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# GAY PRESS IN BRAZIL:

a journalistic and militant look at  
homosexual reality in the 70s and 80s



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**ABSTRACT** – This article approaches how the militancy of the homosexual movement and the journalistic practice by some agents were responsible for a unique phenomenon in the history of Brazilian journalism: the gay press. For this, a comparison was made between the subjects treated, as well as the approaches, of the newspaper *Lampião da Esquina*, a gay periodical that had the greatest impact between 1979 and 1981, and *Folha de S.Paulo*. It is a comparative document analysis, based on bibliographical research. As a result, it was possible to identify that, in addition to being unprecedented, the militant look at reality was essential for the existence of this press, making its focus not only a differential element, but a primordial one, so that the appropriate subjects were launched to the dimension of the public sphere.

**Key words:** Communication. Journalism. Gay press. Militancy. Homosexuality.

**IMPrensa GAY NO BRASIL:  
um olhar jornalístico e militante sobre a realidade  
homossexual nas décadas de 70 e 80**

**RESUMO** – Neste artigo aborda como a militância do movimento homossexual e a prática jornalística por alguns agentes foram formadores de um fenômeno único na história do jornalismo brasileiro: a imprensa gay. Para isso, foi realizada uma comparação entre os assuntos tratados, assim como as abordagens, do jornal *Lampião da Esquina*, periódico gay que teve maior repercussão entre 1979 e 1981, e a *Folha de S.Paulo*. Trata-se de uma análise de conteúdo documental comparativa, embasada em pesquisa bibliográfica. Como resultado, foi possível identificar que além de inovador, o olhar militante frente a realidade foi essencial para a existência desta imprensa, fazendo com que seu enfoque se tornasse não apenas um elemento diferencial, mas sim, primordial, para que devidos assuntos fossem lançados à dimensão da esfera pública.

**Palavras-chave:** Comunicação. Jornalismo. Imprensa gay. Militância. Homossexualidade.

**PRENSA GAY EN BRASIL:  
una mirada periodística y militante sobre la realidad  
homosexual en los años 70 y 80**

**RESUMEN** – Este artículo aborda cómo la militancia del movimiento homosexual y la práctica periodística de algunos agentes fueron responsables de un fenómeno único en la historia del periodismo brasileño: la prensa gay. Para esto, se hizo una comparación entre los temas tratados, así como los enfoques, del diario *Lampião da Esquina*, periódico gay de mayor impacto entre 1979 y 1981, y *Folha de S.Paulo*. Se trata de un análisis documental comparativo, basado en una investigación bibliográfica. Como resultado, fue posible identificar que, además de ser inédita, la mirada militante de la realidad fue fundamental para la existencia de esta prensa, haciendo de su enfoque no sólo un elemento diferencial, sino primordial, para que las cuestiones debidas pudieran ser lanzadas a la dimensión de la esfera pública.

**Palabras clave:** Comunicación. Periodismo. Prensa gay. Militancia. Homossexualidad.

## 1 Introduction

The Brazilian Homosexual Movement (MHB, Movimento Homossexual Brasileiro), the former name of what we now know as LGBTQIAP+, had its formal organization start in the late 1970s in Brazil and with it, a series of publications related to the reality of Brazilian homosexuals came to exist<sup>1</sup>. This movement comes from a proto-press linked to the daily life and homosociality of the 1960s, in which diverse groups met and carried out coexistence activities in common,

without necessarily being present in a broad discussion within the public sphere (Silva Jr., 2022, p. 3). The public discussion on the issue of homosexuality brought contours hitherto nonexistent in the public sphere since it assumed that, like other human beings, homosexuals were people with rights, especially the right to pleasure, and worthy of having an emotional life in its fullness (Colaço, 2022, p. 4).

Before this position, and during the publication of several newspapers linked to the homosexual cause, there were reports in the press, especially the sensationalist one, that pointed to gays as criminals and dangerous. As an example, we have the newspaper *Notícias Populares*<sup>2</sup>, which had in its headlines titles such as “Homosexuals kidnap two brothers in SP”, “Two homosexual marriages outrage the people” and “Lesbian killed Dulcinéia who denied her love” (Francischelli et al., 2016). To understand the effective contributions of the process that mixes journalism and militancy during this period with Brazilian journalism, if they existed, we sought to analyze some editions of the newspaper *Lampião da Esquina*, comparing their agendas and approaches with the newspaper *Folha de S.Paulo*<sup>3</sup>; the objective is to verify whether the periodicals covered the same topics and whether, if so, they had a similar approach.

However, before starting the article, it is necessary to clarify the term “gay press”. The term gay press, or homosexual press, of an identity character, is widely used in the current literature on the subject. In addition to the current use, it is how the members of *Lampião da Esquina* titled the journal. According to João Silvério Trevisan, in the documentary *Lampião da Esquina*, it was “a newspaper made by faggots, and for faggots” (Francischelli et al., 2016).

