

SEXUAL DIVERSITY IN BRAZILIAN JOURNALISM:

a study of the representations of LGBT people in the newspapers *Folha de S. Paulo* and *O Estado de S. Paulo*

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ABSTRACT - We understand that the news, the main product of journalism, is constructed from the multiple discourses that circulate within the present culture, influenced by the values related to the hegemonic norm that governs social behavior, the hetero-normativity. Through Discourse Analysis, we analyzed which representations of LGBT people the leading Brazilian newspapers *Folha de S. Paulo* and *O Estado de S. Paulo* help to build in our society. The search for recognition of sexual diversity operates via standardization, within a perspective that encourages a culture of tolerance, in which the representations of the group are anchored, strengthened by the moral and ideological discourse of religious institutions that deny LGBT people the possibility of the enjoyment of full citizenship. We conclude that as long as heterosexuality is not questioned by journalism and debated in the public sphere in an open and democratic way, it is difficult to combat prejudice and violence against LGBT people.

Keywords: Journalism. Discourse Analysis. Sexual Diversity. Hetero-normativity.

DIVERSIDADE SEXUAL NO JORNALISMO BRASILEIRO

um estudo sobre as representações da população LGBT nos jornais
Folha de S. Paulo e *O Estado de S. Paulo*

RESUMO - Entendemos que a notícia, principal produto do jornalismo, é construída a partir dos múltiplos discursos que circulam dentro da cultura vigente, influenciados pelos valores relacionados à norma hegemônica que rege os comportamentos sociais, a heteronormatividade. A partir da Análise do Discurso, analisamos quais representações sobre a população LGBT os jornais brasileiros de referência, *Folha de S. Paulo* e *O Estado de S. Paulo*, ajudam a construir na sociedade. A busca pelo reconhecimento da diversidade sexual opera via normalização, dentro de uma perspectiva que estimula uma cultura de tolerância, na qual estão ancoradas as representações sobre o grupo, fortalecidas pelo discurso moral e ideológico das instituições religiosas que negam a possibilidade de exercício de uma cidadania plena da população LGBT. Concluímos que enquanto a heterossexualidade não for problematizada pelo jornalismo e debatida na esfera pública de forma aberta e democrática fica difícil romper os preconceitos e a violência contra a população LGBT.

Palavras-chave: Jornalismo. Análise do Discurso. Diversidade Sexual. Heteronormatividade.

INTRODUCTION

The year 2011 was a milestone for the advancement of civil and social rights for the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) people in Brazil, especially with the decision of the Supreme Court to recognize *a stable union between people of the same sex as a family entity*. In some cases, judges have already converted a stable union into a marriage. But the year 2011 was also marked by much physical and symbolic violence against LGBT people, as in cases of assaults on Paulista Avenue¹ in São Paulo, and the “campaign” of evangelical members of Congress against the rights of this population. And what does journalism have to do with it?

Journalism is, in our view, a discourse that should represent the diversity of thought in contemporary society, taking into consideration the public nature and the social commitment of the journalistic field. However, the events transformed into news are still interpreted in the collective imagination as natural, and not socially constructed by multiple discourses.

This naturalistic and essentialist view of journalism does not take into account the cultural processes historically constructed. We understand the news - the main journalistic product - as the overlapping of journalism itself with the culture in which it is inserted. This perspective is based on a western hegemonic normative standard defined as hetero-normativity, which ranks and assigns values to masculinity, femininity, family arrangements.

From this perspective, our research seeks to discover which representations of the LGBT population circulate in the discourses of the leading newspapers *Folha de S. Paulo*² and *O Estado de S. Paulo*³.

Right to Sexual Diversity

Sexual diversity is a term used to define the multiple expressions of sexuality. There is no pattern that makes it possible to define the emotional and sexual involvement of one person with another. As explained by Torres (2010), understanding sexual diversity in a socio-historical context allows us to recognize that we often repeat forms of discrimination even without realizing it. Rubin and Butler (2003) also indicate the need to know the issues of sexual difference and variety in order to question the understanding of heterosexuality as the only possibility of sexuality.

