

Educational spaces and the production of gay, transvestite and transsexual subjectivities

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ABSTRACT

The article aims to identify and understand how social levels – family, religious institutions, LGBT movements, and psychological and medical institutions – view individuals and produce their subjectivities from management strategies. We understand such instances as educational spaces because they teach people ways of being and behaving in the world. To this end, we have analyzed the discourse of gay, transvestite, and transsexual subjects produced through methodologies of thematic oral history and participant observation. We have thus concluded that the family sphere strives for coherence between sex, gender, sexual practice and expression of desire. Medical and psychological institutions seek to diagnose and normalize the attitudes of “deviant” individuals; religious institutions seek “condemning” transgressive practices; and the LGBT movements conduct the subjects’ practices while instituting appropriate postures, in coherence with the movement’s policies.

KEYWORDS

subject; management; heteronormativity.

ESPAÇOS EDUCATIVOS E PRODUÇÃO DAS SUBJETIVIDADES GAYS, TRAVESTÍS E TRANSEXUAIS

RESUMO

O artigo tem como objetivo conhecer e compreender como as instâncias sociais – a família, a instituição religiosa, o movimento homossexual (Associação LGBT) e as instituições médicas e psicológicas –, por meio de suas estratégias de governo, interpelam os sujeitos, produzindo suas subjetividades. Entendemos tais instâncias como espaços educativos, pois nos ensinam modos de ser e estar no mundo. Nesse sentido, analisamos enunciações de alguns sujeitos gays, travestis e transexuais, produzidas por meio de metodologias da história oral temática e da observação participante. Assim, concluímos que a família prima pela coerência entre sexo, gênero, prática sexual e desejo; as instituições médicas e psicológicas buscam diagnosticar e normalizar as atitudes dos sujeitos “desviantes”; as instituições religiosas buscam “condenar” as práticas transgressoras; e o movimento homossexual conduz as práticas dos sujeitos ao instituir as posturas adequadas e coerentes com a política do movimento.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

sujeito; governo; heteronormatividade.

ESPACIOS EDUCATIVOS Y PRODUCCIÓN DE LAS SUBJETIVIDADES GAIS, TRAVESTÍS Y TRANSEXUALES

RESUMEN

Este artículo tiene como objetivo conocer y comprender cómo los grupos sociales –la familia, la institución religiosa, el movimiento homosexual (Asociación LGBT) y las instituciones médicas y psicológicas– desde sus estrategias de gobierno, interpelan los sujetos produciendo sus subjetividades. Entendemos estos grupos como espacios educativos, pues nos enseñan maneras de ser y de estar en el mundo. De esta forma, analizamos enunciaciones de algunos sujetos gais, travestís y transexuales a partir de las metodologías de la historia oral temática y de la observación participante. Así, concluimos que la familia valora la coherencia entre sexo, género, práctica sexual y deseo; las instituciones médicas y psicológicas buscan diagnosticar y normalizar las actitudes de los sujetos “desviantes”; las instituciones religiosas buscan “condenar” las prácticas transgresoras; y el movimiento homosexual conduce las prácticas de los sujetos, al instituir las posturas adecuadas y coherentes con la política del movimiento.

PALABRAS CLAVE

sujeito; gobierno; heteronormatividad.

INTRODUCTION

[...] *We as subjects do not create or cause institutions, discourses, and practices, but they create us or cause us by determining our sex, our sexuality, our gender*

SALIH, 2012, p. 21

In contemporary times, we are interpolated by discourses produced by different social instances that teach us how to be, and behave in society. These educational spaces produce subjects through their precepts, discourses and statements, and with rules, norms, doctrines and dogmas that determine positions, attitudes, gestures behaviors and modes of gender and sexuality that are both allowed and acceptable.

We understand educational spaces to be those that produce knowledge and experience that in some way teach us ways of being and acting in the world, constructing and (re)producing social meanings. Thus, schools are not the only educational spaces, which include all spaces that exercise pedagogies such as the social instances that are discussed in this study and through which LGBT subjects (lesbians, gays, transvestites, and transsexuals) pass and constitute themselves.

Knowledge produced about these subjects operate in different spaces, which produce, reproduce, and disseminate discourses that aim to “capture” these subjects and bring them into the norm. As well as being constituted as educational spaces, these social entities utilize governmentality strategies to control subjects.

Foucault talks about the notion of “governmentality,” explaining that the pastoral power introduced in the West by Christianity would be expressed by the governmentality of souls with an activity that is aimed at saving the flock. Pastoral power is characterized by acting upon a multiplicity of individuals instead of upon territory (Foucault, 2010a). However, a few changes in governmentality occurred between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, introducing other relations between pastor and flock – that is, other ways to govern. There is a governmentality of families, children, etc. “The general questioning about ways of governing and governing oneself, conducting and conducting oneself, follows the birth of new means of social and economic relations after the end of feudalism, as well as new forms of political structures” (Foucault, 1997, p. 82).

These changes have resulted in the birth of political economy, that is, of a political science. There was thus a passage from a sovereign mode of governance to another mode that is delineated by techniques of governmentality (Foucault, 2008; Rose; Miller, 2010). We will use the term governmentality not “under its political form,” but to refer to relations among subjects, that is, to guide the behavior and postures of subjects. From this perspective,

[...] the people who govern, the practice of government, on one hand are multiple practices, since many people govern: The father of a family, superiors at a convent, pedagogues, teachers in relation to children or disciples; there are, therefore, many governments in relation to which a prince governing a state is

just one of the modalities. On the other hand, all these governmentalities are within the state or within society. (Foucault, 2008, p. 124)

Similarly to Foucault, Fimyar (2008) discusses the meaning acquired by the word “governmentality”, not relating it only to the political understanding so broadly used today, but to a more general sense of steering the conduct of subjects.

