

Sexual Politics, Pride, and Media Mediation in Spain

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Abstract

Media are fundamental in the processes of identity construction. In the case of social movements, media also play an important role for the visibilization of the movements and their claims, and for the mobilization of the population (Shner and Aviv, 2006; Carroll and Ratner, 1999: 3). I aim to analyze media mediation and LGTB activism through the analysis of the impact in media of LGTB Pride celebrations in Barcelona and Madrid in 2010. This analysis is part of a wider project based on intensive ethnographic fieldwork about identities and pride. I have undertaken qualitative content analysis of selected media and compared the topics displayed with the topics that appear in the Pride official webpages designed by the organizing LGTB organizations in Madrid and Barcelona. The conclusions confirm the display of different communicative strategies used in popular media and emic (or native) social media that point out to an intention to depoliticize the event and return sexual identities to the private and individual sphere in some popular media.

Keywords: LGTB activism, Pride, media strategies, native media, sexual politics

Sexual Politics, Pride, and Media Mediation in Spain¹

The intersections of media and social movements pose a challenge to the shaping of contemporary activism. Since the 1970s mass media have been considered as key sites of political contention and the production of news has been affirmed as a hegemonic 'system of power' (Gitlin in Carroll and Ratner, 1999: 2) closely related to the management of what is made visible (Ragusa 2003: 221). Although it is evident that movements need the media for mobilization and visibilization, in Spain popular media have remained aside the claims of the grassroots LGTB activists and have only echoed them when they have gained a political dimension². All media talked about homosexual marriage once the proposed law was being discussed in the Parliament (and was finally passed in 2005) but grassroots activism is rarely present in popular media. However, social media set an opportunity for activism to reach publicity, control the information and 'get the message out' (Stone, 1993 in Carroll and Ratner, 1999). Media play a fundamental role in the conformation and reproduction of social imaginaries and cultural repertoires and they are fundamental for the reproduction of order and confirmation/ alteration of stereotypes. As Gibson explains, "media coverage influences the manner in which groups view themselves and are viewed by majority group members' (Gibson 2004). Whereas traditional media work to support hegemonic ideologies and reproduce

¹ A previous draft of this paper was presented at the International Communication Association Conference held in Boston (May 2011).

² Ragusa (2003: 221) reached a similar conclusion in reference to the small power and control over images and visibility of LGTBs in *The New York Times*.

heteronormativity, social movements work to challenge hegemony and challenge heteronormativity. Therefore, there are complex relationships between them that are embedded in processes of hegemony and a multiplicity of relations of subordination as Mouffe suggests (van Zoonen, 1994: 8) .

Pride parading is one of those occasions in which the popular media echo the LGTB movement because the public display of identity promoted by Pride parades is powerful (given the number of people they involve) although ephemeral. Pride parades are related to permanent organizations and cannot be isolated from the sociocultural context (LGBTB activist organizations included) where they occur unless we want to convert Pride in a punctual spectacle or a tourist attraction. So it is important to analyze how Pride-related news are laid. My findings point out that most popular media objectify the Pride and separate parades from activism, thus reinforcing the tensions between media, activism and Pride. Through this objectification subtle mechanisms of domination are enacted (see Chasin 200: 159).

This analysis is part of an ongoing ethnographic research about the organizational strategies of Pride Parades that includes media mediation. It is centred in 2010 celebrations in Madrid and Barcelona (the biggest cities in Spain) and the news that appeared about this celebration in the most popular newspapers of both cities. Barcelona Pride was held on 27th June 2010; all our data are based on the articles published the following day, on 28th June 2010. The State Demonstration in Madrid was held on 3rd July 2010 so our data rely on publications on 4th July 2010. The sample that I have selected includes, for Barcelona, *El Mundo*, *Público*, *Avui*, *El Periódico*, *El País* (Catalunya) and *La Vanguardia* and for Madrid *El Mundo*, *ABC*, *La Razón*, *Público*, *El Periódico* and *El País*³. In selecting this sample I have had into account the diffusion of the papers and their political stance, even though it is not an objective of this article to associate the content of the news on Pride celebrations with the political bias of the paper. All the newspapers in the sample appear in the OJD⁴ and, in terms of diffusion, are the most important papers in both cities.

I have undercarried a detailed qualitative content analysis of media accounts of the events, considering the texts but also the images that accompanied the news.