Sexual practices were naturalized and used to control the body of the subjects, limiting their possibilities for expression of sexual diversity. The normative nature of sexuality in the western countries considers as legitimate monogamous heterosexual marital relations. From this

norm there follows an infinite number of implications, among which the pattern of family arrangements formed by women, men and children and kinship relations based on blood ties stand out (SILVA, 2010).

The representations of these relationships are called hetero-normativity⁴, whose founding base is compulsory heterosexuality (BUTLER, 2003a). This hetero-normativity becomes more complex when associated with other social markers such as race, color, sexual orientation, class and age, resulting in social values that assume a hierarchy, producing social relations of inequality and masculinity, femininity, sexuality and peripheral family arrangements (VEIGA; DARDE, 2009, p. 3).

Hetero-normativity falls into a binary, dichotomous system of categorization and assumes two strictly defined models based on genitalia: male or female. This results in expected behaviors for males and for females, guided by a *compulsory heterosexuality* (supposedly biological, and therefore natural, given by the body) that focuses desire on the opposite sex.

The hegemonic masculinity is associated first and foremost with heterosexuality and marriage, but also with authority, paid employment, physical strength and hardness. This hegemonic masculinity is practiced by few men in society. However, a large number of men take advantage of this dominant hegemonic masculinity in the patriarchal order, embodying in this way a complicit masculinity.

Hetero-normativity creates an environment of tolerance with regard to lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transvestites and transsexuals by a large part of society based on the domestication of homosexuality, which means leading homosexuals to think and behave like heterosexuals. Referring to the media's *normalizing strategies*, Seffner states that:

[...] society seeks to **standardize** (author's boldface) gays, lesbians and transvestites, insisting on the inclusion of those who are monogamous, those who maintain stable unions, those who have shown a good economic situation, in short, those who strive to look **normal** and well-behaved. [...] Among lesbians, the situation is no different, with the obvious prestige of those who are discreet, successful, determined and enterprising without losing femininity (SEFFNER, 2006, p. 30).

We believe it is through understanding the hierarchy of attributes (race, gender, social class etc.) that we can understand both social values and concepts of gender that make up social practices and that end up contributing to the hetero-normativization of our society, therefore being the foundations of historically constructed inequalities between individuals.

The queer theory has been deconstructing the binary antagonism heterosexuality / homosexuality existing within the hetero-normative

standard. Queer can be translated as strange, ridiculous, eccentric, unusual, extraordinary. This term is assumed by a current of homosexual movements precisely to characterize their view of antagonism and contestation. For this group, queer means placing themselves against standardization (LOURO, 2001). The theory was structured around the 1990s, consisting of members with diversified thoughts. These thinkers started from the discursive construction of sexualities presented by Foucault (1985) and adopted the proposal for deconstruction by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida.

As noted by Louro (2001), the deconstruction of binary antagonisms would make the interdependence and fragmentation of each one of the poles evident. For queer theorists, the antagonism between heterosexuality and homosexuality, ubiquitous in modern western culture, could be effectively criticized by deconstructive procedures. When we conceive of sexuality in the plural, we are recognizing the differences in orientation or sexual preferences, enabling different individuals to see themselves as interdependent and not opponents.

The continuing struggle for recognition of already existing rights, usually supported by consolidated identities and lifestyles, clearly leads us to discriminate against other modes of being and existing historically constructed along the path of LGBT individuals. As pointed out by Seffner (2011), in this way being gay, for example, which has long been seen as a critical image of the male heterosexual life, today seeks to be classified as clearly hegemonic attributes of masculinity. The author argues that homosexuals need to unite as LGBT people, but have to learn to break the hegemony intra-movement gay hegemony. In this case, we could have more effective results regarding the citizenship of these marginalized subjects, not only with the achievement of civil rights through the legislature and the judiciary, but the effective recognition of the diversities.

Journalism and the social construction of reality

Journalism, understood as a discursive space, represents an important sphere of production of meanings in which new visions of gender and sexuality anchored on the concept of sexual diversity can be built. With the understanding that journalism contributes to the construction of reality and thus is closely related to the current normative situation (either in the sharing of values, or in their reproduction), we assume that it contributes to the reinforcement of the dominant values of society, working indirectly for maintenance of the *status quo*. It is important to emphasize that it is not a question of thinking of journalism

in a Manichean way, acting perversely and deliberately in this sense, but rather from the perspective of understanding the news as a result of overlapping of journalism itself with the culture in which it is inserted.

