very far in the process of claiming justice if they work in a context of homophobic culture and oppressive heterosexual norms.

Different discursive strategies can be employed in development programmes. In research, focus on the linguistic differences is of great importance. For instance, when talking to men who have sex with men, the notion of 'sex' might only apply to relationships that potentially lead to reproduction. This can result in answers denying sexual conduct with other men, which can consequently lead to erroneous conclusions and development programmes that fail (Cáceres, Aggleton & Galea, 2008: 48). This linguistic complexity can also become a problem in policy formulation, as described by Jaya Sharma, if for instance the number of people registering as LGBT is much smaller than the number of people experiencing same-sex desire (Sharma, 2008: 68). How then to target or include these people?

Using the strategy of counter-discourse, taking use of the opponent's tactics and language, can also be very effective, and should be used in combination with alliance building and solidarity work. Finally, when working in the field of discursive power, timing, and waiting for a window of opportunity, seems to be another important factor (Amado, 2009: 63).

As seen above, sexuality in development should be utilised as a holistic approach. Policies and rights should work in concert with public discourse, strengthening the bodily autonomy.  In the next paragraph I will be focusing on *Travestis* in Latin America, exemplifying how a queer approach might induce better and more helpful approaches to development in that area.


### 3.2: Travestis in Latin America

*Travestism* is a term from the pre-Hispanic period that has survived into contemporary times. In the Inca Empire, *travestis* were highly valued servants in religious rituals. Yet under Spanish colonial rule, 'cross-dressing' was sanctioned for not serving the divine purpose of procreation and for breaking with the Christian gender dichotomy (Campuzano, 2008: 136). In the postcolonial present, *travestism* has often been mistaken for being a kind of LGBT identity. The prevailing prejudice about *travesti* is that they are homosexuals who present themselves as female according to manner, dress and make-up, and today

*travestis* all over Latin America are exposed to all sorts of hate-crimes, and have been a favourite goal for left- as well as right-wing militias (Campuzano, 2008: 139).

People who identify themselves as *travesti* often work in the sex industry due to general lack of work options and discrimination in the labour market. This entails a great health risk due to the poverty (cold, outdoor, and unclean facilities) and exposure to HIV (Campuzano, 2009: 78). Though most *travesti* prefer homosexual relations, some lead 'normal' family lives with wife and children. As a 'group' *travestis* are quite plural, which is why the notion of *travestis* can never become a sexual or gender category as such. It might be helpful to comprehend *travestism* not as a box, but as a vector, pointing away from heteronormativity into the unknown lands of sexual space.

*Travestis* often suffer crimes of hate and institutional harassment, and they often receive a discriminatory treatment in public health facilities. Consequently, they often seek alternative treatment with shamans or beauticians, leaving health problems such as HIV untreated. This structural violence could be countered by better education for health care professionals and new hospital procedures. In Lima, in Peru, a homosexual doctor has founded the Alberto Barton Health Centre, where *travestis* are understood and treated like human beings instead of being taunted and faced with discriminatory comments (Campuzano, 2009: 80-81).

Though not all countries in Latin America have legislations that criminalise homo- or transsexuals, there are still laws that target sexual minorities more indirectly. In Peruvian Law, for instance, you can get 10-30 days of community service for making "immoral or indecent proposals to a third party in public spaces" (Campuzano, 2009: 80). One way to counter the social exclusion and health risks could be to legalise sex work and recognise it as just another income-generating activity. This would reduce stigma and facilitate social inclusion while resulting in better working conditions and less harassment (Campuzano, 2009: 81-82). In turn, this would lead to more freedom, and thus, following Sen's argument, reduce poverty. In the Central and South Andes, *travestis* also work with petty trade and mining, which allows a much greater degree of inclusion, since it does not attract so many stigmas as the sex work (Campuzano, 2009: 79). As discussed earlier, the application of Sexual Rights within a Human Rights framework seems more problematical, especially since the category of *travestism* has such blurry boundaries. This rights-rhetoric however, could be used for more discursive purposes.

In public schools / state schools the structural and symbolic violence is reproduced, providing students with heteronormative Christian moral and military macho stereotypes. Thus, launching new educational policies would influence public discourse (Campuzano, 2009: 80). An already established project that specifically aims at public discourse is the Travesti Museum of Peru. This project works as a travelling exhibition celebrating pre-Hispanic and contemporary *travesti* culture. The objective is to affirm

*travesti* identity by disseminating information on the rich historical tradition, and by generating dialogue regarding the difficulties *travestis* face today (Campuzano, 2008: 143).

