

Homophobia: the perception of social discourses and the experience of victimization of homosexuals

Sofia Fernandes (sofiafernandesum@gmail.com)

Paula Cristina Martins (pcmartins@psi.uminho.pt)

12th Annual Conference of the European Society of Criminology
Criminology in the 21st Century: a Necessary Balance Between Freedom and Security
Bilbao, 12 to 15 September 2012

Abstract

This study, of exploratory character, aims to understand the nature of homophobic crimes from the perspective of victims. More specifically, it intends to characterize the discourses and practices of homophobic nature, and its impact and significance for the victims.

A convenience sample of 13 individuals of both sexes, homosexual or bisexual, with experiences of homophobic victimization, responded to an interview focused on homophobia and cultural discourses about homosexuality, as well as episodes of victimization experienced by these participants.

Results show that social discourses reveal an attitude of non-acceptance of homosexuality and the lack of one perpetrator type or characteristic contexts associated with the occurrence of episodes of victimization with homophobic motivation, prevailing, however, the verbal abuse. In this scenario, the victims tend to mobilize strategies of concealment of sexual orientation, using various types of social support.