This article¹ seeks to recognize and understand how some social instances – the family, religious institutions, homosexual movements (the LGBT association in the city of Rio Grande, Brazil), as well as medical and psychological institutions – interpolate subjects through their strategies of government/governmentality² producing their subjectivities. To do so, we have analyzed statements³ by individuals in the city of Rio Grande, Brazil who are self-identified as gay, transvestite, or transsexual.⁴ Some Foucaultian tools have been used to perform this study, because as Ewald (1993, p. 26) affirms they provide opportunities to operate with Foucault in a way that is

[...] Certainly not any truer than others, but perhaps more pertinent, effective, and productive... And that is what matters: not to produce something true in the sense of something definitive, absolute, and peremptory, but to provide ‘parts’ or ‘pieces,’ modest truths, new queer glances that do not imply stupefied silence or commentary buzz, but which are useful to others like the keys to a tool box.

In this sense, we have employed Foucault’s contributions as a strategy for analyzing statements in order to problematize the social instances that interpolate subjects and produce affects on their subjectivities.

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- 1 This article is part of a doctoral study performed at the Graduate Program in Science Education, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande (FURG), in relation to the research line Scientific Education: Implications of Scientific Practices in the Constitution of Subjects.
 - 2 Veiga-Neto (2005) suggests that we replace the term “government” for “governmentality” in cases that are not referring to a governmental instance – that is, to a central administrative state. In this sense, and considering what we propose to discuss with this text, we will use the term “governmentality”.
 - 3 We operate with the understanding of statement by Foucault, when he affirms that “it is an event that is not repeated; with a situated and dated singularity that cannot be reduced. However, this singularity presents a certain number of grammatical, semantic and logical constants from which it is possible to recognize the general form of a sentence, a meaning, or a proposition by neutralizing the moment of the statement and the coordinates that individualize them” (Foucault, 2005, p. 115).
 - 4 This study was conducted with support from the Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq).

METHODOLOGIES OF THE PRODUCTION OF STATEMENTS

The statements analyzed have been produced using the Thematic Oral History methodology, because our investigation is focused on the constitution of the individuals who participated in this study in different educational spaces.

Thematic Oral History is a data collection method that refers to a subject, topic, stage, or specific event in the interviewee's life, as described by Meihy (1996) and Meihy & Holanda (2010). The history of individuals is considered based upon specific aspects, and not their entire life story. In this case, questionnaires are important for conducting the interviews, since they allow focusing on the research goals.

According to Meihy (1996), interviews themselves do not constitute Thematic Oral History. Thus, we have organized a project to point out specificities of this study. In this project, we work with a network of research participants, comprised of gays, transvestites, and transsexuals referred to us by the president of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transvestite, and Transsexual Association (ALGBT) of Rio Grande, Rio Grande do Sul State, Brazil. The network is composed of 8 interviewees. Leo, Veto, and Robert who identify themselves as gay; Gisele⁵, Maria Regina, Naraya Luisa Brum, and Luciana Guerra as transsexual; and Cindy as transvestite.

Thus in articulation with Thematic Oral History, we developed a participant observation method, which is understood by Angrosino (2009) as a process and not an isolated act. Participant observation requires a few important features, such as selecting a location for observation, access to the observed individuals or group to be observed, attention to note taking in journals, etc.⁶

We engaged in participant observation during LGBT Association meetings and in a beauty parlor owned by the president of the Association - who is interviewed in this study. This is a space where 3 of the interviewees work and the other interviewees visit. To conduct the process guidelines were produced, indicating the objectives of the observation, issues to be considered for future directions of the study and the aspects to be observed. We have also presented a few journal entries made under the participant observation method.

To understand how the participants produce themselves in different social situations, we present statements that are analyzed using discourse analysis tools proposed by Foucault. When analyzing the discourse, the intention is not to interpret what is behind the enunciating act, but to analyze what is visible. It is to look at the exterior and not look for something hidden. The study does not intend

5 It is important to note that the names of the interviewees used in this study have been chosen personally by each participant. Some maintained their civil and/or social name; others have opted for anonymity, choosing another name for identification in the study. In Gisele's first interview, she identified herself as Ricardo and acknowledged herself as gay. Over time, she acknowledged her transsexuality and came out, and was interviewed for the study once again.

6 Terms of Informed Consent have been used with those interviewed in the study.

to read between the lines of the statements produced by the research participants, or to judge the true meaning that their statements may or may not have, but to problematize and analyze what is said, what is placed in their narratives, discussing their implications in the constitution of their subjectivities. We highlight the intertwining of these statements, problematizing how social instances reproduce a heteronormative discourse,⁷ interpolating the participants.

THE FAMILY INSTITUTION: A SPACE FOR SOCIALIZATION?

The family is perhaps one of the first educational spaces in which LGBT individuals find difficulties and conflicts in relation to their identification and recognition as such, since it is their first space of socialization. We thus problematize how this instance effects the constitution of individuals, instituting ways of being and acting within society. In a family, several values, norms, and beliefs are (re) produced, particularly in relation to gender and sexual identities, reinforcing the heteronormative discourse.

Veto highlights the difficulty in coming out to his family as homosexual:

In the family, certainly, because the person is raised a certain way, with the parents thinking about a future for that son, and that for me is a kind of pressure. So, my father wants me to be a certain way; my father has a dream for me to have a family, to build a family, to have children [...]. I don't want that for myself. [...] I've had parental pressure. My dad said, - "When you grow up, I want you to be like me."

Discourses (re)produced by the family institute socially suitable modes, attitudes and postures. However, the expectations of mothers and fathers in relation to the ways of being a man or a woman, for example, are not always met by their children. This causes great concern and may lead to repulsion and exclusion of some individuals from their family circle.

In her statement, Cindy points out the troubled relationship she had with her mother. In contrast, she believes her father would have been more understanding if he had been living with her when she came out. She highlights that she first came out as a homosexual, and later over time, she began to recognize herself and came out as a transvestite.

[...] In my family, the only one who did not accept me was my mother. She kicked me out of the house, and said horrible things to me. [...] She was the person who discriminated against me the most. Actually, with my father...I

7 We understand heteronormativity as "the set of values, norms, devices, and mechanisms that define heterosexuality as the only legitimate and natural form of sexual and identity expression" (Carvalho; Andrade; Junqueira, 2009, p. 20). Discussions that reinforce and (re)produce heterosexuality as a norm, and characterize other subjectivities as deviant and abnormal, compose the discourse of heteronormativity.

never had any supervision from him, because when I was very little, he was an alcoholic, and he was hospitalized, when I was still very little. [...] The few memories I have of him are good – so I am sure that if sober, he would accept me with no problem at all.