The identity of this press had an important issue in the formation not only of the journal but also of the movement organized at the time, entitled the Brazilian Homosexual Movement. It is worth mentioning that the very conception of homosexuality, or gay identity, went through a process of creation, often not being assimilated by the subjects of the time. Reports in which militants were indecisive about their identity are not uncommon, placing political militancy as a priority on their sexuality, as was the case of Herbert Daniel, reported in the book *Revolucionário e Gay* [Revolutionary and Gay], by James Green (Green, 2018). Another example is also reported by João Silvério Trevisan in *Devassos no Paraíso* [Libertines in Paradise], in which in 1976, in the search for the first articulation of a gay group, he encountered several difficulties precisely concerning the

identification of the members with their homosexual identity (Trevisan, 2018).

Therefore, when we refer to *Lampião da Esquina* and several newspapers of this time, we are not talking about newspapers or magazines concerning “men who slept with other men”, in this case, we would be being anachronistic and taking the risk of not honoring the very struggle of these individuals in their subjective processes of construction of identities and masculinities. The transformation of the term gay into an identity of pride was an element of struggle not only in Brazil but throughout the world, as stated by Foucault (2004), the objective of that movement was to discover a way to be gay, without being content with the homosexual ideal that had been imposed until then by the device of sexuality.

Finally, we believe that the construction of an identity, as was desired by the members of *Lampião da Esquina* as it appears in all its existence and literature, in our view, confers more rights to the individuals who claim it since this identity is a compound that confers humanity and does not reduce the subjects to their sexual practices, it is a way of experiencing the world. Thus, in order not to be anachronistic, due to the fact that it is a current term in current literature, in respect to those who fought for the establishment of a hitherto non-existent identity, the gay one, we chose to use the term, characterizing this press as identity and as such revolutionary.

This work is divided into three parts – in the first we address the concept of gay press, making a brief history and demonstrating how militancy and MHB gave new configurations to these journals; in the second moment we address the methodological processes, as well as the presentation of the data collected; finally, in the third and last part, we present the comparative analysis between the media outlets *Lampião da Esquina* and *Folha de S.Paulo*

## **2 The unfolding of a militant gay press**

The beginning of the gay press in Brazil was more informal and related to homosociality than that with an interest in transforming the political and social reality of the country. In the 1960s, several homosexual groups, known as classes, met and published artisanal publications (Howes, 2015). This proto-press<sup>4</sup> existed from 1963 to 1970. Characterized by its handmade aspect, many of the outlets were

mimeographed, hand-copied, and reproduced on A4 bond sheets, or even cut and pasted. In addition, they had as a characteristic the internal circulation within the groups, at most, reaching other classes with similar sociability objectives (Silva Jr., 2022).

It's worth pointing out that despite not being a militant press, this gay proto-press had its objectives and interests, promoting an experience beyond meetings and parties, not to mention that some of these journals such as *O Snob*, which had the longest life among this type of production, promoted interesting discussions, like the role of the “faggot”, “poof” and “queer”, stereotypes that at that time were used as characterizers of the homosexual world.

In all, 37 journals of this type existed during the 1960s in Brazil. They are usually mimics of the gossip column format, or social column, defined by Marques de Melo (2003, p. 141) as those contents to which the life of the bourgeoisie was the center of attention. In this case, instead of bourgeois life, the groups brought information and gossip about the different members of their classes, or rival classes, highlighting positive or negative behaviors in the face of the conduct exercised by each of the groups.

Despite their importance, these journals cannot, a priori, be seen as militants, since the organized movement did not exist in the country and the activity of these groups did not have a public and strictly political character in its relationship with the world. This is far from saying that they did not do politics, on the contrary, the organization and existence of these groups demonstrate a political experience of reality; let's not forget that these publications existed during the military dictatorship. However, political organizations and their journals emerged in Brazil a little later, specifically in the 1970s.

After this period of socialization, from 1976, we will have the publication of other journals with more markedly political features. The *Boletim da Aliança de Ativistas Homossexuais* was an example of this new type of journal. The bulletin, created by Frederico Jorge Dantas, circulated between 1976 and 1977. It is a single-cover typewritten publication that contains only the title of the bulletin, as well as its issue and year. In its first issue, the bulletin presents itself as a clarification movement, as follows,

We set out to start a journey in which you are also a participant. We started a Movement of clarification that aims to better understand and make use of all these sources of positive forces, hitherto poorly distributed among the various classes of homosexuals. If we manage to channel all the existing effort

towards a greater and more responsible commitment to society, we believe this will already be of great importance to our cause, especially in the fight for civil rights, in which not only Brazilian homosexuals are engaged, but even in a more active way, homosexuals in all countries where the human conscience already has greater openness, more cultural and psychological maturity, as well as greater development.<sup>5</sup>

In the first edition, in addition to the aforementioned editorial, the bulletin brings a series of information about the American gay movement, such as marches and events, as well as discussions and comments on the issue of civil rights, always regarding the United States movement, as well as an excerpt from a poem by Oscar Wilde. All content is distributed in a total of nine pages, without images. The same logic follows the two other issues that were accessed for this research – #3 and #4, with a slightly more artistic cover, and no images.