To understand the construction of the news, we adhere to the constructionist theories⁵, “[...] that present the very ethos of journalism, the place where news is produced as a basic element and in the center of this ethos, the journalist stands out” (SILVA, 2010, p. 41). According to Traquina (2001, p. 86), understood by Veiga and Darde,

the constructionist theories “[...] recognize news items are narratives, ‘stories’, marked by the culture of the tribe members and the culture of the society to which they belong.” Wolf (2004, p.190) shares this point of view and goes further, stating that “[...] the news is what journalists define as such” (VEIGA; DARDE, 2009, p. 06).

In our view, truth undergoes a reconstruction in journalism, which makes it possible to contextualize the facts, proceed to link them, look for their causes and present them in their coherence. Truth, if it is somewhere, is never in the fact, but in who sees it as truth. As indicated by Cornu (1999), in informative practice it is illusory to separate the discussion of the event from the discussion regarding its meaning. Therefore there are potentially many possibilities for reconstruction of reality. However, this aspect does not prevent the intention of objectivity from being included as a guiding element of reconstruction and interpretation.

Daily, journalistic products permeate social life serving as a source for production and exchange of meanings, which is directly related to the culture. This importance is primarily due to the fact that they are “[...] the cultural meanings [...] that organize and regulate cultural practices, influence our behavior and thus have real practical effects” (HALL, 1997, p. 2).

In the opinion of Correia (2008), giving the news consists of assigning relevance to topics of current reality that are attractive to the community, in light of the respective systems of beliefs and relevancies. For this purpose, a framing is used that could be understood by the largest possible number of receptors and is ideally regarded as capable of being read and assimilated regardless of the different political options and cultural background of its members. In this way it builds a standardized and stereotyped narrative that is designed in order to overcome the spatial and temporal constraints and win over audiences.

[In the] intrinsic relationship journalism-formation of values, the news is certainly the link that can reveal this overlapping. On conceiving the news as a social construction, a group of basic elements is identified for a “fact” to acquire the status of news.

According to Wolf, “[...] newsworthiness corresponds to a set of criteria, operations and instruments with which the media face the task of choosing daily from an unpredictable and undefined number of facts a finite, and tending to a stable, quantity of news” (WOLF, 2003, p. 190). The definition of newsworthiness clearly indicates the existence of a selection process, which demonstrates that “the need to select, exclude, accentuate different aspects of the event - a process guided by the framing chosen - are some examples of how the news, giving life to the event, constructs the event and constructs reality” (CAREY⁶ apud TRAQUINA, 2001, p. 87). This complex process, “which transforms raw material (events) into a product (news)” (TRAQUINA, 2004, p. 180), has to do with a set of requirements that should necessarily “make sense” to both the media and to the professionals (journalists) [...] (SILVA, 2010, p. 36-37).

In the analysis of Antunes, Vaz *et al.* (2011), the news, placed in circulation, will have a repercussion in the sense of scheduling topics for discussion, informing the public about issues that are on the “agenda”. Likewise, the public itself sets the agenda of the media, based on demands that the media give visibility to issues that interest the public, and that the media schedule each other, based on the impact of issues with broad social appeal.

In this scheduling, typical elements of doing journalism enter, such as framing and newsworthiness. Newsworthiness is intimately tied to what scholars call “news values”, which may vary from the notion that news values involve rare events, topics that cause commotion, such as violent and/or prejudiced attitudes practiced against persons or groups or even scheduled events, with obvious social impact (PONTE, 2005; WOLF, 2003).

Thus, it is essential for us to recognize journalism as a discursive practice, as the place for selection and symbolic construction of facts, in which there are fundamental choices between what is said and what is silenced, who participates and who is absent from this process. It is also evident that journalistic discourse was naturalized as a discourse on the real, taking advantage of capital of credibility (BERGER, 1998). That is why thinking of Journalism using the mechanisms of language makes it possible to see what usually remains hidden: the web of relations that constitutes a discourse (already taken by the analyst as text), extracting from it the particular processes (present and historical) that shape it.