As part of a bigger research, the analysis relies in participant observation of the celebrations but also in the data obtained in in-depth interviews to members of the organization of Madrid and Barcelona parades and members of local institutions (activists, local council, entrepreneurs).

In Spain, LGTB periodicals and magazines are very scarce (in 2013 only *Shangay* subsists), and social media are extensively used for communication of LGTB related issues through 'official' activist webpages and through other platforms such as facebook or blogs. For example, Madrid offers 'official' information about the LGTB Pride in four different webs: two activist webs (www.cogam.es, the page of the LGTB

³ Avui and La Vanguardia are Catalan newspapers. The rest are nation-wide with editions for Catalonia.

⁴ Source: Oficina de Justificación de la Difusión (OJD), a division of Información y Control de Publicaciones. http://www.ojd.es/OJD/Portal/diarios_ojd/_4DOSpuiQo1Y_FOivPcLIIA (retrieved October 2010).

Association in Madrid and www.felgtb.org, page of the Federation of Spanish LGTB associations) and two more pages centred on Madrid Pride demonstration: orgullolgtb.org (patronized by COGAM and FELGTB) and www.madoweb.com (patronized by entrepreneurs with the collaboration of activists)⁵. Both pages specifically devoted to the Pride consider the demonstration as the central event of the Pride Week. In the case of Barcelona, activism is fragmented and there is not a particular group that assumes entirely the Pride celebration (the 'new' Pride born in 2009); this 'new' Pride is organized by the Catalan entrepreneurial LGTB association (ACEGAL) with the collaboration of activists. There is only one page about the event, www.pridebarcelona.org, and it includes information about all the events of the Pride Week (including the parade).

As stated, all data are based on 2010 Pride celebrations. These events are the main LGTB public activist action. In Madrid, Pride is organized by COGAM and FELGTB (two LGTB associations) with the help of an entrepreneurial association, AEGAL. In Barcelona, it is ACEGAL, the entrepreneurial association, the association which holds more responsibility in the organization. The participation of entrepreneurs as well as recent turns towards carnivalesque presentations in patronized floats, have become a major tourist attraction; this process of 'commodification' is strongly criticized by the so-called 'critique' LGTB associations, not sheltered under the FELGTB.

Inspired by the theoretically- proved difficulties between press and social movements (activism) I considered that it would be worth contrasting the highlighted topics and the mode of exposition of the topics in the content of the news from external media (popular press as commented) and in emic or native sources of information. Thus, I decided to include in the sample both pages devoted to the event.

Following Lin Zhang (2009), the previous questions have been: which related topics with Pride events are considered in papers and webpages? Do papers treat the issue differently? How are the news on Pride framed? With these questions in mind, I codified different significant categories derived from my ethnographic analysis consisting on participant observation, unspecific observation and in-depth interviews. The significant categories I identified were: presence/absence of the event on the front-page, contents of headlines, name given to the demonstration, reference to size, dynamics between fiesta/vindication, audience, slogan and manifesto. I had into account if the organization and the participants were recalled, and also considered presence /absence of references to representational strategies, commercialization, institutionalization, conflict, framing of the event, image analysis and the economic gains granted by the event. Given the small sample, and my interest in triangulation of data, qualitative analysis turned out to suit better the objectives (vid. Piñuel, 2002; van Zoonen, 1994). As I am interested in the presence/absence of the categories but also in how they are presented, literal quotations from the news

⁵ Madoweb is no longer available and information on Pride can be now found in Madrid Orgullo: <http://www.madridorgullo.com/es/>.

will be profusely used. All papers in the sample have a digital version but I have based this analysis on the printed version.

Mediated Media: Pride in Press⁶

Some time ago, in an interview, David Marti, a journalist and the president of ACEGAL (the LGTB entrepreneurial association in Catalonia and main organizer of Pride after 2009), told me about the intentions of the organization of Barcelona Pride to promote a diverse image of the LGTB community. With this objective, they were planning to celebrate different religious acts under the label Pride Barcelona (as they did) and planned to ask the members of the Chamber of Commerce to march in suits (they did not). However, he was sceptical about the impact in media of these actions: he thought that media would only show 'drags and not families, as they always do'.

Madrid activists in COGAM and FELGTB regularly talk to the media about Pride: every year after the event, I ask them about their impressions on the presentation of the event in media and the answer is always the same: 'easy stereotypes', independently of their publication in more traditionalist or more progressist papers.