Moving away from the idea of a chronological evolution of the Latin American gay press, it is important to emphasize that publications of a more entertainment-related nature, without necessarily being linked to political movements, continue to exist. This is the case of another journal that appeared in 1976, in Brazil, the newspaper *Gente Gay*, made by Agildo Guimarães, the same creator of *O Snob*, and which was distributed in Rio de Janeiro. With a simple typewritten layout, it brought collages of images and texts, and dealt not only with news from outside the country but also with what happened in Rio de Janeiro. The newspaper, made of an A4 bond sheet, also had a “Letters from the Reader” section; in addition to columns, it brought readers poems, short stories, interviews, tips on gay gathering spaces, and various news. The newspaper was published until at least 1978.

As of 1978, more professional newspapers began to appear, with more sophisticated layouts and use of photos, among other graphic elements that enhanced the journalistic content. In Brazil, the advent of the alternative press will facilitate this more sophisticated production. In São Paulo, between 1977 and 1978, the newspapers *Entender*, *Mundo Gay* and *Jornal do Gay* came into existence with a variable circulation. These were publications that had political demands in their content while addressing cultural themes. This profile would become the most seen in the country from then on, with the newspaper *Lampião da Esquina* as a major example, created in 1978 and published up to 1981.

There is extensive literature on the newspaper *Lampião da Esquina* (Ferreira, 2010; Gonçalves, 2010; Peret, 2012; Rodrigues, 2012; Feitosa, 2014; Lima, 2017; Fujikawa et al., 2018; Simionato, 2018, 2021; Silva Jr., 2019; Quinalha, 2021; Pires, 2022), including in audiovisual material, the 2016 documentary directed by Lívia Perez and co-directed by Noel Carvalho, which brings information about the dynamics of the publication's production, as well as its repercussion in the public sphere. The journal was the first periodical in color (only a few pages) in Brazil and brought a more defined and refined journalistic work in its contents.

Under the tutelage of Aguinaldo Silva, a journalist and playwright, its main objective was to be "in fact a newspaper" (Francischelli et al., 2016), concerned with the guidelines that were addressed, as well as the form of the texts. Several editorials end up standing out in *Lampião da Esquina*, among them the Letter from the Readers, a space of intense debate and search for partners, as well as the interviews, always bringing personalities to address the theme of homosexuality and gay rights. Another editorial that brought entertainment was the *Bixórdia* column, a space in which the gossip and amenities present in the newspapers of the proto-press were present.

The period in which *Lampião* was edited became known in Brazil as "political opening", since the military regime, installed in 1964, lost strength thanks to popular militancy and the loosening of rules due to the various strains that the dictatorship faced after the illusory economic miracle. This period is also marked by the process of repatriation of individuals who were previously exiled because of their positions against the dictatorial regime, or who chose to live abroad because of the various repressions witnessed in the Brazilian reality. This makes a new political vision reach the Brazilian militancy, as well as new issues that were not previously addressed by traditional politics, fueled by Marxist ideals,

In the search for solutions to their contradictions, students and intellectuals turned their concerns to issues such as the body, eroticism, and subversion of values and behaviors. (...) Among these sectors, an increasingly clear disinterest in politics as it had been understood until then began to form. The theory and practice of the left wing were questioned, and their cultural conservatism was pointed out, reflected in their difficulty in innovating in the areas of arts and customs. Marxism was stigmatized as "old-fashioned" and a new notion spread – there would be no possibility of a revolution or social transformation without also an individual revolution or transformation. (MacRae, 2018, pp. 20-21).

João Silvério Trevisan was one of the articulators of this new perspective linked to the renewal of customs, who tried in 1976 to organize a group for studies related to homosexuality, a group that despite its short duration, can be considered one of the embryos of the homosexual liberation movement in Brazil. The author reports the difficulties of this first moment, due to the internal questions of the participants themselves, and anticipates a dispute that would later be the main cause of the disintegration of Somos, the first gay group in Brazil: the demand for alignment in political militancy linked to the “great struggle” for the re-democratization of the country, or the independence of the gay cause in the face of the militant and partisan interests of the time, questions that were internalized by homosexuals who ended up calling themselves “abnormal”.

There was an attempt to study some texts. But the participants, very reticent about the experience, were paralyzed by feelings of guilt related to their ideological convictions – even when they had suffered humiliation from their party comrades because they were homosexual. The big question that was asked was going to be common from then on in the homosexual groups of the first phase of the Homosexual Movement: would it be politically valid for us to meet to discuss sexuality, something considered secondary in the serious Brazilian political context? Without a clear answer, any movement was stalled on this question. As if that were not enough, 70% of the group frankly admitted to being abnormal because of their homosexuality. (Trevisan, 2018, p. 315).

This type of organization, which went from coexistence to the problematization of the cause and the gay context in the country, then became a concrete reality for some intellectual elites, and *Lampião da Esquina* is directly linked to this movement. Several studies deal with the importance of *Lampião da Esquina* as the first journal to address the issues of “social minorities”, as a structured publication with national circulation, produced by professionals in the area of communication and several other sectors of culture, openly gay and that aimed to remove homosexuals from the underground that was imposed and internalized to them.