Methodology

Verifying which representations of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transvestites and transsexuals are constructed by the journalistic discourses of *Folha* and *Estadão*, identifying the hegemonic and peripheral views, requires a methodology that applies, in its several

levels of depth, techniques derived from the French Discourse Analysis.

Benetti (2007) explains that Discourse Analysis is productive for two types of study in journalism: mapping of voices (journalist, institution, source, reader) and identification of the meanings (discursive formations, silencing, movements of paraphrase and polysemy). We used the two types of research as a method for the analysis of journalistic texts, as we understand that in this way we would arrive at a more profound result and would contribute to the strengthening of the construction of a research methodology appropriate for the field of journalism.

Discourse Analysis is concerned with the functioning of discourses - that is to say, it wants to know both *what* the text says, in terms of meanings, and *how* and *why* it says it that way. It also defines discourses as social practices determined by the socio-historical context, but that also constitute this context. In Discourse Analysis it is necessary to visualize the structure of the text, and it comes from the outside, it is made up by ideology and by imagination. We began the analysis by identifying the Discursive Formations (DFs), which authorize what should or should not be said. In order to arrive at the Discursive Formations, we mapped the Discursive Sequences, excerpts that we cut out of the text for analysis, in which we identified the meanings produced by this text. There is no formula to be applied, leaving it up to the researcher's interpretative capacity within strict parameters.

The research corpus consists of newspaper articles published by the newspapers *Folha de S. Paulo* and *O Estado de S. Paulo*, reference daily newspapers in Brazil. To refine the search, first we used the rule of completeness, including all documents relating to LGBT people published during the first half of 2011. We selected this period because it involved a historical fact in the struggle for LGBT people's rights in Brazil: the approval of stable gay unions by the Federal Supreme Court, which means the recognition of the homoaffective relationship as a family, with the same rights as a heterosexual couple in a stable union.

Representations regarding the LGBT population

When we identified the sources of information used in the reports of the two newspapers, we noticed the predominance of institutional sources connected to the three branches of the government: **Legislative**, **Judiciary** and **Executive**. As we mentioned, the significant access to these speakers is due to events that occurred such as the approval by the Supreme Court of the stable union between people of the same sex and the consequent impact of this issue made by the newspapers. The discussion in Congress of bills such as the one criminalizing homophobia,

and in the Executive Branch, of the preparation of teaching material for public schools with contents combating prejudice against sexual diversity also attained prominence in the newspapers because of its “controversial” nature. Thus, legitimate sources for speaking for LGBT people - such as **NGOs** (nongovernmental organizations) - and spokesmen linked to the **Catholic and Evangelical Churches** were heard by journalists. In the case of articles about civil rights we also have access to the sources identified as **Experts in Law, Education and Psychology**, who were requested to discuss the bills and projects mentioned above.

The presence of a large number of **LGBT People** as a source of information also appears because of the increase in complaints of aggressions against gays and transvestites motivated by homophobia. The LGBT population seems to have no more fear of being exposed publicly in order to denounce prejudice and help in confronting violence. For this reason we also have the participation of sources linked to the **Police**. The sources classified as **Sports** also appear in the context of discrimination and prejudice suffered by a volleyball player that prompted several reports.

We can also emphasize that only the newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo* sought to ascertain whether the notary public registries were actually recording the stable union between people of the same sex days after the approval by the Supreme Court, a strategy used by the newspaper to keep the issue on the agenda and also to comply with its oversight role with relation to the government. Therefore we have a significant number of sources related to the **Notary Public Registries** in Sao Paulo. The number of sources consulted by the *Folha de S. Paulo* and classified as **Commerce** is mainly due to the texts that were addressed to LGBT people to motivate consumption, such as the articles on Tourism and the LGBT Pride Parade in São Paulo.