Gisele highlights that when she came out to her family, her mother did not accept it; it was her sister who always supported her. Over time, her mother began to understand and increasingly accept her. However, when she came out as transsexual, Gisele guarantees that her relationship with her family, particularly with her mother (her father had passed away before she came out to her family), improved considerably.

It got better, like, 100, 200, 300%. My mother treats me super well, gives me women's clothes... My sister, too – she always knew, right? My brother (who had some prejudice) and my sister-in-law, today, think I'm a diva.

Maria Regina highlights that her family currently accepts her transsexuality with no problems. However, when she first came out to her family, her mother showed difficulties towards it:

[...] my mom even thought I may even be gay, but a gay dressed as a man. She didn't want me to be dressed as a woman. She was afraid of the prejudice, and she was afraid of what others would think. But it wasn't really the others, it was more the family. [...] When I was younger, I came out as gay and they had a lot of prejudice. [...] My dad always told me that it made no difference at all for him. My attitude will continue the same, if I am a masculine gay man, an effeminate gay man, or if I am a transvestite or a transsexual.

Maria Regina points out a factor of great concern to her mother in relation to her sexual and gender identity. The mother did not accept at the time that Maria Regina would deviate from what is socially allowed: Boys following the masculine gender; and girls following the feminine gender. It is through this prism that Butler (2010) discusses cultural intelligibility. For this author, there is a social imposition that emphasizes coherence and continuity between sex, gender, sexual practice, and desire.

[...] The cultural matrix through which gender identity becomes intelligible demands that certain types of 'identity' cannot 'exist' – that is, those in which gender does not follow from sex and those in which practices of desire do not "follow" either sex or "gender". In this context, "to follow" would be a political relation of rights instituted by the cultural laws that establish and regulate the form and meaning of sexuality. Thus, from the point of view of this field, certain types of "gender identities" seem to be mere flaws in development or logical impossibilities, precisely because they do not conform to the norms of cultural intelligibility. (idem, p. 39)

According to her mother, Maria Regina does not correspond to this socially instituted intelligibility, because she does not establish coherence between sex, gender, sexual practice, and desire. Maria Regina causes disorder in socially constructed norms of gender and sexuality. She presents an incoherent and non-hegemonic gender identity. This can also be understood from the situation experienced by Luciana Guerra, who considers herself to be a lesbian transsexual. Before going out dressed with women's clothing and coming out as transsexual outside her home, she first told her parents. She told them she would change her body, that she was going through a process of taking hormones, and that she wished to have a woman's body, and not a man's.

They kept asking me, - 'Okay, but if you like women, how are you going to have a woman's body?' And I'd be like, - 'Yes, but I still like women, I just want to have a woman's body.' [...] And then my dad cried, my mom said a lot of stuff (I think I got this from her) she kept saying a lot of things and asking questions... Saying, - 'But you can't be like that. No woman will want you.' [...] So, it was very complicated. It was something that is unresolved like this, until today.

Maria Regina affirms that she could not wait for her mother to accept her way of being and dressing, since it would mean not considering her own happiness.

If I keep postponing it because of my mother, what if my mother lasts a hundred years? How long will I be unhappy? No, I can't - that would be wrong to do to myself. I can't stop living because of what my mom thinks is right or wrong. I have to live my life. That's when I left the house and went to live my life. [...] I left to live with other friends. [...] You end up having other connections with people that understand you, that experience the same things as you do, and suffer the same as you do.

The strategy adopted by Maria Regina is the same that several lesbians, gays, transvestites, and transsexuals take when they are not expelled from their own families. The freedom to be able to be and act as they wish leads several LGBT people to abandon the space that, at the time, imposes limitations on them. In this sense, they seek groups and people with similar interests as them, finding a way to live without giving up what they want.

The difficulty faced by family members in accepting subjectivities that differ from heterosexuality is not attributed only to the fact that it is determined as the norm, but also in relation to the scorn they suffer in different social instances. This is what Luciana Guerra and Leo affirm:

Luciana Guerra: [...] There was an opportunity when my mom caught me dressed in women's clothing, and she ended up being very tough, like... She said people would cut me off, that I could get beat up on the streets and that she didn't want me to do this at home or anywhere else; that when I could support

myself and not depend on them I could change into whatever I wanted, but out of her sight.

Leo: I told my mom I was in love with a man [...]. And my mother cried a lot [...]. That happened when I was 12 years old. I was scared, but I faced it [...]. I was scared of everything, actually – I was also scared of my mother being disappointed for having a homosexual son, but also of the people in the street. People talked very badly about homosexuality, we were treated differently everywhere – it was something bad and inexplicable. She was never able to cut me off, but my mother was afraid, as she said, of the prejudice I'd suffer out there [...]. And her fear (and my father's and my sisters') was that I would suffer prejudice on the street, that I'd get beat up – all the things homosexuals suffer.

Nevertheless, it seems that the deviation from heterosexuality – and consequently from the norm – is the reason for great concern within the families of LGBT individuals. Although it is evident that contemporary family arrangements have been distanced from the traditional model formed by a white Christian heterosexual couple, families have strong expectations in relation to their children's forming other hegemonic families.

Therefore, the family is one of the instruments used for the governmentality of the lives of people in society. It seeks to conduct the lives of subjects through different strategies or normative practices, regulating their ways of being. Families are involved in disciplining bodies and individuals, normalizing them and bringing them to the norm (Klauss, 2004).

Foucault (2008) affirmed that family as a modality of governmentality disappeared with the emergence of political science and the establishment of other ways of governing. The family is now a support for governing the populace. As the family becomes an interior part of the population, it is no longer a model and becomes a “simply privileged segment, because when one wants to obtain something from the population in relation to sexual behavior, demography, the number of children, consumption, one has to effectively go through the family” (*idem*, p. 139).

