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Assumptions about Gender, Power and Opportunity: Gays and Lesbians as Discursive Subjects in a Portuguese Newspaper¹

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Introduction

This paper sets out to examine how gays and lesbians have been socially represented in one of the most important quality daily newspapers published in Portugal – *Diário de Notícias* – in a particular set of texts that were released over a week, under the general title “*Gay Power*” [“*Poder Gay*”].

The texts appeared from Sunday, April 22 to Saturday, April 28, 2001 and were announced in a previous edition of the newspaper, on Friday, April 20, as “*The Gay Power: an in-depth report starting Sunday in DN*” [“*O Poder Gay: Uma grande reportagem a partir de Domingo no DN (Diário de Notícias)*”].

Confirming the importance the newspaper was attributing to this specific news coverage, on Sunday, April 22 the entire front page was dedicated to it, as well as pages 2 and 3, and the editorial on page 5. Under the heading “*State of the nation*” [“*Estado da Nação*”], in small capital letters, the front page presented readers with the large headline “*State promotes ‘gay’ tourism*” [“*Estado promove turismo ‘gay’*”], together with the following two sentences in small print: “*Lisbon City Council and ICEP edit catalogue for homosexuals. Poll reveals that ‘gays’ have little influence in Portugal*” [“*Câmara de Lisboa e ICEP editam catálogo para homossexuais. Sondagem revela que ‘gays’ são pouco influentes em Portugal*”]. The headline and the text are followed by a large photograph (and its caption) where in the foreground one can see two men in drag.

The remaining texts in the serial appeared over the following days and spread over two inside pages of the newspaper, though always (with the exception of the last day, Saturday 28) with a brief text on the front page calling the reader’s attention to

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them. These texts were part of the “Society” section of the newspaper (one section among others, such as “National”, “International”, “Education”, “Sports”, “Science”, etc.). Apart from the ones published on the first day, all the texts were presented under the general heading “*Feature: Gay Power*” [“Documento: Poder Gay”]. These headings were numbered between brackets and in roman numerals, from two to six, plus the conclusion.

All the texts were about Portugal, except the ones on Wednesday 25, dedicated to Spain, and on Thursday 26, dedicated to Brazil, France and Germany. The total amount of words in the texts was 13,600.

In what follows I will begin by locating the present study in terms of the theoretical and methodological framework used, then moving to a discussion of the socio-political context of Portugal in relation to the particular social group I am working with, gays and lesbians. This is followed by an analysis of the representation of gays and lesbians as discursive subjects in the newspaper in question. Finally, I will conclude by summarizing the findings of the analysis and suggesting some lines of interpretation for the overall news coverage in relation to the socio-cultural context that motivated it.

Theoretical and methodological framework

From the eclectic perspectives of analysis of public culture and of discourse in late modern social life, the frameworks for this study are Fairclough’s theory and method of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 1989, 1992, 1995a, 1995b, 1998 and Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999) and Halliday’s theory of grammatical description, systemic functional grammar (Halliday 1994).

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is defined by Fairclough (1995b: 57) as the analysis of relationships between the three dimensions or layers of a communicative event: the text, the discourse practice, and the sociocultural practice. In this framework, texts may be either just spoken or written, or spoken or written and visual; discourse practices are processes of text production and text consumption; and sociocultural practices are the social and cultural activities of which the communicative events are a part. The theoretical assumptions supporting the framework stress the fact that language use is always constitutive of social identities, of social relations and of systems of knowledge and belief, in the sense that it helps shape these aspects of society and culture. As Fairclough (1995b: 55) puts it, the way this process takes place will depend upon different factors:

Language use is, moreover, constitutive both in conventional ways which help to reproduce and maintain existing social identities, relations and systems of knowledge and belief, and in creative ways which help to transform them. Whether the conventional or the creative predominates in any given case will depend upon social circumstances and how the language is functioning within them.

CDA is a textually-oriented discourse analysis (cf. Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999: 152), thus departing itself from other versions of discourse analysis. Its analytical claims about discourses and social life are anchored in close analyses of texts, using for that matter instruments and concepts from linguistic theories that share with CDA some of its assumptions about language, particularly the linguistic theory of systemic functional grammar (SFG), as this theory is seen as the one that has most in common with CDA (cf. Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999: 139).

SFG is a theory of grammatical description that views language as a semiotic system structured in terms of strata and that looks at grammar in terms of how it is used. It describes languages in functional terms with the aim of providing a general grammar for purposes of text analysis and interpretation. SFG is functional in several different but inter-related senses: for instance, in the way it looks at the linguistic system and at its description, in the way it looks at linguistic elements and structures, and in the way it looks at texts and at their interpretation, that is, in the description of how language is used. SFG is, thus, as Halliday (1994: XIV, XXVI) puts it:

(...) a theory of meaning as choice, by which a language, or any other semiotic system, is interpreted as networks of interlocking options (...), as a resource for making meaning. Each system in the network represents a choice: not a conscious decision made in real time but a set of possible alternatives.

Since choice is moved by intentionality, it ultimately means that speakers word and organise their texts according to and in order to fulfil the expectations they put in them as conveyers of messages. Echoing Leap (1996: XVII), and keeping the idea of text-as-choice in mind, we may say then that “meaning is not inherent in text but is instead a product of situated, social action that must be studied accordingly”.