Table 1 - Sources in the texts of the two newspapers

Source Type	Folha	Estadão	Total
Legislative	20	36	56
Judicial	18	36	54
Executive	15	26	41
LGBT People	21	19	40
NGO	21	18	39
Church	10	15	25
Bar Association / lawyers	09	11	20
Legal specialist	15	04	19
Police	07	07	14
Commerce	12	00	12
Sports	04	06	10
Notary Public Registry	08	00	08
Public Prosecutor	03	05	08
Health	05	02	07
Education specialist	04	03	07
Artist	04	01	05
Psychology specialist	01	02	03
Others	19	22	41
Total	196	213	409

Source: elaborated by the authors

The mapping of the topics in the two newspapers researched reveals parity between the topics covered, largely in the coverage and impact of events such as the approval by the Supreme Court of the stable union, the case of discrimination against a volleyball player and controversial statements by Congressman Jair Bolsonaro. We understand that the visibility of issues identified as **Civil Rights** and **Discrimination and Violence** are consistent with the claims of the organized segments of the LGBT people and the federal government itself with the National Plan for the Promotion of Citizenship and Human Rights of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transvestites and Transsexuals of the Special Secretariat for Human Rights of the Presidency. We also know that these issues intersect in the public debate, as in the case of a bill criminalizing homophobia, and have generated a dispute of interests between legislators who support the administration and others linked to the religious groups (which in this administration are characterized as opposition).

We identified only one difference between the newspapers, which was the approach to LGBT people by means of tourism, with a special section about the tourist destinations in Brazil and around the world aimed at this audience. These texts, however, reinforce the reduction of sexual diversity to only one hegemonic homosexual identity, the gay identity. Lesbians, bisexuals, transvestites and transsexuals are practically forgotten by the tourism section, which also reveals the prejudice among homosexuals themselves, as part of the texts was written by a journalist and gay activist.

Something that we would like to emphasize in the reports surveyed is that sexual identity as a position of the subject in the journalistic discourse is linked to the struggle for rights and in situations of violence and abjection. **We did not find subject positions in the field of sexuality in topics that address other possible aspects for the construction of a new look at sexual diversity.**

Table 2 - Topics in the texts of the two newspapers

Topics	Folha	Estadão	Total	%
Civil rights	41	46	87	53
Violence and discrimination	28	31	59	36
Tourism	08	00	08	05
Others	07	03	10	06
Total	84	80	164	100

Source: elaborated by the authors

The meanings produced by the journalistic discourse on LGBT people in the two newspapers studied show a contrast between the representations that remain conservative and others who seek to

deconstruct existing cultural standards about sexuality and thus help to combat the repression of sexual diversity. Both in the *Folha* and in the *Estadão* the representations that predominate are the **Deviation from the Norm** (which we define as DF-2), based on religious doctrines and ideologies that consider homosexuality as a sin, abnormality, disease and crime, as we see in this discursive sequence:

"This is not a question of homophobia, but rather a position contrary to the apology that exists regarding homosexuality ... **The normal thing is not being homosexual.** The standard is being heterosexual. I doubt that any father would be proud to have a gay son." said Flávio Bolsonaro, congressman and son of Jair Bolsonaro (ESTADO DE S. PAULO, April 2, 2011).

The use of the term *homosexuality*, associated with the imagery of disease, is also a strategy that reinforces the prejudice, reproducing the standardized pattern of sexual relations with the purpose of procreation between a man and woman.

He criticized the government's policies to combat discrimination against the LGBT community, such as the anti-homophobia kit distributed in public schools, which he called "**apology for homosexuality.**" "They want to create a scholarship for transvestites and transsexuals. It is the **gay scholarship**", attacked Congressman Jair Bolsonaro (ESTADO DE S. PAULO, April 1, 2011).

The process of stigmatization also involves the stereotype of the effeminate man. The negative value has been historically attributed to effeminacy, in other words, a man should not have "typically" feminine behaviors. When considering the effeminate person as someone inferior, the groups established as the majority within hetero-normativity immediately attribute to all homosexual men that characteristic, as we highlight in this discursive sequence:

This is because, according to the BBC British network, the grave of this ancient European shows **characteristics normally associated with the graves of women.** (Excerpt from report) (FOLHA DE S. PAULO, April 8, 2011).