According to Foucault (2001a), by the mid-eighteenth century, the family, which was characterized as the relational family concerned with kinship transmissions, relations of descendance, and division of assets was reconfigured. That is, the bourgeois and aristocrat family that controlled the sexuality of children and that started a campaign against masturbation was reorganized in the early nineteenth century into the family cell, that is a substantial, affective type of family. The family cell is constituted as a space of direct contact between parents and children. Parents have careful surveillance over children, diminishing the contact of children with servants. This means that “at the same moment in which the family cell is enclosed within a dense affective space, an investment is made in this family in the name of disease, of a rationality connecting it with technology, to external medical power and knowledge” (*idem*, p. 317).

Since the moment when masturbation became a cause for concern of the family- cell institution, this space was traversed by medical rationality. Parents began to control the sexuality of the children, controlling their gestures, and producing a diagnosis in order for medical intervention to occur.

To summarize, the instance of the medicalized family functions as a principle of normalization. It is this family that receives all immediate power over the bodies of children, with no intermediaries, but which is controlled from the outside by medical techniques and knowledge – that will allow the rise of notions of normal and abnormal in the sexual order after the first decades of the nineteenth century. The family will be the principle of determination and discrimination of sexuality, as well as the principle of correcting the abnormal. (*idem*, p. 322)

We notice that this constitution of the family that disciplines, that seeks to correct the attitudes and behaviors of children, and which is also an agent of medicalization – that is, which seeks intervention strategies in medical knowledge – is also present today. In this sense, we highlight how the family has also produced effects in the constitution of gay, transvestite, and transsexual people, which often suggests and imposes that they seek physicians or psychologists to explain homosexuality, transvesticity, and transsexuality. One of the first reactions from parents upon learning about their children's homosexuality, for example, is to think of ways to obtain "treatment and cure" for homosexuality, since it is seen as an abnormal practice or posture.

The process of breaking social norms, of revealing attitudes and gestures that are not in keeping with social impositions, as Butler (2010) mentions, is a way to make the body a target of control and investigation not only by the family, but also by medical and psychological institutions.

MEDICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONS: IN SEARCH OF TREATMENTS...

Medical and psychological instances emphasized in this text are also constitutive of subjects. According to Foucault (2011), since the nineteenth century, the social function of medicine in a society of normalization is conducted through psychiatry. In this sense, the power of medicine emerges in several contexts: In the family, schools, courts, and also advances over sexuality, education, etc. "The norm becomes a criteria of division of individuals. Given that a society of the norm is being constituted, medicine as the science of – above all – the normal and pathological, will be the queen science" (*idem*, p. 395).

Many doctors contribute to producing us based on norms – whether in relation to ways of eating, exercising, or concerning general health care. "Authorized voices" of physicians and experts of several *psych* areas, for example, dictate the ways that we should care for our bodies and sexualities. In this sense, they wind up classifying subjects and their ways of being and acting based on countless

strategies, establishing abnormality and normality. Based on this supposition, we can understand some medical institutions as heterotopias. Foucault affirms that heterotopias are effective places presented in society in which “real positions that may be found within a culture are at the same time represented, contested, and inverted – types of places that are outside all other places, although they are effectively localizable” (Foucault, 2001b, p. 145).

We understand psychiatric and psychological institutions as heterotopias of deviance, as Foucault defines this type of heterotopia as “those in which individuals whose behavior deviates from the average or the demanded norm are located. They are nursing homes, and psychiatric clinics; prisons are also well understood [...]” (*idem*, p. 416). These instances thus become places that establish ways of being by exerting certain mechanisms of control and vigilance over subjects and their bodies, particularly over those seen as deviant from the norm. The normalizing practices applied to these subjects depend on the experienced context.

The interviewees discussed their understanding and association between homosexuality and pathology, commenting that they have been sent to psychologists at some point in their lives, because their families believed it was necessary to “treat” their sexual or gender identity. In this sense, psychologists ultimately exert “a certain power over deciding the path that someone should take” (Foucault, 2011, p. 308).

Luciana Guerra: Actually, my mom proposed this for me and I thought it was great. I said, - So okay, we’ll go see a psychologist. [...] I went there and the psychologist spoke... After like, 30 minutes talking, she said, - Look, I have nothing to say to you. I have to talk to your parents, because I can see you’re pretty sure of this.

Cindy: Yes, from ages 7 to 14. And it was normal for me, because I’d go, I would draw, converse, talk,– that’s how it was. And then, at the last psychologist I went to, like... and she [the mother] always insisting to the psychologists, that there was something wrong [...]. And then, when I came out the treatment by psychologists stopped, because there was no use anymore, right? We went to group visits, me, her and the psychologist, and she’d start crying. She said she wouldn’t accept it, I don’t know, that she didn’t have a son anymore.

Leo: My mother wanted to take me to the children’s court, to get sent to psychologists, because at this time I already had friends living on my street that were homosexuals. I think they were 15 years old, I was 12, and my mom thought it was very wrong for me to hang out with that kind of people.

Naraya Luisa Brum: [...] I had to go to 5 psychologists. All 5 told me it was a phase. One of them, even, in her way of wanting to change me and get me out of this phase, she tried to seduce me. She used tight clothing, low-cut blouses

with her breast's nearly out, tight pants and stuff, but I saw her and said: , - One day I'm going to dress like that.

Gisele: She [her mother] wanted to take me to a psychologist, too, to see if there was something on my mind, I don't know? She forbade me to do lots of things, she wouldn't even let me go out. When I did, she was on my case, always asking someone to watch over me to see what I'd do when I was in the street.

It is interesting to note both the strategies used by families, specifically by mothers in this study, to "treat" their children's homosexuality or transsexuality, and the strategies adopted by some psychologists in their offices. Statements by Naraya Luisa Brum revealed that one psychologist sought to have her deviate from transsexuality by using a mechanism of seduction.