SFG has multiple applications and there are many purposes for using it. For a critical discourse analyst to use it, for instance, SFG needs “to include considerable social contextual information to facilitate informed text deconstruction.” (Martin, Matthiessen & Painter 1997: 2). But no matter its application, SFG doubtlessly provides

analysts with the tools for understanding why a text is the way it is, and in that respect it stands as the most relevant theory of grammatical description to be used in a textually-oriented discourse analysis as is the case with CDA.

As socially constructed systems, gender, power and opportunity are products of representations and social constructions of individuals and relations between individuals that are interwoven with processes of cultural and historical reproduction where tradition plays a fundamental role. The stability or variability of those systems, that is, the maintenance or modification of the social, gender and power positions of individuals in the community, depends on how tradition evolves over time. From the point of view of CDA, analysing assumptions about gender and opportunity as they are presented in the representation of gays and lesbians as discursive subjects in a Portuguese newspaper is therefore reflecting on the stability or variability of the systems in relation to their traditional configuration.

Tradition and the cultural context

The main characteristic of the news articles under analysis seems to be the willingness of the newspaper to make gays discursive subjects of news for a week. This is a fairly important aspect, considering that in Portugal homosexuality is not a theme found regularly in the news when compared with other countries, and in particular with other European Union countries. For instance, in terms of legislation, one may say that in Portuguese laws there are more omissions concerning homosexuality than explicit references. These omissions give way to multiple situations of exclusion, which are made possible not only by the long tradition of socially silencing the homosexual condition, but also and mainly by the legal vacuum that frames that condition in terms of social rights. As has been stressed by Santos & Fontes (2001: 175-6), this way of acting has been characteristic of the Portuguese State, which has aimed at silencing discrimination and harmonizing consciences, while legitimising a rigid moral that is heir to centuries of religious puritanism and to a lack of critical contestation².

Due to these factors, Portuguese gay and lesbian activism is a reality that was only made possible in 1995, when ILGA-Portugal (International Lesbian and Gay

² This is still true and plays an important part in the legal text. As Santos & Fontes (2001: 176) point out, Portuguese law, against European recommendations, not only “forgot” to criminalise discrimination based on sexual orientation, but has also permitted that, up till now, some legal regulations indirectly but effectively punishing the homosexual citizen may still be active. These include, for instance, specific

Association – Portugal), the first lesbian and gay association, was founded. And though other similar movements were set up afterwards, it is a fact that to this day the majority of Portuguese lesbians and gay men choose to remain ‘in the closet’. As stressed by several activists interviewed for this specific news coverage, Portuguese gays and lesbians are still afraid of disclosing their sexual condition and of fighting for their rights, as they regard society as still too homophobic: “*Social fear is what prevents people from coming out, because they feel they will be discriminated against, if their sexual orientation becomes known*” [“O medo social é o que faz com que as pessoas não se queiram assumir, porque sentem que vão ser prejudicadas, se a sua orientação for conhecida”]. In this respect, the situation has similarities to that of Austria, as reported by Bunzl (2000: 215-6), where gay and lesbian activism has shifted “from working toward large-scale social transformations (which would fully emancipate lesbians and gay men along with other oppressed peoples) to carefully targeted, ideologically flexible, efforts intended to subvert and disrupt the reproduction of heteronormative regimes”. A result of this shift was the organization of a Pride/Rainbow Parade almost at the same time in both countries (in 1996 and subsequent years in Austria, in 1997 and subsequent years in Portugal). But a major difference between Austria and Portugal is that despite the population of Austria being around 80% of the population of Portugal, in Austria the “Rainbow Parades have drawn up to 50,000 marchers and spectators to Vienna’s Historic Ringstraße – the symbolically-laden site of such political mass convergences as the annual labor day parades held on May 1st” (Bunzl 2000: 216), whereas in Portugal the parades have never had that many marchers and have been confined to low-visibility sites, such as Jardim do Príncipe Real and Praça do Município.

The symbolic repertoire of a community is not yet fully present in whatever binds lesbians and gay men together in Portugal. In fact, the ideological integrity that constitutes a community and informs the expression of its symbolic repertoire is non-existent if we consider that the reality of difference manifested by both gays and lesbians and by the members of each group in isolation consistently refuses to construct the appearance of similarity. While it is necessary to unite members in their opposition, this appearance of similarity may be in the process of formation but is not yet close to being totally expressed (for an appraisal of this process see Meneses 1998). The

regulamentations that prevent their access to a military career or that prevent them from being blood donors.

growing number of bars and places of cultural animation one may label 'gay friendly' has helped develop a sense of identity, a sense of belonging to a community, but the community, in the precise sense of the notion, simply does not exist, as it is not visible to the larger community.

It is a fact that in almost every country in the world there is fervent discussion about sexuality, its regulation and its equality. In Giddens' words (1999: 51), "There is a global revolution going on in how we think of ourselves and how we form ties and connections with others". But as Giddens also points out (1999: 52), "the transformations affecting the personal and emotional spheres go far beyond the borders of any particular country... We find parallel trends almost everywhere, varying only in degree and according to the cultural context in which they take place".