The activists I interviewed are pessimistic about the media presentations of Pride and, at the same time, are aware of the enormous impact of media presentation on people's construction of LGTB images and realities⁷.

Pride celebrations are thick phenomena that condense different meanings related to sexual identity, civil rights, full citizenship, transgression, subversion, social reproduction, territory, ideology, activism and fiesta (Enguix, 2009a and 2009b). They have mobilized institutions, activism and politicians as well as entrepreneurs. They rise intense debates on the means of representation, the meanings of the event (and therefore identity politics) and the commercialization/institutionalization of the fight for civil rights, and therefore, assimilation⁸. In Madrid, with the biggest celebration in Europe, the LGTB Pride State Demonstration assembles more than a million people. In Barcelona, in 2010 there were 80.000 participants. Therefore, the Pride parades (or demonstrations) are the most important outcome of activism and a cornerstone of the modern LGTB movement⁹.

In Madrid, papers' coverage of the event is longer than in Barcelona. Three of the six papers in the sample dedicate a special supplement to the event (*El Mundo*, *El País*, *Público*). Surprisingly enough, no paper,

⁶ All translations are from the author.

⁷ In 2010 I interviewed the presidents of COGAM, AEGAL, FELGTB and ACEGAL.

⁸ See Rimmerman (2008), Arditi and Hequembourg (1999).

⁹ See Altman (2002), Armstrong (2002), Armstrong and Cragge (2006), Bernstein (1997), Binnie (1995), Brent Ingram et al. (1997), D'Emilio (1990), De Waal and Manion (2006).

neither in Madrid nor in Barcelona editions, talks about the event on the front-page. Only el *Público*, in Madrid, dedicates four lines on the front-page, with a photo of the opening banner and the following headline: ‘gays claim trans rights’.

In contrast, official webs offer in their front-pages detailed accounts of the event but with different accents. Barcelona web ([Pride Barcelona](#)) displays the logo, the name (Pride Barcelona 2010) and a photo of the Pride village, different activities and all the sponsors. On the right side of the page, the main sponsor is highlighted (Estrella, a Catalan make of beer) together with the supporting institutions (council, Diputació, Generalitat, Tourism). Contents are available in Spanish, English and Catalan.



In contrast, *Orgullogtb* displays on the front-page the name ‘Orgullo 2010’, followed by the legend ‘lesbians, gays, transsexuals and bisexuals’ and the slogan ‘For trans equality’, the state demonstration main theme for 2010. There are no mentions to sponsors or to institutions, just the logos of the three organizing associations (Cogam, felgtb and Aegal).

ORGULLO 2010
Lesbianas. Gays. Transexuales y Bisexuales
POR LA IGUALDAD TRANSEXUAL

Inicio | Novedades

CALENDARIO EVENTOS. MADRID Y TODOS! • CARROZAS • CONTACTO • DESCARGAS • IMÁGENES • MANIFESTACIÓN • ORGULLO CIUDADANO • PREGUNTAS FRECUENTES • PRENSA • RECOMENDACIONES DE SEGURIDAD • VOLUNTARIOS •

Orgullo Ciudadano ¿Contamos contigo?

Beatriz Montañez (La Sexta), José María Calleja (CNN) y Carla Antonelli (Diario Digital Transexual) leerán el manifiesto en el Salón de Actos del Ateneo de Madrid a las 11.00 horas. Es tu Orgullo. No faltes!!

Orgullo Ciudadano
28 JUNIO

leer...

Manifestación Estatal del Orgullo (Madrid)
12 01 00 12
Días - - - - -

Temas

3 julio 28 junio 2009 acreditación actividades ayudar banner calendario **carroza** citas ciudadano contacto cultura derechos humanos email eventos faq fechas fotos galería gran vía imágenes inscripción lema medios Madrid Gay Pride Madrid LGTB Pride March **manifiesto** organización participar preguntas **prensa** programa puerta de respuestas significado socios teléfono Tel Auid trans-formar unirse voluntariado voluntarios web

Premios Triángulo Rosa 2010 y Ladrillo Rosa

El Colectivo de lesbianas, Gays, Transexuales y Bisexuales de Madrid (COGAM) procederá a la entrega a las 20 horas del próximo día 29 de junio de 2010 en la Casa Encendida de los Premios Triángulo Rosa 2010 a personas que se han distinguido por...

leer...