According to Foucault (2010b), psychology appeared in the West in the fifteenth century, with the history of madness. In the experience with madness, the space of internment reflects a process of segregating the mad. Internment thus not only had a function of exclusion, but also revealed a social organization. According to Foucault (*idem*, p.83)., internment:

[...] approximated, in a unitary field, people and values among which previous cultures had not noticed any similarity. Imperceptibly, it established a gradient among them in the direction of madness, preparing an experience – our experience – in which they would be noted as already integrated to the domain of mental alienation. In order to make this approximation, an entire reorganization of the ethical world was necessary to create new boundaries between good and evil, recognized and condemned, and the establishment of new norms in social integration.

Foucault (*idem*) highlights that experiences related to sexuality have been brought closer to madness since the 17th century and placed in to exile, constituting the world of insanity. Among these experiences are those related to family, that is, to the bourgeois family organization. In the late eighteenth century, some forms of sexuality were then related to insanity and mental illness. In the modern era, a division between rational and mad love was established, departing from Classicism. Homosexuality, for example, was related in this context to insanity, occupying over time a position that is closer to madness. Sexuality itself is placed at the division between reason and insanity and, consequently, between the norm and abnormality, between health and illness (*idem, ibidem*).

Internment assumes the role of isolating those that represent a danger to society; including those with venereal disease, the libertines, the wanton, and the insane. Internment, based on the separation of those who are socially excluded is configured more as a space for operating strategies of power than as a medical space to differentiate subjects (Silveira; Simanke, 2009). The practice of internment in the seventeenth century was not configured as a medical space, there was no connection between hospitalization and medicine at the time.

According to Foucault (2010b), it is after the eighteenth century that medicine established itself within the scenario of madness, through the study of curing nervous diseases. In this context of cure, the emergence of observation psychiatry is enabled, establishing a dialog between the physician and the insane. Some therapeutic ideas about curing madness were developed. However, in the classic era there was no distinction between physical, psychological, or moral medication, given that psychology did not exist. This only occurred in the nineteenth century, when moral methods were created. “The distinction between the physical and the moral only become a practical concept in the medicine of spirit when the issue of madness shifted into a questioning of responsible subjects” (*idem*. p. 325).

Thus, psychology was born, it is not seen as a truth about madness, but it indicates that madness is dissociated from its truth, which was insanity (*idem*).

That is, man only became a ‘psychologicalizable species’ once their relationship with madness allowed for a psychology, that is at the moment that their relation with madness was defined by an exterior dimension of exclusion and punishment, and by an interior dimension of moral mortgaging and guilt. By situating madness in relation to these two fundamental foci, man of the early nineteenth century enabled a position about madness and through it a general psychology. (Foucault, 1975, p. 59)

Filho and Trisotto (2007, p.12) discuss psychology by understanding it as a discipline of the norm. They affirm that psychology has the power to say who are the individuals, to speak of what is our subjectivity; “however, it always enunciates us as subjects of the norm, related to it, and comparatively to other subjects like ourselves, naming and marking deviations in terms of averages, curves, conducts appropriate or not, sanctioned or not, and when not, pathologized”.

It is in this sense that we understand psychological institutions as social and disciplinary instances participating in the constitution of people, based on strategies of governmentality that classify them. According to Foucault (2002), contemporary psychology can be characterized by the investigation and analysis of the abnormal. Although statements of those we interviewed do not reveal that psychologists had exerted any corrective practice or intervention (except in the case of Naraya Luisa Brum), psychology very often labeled them, and attributing to those who escape the norm the necessary sanctions.

Psychological institutions thus institute ways of being and acting based on their discourses, which often reproduce and reinforce prejudices in relation to sexual and gender identities. These discourses often classify homosexuality, for example, as pathology.

Nevertheless, in 1973, the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from the official list of psychiatric ailments, and it was also removed from the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD). In 1980, the term homosexuality began to be used. The World Health Organization (WHO) excluded homosexuality from its list of mental

diseases on May 17, 1990, which became International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia.

Although homosexuality, for example, has been withdrawn from the list of mental illness in the late twentieth century, some psychology and psychiatric specialists have treated homosexuality as a deviation, establishing strategies to recuperate homosexual individuals, seeking a way to intervene and guide a cure for this disease.

Meanwhile, for transsexuals to be able to modify their bodies through sex change or genital reassignment surgery, they must be diagnosed, and if they are approved in the medical and psychological tests conducted, they can have the body and “sex” they desire. In this sense, medical and psychological knowledge continues to scrutinize homosexuals, transvestites, and transsexuals, conducting detailed examinations of their bodies and seeking in a certain way to classify them, and intervene upon them.

In medical and psychological instances, we must confess our attitudes and behaviors to later receive diagnosis and treatment. Gays, transvestites, and transsexuals, for example, are constant targets of this technique of production of truth in medical offices. They are sent to these spaces to receive treatment and perhaps to cure the “pathology” that ails them, through the gaze and intervention of psychologists and even psychiatrists.

According to Foucault (2011, p. 306):

[...] since the eighteenth century, one of the greatest functions of medicine, psychic, psychiatric, psychopathological, and neurological medicine, was precisely to replace religion, and reconvert sin into disease, to show that that which was a sin perhaps was not be punished at that time, but it would certainly be now. This was one of the great functions of medicine in the eighteenth century.

Although medicine in the eighteenth century proposed to substitute sin with disease, the gender and sexuality practices classified as transgressive were also under surveillance by religious instances. In many instances, sexuality must be confessed – that is, techniques for the production of truth are imposed on individuals. Religious institutions also sought to intervene to some extent on the lives of so-called deviant individuals, using strategies to bring them to normality, to heterosexuality.

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS: HOMOSEXUALITY AS SIN OR “PUNISHMENT”?

Religious institutions, based on their rituals and beliefs, determine what behaviors are socially and morally accepted, guiding the lives of individuals. Some institutions seek to establish norms through their religious dictates, based on what is written in the Bible for example. In these instances, heterosexuality is reinforced as the only, natural, and legitimate form of relationship.