Furthermore, along the lines of Meneses (2000: 954), but not entirely concordant with them, we may consider that gays and lesbians in Portugal see themselves more as part of the modernity and globalisation of lifestyles, than as members of a community constructed discursively on the basis of their homosexual condition and their history of discrimination. That is, the discourse of identity is mostly constructed through a confirmation of their difference in relation to the rest of society than through a discourse that aims at destroying the difference in the legal text and in social practices.

Concordant with some of the aspects mentioned above is the almost total absence of academic and scientific studies about gays and lesbians in Portugal, when compared to other countries (Meneses 1998, 2000, Gameiro 1998 and Santos & Fontes 2001 are somewhat the exceptions). This is due not only to a long tradition of gays and lesbians silently living their lives and hiding their sexual orientation, but also to the lack of interest of researchers towards a non-visible "community", to their fear of being associated with a group that is still discriminated against, and to their fear of the negative consequences that their research may bring them in academic as well as in social terms.

Analysis

Aiming to distance itself from what has been the practice in Portugal, the newspaper *Diário de Notícias* proposes a news coverage that will put homosexuals in the limelight for an entire week. This action is based on the principle stated in the editorial on the first day of news that "*The so-called right to be different in sexual orientation has become an irreversible reality during the last few decades*" ["O

chamado direito à diferença na orientação sexual é uma realidade irreversível das últimas décadas”]. Keeping this principle in mind, the newspaper stresses in the same editorial that “*a modern and balanced social positioning must be located in the fight against discrimination and in the support of all the measures capable of guaranteeing a citizen full equal rights in every circumstance, independently of his/her sexual preferences*”:

Um posicionamento social moderno e equilibrado deve situar-se no combate à discriminação e no apoio a todas as medidas capazes de garantir a um cidadão a plena igualdade de direitos em todas as circunstâncias, independentemente das suas preferências sexuais.

This seems to be, from the start, the point of view of the newspaper, particularly because this last sentence is the only one foregrounded in the text as it is repeated in a separate column. In the process of construction of its ideal reader, the editorial is then providing a reading position from which the news coverage seems unproblematic and natural. That is, it serves as an example of *a modern and balanced social positioning* condemning and fighting any form of discrimination towards the social group in question. But as we shall see that is not the case.

The Editorial

Beginning with the editorial written by the director of the newspaper, what we have in the texts constituting the data does not seem to be what readers, following the highlighted text, may want to consider a *modern and balanced social positioning*. On the contrary, considering this same editorial, entitled “*(The) Gay Power*” [“O poder ‘gay’”]³, what readers are to find is an *unbalanced* social positioning, firstly, because the editorial and the remaining texts in this news coverage simply presuppose the existence of a social group, gays, that has considerable power in social terms; and secondly, because from that presupposition one can read the assumption that gays should not have that power. If we are to pursue that argument, the assumption that gays should not have the power they have is not only based on the presupposition that they have it (if a group has power and if that power is negative, then the group should not

³ The use of the definite article (even if between brackets) in the expression “The Gay Power” is kept from the original expression in Portuguese, where, in this context, and contrary to the English language, its usage is optional. The fact that the editor chose to use it is thus meaningful, as it contributes to single out and discursively establish in the minds of its readers the power the newspaper refers to.

have that power), but also on the following negative premises stated in the editorial that validate the assumption: i) the gay community functions “*as an organised force with the aim of protecting or benefiting its members, in professional life, in politics or even on the more noble plan of social solidarity*”; ii) the power they have is “*a domain of yet unclear features*”, whose veil must be uncovered; and iii) it is a power that has “*less transparent aspects*” and “*tends, sometimes, to surpass the admissible frontiers of action in a democracy*”:

Referimo-nos ao funcionamento da comunidade gay como força organizada com o objectivo de proteger ou beneficiar os seus membros, na vida profissional, na política ou ainda no plano mais nobre da solidariedade social.

O DN inicia hoje a publicação de um conjunto de trabalhos que procura levantar o véu sobre esse mundo de contornos ainda difusos que é o poder gay. (...) não nos inibiremos de abordar os pontos menos transparentes de um poder que tende, por vezes, a extravasar as fronteiras de acção admissíveis numa democracia. (my emphasis)

[We are referring to *the performance of the gay community as an organised force with the aim of protecting or benefiting its members in professional life, in politics or even on the more noble plan of social solidarity.*

DN begins today the publication of a set of articles that tries to uncover the veil drawn over that *domain of yet unclear features* which is gay power. (...) we will not avoid addressing *the less transparent aspects of a power that tends, sometimes, to surpass the admissible frontiers of action in a democracy.*]

It is rather surprising to find stated as facts what, ‘de facto’, is a matter of opinion. What one can read in this editorial are serious accusations that portray a community as putting unwarranted pressure on society and other social and institutional groups so as to favour its interests. There is nothing wrong with the assertions, particularly if one is to find them substantiated in the texts that constitute the news coverage, which in turn is guided by “*the seriousness and rigour that are the trademark of journalism*” produced by the newspaper, as stated in the same editorial: “Fá-lo-emos com a seriedade e o rigor que são a imagem de marca do jornalismo desta casa”. Contrary to expectations, what the readers find in the texts is not a substantiation of the assertions stated in the editorial. Furthermore, these assertions are, in most cases, denied by the people interviewed, mostly politicians and defenders of gay rights, but particularly by the

informants of the poll presented by the newspaper on the first day of its report: “Homosexuals are discriminated against by Portuguese society. According to the results of the DN/Marktest poll, most Portuguese think that gays are not favoured and that they have little power of decision.” [“Os homossexuais são discriminados pela sociedade portuguesa. De acordo com os resultados da sondagem DN/Marktest, a maior parte dos portugueses considera que os gays não são favorecidos e têm pouco poder de decisão.”].