Asegúrate durante el Orgullo

La Policía nos ha trasladado una serie de recomendaciones de seguridad. Aquí te las hacemos llegar para que vivas un Orgullo sin sobresaltos no deseados.

leer...

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Organizadores: **COGAM** Colectivo de Lesbianas, Gays, Transexuales y Bisexuales de Madrid GayPride.com LesbianLondon 91 523 00 70 www.cogam.es

Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gays, Transexuales y Bisexuales www.felgtb.org **FELGTB**

Colabora: **AEGAL**

Administración web: voluntarios de Internet@cogam.org del Colectivo de lesbianas, gays, transexuales y bisexuales de Madrid (COGAM.org) - WordPress.

In press headlines, the tensions between fiesta and vindication are evidenced. Four Catalan papers (*El Mundo*, *Público*, *Avui* and *Periódico*) stress *vindication* through terms like *liberty*, *equality*, *rights*, or *march*. Coincidence of Madrid Pride 2010 with the semi-final of the World Football Championship held in South-Africa in July took Madrid papers to talk about fiesta and pride in an ambiguous way to refer to both

events; however, for Pride, there was a strong accent in vindication. For example the traditionalist newspaper *La Razón*, included an article called 'The most political pride', *El Periódico* talked about the massive support to transsexuals and *El País* affirmed that 'transsexuals and families are now proud, and celebrate the fifth anniversary of gay marriages'. Only *El País* and *El Mundo* include the word 'fiesta' in the text. In Barcelona the festive aspects are more present in texts: All media, except *El Periódico* refer to it, although they also talk about the 'fight for equality' (*El Periódico*), about the claims against the 'consideration of transsexuality as an illness' (*El País*) or about the search for particular work policies.

In turn, in Madrid's webpage <http://orgullolgtb.org/>, vindication is everywhere: the opening discourse, the manifesto and the implication of citizenship (Orgullo Ciudadano) appear on the first page. The link with Stonewall is highlighted together with issues like civil rights and visibility. In the press section, a booklet intended for a correct treatment of transsex in media is presented. The four activists that will read the manifesto are also presented in the press section, whereas in the webpage *barcelonapride* the manifesto is not even commented. Even *Madoweb* – more centred on ludic aspects- presented the pride celebrations as 'an open, multiethnic and cultural celebration... a festive event to celebrate equality and diversity in an enjoying way but without forgetting the vindications of LGTB community (*colectivo*)' (p. 3-4).

Different terms are used to refer to the event: 'parade' (*La Razón*, *ABC*, *El Periódico* and *El País*, all in Madrid; *Avui*, *El Periódico*, *El País*, and *La Vanguardia* in Barcelona), 'march' (*Público* Madrid), and 'demonstration' (*Público* Barcelona) are the most common¹⁰. The use of the label 'Gay' is overwhelming thus invisibilizing lesbians, transsexuals and bisexuals. As for webs, the term 'demonstration' is preferred in *orgullolgtb* because of its political connotations but *pridebarcelona* defines the event as 'Pride', 'parade', and 'festival'.

The slogan, manifesto and organizing associations are the cornerstones of the activist nature of the event. However, only two papers in Madrid include information on the slogan and the manifesto (*Razón and Periódico*) whereas in Barcelona *Público*, *Avui*, *El País* and *La Vanguardia* comment briefly on these issues. This logic is inverted in the webs: The official slogan 'For Trans equality' is not mentioned in *pridebarcelona*, whereas it is on the front-page of *orgullolgtb*. So, whereas in Madrid webs are totally positioned in activist messages (and slogan and manifesto are central), papers rarely mention this issue; the opposite occurs in Barcelona.

It is quite unthinkable to conceive the news on a demonstration without quoting the organizers: however it is the case for LGTB Pride. Only two papers in Madrid mention COGAM and FELGTB (*La Razón* and *El País*) and only two (*La Razón* and *Público*) mention the opening banner and the presence of the Ministress of equality in the demonstration. Despite the participation of LGTB groups from all over the Spanish State, no

¹⁰ The most 'exotic' terms are 'celebration' and 'procession' (sic; this term is generally used for religious events) (*El Periódico*).

paper mentions it. Instead, all Catalan papers mention the political parties that participated in the parade, some of them in detail (*Público*). *Pridebarcelona* mentions '30 associations, businesses and the entire LGBT community'. And the organization is present in all webs in Madrid.