Each culture certainly has a coherent series of gestures of apportionment, from which the prohibition of incest, the delimitation of madness, and perhaps some religious exclusions are only particular cases. The function of these gestures, in a strict sense of the term, is ambiguous: at the same time as they mark the limit, they create space for an always possible transgression. This space thus scrutinized and opened has its own configuration and laws: It forms for each epoch, what could be called a “transgressive system”. (*idem*, p. 271)

Transgressive practices of gender and sexuality are censored and captured, for example, by the discourse of salvation. Many religious instances establish control over the body and the desires of individuals, who are marked by confession – a specific technique for production of truth that still operates in many religious institutions, seeking to bring the deviant individual into the zone of normality.

Questioned about what leads people to not accept sexual and gender multiplicity, that is, distinct forms of experiencing our desires and pleasures of being, Luciana Guerra comments that religion and its articulation with other issues is one of its great contributing factors.

It's the religious issue. This is what leads people to not accept it, most people and especially the family. [...] There is another issue in addition to religion, which is machismo, which does not necessarily come from religion. Maybe a good deal of sexism, does, but it's the issue of machismo along with religion. Both on the street, because it's a dishonor for a father to have a gay son – not only religiously speaking, but for him to, in that case, not establish a family, not be able to have a family with his own natural children – but also because it's against God's will.

Several religious institutions wind up becoming regulators of social practices. Discourses reproduced in this space reinforce prejudice by reaffirming that sexual identities that diverge from heterosexuality are sinful practices. Natividade (2009) emphasizes that compulsory heterosexuality is manifested in religious discourses in different ways, be it from a silence about issues of genders and sexualities, or from the (re)production of discourses and representations that lead to prejudice against LGBT subjects.

Some religious instances also use discourses to welcome homosexuals, transvestites, and transsexuals. However, limits are established, that is, they are welcome as long as their transgressive gender and sexual identities are not visible in these spaces. Conservative strategies are (re)produced at every moment.

On the other hand, one of the interviewees sought in the doctrine of Spiritism explanations for her homosexuality and transsexuality.

A person is born gay. She doesn't become gay [...]. I don't think it's genetic. I think it's within religion. I believe in Spiritism. For Spiritism, people who are gay had a lot of prejudice in their previous lives, or were in a rush to reincarnate. Or it's a person who was very bad. More or less, they reincarnate into gay life.

So, I believe in religion. [...] Maybe in my past life I had a lot of prejudice, maybe I killed a gay guy, maybe I had a relationship with some transsexual and killed her – or I did something bad to her.

Gisele emphasizes that living as a homosexual and later as a transsexual is a way to “pay” for a “mistake” made in previous lives, as if it were a way to live the experience she discriminated against in a previous life, seeking within Spiritism an explanation for her sexual and gender identity. It is possible to find in Gisele’s speech how the “explanation” for her homosexuality and transsexuality is in a search for something that escapes us – that is, within religion.

Natividade (2009, p. 130) highlights that, when analyzing some studies discussing the relation between sexual diversity and religion, it is important to first:

[...] highlight the experience of very plural responses that vary among different religions, as within a single denomination or even at the heart of a local group. [...] At least on a normative plane, there are religions within which there would be room for a relative valorization of sexual diversity (such as Afro-Brazilian religions), while Catholic and Evangelical positions express a persistent rejection of homosexual practices, qualified as a sin based on different discursive strategies.

Many religious institutions have sought to steer the conduct of individuals. They seek to regulate and normalize deviant attitudes and behaviors through strategies of governmentality. This act of governing instructs individuals to confess their practices and desires so that “punishments” may operate upon them, so they can establish a “normal standard” of sexuality – heterosexuality. Homosexualities, transvestities, and transsexualities receive several classifications in the discourses (re)produced by these institutions. These counter-hegemonic subjectivities are seen as anti-natural practices, as abominations, as sins, because there is no possibility for procreation, they do not correspond to the constitution of a patriarchal family. This view comes mainly with instances connected to Christianity.

As it became the religion of the state, Christianity brought new mechanisms of power to the history of sexuality and pleasures, such as the aforementioned pastoral power. Therefore, since that time, the history of sexuality in the West has been more closely associated with mechanisms and strategies of power than to prohibitions (Foucault, 2010a).

However, Natividade (2009) highlights that historically there was a certain conflict in the relation between sexual diversity and Christianity, which has been marked by the reproduction of discourses and norms that control and regulate sexuality.

André Musskopf (2012) highlights that although certain advances have been made in relation to the articulation between religiousness and sexuality, there is a great impasse between the religious sphere and sexual rights, bringing to light the effects produced in society by religious intolerance. The author affirms that this intolerance has driven some religious movements to interfere in political issues, which winds up affecting the secular quality of the country.

We see some churches conducting discussions and advancing in issues related to sexuality, and a proliferation of “inclusive churches” (which are not always necessarily more open to experiencing that sexuality), while at the same time we see increasingly virulent attacks on topics such as sexual diversity and rights from other churches and religious groups. This demonstrates in what way the control over bodies by certain political and ideological systems resists and how certain religious traditions have particularly served as a channel for this control. (*idem*, p.145)

In this contemporary context, many discourses emerge on the effects produced by religious intolerance on the realm of human rights. Numerous religious discourses have prevented advances in relation to rights and plurality from being established. Religious pressure, particularly from fundamentalists, and conflict with the homosexual movement have led to countless debates, in the political sphere as well.

In the following section, we discuss how the LGBT movement has been articulating in the struggle to fight prejudice, becoming characterized as a social instance that also constitutes individuals, and as an educational space.

THE LGBT ASSOCIATION: A SPACE FOR STRUGGLE AND VISIBILITY!

Spaces in which the LGBT movement gathers and discuss issues of interest, particularly in relation to human rights, are also spaces that constitute individuals. The LGBT Association in Rio Grande is, therefore, also one of the instances in which the participants of this study produce their subjectivities. In this space they articulate proposals to struggle for equal rights, and for the visibility of the movement in the city, and it is where they exercise strategies of governmentality. The attitudes of the individuals are to some extent, controlled and conducted.