Another dominant representation is that of the **Citizen** who deserves civil rights (which we define as DF-1), which appears quantitatively slightly below the first place, but we which we consider a balance in these discourses. In the following discursive sequences we identified the representations involving citizenship:

"Those who make their choice for the homoffective union **cannot be place in an unequal position in their citizenship,**" said the justice of the Federal Supreme Court, Cesar Peluso (ESTADO DE S. PAULO, May 6, 2011).

“Why cannot a homosexual constitute a family? Because of two issues that are **abhorred by the Constitution, intolerance and prejudice**,” said Justice of the Federal Supreme Court, Fux (FOLHA DE S. PAULO, May 6, 2011).

Between the newspapers there is also a balance in addressing issues related to physical and symbolic violence, which resulted in the representation of LGBT people as **Victim** (which we define as DF-3) in third place, as we see in this excerpt from the report:

“When the employees **found out I was gay, they forced me to remain naked** and two employees **tied my feet** and a third, my hands. Another introduced the handle of a broom with violence in my anus. I had a **hemorrhage**,” said Fábio (fictitious name), a gay prisoner (FOLHA DE S. PAULO, Jan. 1, 2011).

The representation as a **Consumer** (which we define as DF-4) is more present in the corpus of *Folha*, mainly because of the special articles on Tourism aimed at this audience, and the stories that deal with the LGBT Pride Parade on Paulista Avenue, as seen in this discursive sequence:

The **first tourists** began arriving yesterday and enjoyed the sunny holiday of Corpus Christi to **take a walk on the Paulista (Avenue)** (Excerpt from report) (FOLHA DE S. PAULO, June 24, 2011).

Table 3 - Representations of LGBT people in the two newspapers

Discursive Formations	LGBT Representations	Folha	Estadão	Total	%
DF-2	Deviation from the norm	37	35	72	37
DF-1	Citizen	37	31	68	35
DF-3	Victim	21	25	46	24
DF-4	Consumer	08	01	09	04
	Total	103	92	195	100

Source: elaborated by the authors

Conclusion

In our research, we identified that the representations that enable social inclusion and the combat of inequalities for LGBT people are anchored on a perspective that reaffirms the hegemonic heteronormativity. The visibility of LGBT people involves the standardization of rights and duties, which has as its main point the stable union. One of the symbolic constructions with more presence that circulates in the journalistic texts is the representations of LGBT people grounded on a view in which monogamous heterosexual marital relations are identified as the standard of “normalcy.” It is the search for “marriage” that includes gays and lesbians.

This conception of normativity is anchored “on the standard of nuclear family structures formed by a woman, a man and children and kinship relations based on blood ties” (VEIGA; DARDE, 2009, p. 3). On top of this concept are built other representations and discourses among which the positions taken by the Catholic Church to “condemn” homosexual practices stand out. The maintenance of this normative pattern does not occur through exclusion of the discourse on homosexuality, but rather by making it eccentric, exotic, transforming it into a “lifestyle” of the “minority” of the population, reinforcing the hegemony of the heterosexual norm.

It is a discriminatory discourse because it reinforces heteronormativity also at the time when it leads homosexuals to want to adhere to norms and values understood as heterosexual, such as “marriage” and adoption of children. These representations of homosexuality that circulate in the media now have several implications for social life related to identity constructions, contributing to the perpetuation of prejudice against LGBT people and other groups that form their social identity based on difference.

The meanings produced by the discourses of *Folha* and *Estadão* also reiterate the reduction of sexual diversity in just one hegemonic identity, the homosexual, a word that comes loaded with prejudice and reproduces meanings such as disease and sin. When using the acronym LGBT, journalistic texts are referring only to the organized movement; in other situations; the terms used predominantly as synonyms are homosexual and gay.

From the perspective of the queer theory, an important strategy in the fight against discrimination and prejudice is to emphasize the mechanisms that promote defamation and abjection, rather than emphasizing social identities and behaviors. On talking about mechanisms and processes that consistently produce defamation and abjection, we can establish productive alliances with other social movements. We can construct places of dialogue and struggle that cross barriers of color, race, class, religion, gender, sexuality etc. In this case, we could have more effective results regarding citizenship of these marginalized subjects, not only with the achievements of civil rights through the legislature and the judiciary, but also the effective recognition of the diversities. For the queer theory, as long as heterosexuality is not questioned as an imposition, as a construction, homophobia and lack of respect for sexual diversity and gender will not end.