Transitivity processes

Another important but dubious aspect that deserves attention is related to the decision to make gays into discursive subjects for an entire week. It seems to have been called for by the necessity to portray the gay community as “*an organised force*”, thus warning society about the dangers they represent. Despite the fact that, as stated in the editorial, “*we have come a long way from the days when the life of a homosexual was confounded with the existence of outcasts in the dark ages*” [“estamos já muito longe dos tempos em que a vida de um homossexual se confundia com a existência dos párias da idade das trevas”], the newspaper seems to suggest that the gay community is a dangerous one.

This process is made clear by an analysis of the data from the point of view of the transitivity processes used. For instance, counting only the 20 processes in which the noun *gays* is used as Subject, without any type of modification to the noun, one finds that it is mainly a participant in relational processes, totalling 65 % of the occurrences, as shown in Table 1:

PROCESSES	OCCURRENCES	PERCENTAGE
Material	4	20 %
Mental	0	0 %
Relational	13	65 %
Verbal	0	0 %
Behavioural	0	0 %
Existential	3	15 %
TOTAL	20	100 %

Table 1: transitivity processes in which the Subject is the noun *gays*⁴

⁴ For these statistics, I am only considering cases such as “gays earn wages above the average” [“os gays recebem ordenados acima da média”], leaving out cases where *gays* is not the head of the noun group as in “Gay consumers travel more and choose more expensive destinations.” [“Os consumidores gays viajam

It is rather striking that as discursive subjects, gays are represented in the newspaper mainly as participants in attributive relational processes (vid. Halliday 1994). Considering that “Strictly speaking, neither of the basic experiential terms, ‘process’ and ‘participant’, is completely appropriate for this category [relational processes]” (Thompson 1996: 86), one may say that gays are not entirely participants in the actions represented in the texts of the newspaper. In fact, they are represented mainly as Carriers of Attributes, as in:

gays are not favoured and have little power of decision
[os gays não são favorecidos e têm pouco poder de decisão]

It seems that gays have increasingly more power
[Tudo parece indicar que os gays têm cada vez mais poder]

As real participants in transitivity processes, gays are mainly Existents in existential processes, or Goals in material processes. As one can see from the processes below, exemplifying, respectively, an Existential process and two material ones, gays are affected participants in agentive processes. On the other hand, cases of representation where gays are Actors, exemplified by the last example in this series, are rather rare:

There are gays everywhere
[Há gays em todo o sítio]

it was João Soares who put gays on our political map
[foi João Soares que pôs os gays no nosso mapa político]

I know, for instance, of a bank that gave homosexuals priority
[Sei, por exemplo, de um banco que dava prioridade a homossexuais]

Homosexual adolescents have to fight against discrimination
[Os adolescentes homossexuais têm de se bater contra a discriminação]

In the texts under analysis, the representation of gays mainly as participants in relational processes is very important. Indeed, and despite the fact that the texts are about gays, which makes them not only discursive subjects but also an available social category open to definition and characterization, the authors of the texts could have

mais e escolhem destinos mais caros.”]. The overall analysis is not restricted to this data, though, which

chosen to represent them more as participants in processes other than relational. Considering that this type of process is used to represent class membership (attributive relational processes) and symbolization (identifying relational processes), the final result in terms of the representation being constructed can only be that of ascribing gays certain attributes, either as a quality, a circumstance or as a possession; or it may be of using another entity to identify gays, again either by a matter of quality, of circumstance or of possession. This type of representation serves the purpose of confining the social group under consideration to a set of characteristics that indicate membership and identity and which helps to differentiate them from other social groups, that is from other memberships, other identities.

The process just analysed is homologous to the process of constantly affirming that in Portuguese society gays have power. In fact, the Nominal Group “gay power” that serves as a header for the texts is itself a nominalization⁵ of another attributive relational process - *gays have power* -, that helps to construct a sense of threat associated with gays, via the naturalised assumption that they have power⁶. Tending towards this construction of fear in the minds of the readers, the newspaper treats power

serves here only as an example.

⁵ Critical linguists such as Roger Fowler, Bob Hodge, Gunther Kress and Tony Trew (1979) have been particularly concerned with nominalization as an effect of the deletions of participants in processes of transitivity, and in that respect their work has been highly influential for the consideration of techniques for obscuring agency. But, as stressed by Potter (1996: 182), while nominalization is “a technique for categorizing actions and processes that allows the speaker or writer to avoid endorsing a particular story about responsibility”, other techniques “build an impression of agency”. That is the case of the so-called ‘intention-promoting’ verbs. In the data under analysis, the headline “*State promotes ‘gay’ tourism*” [“Estado promove turismo ‘gay’”], on the front page of the first day of news has an example of an ‘intention-promoting’ verb. The story concerns the production of a leaflet entitled “Lisbon Friendly”, produced by the City Council under a protocol with a Gay and Lesbian Association, and distributed internationally by governmental agencies. While it is strictly true that the action being reported is a promoting, marketing one, the title implies something bigger, that is, that the government/the state is in fact promoting a bill in Parliament concerning gay tourism (tourism for Portuguese gays).