Ferrari (2004) discusses that the homosexual movement has sought its place within the public sphere, constituting itself as a space for the production of knowledge, for debate, and for political struggle beyond its walls. The movement is also an educational space. “The work of the gay movement constitutes essentially what Foucault classifies as a political cause, in terms of the discourse produced about sex, sexuality, desire, and truth – that is, with the reflections of our modern heritage” (*idem*, p. 114). For this author, the homosexual movement emerges from a concern for the politics of identities, gender, and sexuality. It appears with the proposal to reveal other possibilities for experiencing homosexualities, highlighting positive aspects about them.

According to Facchini (2005), the homosexual movement emerged in Brazil in the late 1970s, and is represented by two waves. The first wave in 1978 would be characterized by the emergence of Grupo Somos [The We Are Group] in São Paulo, and by the newspaper *Lampião da Esquina* [Corner Streetlight]. Grupo Somos was characterized as a model for political articulation and organization, acquiring visibility due to its action and because of the importance it had in the life experience of the people who passed through this space. The newspaper *Lampião*

da Esquina enabled many groups to become known and gain visibility, since it promoted the work these groups did.

In 1980, Grupo Somos divided into three: Grupo Somos, Grupo Ação Lésbica-Feminista [Lesbian-Feminist Action Group] (GALF), and the Grupo de Ação Homossexualista [Homosexualist Action Group], which later became known as Outra Coisa [Something Else]. The homosexual movement suffered countless conflicts and declines, which can be understood because of the onset of AIDS. *Lampião da Esquina* closed in 1981.

With the appearance of AIDs in the early 1980s, understood as the gay plague, social representations and prejudice against homosexuality, intensified. The homosexual movement organized, mobilized, and took positions, promoting social actions to prevent and fight AIDs and prejudice (Ribeiro; Soares; Fernandes, 2009). However, this articulation between AIDs and homosexuality still remains in the social imaginary. Since 1980, the movement has been gaining strength in human rights struggles and within the political sphere, seeking to demystify social discourses that reproduce prejudice towards gender and sexual identities.

In this context, the second wave of the movement can be highlighted by the appearance of Grupo Gay in Bahia (GGB – Salvador), as well as Grupo Triângulo Rosa [The Pink Triangle Group] and Atobá in Rio de Janeiro. The negative relation between AIDs and homosexuality led the Grupo Triângulo Rosa to not discuss the fight against AIDs. In turn, both GGB and Atobá were able to articulate proposals that gave a collective response to this negative position, promoting a separation between homosexuality and AIDs. This was one of the aspects that marked the second wave of the homosexual movement (Facchini, 2005).

According to Facchini, the 1990s was marked by the resurgence of the homosexual movement in Brazil. In 1992, various groups appeared in national meetings of the movement. Among countless conferences with national discussions about homosexuality and discrimination, and due to the participation of several groups from the movement, the Associação Brasileira de Gays, Lésbicas, Bissexuais, Travestis e Transexuais [The Brazilian Association of Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals, Transvestites and Transsexuals] (ABGLT) emerged in 1995 which had been publishing papers and proposals within the movement and promoting action to fight prejudice and to acknowledge LGBT rights.

Ramos (2005) points out that the 1990s was a decade characterized by important events related to homosexuality, such as: 1) The emergence of actions in the realm of human rights in legislatures and the courts; 2) the increasing number of spaces for LGBT sociability, and of products related to gays and lesbians (magazines, *websites*, etc.); 3) the appearance of groups to support and defend homosexuals; and 4) the organizing of activists and homosexuals in the struggle for visibility and the emergence of gay pride parades, or LGBT parades.

Gay pride parades have been characterized as some of the events with the greatest prominence among the actions of the movement. This organization promotes intense articulations among LGBT groups. The LGBT association in Rio Grande, for example, has been working on the organization of this action for three years, among other activities such as debate seminars about issues related to

sexual and gender multiplicity as well as homophobia, and Miss Gay and Miss Transex pageants. The purpose of these proposals is to involve not only the LGBT movement, but also society as a whole.

We interviewed the president of the LGBT association in Rio Grande to understand how the group was organized and the context in which it emerged. The LGBT association in Rio Grande was created in October 2010, when the current president Robert de Almeida organized the Miss Gay pageant in the city. At the same time, a city councilman was preparing a bill to establish December 18 as Gay Pride Day in the city.

Based on the proposal for the Miss Gay Rio Grande pageant, and the municipal Gay Pride Day bill (6920/10), an assembly was held on October 19 2010 to create the LGBT association of Rio Grande and elect a board of directors. At the meeting, the social objectives of the association were presented, as well as the proposed bylaws to be discussed and approved by those present.

Robert discussed the creation of the Association, highlighting the LGBT Pride Parade as an event of great visibility.

Actually, the Association emerged from the Miss [pageant]. Since it was almost the end of the year, we had to hold an event to give the Association this visibility, and that's why we thought of the parade. [...] So, we already had several people participating and getting closer, articulating with us in the Association while we were assembling and registering it. So the first thing we thought of was to hold an event with great visibility.

While seeking visibility for the movement, the LGBT association also pointed out some paths for people involved with it to gain respect from society, as Robert points out:

[...] I think I know about 70% of the LGBT population in my city, and I see that the biggest problem, the greatest sadness, is for them to have to stop studying or to not be able to use their skills in a job. Because society is still making this distinction. [...] So we have to face it. [...] You didn't finish school, go back. You don't have a specialization? Then go and get one. Go for it and fight, because it's that union, this strength that will change this society. Because if we accept it... I've suffered prejudice, so I'm terrified and I don't leave the house? But they will still throw stones at me. So, I have to get together with everyone going through the same problem, and we'll face it together. Special training? A job? Let's go for it.