A relevant point to be highlighted linked to this leading role of *Lampião da Esquina* is that, almost concomitantly with the emergence of *Lampião da Esquina*, the Somos group was created. Considered the first group of the Brazilian homosexual movement, it was seen as a milestone in the struggle for LGBTQIAP+ rights and was headed by members who were part of the journal.

Officially created in 1978, in the city of São Paulo, the Somos

group was the largest gay association of the 1970s (Green, 2003, pp. 51). In one of the editorials of *Lampião da Esquina*, entitled “Grupo SOMOS: uma experiência” (SOMOS group: an experience), a space was opened for the group itself to expose its ideas. In this editorial, we can see the difficulties encountered at the beginning of the organization of the group and how the personal problems faced by the members themselves affected the core issues of the group, putting the “homosexual being” ahead of any other issue addressed by the homosexual movement at that time,

We had an almost clandestine and very troubled existence. Imagine a bunch of people often with everyday problems of personal acceptance, trying to find a common ground to start a dialogue about themselves. Everything was quite torn apart, on one side. A lot of doubt, because everything was new. And in an extreme fluctuation of people coming and going. Many came to spy. They were disappointed. They criticized our lack of objectives and organization. In fact, no, we had nothing ready, nothing concrete to change the world. (...) We have already been told that SOMOS only has problems to deal with. To some extent it is true. But we discovered important things, thanks to the problems. For example, we discover that we have difficulty talking about ourselves as individuals. People in general feed a mystified idea of collectivity, community, and unity: and forget that each one forms the basis of the whole. (Grupo, 1979, pp. 2-3).

This is how this press is characterized, demonstrating that in addition to the need for sociability, it was important for homosexual groups to claim their rights. This politicized positioning will be part of several periodicals and groups that came into existence at the time. We can cite as an example: *Jornal Gay Internacional* (Rio de Janeiro), *O Corpo* (São Paulo), *Boletim do Grupo Gay da Bahia* (Salvador), *Facção Homossexual da Convergência Socialista* (São Paulo), *Manga Preta* (Brasília), *Dialogay* (Sergipe), *Triângulo Rosa* (Belo Horizonte), among others<sup>3</sup>.

### **3 About the methodological processes and data of this work**

For this article and in order to understand how this militant journalism brought a unique and particular effect to the Brazilian press, we chose to analyze the guidelines disseminated in the periodical *Lampião da Esquina* and compare them with the approach of *Folha de S.Paulo*. The choice for the newspaper *Folha de S.Paulo*, in addition to its current relevance, is due to the practicality of retrieving information in its digital collection. For this, we observed

some characteristics of the journals so that the analysis did not demonstrate deviations due to this nature. This is a content analysis based on the principles indicated by Bardin (2016), in which we choose the material, floating reading, coding, decoding, and inferences. In our process, the inferential ones are consistent with the process of comparison between the identified contents.

The newspaper *Lampião da Esquina* circulated between 1979 and 1981, in tabloid format on a monthly basis. On the other hand, *Folha de S.Paulo* is a daily newspaper that has been circulating in the country since 1921, still under the name *Folha da Noite* and being an afternoon newspaper. It became the largest newspaper in circulation in the country since 1986, maintaining this position until 2021.

Due to these different natures and in order to highlight the militant role, we built a convenience sample from *Lampião da Esquina*<sup>6</sup>, selecting four issues, one of each year of its circulation. Thus, the following issues were chosen: #2 (June 1980), #16 (September 1979), #20 (January 1980) and #35 (April 1981). Of these publications, we focused on the headlines presented as central to the issue and linked to the themes of homosexuality. Thus, we have the following table, with the title, issue, date, and summary of what is dealt with in each of them (table 1).

**Table 1**

*Lampião da Esquina headlines*

Headline	Issue	Date	Summary
<i>I'm a pervert (Lennie Dale confesses, under general protest)</i>	#2	Jun-Jul, 1978	Interview with choreographer Lennie Dale and his homosexual experience
<i>Homosexuals get organized</i>	#16	Sep, 1979	Interview with members of the Somos group about the organization of the Brazilian Homosexual Movement
<i>Chit-chat on transvestites</i>	#16	Sep, 1979	It deals with two articles, the first about the role of Anselmo Vasconcelos, in the movie <i>República dos Assassinos</i> and the documentary <i>Daniele, Carnaval e Cinzas</i> which addresses the life of the transvestite Daniele
<i>Minas elects its "Miss Gay"</i>	#16	Sep, 1979	It talks about an event that elected Miss Gay in the city of Juiz de Fora

<i>Blackmail in the Central bathroom</i>	#16	Sep, 1979	It brings the report of a homosexual arrested and bribed not to be indicted in a lawsuit for being in a public bathroom
<i>It happened in Rio: National Meeting of Gay People</i>	#20	Jan, 1980	It deals with the First Meeting of Militant Homosexuals, held in Rio de Janeiro
<i>The confessions of a hustler</i>	#20	Jan, 1980	Interview with a hustler
<i>The faggot who became a woman: a discussion on transsexual</i>	#35	Apr, 1981	Interview with Claudie, a trans woman. The conversation addresses her life in a general way
<i>Lesbians use MR-8</i>	#35	Apr, 1981	It deals with the 2nd Congress of the Paulista Woman and the clashes between lesbian groups and the MR-8 (8th October Revolutionary Movement)

After identifying these contents, to identify the materials in Folha de S.Paulo that could be related to the subjects addressed, a search was carried out using indicators (keywords) in the Folha Collection, during the respective period of circulation of Lampião's issues. Thus, the following terms were searched on the respective dates (table 2).