Is journalistic discourse a place for extension and reproduction

of the forms of social domination or can it also make itself a place for affirmation of pluralities of resistance to domination? Does the representation of multiple sexual identities and genders allow it to speak differently, or is simply associated with the production of stereotypes and in tune with a monophonic discourse of maintenance of the hegemonic standard? Journalism as a field marked by “disputes, place of production of meanings and formation of values” (SILVA, 2010, p 27), should constantly seek to fulfill its promise of clarification, based on the assumption that all discourse is ideological and that there is no information not dependent upon interpretation. And we do not mean that the contextualization of the events is lacking in journalistic work, because it is often present, but in a way that reiterates common sense based on “ready interpretations.” Based on fissures in the structure of the production process of news, journalists are capable of leading to reflection on daily life, and thus contributing to a new look at sexual diversity.

Hetero-normativity needs to be directly challenged by journalistic discourse because all violations related to sexuality derive from the threat that the desire for people of the same sex represents to the existing norms and structures that anchor compulsory heterosexuality. The fact that the journalistic discourse regarding rights for LGBT people does not confront hetero-normativity also means that it is almost never engaged with the subversive potential of queer sexuality.

For the construction of a new view of sexual diversity, journalists and the media in their discourses cannot reduce the study of gender and sexuality to the nature/culture dichotomy; they should avoid limitation of the gender debate to the feminine situation and undertake discussions that go beyond the generic cultural differences between men and women and the social abstractions of gender relations, considering the cultural diversities produced by class, race/ethnicity, generation and sexual orientation.

A plural view is needed on masculinity as a form of permanent criticism of the attempt to reduce masculinity to a category that makes men homogeneous. A narrow use of the discourse on the rights of LGBT people offers a loophole to order not to confront hetero-normativity and its subversion. Only this intersectional approach will help us to reveal the links between oppressions. Hetero-normativity is so widespread, insidious and often intangible it that cannot be challenged only as a violation of sexual rights. And journalism, within this field of power struggles, should provide transparency and democratic values for society, the right to truthful reporting and informative discussion of the present conflicts. This requires journalists, with some urgency, to seek to

deconstruct their “backward” values and make room for new knowledge and perspectives on the world.

NOTAS

- 1 Paulista Avenue is considered to be one of the main financial centers of the city of São Paulo, as well as one of its most characteristic tourist attractions. The avenue reveals its importance not only as an economic center, but also as a venue for public demonstrations such as the LGBT Pride Parade.
- 2 *Folha de S. Paulo* is a Brazilian newspaper published in the city of São Paulo by the Folha Group. Founded in 1921, it became the best-selling newspaper in the country in the 80s. In 1983 the newspaper had the first computerized newsroom in South America. In 2011, it was the newspaper with the second largest circulation in the country, according to date from the Circulation Checking Institute (IVC), and was considered one of the most influential.
- 3 *O Estado de S. Paulo*, founded in 1875, is the oldest newspaper in the city of São Paulo still in circulation. As time passed, new companies and products were created based on *O Estado de S. Paulo*, the main product of the Estado Group, such as a radio station and a news agency. In 2011, the newspaper ranked fourth in circulation throughout the country, according to data from the Circulation Checking Institute (IVC). The newspaper is popularly called “*Estadão*”.
- 4 Term coined in 1991 by Michael Warner in the text *Introduction: fear of a queer planet*, **Social Text** 29, p. 3-17.
- 5 Traquina (2004) explains that the constructionist theories (structural and interactionist) arise in the ‘70s with the emergence of a paradigm that is diametrically opposed to the perspective of news as ‘distortion’ and also directly questions the journalistic ideology itself and its theory of news as a mirror of reality.
- 6 CAREY, J. The Dark Continent of American Journalism. In: MANOFF; SCHUDSON (ed.). **Reading the News**. New York: Pantheon Books, 1986.

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