⁶ I am well aware that in English the expression “gay power” is paradigmatic with such expressions as “black power”, carrying with it meanings that go far beyond the ones involved in a restricted sense of the expression. One has to bear in mind, though, that the meanings associated with such expressions have never been fully activated in the Portuguese language, namely the meanings of emancipation or of access to full rights. Portugal only became a democracy in 1974, and before that time there was tough censorship and a total absence of freedom. Before the 1974 revolution, and against the opinion of the rest of the world, namely the UN, Portugal still had colonies (which only gained independence in 1975), for instance, and women (up till the end of the sixties) were not allowed to travel, open a bank account or run a business without the consent of their husbands or fathers (vd. Mónica 1996: 218-9). It is not entirely without a doubt that the meaning of “emancipation”, for instance, is associated in Portuguese with the expression “gay power” by most of the newspaper’s readers. In fact, the reading of the expression as a nominalization of an attributive relational process seems not only more adequate at the light of this clarification but also when considering the manipulation of meaning uncovered by the remaining analysis of the data.

as a monolithic concept, as the sort of thing a social group can have to a greater or lesser degree, in a society that may be regarded as what is called an economy of power⁷.

It is rather awkward, though, that, despite most of the interviewees denying the existence of this power, the newspaper insists on its presence in Portuguese society. Furthermore, if one looks at the Attributes that gays are Carriers in attributive relational clauses, one may note a discrepancy between the Attributes given to gays in the texts and the general idea of gay power transmitted by the overall news coverage. In fact, almost all the Attributes contradict the general assumption that gays have power, with only a minority of them confirming that idea. What we find in the texts is that gays are “*are not very influential in Portugal*” [“são pouco influentes em Portugal”], are “*discriminated against by Portuguese society*” [“são discriminados pela sociedade portuguesa”], are “*constantly attacked*” [“são constantemente atacados”], are “*not favoured*” [“não são favorecidos”], have “*little power of decision*” [“têm pouco poder de decisão”], are “*not a lobby*” [“não são ‘lobby’”], are “*people who naturally have diverse options, particularly in terms of political choices*” [“são pessoas que, naturalmente, têm opções diversas, nomeadamente em matéria de escolhas políticas”], and, if they happen to be politicians, they are “*right wing*” [“os políticos gays são de direita”]. Transmitting the opposite idea, but highlighted by the newspaper in the headlines, there are only a few Attributes such as: gays are “*quite powerful*” [“têm muita força”] and are “*well placed in the entrepreneurial world and in political positions*” [“estão bem colocadas, no meio empresarial ou em cargos políticos”].

Moreover, the lexical choices associated with the representation in transitivity processes belong to what we may refer to as an abstract domain, not to a material, causative domain. In fact, bearing in mind expressions such as “political map”, “influential”, “power of decision”, “lobby”, “well placed”, “entrepreneurial world”, “political positions”, and so on, we may actually say that gays are not represented as concrete entities, performing concrete activities.

⁷ Notice for this matter, that the question most of the interviewees were asked to answer was “Is there a gay lobby/power?”, as if the main concern was to get to know whether gays have or do not have power in Portuguese society. This also shows that the interpretation of “gay power” as a nominalization of the relational attributive process “gays have power”, discussed above and referred to in the previous footnote, seems correct.

Quotes and projecting verbs

Most of the Attributes referred to above are given by the interviewees. Generally speaking, we may say that the interviewees fall mainly into three categories of social actors: politicians, advocates for gay rights and gay people. The entities considered in these three categories seldom speak for themselves (there are no letters to the editor or opinion texts, for example). Most of the time their discourse is represented by the journalists, whose practice is to submit the discourses to a selection process, to a representation of what was actually said.

The journalistic representation of the social actors' discourse is made by direct quotes or by reports of their "voices" using what is called, in traditional grammar, direct speech, reported speech and free reported speech. Most of the texts are thus a mediation of the discourses of the social actors, integrated in another discourse, that of the journalist.

From a clausal point of view, and following Halliday's systemic functional model, what we are dealing with here are cases of projection, the logical-semantic relation in which a clause does not work as a direct representation of non-linguistic experience but as a representation of a linguistic representation. Projection varies according to the characteristics of its discursive function, to the interdependency between clauses and according to the projecting process that motivates it; thus projection may result in a quote, a report or a fact.

The establishment of obvious or oblique frontiers between the discourse that represents/projects and the discourse that is represented/projected, whether we are facing quote cases or report cases, is in itself an important variable for analysing the data (vid. Fairclough 1995: 81). And it is even more important when it is looked at in relation to the projecting verbs, as the overall result activates a particular framing that informs the way the represented discourse is interpreted.