**Table 2**

*Terms and results found in the newspaper Folha de S.Paulo*

Term	Date	Results found
<i>Lennie Dale</i>	June 25th-July 25th, 1978	No result found
<i>Homosexuals</i>	September 1st-30th, 1979	10 results found
<i>Transvestites</i>	September 1st-30th, 1979	4 results found
<i>Miss Gay</i>	September 1st-30th, 1979	No result found
<i>"Central bathroom"</i>	September 1st-30th, 1979	No result found
<i>National Meeting of Gay People</i>	January 1st-31st, 1980	No result found
<i>Hustler</i>	January 1st-31st, 1980	No result found
<i>Transsexual</i>	April 26th-30th, 1981	No result found
<i>Lesbians</i>	April 26th-30th, 1981	2 results found

Out of these results, it is worth mentioning the topics that were not even addressed by Folha de S.Paulo and highlighted in Lampião da Esquina. No mention of the choreographer Lennie Dale, whether about his homosexuality or work was found; no news about the Miss Gay event, which took place in the city of Juiz de Fora, Minas Gerais; there was also no approach to the persecution of homosexuals and bribery by police officers in the public restrooms of Central Station, in Rio de

Janeiro; there was no mention of the terms transsexual and hustler in any of the Folha de S.Paulo articles; and most evidently, there was no coverage of the National Meeting of Gay People, which took place in 1980, by the national newspaper.

From these data, and the verifiable omission of Folha de S.Paulo, it is possible to verify that the militant look of *Lampião da Esquina* served to guide various issues related to homosexuality that were not present in the daily news, at least in the pages of the São Paulo newspaper. However, the comparative analysis between the agendas and approaches to this content demonstrates how this militant approach differs even more from that considered traditional.

Out of the results found, it is possible to find only three specific articles on the theme of homosexuality – one on the organized homosexual movement, entitled “Gay com orgulho” (Gay with pride); the second one, “Um torneio esportivo homossexual nos EUA” (A homosexual sports tournament in the USA); and finally, “Homossexualismo, um drama entre a farsa e a realidade” (Homosexuality, a drama between farce and reality) that addresses different theatrical plays related to homosexuality. The other articles bring only brief quotes, as can be seen in table 3.

**Table 3**

*Results found on Folha de S.Paulo by keywords*

Headline	Date	Keywords	Summary
<i>Brazilians do not live by miracles alone</i>	September 30th, 1979	Homosexual	It deals with several issues related to freedom; on homosexuality, it brings the following excerpt, “Discrimination against homosexuals has also changed a little, although it does exist”.
<i>Gay with pride</i>	September 30th, 1979	Homosexual, Transvestites	Article that addresses several elements of homosexual life and the organized movement.
<i>A homosexual sports tournament in the USA</i>	September 23rd, 1979	Homosexual	It addresses the performance of two homosexual teams in volleyball and football competitions in the United States.
<i>A moralist who discovered paths of freedom</i>	September 23rd, 1979	Homosexual	Story on Freudian thought, which quotes, “How can a doctor reject a homosexual client or someone who has extramarital relations, or even a criminal?”