Robert indicates the importance of people articulating the visibility of gender and sexual identity to professional skills and to continued studies. The search for visibility and respect both for oneself and for the LGBT Association seems to require certain ways of acting. During the participant observation at the Association discussion meetings, we noticed a few governmentality strategies operating upon members of the Association, which require them to be coherent with the proposal

of the movement. There was a debate about the continuation of a member in a position of responsibility within the Association:

[...] First, they began to discuss whether or not a certain member would remain in the organization of the parade. According to the people present, she only comes close to the Association when the parade is getting close, as if it were a way to grant her visibility in this event. They commented on the impossibility of preventing someone from participating in the organization as support but emphasized the importance of not giving her any important functions since, according to them, this person caused disturbances and disagreements among participants and organizers in previous events. [Excerpt from Field Journals, 11/5/12]

At another moment, they discussed the attitudes of another member in the Association who had displeased both the president and other group members. They had been debating how the Association would proceed considering that a participant had an altercation with a transvestite on the street, which got attention on social media. They decided that the entire group would speak with the member:

[...] The member of the Association involved in the altercation recognized her mistake, saying she understands how she must have exemplary behavior as a member of the board of the Association, and not encourage violence. Recognizing her error by arguing with someone, she promised herself she would not do this again, since as part of the Association she must work for respect and minimal violence. She said that if that ever happened again, she would resign from the Association herself [...]. [Excerpt from Field Journals, 11/29/12]

Although the Association is constituted as an instance that also regulates the practice of subjects to some extent, as evidenced in the aforementioned case, it is also characterized as an educational space in which subjectivities are produced while members get educated at the same time, highlighting the importance of the LGBT movement and the city LGBT association in the lives of the participants of this study.

Gisele: I always followed the LGBT Association here and now even more, because I see that being transsexual or a transvestite is a bit more complicated. Usually there is more prejudice from people – I know because I've already felt it, that prejudice. – 'Oh, it's a transvestite or a transsexual, she has AIDS. She's a prostitute. She has diseases.'

Maria Regina: I'm a militant. I am a member of the LGBT Association in Rio Grande; it's for myself, because if I didn't have access to the association (which is new, right?), I always had to fight for myself – to put my foot down and say that this is who I am and nobody will change [me].

Naraya Luisa Brum: I like it, because I think a lot about the work market for the queens, because that'll be a future for me. When I graduate, I'll have to shave my hair and wear men's clothes to get a job. [...] So, this is what I think, and what I see from the ones working on the corners: I see a lot of people have a future there.

Veto: Actually, I kind of parachuted into this Association... I was going to photograph the entire event of the Rio Grande Gay Parade, and thought their fight was cool. I'd never expose myself – maybe because of a bit of prejudice on my part, and I thought that their unity was cool: To fight for a cause. I'm going to fight along, and turn my cheek.

Considering these statements, we highlight the importance of the homosexual movement in the constitution of LGBT people, as well as the learning that takes place in group meeting spaces. This space of political struggle produces effects on the subjectivation processes of participants in the group, but also in society, based on their collective action in the fight for equal rights, visibility, and recognition, and by the deconstruction of discourses that reproduce prejudices towards sexual and gender multiplicity.

FINAL REMARKS

Based on a few Foucaultian tools and analytical operations, we have sought to point out some of the effects produced by some social instances on the subjectivation of gay, transvestite, and transsexual individuals who participated in this study.

According to the statements produced using the thematic oral history methodology and participant observation, the family as the primary space for socialization strives for the coherence between sex, gender, sexual practice, and desire. This understanding is expressed in statements by Maria Regina, for example, when she highlights that her mother would not accept her taking a feminine posture when she came out as gay. Medical and psychological institutions seek to diagnose and normalize the attitudes of “deviant” subjects. This discussion is present in statements by Naraya Luisa Brum, who reported that one of her psychologists somehow tried to seduce her for her to stop being transsexual. Religious institutions highlight the importance of family reproduction, seeking to “condemn” transgressive practices and often presenting them as sins. This is revealed in the speech of Luciana Guerra, when she states that from a religious point of view not establishing a family in a “*natural*” ways and being homosexual, transvestite, or transsexual is an act against the will of God. Finally, the homosexual movement represented in this study by the LGBT Association in Rio Grande also steers the practices and attitudes of participants by instituting postures that are suitable and coherent with the politics of the movement. The statements produced in field journals express this debate by indicating, for example, discussion among Association members about how to react to a member that had gotten involved in a street fight.

We have discussed how these social instances, at the same time that they are constituted as educative spaces, also operate governmentality strategies that seek to steer the attitudes and postures of individuals.

[...] to educate is to govern over others (to guide, steer, and direct), but this guidance, steering, and direction can be understood as a two-way action: From the outside in, and from the inside out. Thus, to educate would also be action that allows individuals to act upon themselves; and in this way, to educate would not only be to govern others, but to help incite, induce, so that the other's govern themselves. (Noguera-Ramírez, 2009, p. 46)

By instituting ways of being and acting and by producing knowledge, the social spaces discussed in this paper develop and use some strategies of governmentality on subjects and also educate them. These educational spaces establish normal and abnormal behaviors in the light of social impositions, and seek in some way to bring deviant subjects into a zone of normality, using analysis, observation, and discipline. These instances govern the positioning and attitudes of individuals to (re)produce and (re)affirm the discourse of heteronormativity by reproducing values and beliefs, and producing diagnoses and affirming rules that is based on the “conduction of conduct” (Foucault, 2008).

Heteronormativity is expressed and reinforced in different social spaces through norms of sexual and gender regulation, reproducing practices of discrimination and exclusion, given that these norms focus on negation and invisibility of certain subjectivities. Therefore, we highlight the importance of problematizing, questioning, and contesting it.

To establish the discourse of heteronormativity in society, they exert governmentality mechanisms and strategies on the lives of individuals, in an attempt to avoid the blurring⁸ of lines, thus evidencing normality. However, many LGBT subjectivities construct and see themselves through this process of transgressing the imposed norms.

Therefore, the educational spaces discussed in this text also reveal a mode of governing – since the word “government” does not only refer to “the instituted and legitimate forms of economic and political overcoming, but to modes of action that are more or less calculated and reflected; however, all are aimed at acting upon the possibilities for action of other individuals” (Dreyfus; Rabinow, 2010, p. 288). Based on conservative knowledge, practices, and discourses – that is, of regulatory strategies – these spaces produce effects on subjectivation processes, seeking to control sexual and gender subversions that may cause disorder within the heterosexual matrix.

8 We use this term in the sense of breaking through, cutting, transgressing.

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