As faithful representations of linguistic representations, quotes are abundantly used in the general data under analysis. However, their frequency of use is much lower than that of report cases. This is probably because the report, being a summarising process, is more open to the transformation of the represented discourses thus becoming more easily integrated in the discourse and the ideological purposes of the journalists. In that respect it is important to note that the transformation of quotes into reports, when moving from what people say to headlines or leads reporting what people say, is more often than not a transformation of both *the spirit and the letter* of what was actually

said. For instance, in one of the texts, the Mayor of Lisbon, known for being supportive towards gays and lesbians, is quoted as having said that in his team at the City Council there are no gays and lesbians. This is quoted as a confirmation of his sympathy for gays and lesbians and to make the point that this sympathy does not lead him to favour gays, that is to discriminate gays and lesbians positively:

“More than BE (Left Coalition Party), it was João Soares who put gays on our political map”, notes Manuel Monteiro. The Mayor confirms. But he adds: “In my team on the City Council there are neither gays nor lesbians”.

[“Mais do que o BE (Bloco de Esquerda), foi João Soares quem pôs os gays no nosso mapa político”, anota Manuel Monteiro. O autarca confirma. Mas acrescenta: “Na minha equipa da Câmara Municipal, não há gays nem lésbicas”.]

It is interesting to note how these projections, which constitute the last paragraph of the text in question, give readers a different reading from that of the paragraph beneath the title of the text:

“The one who put gays on our political map was João Soares”, says Manuel Monteiro. “But there are no homosexuals on the City Council”, counterargues the Mayor.

[“Quem pôs os gays no nosso mapa político foi João Soares”, diz Manuel Monteiro. “Mas não há homossexuais na Câmara”, contrapõe o autarca.]

The difference between the two extracts, or should one say the difference between the two quotations of the same quote, apart from being a difference in wording, is most of all a difference in the way of rendering meaning. In the paragraph beneath the title of the text, the whole thing is represented as a verbal fight between two politicians, with an accusation and a subsequent defence. In fact, the Mayor is represented as defending himself. Note for that matter the projecting verb used to project his quote, “*contrapõe*” (“counterargues”). The relevant thing about the paragraph beneath the title of the text is that the Mayor’s quote is different from the one in the final part of text. From one quote to the other the Mayor’s team on the City Council has become the City Council, that is, from a reduced spatial location circumstance we passed into a large one. This transformation helps to represent a different Mayor, one that either has imposed a restrictive policy on the employment of gays and lesbians in the City

Council, a discriminating one, or a Mayor that claims to have control over something that is far from being controlled.

The example above is not an isolated example as the process underlying it is used several times in this news coverage. For instance, the same process serves to connect gays to right wing politics and to portray them as a reactionary group. Considering that in Portugal, a country that was ruled by a fascist dictatorship for almost fifty years, the word reactionary has a high negative status, bringing into the reader's mind the fascist regime and the struggle for freedom, its use is not innocent at all. Furthermore, the word is used as part of an Attribute in a relational clause in which gays are construed as Carriers. This clause, a quotation, is presented as the title of a text together with the verbal process that projects it:

BE accuses: "Gays are reactionaries"
[BE acusa: "Gays são reaccionários"]

The Sayer in the verbal process is Bloco de Esquerda (BE), the Left Coalition of small political parties that has publicly defended gay and lesbian rights. It is interesting to note how this title frames not only the text in itself but the entire news coverage. In fact, the title provides a general attribute to gays that stands in close relation to the relational process that synthesises the entire theme of the news coverage, "gays have power", nominalised in the noun group "gay power". The particular projecting verb used, "*acusa*" ("accuses"), is again very important. It helps the construction of gays as dangerous entities from whose positions and methods of lobbying even the Left Coalition, a traditional defender of gay rights, it is trying to distance itself. The implicature of the title and the text is: what can one expect then from gays when even the Left Coalition is trying to distance itself from them?

The use of this headline led to an extra text in this news coverage as the coalition party in question wrote a letter to the newspaper protesting against the title saying:

The news headline is wrong. None of the leaders of the Left Coalition has ever made this absurd generalisation.
[O título da notícia é errado. Nenhum dirigente do Bloco de Esquerda fez alguma vez essa absurda generalização.]

Collocates and noun groups

The representation of gays as reactionaries is homologous to their representation as a powerful and dangerous group. Not counting function and non-content words, the most recurrent collocates for the word gay(s) in the entire set of texts are power, community and lobby. These collocates function as Thing in noun groups where gay is a Classifier, as we can see in Table 2:

NOMINAL GROUP	OCURRENCES
gay power [poder gay]	15
gay community [comunidade gay]	14
gay lobby [lobby gay]	10

Table 2: most recurrent collocates for the word gay(s)

The use of these noun groups helps construct the idea of an organised force present in Portuguese society. The construction of that “organised force” as a dangerous one is a matter of the ideational devices used to represent it, namely transitivity processes and modifications in the noun groups “gay power”, “gay lobby” and “gay community”. In the case of the noun group “gay power” (repeated throughout the news coverage as its general title), it is construed as a Carrier in relational processes like “*still has no face*” [“continua sem rosto”] and “*is still a shadowy world*” [“é um mundo de contornos ainda difusos”], and as an Actor in the material abstract process “*conditions political behaviours*” [“condiciona os comportamentos politicos”]. In the case of the noun group “gay lobby”, pre-modified at least in one instance by the Epithet “*powerful*” [“poderoso lobby gay”], it is construed as Existent in existential processes, as a Carrier in a relational process such as “*is well organised*” [“está bem organizado”] and as a post-modifier in the noun group “*prisoner of the gay lobby*” [“prisioneiro do lobby gay”], which is in itself an attribute of a negative relational process of which the Left Coalition party is the Carrier.