Other interesting elements such as references to participation, have also disappeared from news records in contrast with previous years (Enguix, 2010). Numbers generally equal power to mobilize and therefore, social power. Webs do not include this information and only *Público* (a million), and *Periódico* ('less than the expected million') in Madrid mention this issue. *El Periódico* (12,000), and *La Vanguardia* ('about 8,000 according to the organizers') mention it in Barcelona.

Despite their potential as a tourist attraction that is highlighted by activists, entrepreneurs and public institutions, references to the public are scarce in media (only *Público* and *Avui*, in the Catalan case, mention the audience; none in Madrid).

The turn towards spectacularity, festivity and carnivalesque performance are well reflected in press. Clichés appear in narratives about 'feathers, glitter, semi-naked bodies and colour' (*La Razón*, Madrid), 'young men with hours of gym... strong men with hairy chests, feathers, platforms and meat,... surrounded by transvestites of enormous breasts' (*Público*, Madrid) or 'hundreds of kilos of lipstick, litres of hair spray, impossible heels, wigs, and enviable naked torsos filled Madrid once again' (*El País*, Madrid). Gays are hegemonic in narratives about an event that is still frequently labelled as 'Gay Pride' (instead of LGTB Pride). These narratives are echoed in Barcelona papers but not in webs, where the performance of 'appropriate' ways of presentation is recommended: 'Whoever wants to can also dress up or wear a special outfit, so long as these are within the by-laws of our host city' (*pridebarcelona*). In the case of Madrid, *orgullolgtb* makes the following recommendations:

The floats participate in the State Pride Demonstration 2010 so the decoration will have to refer to the issue (rainbow flags, pink triangles, etc) and must avoid looking like a carnival float without any reference to LGTB topics that is the reason why we occupy the street that day.

Although the presence of sponsored floats is much lesser in Barcelona than in Madrid (around 12 and 35 respectively), Barcelona press is more assertive about commercialization and branding of identities (*El País* and *Avui*). *Avui* explains that the parade 'bore a certain degree of merchandising (on the part of floats related to gay leisure)'. *Pridebarcelona* displays 39 sponsors on the front page whereas *orgullolgtb* includes the list of the 35 floats.

The increasing presence, support and collaboration of institutions in the event brings out a discussion on assimilationism or abandonment of radical stances by the movement and an adaptation to standard values that has transcended time. In Madrid, public institutions do not collaborate nor participate in the event and only one paper, *Público*, acknowledges this situation. In Barcelona, where the institutional support is

explicit, only *Periódico* comments on it and refers to the Municipal Plan for LGTB people. Press reports on this issue are very scarce if not inexistent in both cases.

Both debates (institutionalization and commercialization) are enacted by critical and/or radical associations that organize 'alternative' and critical demonstrations in both cities¹¹. In Madrid, some critical groups participated in the State demonstration to claim against commercialization under the slogan 'our rights are not a business'.



Photograph by B. Enguix

In 2009 some Catalan papers reflected extensively these conflicts through news about 'official' and 'critical' parades (Enguix, 2010). It is not the case for 2010. *Público* and *ABC*, in their Madrid versions, have commented on 'the pink lobby' (*Público*) or have denounced that 'within the LGTB organizations there is an open critique of the stereotyped and carnivalesque image that is offered by this parade' (*ABC*). *Público*, in particular, in its supplement, speaks largely about 'gay hegemony', 'transsexual invisibility', 'misogyny', and the critical activists. In Barcelona, only *Avui* talks about the critical demonstration of the 26th and connects it with a critique of the concepts of marketing, 'merchandising and fashion advertising'. Official webs do not mention this issue.

Of all the papers analyzed, only three Catalan papers (*El Mundo*, *Público* and *La Vanguardia*) frame the demonstration in the context of a series of celebrations and events that last for a week. But the different

¹¹ See Enguix (2009a and 2009b), Coll-Planas (2008); for an approach to LGTB history in Spain see Trujillo (2008), Mira (2004), Mirabet (1984), Petit (2003), Petit and Pineda (2008), Pérez (2006) and Osborne (2006).

activities and parties that shape the Pride celebrations are central in webs. In Barcelona, 38 parties are advertised, as well as films and debates. Madrid offers the festival 'Visible', exhibitions, theatre, and music on six stages distributed in different parts of the city centre from 30th June -4th July.