*Travestis* also face a strong within-group pressure that regulates the way they view themselves. For instance, *travestis* with female partners are often looked down upon from other *travestis*, as they do not fulfil the *travesti* homosexual norm. Giuseppe Campuzano mentions an example of a married *travesti* (female partner) with children, doing sex work as the family breadwinner. This underscores the complexity of the matter, hence, as Campuzano remarks: "It is not simply a matter of assigning *travestis* a unique gender or sexuality, nor taking for granted their homosexuality or their desire to become a genital woman. *Travestis* need freeing from normative pressures, to enable them actualize their own self-expression" (Campuzano, 2008: 141-142). Concluding this, Campuzano calls for a general application of the principle of gender relativity, the outcome of which would be a "healthier and wiser development, one in which people can claim their rights to combine genders, to transit and to choose" (Campuzano, 2008: 144).


### 3.3: A politics of difference and sexual freedom

Combining the insights of the two sections, it seems clear that queering development works through various forms of freedoms, rights and autonomy. When working on sexuality within the rights framework, we must change the discourse on 'rights' from a primary focus on 'protection from' to a focus on being 'free to'. It should be avoided to define this freedom inside the borders of new identity markers, thereby restricting sexuality to new forms of social normativity (Cornwall & Jolly, 2006: 7). Sumit Baudh proposes a concept that would go beyond the problematical boundaries of identity-categories. "There is a need for human rights language to [...] acknowledge and indeed promote people's autonomy, independence, free will and sovereignty over their bodies" (Baudh, 2008: 100). Thus, Baudh suggests a 'right to sexual autonomy', thereby avoiding exclusion of non-categorical, non-identifiable non-normative sexual and gender conduct. This could be articulated as a sexual autonomy that is consistent with everyone else's sexual autonomy (Heckert, 2005: 77).

However, rather than focusing only on violations of rights, queer politics should also challenge and seek to subvert the founding norms of society (Sharma, 2008: 75). In 'Development as Freedom' Amartya Sen makes the argument that poverty is due to the lack of capabilities, and capabilities are depending on freedom. Hence, working against the barriers of heteronormativity, thereby expanding the freedom of choice, is at the heart of development. The choices of sexuality and gender are "made within the limits of what are seen as feasible" (Sen, 2006: 5). We may thus be able to paddle around on the big sea, but the strengths of our arms and the conditions of our equipment clearly limit the distance we might be able to paddle, thus limiting the possibilities we have. Along with improvements on the material side of

development, we should also enhance the scope of identity options while simultaneously pushing for plural and open-ended categorisations avoiding strong group formations. Or as Sen puts it: "What we need, above all, is a clear-headed understanding of the importance of the freedom that we can have in determining our priorities" (Sen, 2006: xvii).

Unfortunately, the 'sexual freedom' is never completely our own to choose, and the feeling of freedom is always depending on the recognition of others, and as Sen also marks, "[t]he freedom on choosing our identity in the eyes of others can sometimes be extraordinarily limited" (Sen, 2006: 31). Therefore, queering development seeks to battle the simultaneities simultaneously, to let the Trojan Horse of queer ethics into the core of development, changing 'politics of heteronormativity' into 'politics of difference'.

## 4: Conclusion – Sexual Space... the Final Frontier

*"The point at issue is not whether any identity whatever can be chosen (that would be an absurd claim), but whether we do indeed have choices over alternative identities or combinations of identities, and perhaps more importantly, substantial freedom regarding what priority to give to the various identities we may simultaneously have" (Sen, 2006: 38)*

The aim of this paper has been to combat the problem of heteronormativity in the development paradigm, and to explore the possibilities of broadening the scope of GAD through queer mainstreaming of development policies and programmes. One of the keys to this mainstreaming is the concept of queer ethics and conduct of queer politics that makes us conscious about problems of identity politics and social normativity, thus avoiding institutionalisation of heterosexual norms. Combined with a strong emphasis on sexual freedom and bodily autonomy, the queer critique can prove to become a strong tool against poverty and inequality, and a new way of securing other freedoms as well. In short, the freedom to choose sexual identity, and indeed having the ability to choose between alternatives as noted by Sen, and thereby gaining sexual freedom, would be enabled by a queer mainstreaming of the development industry at large.

Queering development is a pluralist approach that seeks to create more flexible and open ended norms. Accordingly, it is not about imposing new values and norms, but about giving those "who feel constrained by certain aspects of their culture [...] the choice whether to aim for an alternative, or to consciously validate 'their' culture" (Jolly, 2000: 81).

To create a better future, development industry must seek to conquer and expand the space of sexuality – to boldly go where no man/woman/gay/lesbian/transgendered/cross-dresser/queer/... has ever gone before!

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