<i>The pursuit of pleasure begins in childhood</i>	September 23rd, 1979	Homosexual	Story on Freudian thought, which quotes, "Another thing Freud used to say is that the existence of these so-called disturbances and perversions – as long as they did not cause discomfort in the person himself – should not even be psychoanalyzed. Once he wrote a letter to a mother very distressed about having a homosexual son, telling her not to worry because, if the son came out, if he was satisfied and it was part of his life, there was no reason to worry".
<i>The FBI's impunity in the Jean Seberg case</i>	September 19th, 1979	Homosexual	It addresses a crime against a woman who loses her child due to a racist rumor, which quotes, "That is, the FBI no longer defames enemies of the status quo like the spinster and closeted".
<i>The myth of French sex</i>	September 12th, 1979	Homosexual	It echoes an article from the magazine F Magazine that deals with the sex life of French women, which quotes, "only 2 percent of women considered themselves homosexual when psychiatric estimates a proportion two or three times higher".
<i>Commander A. Alazão</i>	September 3rd, 1979	Homosexual	It brings an experience report in Lisbon, which quotes, "You don't see, for example, a woman or a homosexual on the street. Yes, of course they exist; but it's all closeted".
<i>The season</i>	September 3rd, 1979	Homosexual	It addresses several works of art and quotes, "In cinema, there is Bertolucci's "Luna", whose theme is incest (the mother, Jill Clayburgh, masturbates her son in the scene), which after all should have been treated much longer ago and naturally in our represented arts, as it permeates all classical literature before our absurd Judeo-Christian censorship was imposed (the same can be said of homosexuality)".
<i>Scilar and the electronic dwarf</i>	September 2nd, 1979	Homosexual	Review of the book "O ano no televisor", which quotes, "(...)where the homosexual relationship between a bachelor and a hypothetical dwarf who lives inside his color TV set ends unexpectedly and cruelly."
<i>Adaptation is always a problem</i>	April 16th, 1981	Lesbians	It deals with the challenges of adapting a literary work to television, which quotes, "No one talks about sex. When the topic is debated, it is always in a veiled, discreet way. Homosexuals and lesbians without calling people's attention. Out of sight. Time of virgins."
<i>Homosexuality, a drama between farce and reality</i>	April 11th, 1981	Lesbians	It deals with the approaches in Brazilian theater that deal with homosexuality.
<i>Plastic Arts</i>	September 15th, 1979	Transvestites	It deals with an exposition carried out by Alex Fleming, which quotes, "The paintings show scenes of daily life as circus tightrope walkers, old Japanese citizens from Liberdade neighborhood, transvestites and others."

#### 4 Comparative analysis between guidelines and approaches

When we observe the results in Folha de S.Paulo, it is possible to understand the two main places in which homosexuals appear; the first one, more evident, however, with less emphasis and deepening,

is the psychological scenario. As a background theme, it is possible to verify in reports and content that seek to address the psyche brief mentions of homosexual issues, read as examples of the functioning of the psyche. The second one is in the field of arts. Works, plays and exhibitions are also highlighted and have homosexuality, lesbianism, and the issue of trans people, portrayed in the figure of the transvestite, as their theme.

This approach sought by Folha de S.Paulo ends up locating homosexuals within a specific spectrum, which is entertainment and their possible social differentiation through the inverse psyche to the heterosexual psyche. The examples that are, in part, no exception to this rule are the three reports that address the issue of homosexuality in its entirety, and that are close, in a certain way, to the journalism carried out by *Lampião da Esquina*.

The first example “Gay with Pride” provides an overview of the political struggle of the MHB, however, always relating it to aspects of cultural expression, addressing, for example, the phenomenon of androgyny and the presentations of the *Dzi Croquetes* and *Secos e Molhados* groups<sup>7</sup>. It addresses the existence of gay newspapers, as well as associations that fight for the right to pleasure. Both the theme and the approach offer a humanized view of homosexuality, the main objective of the journalism carried out by *Lampião* and the other newspapers of the militant press of the time.

The article includes an interview with members of the feminist, homosexual, and lesbian movements. Characters such as Peter Fry, João Silvério Trevisan, and Celso Curi, important militants of the movement, are interviewed as sources of information. It is worth mentioning that the three contributed as authors in the newspapers of the Brazilian gay press of the time. As a difference, it also highlights the number of publications dedicated to the subject, as well as mentioning some of the homosexual groups that were beginning to organize themselves at the time,

(...) on the hottest Vieira de Carvalho street, in the heart of the capital of São Paulo, near Praça da República, newsstands are no longer ashamed about advertising gay publications, besides *Lampião* (1978), *Gay News*, *Jornal do Gay*, *Mundo Gay*, *Entender*, etc. In one of the last issues of *Gay News*, for example, the editor announced with a hint of pride that São Paulo – and here, there’s a question: São Paulo or Rio? – can be considered “here and abroad, the Gay Eldorado of Latin America. Its population is estimated at one million with 200 exclusively gay establishments”. Other than this “messaging around”, what has appeared in recent times are the organizations themselves, which want to discuss problems,

repressions, possible case solutions, etc. The most famous group is still Somos, from São Paulo, (they are trying to launch it in Rio); also, Libertos, from Guarulhos; the Atuação e Afirmação Gay group, from Duque de Caxias (RJ) “apart from others in Sorocaba, Belém, etc.” – states Trevisan.<sup>8</sup>

The article “Homosexuality, a drama between farce and reality” on the other hand brings approaches to the issue of homosexuality in Brazilian theater, the concern with the commodification of the topic, and again offers MHB militants as sources of information (and opinion), and again we have members of Somos group and the newspaper *Lampião da Esquina* demonstrating their capacity as agents of homosexual issues in the public sphere, and their repercussion and credibility, at least in the spaces of traditional journalism. The third and last article dedicated exclusively to the homosexual issue in *Folha de S.Paulo* deals with the sports practiced by gays, men’s volleyball and football, in which specific teams were organized for local competitions as an initiative of the University of Colorado. It is a small note, apparently coming from an international news agency, since it originates from the city of Boulder, Colorado. In addition to the information on the organization of the teams, it brings a statement from the captain of the volleyball team.