All papers accompany the text with one or more images. In Madrid we find families (*Razón*), the heading banner (*Público*), the streets with floats (*ABC*), a man and a woman on a float (*El Periódico*) and two men kissing one another under an enormous rainbow flag (*El País*). Barcelona images are more stereotyped: men disguised as policemen with a harness on a float (*El Mundo*), an 'athletic' body on a float (*Público*), semi-naked men on a float (and a text on 'Gay (sic) Pride' (*Avui*), drags (*El Periódico*), the crowd (*El País*) and two *drag-queens* (*La Vanguardia*).

Finally, it is worth to note that for the first time, three papers in Madrid referred to the economic income provided by the event and to its potential to attract visitors to the city (*El Mundo* in the edition of 2nd July, *Razón* and *El País*). Curiously enough, the first two are thought to be conservative papers whereas *El País* is supposed to be quite progressist. Benefits are quantified in 40 million euros, a quantity that according to my interviews is well below the real numbers that would be around 100m¹². *El Mundo*, on 2nd July, stated that the Economy Department of the City council estimated that the 'gay' (sic) celebration would bring between 30-40 m and a million tourists, with a hotel occupation of 60% and an average daily expense of 134 euros per person (p. 6). This converts Pride not only in an identity celebration of rights and a claim for equality, but also in an enormously attractive event in economic terms for all the parts implied: activists, entrepreneurs and institutions.

Constructing hegemonies: Final considerations

Activism-related events need the visibilization and mobilization facilitated by publicity in media. Pride events –despite their density and complexity- are not an exception. Activists hold periodic talks with journalists in order to achieve a presentation of pride that does not just rely on spectacularity. They also use social media –such as facebook and blogs- for punctual actions (kiss-ins, protest against the recourse against homosexual marriage) and, in the case of Pride have constructed special webs devoted to the event¹³.

The influence of media on people's attitudes and subjectivities is so important that some authors such as Armstrong (2002) have considered LGTB press as part of the LGTB movement. However, in the Spanish context LGTB periodicals are scarce (activist leaflets and pamphlets were common in the eighties but not nowadays) and there is a gap between LGTB realities and popular media. This gap has been filled through social media and, in particular, through webs. Considering that activist or organizing associations' webs are

¹² After 2010, most news on the Pride celebrations include the 100 m. gains as a highlighted topic.

¹³ Apart from these webs, we can find static information on the event in the webs of the organizing associations.

under the control of those who promote the event, and deriving from the categories identified as significant during our fieldwork, we compared the content of these webs with the content of the news on Pride in popular press.

We found that popular press, as Dale Stone (2001: 65) recalled, simplifies, dramatizes, personifies, stereotypes and enjoys to present news as 'unexpected' and newsworthy. Through these processes, hegemony and hegemonic views are constructed and reproduced.

In our sample, as we showed, Pride is generally decontextualized from activism and from the historical claims of the LGTB movement. Although some references to LGTB claims appear in the news, and some papers refer to the event as a 'demonstration' (which is the native activist term to refer to it), the references to the manifesto, the slogan, the organizing associations, the participating groups from all over Spain (in Madrid) and the number of participants (power to mobilize) have almost disappeared from news. It is not the case with the media reports on other mobilizations (trade unions for the 1st May, Civil Servants against cuts, etc).

Headlines and texts are built along inverse lines: Barcelona headlines emphasize fiesta where Madrid's emphasize claims, but texts run the opposite way. Headlines in Madrid are aligned with Madrid webs, where activism is everywhere, whereas in Barcelona web one has to be an expert to be able to read between lines and find the vindicative messages. In this sense, Madrid Pride would be presented in 'native' narratives as more 'authentic' than Barcelona's as it is clung to the political message of the event.

The existence of more politically implied texts in Barcelona popular press to refer to an event that is not presented clearly as a political action in native webs, can be connected to Barcelona's long tradition as an active city in social vindication with a thick social network of associations. Within this tradition, popular press ends up constructing an event in political terms that even exceeds the political content of the event itself (and of its 'native' representations).

It is worth to note that 'LGTB' Pride events are still widely referred to as 'Gay' Pride events (with the only exception of *Público* and *Avui*), invisibilizing lesbians, transsexuals and bisexuals and consolidating the hegemony of males in news and images¹⁴. There is no (or very little) reference to women or 'trans' despite the slogan. All is 'gay': bodies, leisure, merchandising, pride.