Concerning the noun group “gay community”, it is a Carrier in the nominalised relational processes “*this freedom of movements manifested by the gay community*” [“esta liberdade de movimentos manifestada pela comunidade gay”] and “*the functioning of the gay community as an organised force*” [“o funcionamento da comunidade gay como força organizada”], as a post-modifier in the noun group “*the*

major obstacle of the gay community” [“o maior obstáculo da comunidade gay”], and as an Existent, or post-modifier in noun groups that are Existents, in existential processes.

What is disclosed through this analysis is not at all favourable to gays. In fact, besides the idea of a community it helps to construct, classified as an organised force with a certain freedom of movement that is unacceptable, these occurrences, when seen together, make it clear that the main objective of the coverage is to promote a sense of fear in the newspaper’s readers. The newspaper puts itself in the position of the “defender of the realm” warning the readers about the dangers that we are all facing due to the existence of a gay lobby in Portuguese society.

Opportunity and gender

In Portugal, power is a male domain, revealed not only in the high number of cases of domestic violence and sexual harassment towards women, but particularly in the low number of women that have access to decision-making posts. For instance, in 1999 in the European Union, Portugal was one of the countries with the lowest percentage of women elected for its national Parliament, 17,4 % (40 out of 230), and with the lowest percentage of women elected for the European Parliament, 20 % (5 out of 25). In the same year, only 6 (9,4 %) out of the 64 government members (ministers and secretaries of state) and only 2 (15,4 %) out of the 13 members of the Constitutional Court were women (vid. Canço & Castro 2000: 95-100)⁸.

What these numbers reveal is that in Portuguese society, men, including gay men, have access to opportunities in ways that are not available to women and the newspaper reflects this social stratification and discrimination in these specific news articles. For instance, the majority of the interviewees that fall under the social category of gay people are really gay men. In fact, lesbians are a social category that hardly appears in the entire news coverage.

After analysing the occurrences of the word “lesbian(s)” in the texts, either as Noun or as Adjective, we come to the conclusion that the word occurs only 22 times while the word “gay(s)” occurs 197 times. Furthermore, 7 of the occurrences of the word lesbian happen to be adjectives associated with the adjective gay in complex noun

⁸ Four years before, in 1995, these same figures were as follow: national Parliament: 12,2 % (28 out of 230); European Parliament: 8 % (2 out of 25); Government members: 10,3 % (6 out of 58); Constitutional Court: 15,4 % (2 out of 13) (vid. Canço & Joaquim 1995: 123-125).

groups, such as “gay and lesbian film festival” or “gay and lesbian bookshop”, which are standard designations which the newspaper has to comply with.

In 11 of the remaining uses of the word, “lesbian(s)” stands in relation either to “gay(s)” (6 occurrences) or to “homosexual(s)” (5 occurrences), in each case forming a copulative noun group that represents both genders separately, even though the noun group “homosexuals and lesbians” results awkwardly as it represents both genders differently with the concept of homosexuality being applied only to males.

Of the remaining 4 uses, 2 of them refer to concrete examples, but they are not expressive, as they refer to the French tennis player Amelie Mauresmo, who publicly assumed her homosexual orientation, and to the activist movement Delas, a lesbian movement in Brazil. What we can extract from all these numbers is that only two instances of the word are used to actually represent differences between the two genders. One is in relation to the social situation in Spain, of which it is said that “*the change in mentalities (concerning gay men) does not seem to cover lesbians who continue to say they still are being discriminated against*” [A mudança de mentalidades parece não abranger as lésbicas, que continuam a dizer-se discriminadas.]. The other is the quotation of a Portuguese politician who says that “*there is more tolerance in society towards male homosexuality than towards lesbians*” [Há mais tolerância da sociedade em relação à homossexualidade masculina do que quanto às lésbicas].

The representation of different systems of opportunity in relation to gays and lesbians does not seem to be important for the newspaper. It is as if whatever is said about gays is also true about lesbians. But that social construction is not exclusive of the reporters, considering the fact that even the way gay men talk about homosexuality is male specific and male oriented, as it is marked by the masculine grammatical gender, despite the fact that in certain circumstances a neutral meaning could have been worded as in the following example, already quoted, produced by a gay rights activist:

Social fear is what prevents people from coming out, because they feel they will be discriminated against, if their sexual orientation becomes known.

[O medo social é o que faz com que *as pessoas* não se queiram assumir, porque sentem que vão ser prejudicadas, se a sua orientação for conhecida.] (my italics)

The absence of any explicit references to lesbians as agents of power, at the same level as gay men, ultimately mirrors the systems of gender and opportunity that are at

play in Portuguese society. In fact, the use of the noun *gays* as a way to signify both gay men and lesbians is concordant with the use of “Man” [Homem], for instance, to refer to both men and women, a use that is generalized in Portuguese society⁹.