It is noteworthy that of the thirteen results presented in the newspaper, at least 12, despite their approaches allocated in specific spaces (culture and psychology, as we have already demonstrated) bring a positive perspective of the homosexual. The only negative example concerns the article “The FBI’s impunity in the Jean Seberg case”, which brings the social stigma of the marginal and criminal linked to the figure of the homosexual.

Despite this positive result, here begins our comparison between traditional and militant journalism, carried out by *Lampião da Esquina*. The first element that is clear is the difference in the topics addressed, as well as the political issue most present in *Lampião*. While in *Folha de S.Paulo* no particular characteristic of MHB is mentioned, the gay newspaper dedicates at least three prominent articles to the subject. The first “Homosexuals get organized” offers an overview of the development of the Somos group, through interviews with its organizers; the second “It happened in Rio: National Meeting of the Gay People” of greater social and journalistic relevance, concerns an event of a national nature, organized by several associations and organizations of the MHB, attended by at least 60 representatives and

held at PUC-RJ; the third and last article that addresses political issues deals with the clash between lesbian groups with the 8th October Revolutionary Movement, also in an event of newsworthy proportions, the 2nd Meeting of the Paulista Woman.

Another aspect that appears in *Lampião da Esquina* and demonstrates the depth in which the homosexual figure was approached is the different accounts of the lives of gay interviewees, with emphasis on their personal experiences and positions in the face of the difficulties presented due to the prejudice to which they were subjected to society. The humanization of the figure of trans people, through the report of transvestites in at least three reports is evidence of this humanized and multifaceted look. Although the articles related to the headline “Chit-chat on transvestites” are linked to the field of arts, as well as in *Folha de S.Paulo*, it is possible to denote the interest in the humanization of these figures and not only their delimitation to the space of performance as a subject or theme. In the interview granted by the director of the documentary *Daniele, Carnaval e Cinzas*, José Augusto Iwersen, he points out,

I think any lucid person is naturally awakened to this case. And I thought, too, that, at least in Brazil, this had never been approached in a serious way. What I wanted to show, when I conceived the film, was how Daniele existed as a human person. That worried me more than the fact that he was a transvestite. (Bueno, 1979, p. 12).

The same occurs in the report “The faggot who became a woman: a discussion on transsexual”, which provides an overview of the life of a transwoman, her daily life, and her stable relationship with her husband, escaping from the commonplace of the stigma, marginalization, and prostitution. The article “The confessions of a hustler” also offers this humanized look for a rent boy, the interesting thing is that the journalists themselves address the issue of objectivity in the text about Rodrigo,

Rodrigo only differs from other hustlers in one point – it is in his impressive ability to theorize around what he calls “hustling, its causes and consequences. During our long chat, in the room – pompously called LAMPIÃO meetings – the interviewers (Adão Acosta and Aguinaldo Silva) tried to avoid any signs of disapproval of the boy’s behavior; they just asked questions and knew how to listen; after all, what is required of interviewers is pure and simple objectivity, right? So what is there is not our opinion about the hustlers and the type of work they have chosen, but rather, Rodrigo’s words, taken by us. (Acosta & Silva, 1980, p. 11).

This conversation about objectivity is related to the project of making *Lampião da Esquina* a “newspaper and not a joke of faggots” (Francischelli et al., 2016), as Aguinaldo Silva states in the documentary about the newspaper. In fact, we will verify several well-crafted journalistic elements in the newspaper, such as the well-structured definition of journalistic formats, periodicity, fixed editorials, concern with the investigation and search for hot and cold agendas, as well as letters from readers. Despite this, it is not possible to classify *Lampião* as a non-militant newspaper, because in its own opening editorial “Exiting the Ghetto” it was said clearly that, “(...) it is necessary to say no to the ghetto and, consequently, leave it. What interests us is to destroy the standard image of the homosexual, according to which he is a being who lives in the shadows, who prefers the night (...)” (Saindo, 1978, p. 2). Approaches to violence suffered by homosexuals have also been a frequent topic in *Lampião*, since its first issue, appearing in our selection of headlines such as “Blackmail in the Central bathroom” in which a gay man reports the abuse suffered and the need to pay a bribe to a police officer who took him to jail, in which he found four other people in the same situation as his own.

This descriptive-comparative analysis was carried out taking into account the complete reading of the journalistic materials found; we highlight in this article the segments and excerpts that show the approaches, similarities, and differentiations in each of the media outlets. Thus it is possible to understand not only the themes in each publication but also the quality of its contents.

## 5 Conclusion

It was possible to identify in this work that, despite a coverage that dealt at some times with the homosexual issue, journalism considered traditional by *Folha de S.Paulo* limited the aspects of homosexual experience to some fields, especially culture and psychology ones, with few reports and articles in which the homosexual was addressed in his human complexity. In *Lampião da Esquina*, on the other hand, we can see a more comprehensive and complex look at homosexual humanity, the search for their rights, their performance, and political organization, in addition to several other aspects that involve the contribution of gays in Brazilian society at the time.

We credit this different perspective to its militant view of reality. The gay newspaper starts from a reality in which the homosexual is a being of rights and duties, like any others, and with that his social role becomes more comprehensive in the face of various demands. The politicized look brought to the public sphere another type of view on homosexuality with the members of the Brazilian Homosexual Movement, offering a discussion that was not present in the press at the time.

We emphasize that in the materials found in Folha de S.Paulo, the members of *Lampião da Esquina* are themselves placed as authorities, being interviewed as sources of information, just as the newspaper itself is mentioned nominally in the two articles in question, which denotes a certain credibility built, at least, among journalists. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that people who carried out other activities, such as prostitution, were not heard by the newspaper *Folha de S.Paulo*, and this space is dedicated only to those considered militants, which denotes a recognition in parts of their rights since this vulnerable population did not have their right to speak recognized by the publication.

This practice may be associated with the silencing carried out by the hegemonic press and its class character, since it recognizes humanity in some individuals, while it offers only visibility to others, something that does not occur in the gay press and alternative journalism, since in *Lampião da Esquina*, for example, it is possible to identify covers and calls of articles that prioritize precisely these marginalized characters.

Another element that can be observed is the social stigma related to the image of gay people at the time. Until then, content relating homosexuality to criminality was common, as in the celebrated case of the newspaper *Notícias Populares*, content that denoted a homophobic practice present in journalistic newsrooms. *Lampião's* frequent clashes with newspapers, including the alternative press, such as *O Pasquim*, demonstrate that this practice was not limited to large media outlets but to a worldview that permeated journalistic work in general.

Thus, it is important to demonstrate that militant journalism in this context of the gay press of the 1970s and 1980s proved to be a stance beyond acceptable, but necessary for the subject to enter, in its complexity, within the discussions of the public sphere, proving to be a process compatible with journalistic practice, at least in this situation. It is important to note that despite the analyzed period being

within the context of political opening, within the military regime, self-censorship was a process that took some time to be overcome by mainstream newspapers.

Regarding the public and militancy, the favorable criticism, as well as the duration of *Lampião da Esquina*, from 1978 to 1981 with 37 issues, closing its doors due to economic unfeasibility, as was the case with most of these journals, it is possible to perceive the acceptance of this practice that mixes journalism and militancy, including supporting the approaches carried out by the outlet, as a way of granting credibility to those who talk about a theme with property, even if related to a specific cause.

Finally, it is possible to affirm that without the militant look promoted by the Brazilian Homosexual Movement, the participation of its members in the media, especially in our case the *Lampião da Esquina*, and the discussions on organizational agendas and political vision on the gay issue of the time, a press like this would not exist, possibly bringing greater damage to this population, leaving it even more marginalized and segregated from public life and social discussions.

## NOTES

- 1 We will use as a synonym the words gay, queer, and homosexual since these were used during the period to refer to men who related lovingly or sexually with other men. As there is no consensus during the period, we will seek not to be anachronistic, because it was an identity in formation and, consequently, in dispute.
- 2 “Notícias Populares” - Popular News in English - was a Brazilian newspaper that circulated between 1963 and 2001. During its existence it was known for the sensationalism carried out in its articles. It became known for being a violent newspaper that explored societal taboos, including sexual scandals. It was published by Grupo Folha.
- 3 Folha de S.Paulo is one of the largest Brazilian newspapers. According to the Circulation Verification Institute (IVC), the body responsible for collecting data on newspaper audiences in Brazil, it is currently the second largest physical newspaper in

distribution in Brazil. The company Folha was created in 1921 by a group of journalists, led by Olival Costa and Pedro Cunha.

- 4 In the thesis under development, 37 journals were identified that contain similar characteristics and that can be classified as proto-press, especially for three reasons: their circulation was restricted to the members of these groups, at most circulating between rival groups or colleagues, thus not reaching the public sphere as a whole; they mimicked the format of a gossip column or social column, and there were not many other journalistic formats on their pages; and finally, it is not possible to verify a concern with the issue of journalistic processes, especially the investigation of the facts. However, far from what is described in the current literature on the subject, they are far from being just some material on gossip, without any importance for the history of the press and homosociality in Brazil.
- 5 Excerpt taken from the first edition of the periodical “Boletim da Aliança de Ativistas Homossexuais” in English Bulletin of the Alliance of Homosexual Activists. This is the first editorial of the first edition, its physical and complete version is available for consultation in the Edgard Leuenroth Archive, at the University of Campinas, São Paulo, Brazil.
- 6 In the thesis under development we analyzed four issues of *Lampião da Esquina*, the same ones used for this study, for this reason, we used the concept of convenience since it is a material previously selected for another purpose.
- 7 Both musical groups were important in Brazil for their transgression of gender roles. *Dzi Croquestes* was a theater group that operated between 1972 and 1976 and featured men dressed as women and criticized the military dictatorship of the time. While *Secos e Molhados* had in the image of Ney Matogrosso an effeminate man challenging the gender structure.
- 8 Excerpt from a report published in the *Folha de S. Paulo* newspaper in 1979, is available in full in the *Acervo Folha*. It was published on September 30, 1979 under the title “Gay with Pride”.

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