Gay males as effeminate beings

Texts in the last day of the news coverage are all about the presence of gays and lesbians in the arts. The first page opens with a lead covering the entire page of texts stating that “*whereas in cinema, theatre, music, literature or in fashion, there is greater openness in relation to homosexuality*” [“Nas artes, seja no cinema, teatro, música, literatura ou moda, existe uma maior abertura em relação à homossexualidade”]. This lead is used to introduce the texts but it serves another purpose, that is, to justify the newspaper’s incursion into the culture and fashion industries. Instead of actually questioning the stereotyped assumption that equates gays and lesbians with the field of the arts in general, the newspaper chooses to perpetuate that stereotype by providing readers with a reading position that validates the stereotype. Despite gays being “in all places”, as said by an interviewee, who is an activist for gays rights, the newspaper chooses to focus their readers’ attention on the arts, culture and fashion industries.

Moreover, in these pages composing the last of the sequence, the newspaper also validates the social construction of gay males as effeminate beings. That construction was already present in the words of two politicians quoted in a previous edition of the newspaper:

Pederasts are suave, gentle, sensitive guys with an artistic tendency. And they engage in easy-going conversation with women.

[Os pederastas são tipos macios, suaves, com sensibilidade e tendência artística. E têm um diálogo amável com as mulheres.]

I know many homosexuals who behave in a very dignified way. But some who openly admit that sexual orientation sometimes do it in a rather showy way that ends up being harmful to the image of the homosexuals in general.

[Conheço homossexuais que se comportam de forma muito digna. Mas alguns dos que assumem essa orientação sexual fazem-no, por vezes, de forma extremamente panfletária, o que acaba por ser prejudicial para a imagem dos homossexuais em geral.]

⁹ The use of generic “he/man” in English, of course, has been well documented by feminists (for example, Spender 1985).

What the newspaper chooses to do is to pick out the stereotype and develop it further by the perpetuating this social construction in its representation of gays in the arts and fashion industries. Using a relational process to transmit the idea of “the stuff they are made of is well known”, that is, “the threads sowing together the personalities of those whose mission is to create, present and sell all sorts of fashion products, is well known” [“são por demais conhecidas as linhas com que se cosem as personalidades daqueles que têm por missão criar, apresentar e vender os diversos artigos de moda”], one particular journalist ends up by associating with a gay orientation the following professions: fashion designers, top models, hairdressers, fashion accessories designers, and sellers of cosmetic products.

Conclusions

In the West, the main elements of sexuality have changed over the last few decades. As Giddens (1999: 57) puts it:

Sexuality is for the first time something to be discovered, moulded, altered. Sexuality, which used to be defined so strictly in relation to marriage and legitimacy, now has little connection to them at all. We should see the increasing acceptance of homosexuality not just as a tribute to liberal tolerance. It is a logical outcome of the severance of sexuality from reproduction. Sexuality which has no content is by definition no longer dominated by heterosexuality.

Although these trends may be visible everywhere in the industrialised world, the way they are dealt with varies from society to society. In Portugal, the discussion in Parliament of a Civil Unions Law that would guarantee domestic partner benefits to gay couples in exactly the same way they were to be guaranteed to heterosexual couples may be seen as one of the outcomes of those trends. It was during this discussion in Parliament that gay associations and activists were most visible, claiming for equal rights concerning not only the Civil Unions Law but also a specific paragraph of the Constitution (Paragraph 13) that would add sexual orientation to the list of attributes (such as sex, race, religion, language and social condition, for instance) on the basis of which citizens could not be discriminated against.

The initial bill, presented by the Socialist Party and that did not discriminate against any type of domestic partnership (no matter the status), being thus favourable to most of the claims put forward by gay associations and activists, was substantially reduced and did not fulfil the expectations raised during the public discussion. The final

outcome was a Civil Unions Law that is far from guaranteeing gay couples the same rights as their heterosexual counterparts.

The news coverage analysed in this paper was produced a few months after this discussion and was thus framed and informed by it. In fact, one can say that this news coverage found its motivation in the public discussion that took place at the time of discussion of the Civil Unions Law in Parliament. And in that sense, what one can see in the coverage is homologous to what one could notice during the discussion, considering that in both cases there was an initial willingness for not discriminating against gays and lesbians, despite the outcome being rather different.

Taking into account the analysis just presented, we can say that in this specific representation there is an explicit refusal to discriminate negatively against gays and lesbians, but at the same time there is also the construction of a sense of fear associated with homosexuality, via the assertion that gays and lesbians have more social and political power than one would expect. Furthermore, as I hope has been shown, the homophobia is male directed. In fact, although one may see a reference to the power of both gays and lesbians in the noun group “gay power”, analysis shows that lesbians are not explicitly referred to as agents of power. This ultimately brings to the forefront of the process of discrimination, the discrimination women undergo in a society which claims to have the most advanced female-rights legislation in the world but where they are far from having their rights guaranteed in their daily life and where the exercise of power is still a male prerogative.

The fear the newspaper wants its readers to experience, focuses on the existence of a so-called gay lobby. Once again, it represents a case of discrimination in the long history of discrimination against gays and lesbians, aiming at: i) preventing gays and lesbians from ‘coming out’ and from defending their rights; and ii) maintaining the traditional view of male homosexuals as effeminate beings, and as such, fitting into only certain jobs and activities in social life, e. g. culture and the fashion industries.

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