The debates that intersect these celebrations are not evident neither in papers nor in webs: the tensions and intersections between fiesta and vindication are hidden and 'fiesta' is overwhelmingly presented as the cornerstone of the event, specially in Barcelona. This is, no doubt, a strategy to attract readers and future participants. When commented, the incorporation of entrepreneurs and institutions to the demonstrations is presented acritically and as a fact that requires no explanation, be it the case of Barcelona (where this

¹⁴ Dale Stone (2001), Israel (2006) and Ragusa (2003) data confirm this.

support is explicit) or of Madrid (without institutional support). Consequently, most of the interesting debates raised by the actual configurations of identity politics and their system of alliances with entrepreneurship and/or governing institutions are also silenced in the reports. And the static and descriptive webs do not favour any discussion or debate on this matter either.

Despite Madrid webs emphasis on the political bias of the event (explicit in the instructions for the floats), newspapers still rely on the spectacular and stereotypical traits to capture the audience's attention, stressing the meanings that are coherent with stereotyped knowledge (as recalled by Dale Stone, 2001). Images are fundamental in this process and although images are less stereotypical than in previous years, they are more stereotypical than texts, specially in Barcelona. Where images still mostly depict *drags*, and muscled men, texts timidly introduce in depth topics like those of 'visibility', 'civil rights', and 'trans rights'. Carol and Ratner (1999: 19) have analyzed the media's appetite for spectacle as a threat to the aims of the LGTB Centre that they analyzed. Its purpose was to represent the gay and lesbian community in all its diversity and in a morally positive light. But in our case, organizing activists have never seen media's appetite for spectacle as a threat although they are aware that the tensions between activist dynamics and popular press' interests will be difficult to solve: activists enhance diversity without any kind of moral judgement whereas many media through their acritical exhibitions of spectacular bodies emphasize difference and clichés. Whereas diversity allows for multiple manifestations of bodies, genders and sexualities, difference constructs limits, frontiers and judgements on those who 'belong' and 'those who do not belong'. In my opinion, decontextualization and stereotypicalization of these events enhance difference instead of diversity and by doing so popular press actively participates in the sociocultural construction of otherness and social hegemonies.

The active construction of 'difference' in news (see Ronda Gibson, 2004) coexists with a 'normalization' of LGTB people in some narratives, which recall citizenship and rights¹⁵.

When compared to the news published on Pride events in 2009 (Enguix, 2010), there are some changes. In 2011 the event has nearly disappeared from frontpages and the reference to the number of participants has also disappeared¹⁶. However, the number of full supplements devoted to the event (between 3 and 6 pages) in Madrid has increased¹⁷. Two progressist papers (*Público*, *El País*) give voice to top activists in their supplements. *Público* relies on impressive data whereas *El País* records are more anecdotic. *Público* stresses the vindicative aspects but also does *El Mundo*, a conservative paper that, year after year, offers very detailed information on the event (opinion articles, the only editorial¹⁸, an additional article on 'rights

¹⁵ Also invoked by Chasin (2000) and Dale Stone (2001).

¹⁶ It was just the opposite way in 2009. There have been some debates in the country about how to count the participants in public events, and probably this caution could be related to those debates.

¹⁷ No supplements are published in Barcelona.

¹⁸ 'From vindication to full social acceptance': in this editorial they recall that in 76 countries homosexuality is still illegal, and vindicate marriage and adoption.

of gays and lesbians in the world' -4th July, p. 38- and the special supplement on M2 -4th July p. 5). The final sentence of the supplement states that Pride consists on 'claims and fun on the same proportion to reach one and only one objective: normalization'. In this sense, *El Mundo* is the only paper that, despite its political stance, contextualizes the event and uses it to inform about LGTB rights in the world.

Is this tendency to concentrate the information in supplements part of a process of construction of more detailed approaches? It could be so, as supplements provide a more in-depth approximation. However, these supplements can also be easily separated from the paper, and may not be conceived for the general audience but only for particular readers. If this is the case, they would conceal this more in-depth information from general eyes by separating from the general contents some contents that can 'offend' the audience (Ragusa, 2003: 228) .

To sum up, there is a tendency in popular press to oversimplify the events related with Pride celebrations even though references to their political signification are increasing be it in headlines or in contents and images. Native narratives in webs are more detailed and in the case of Madrid, stress the political meaning of the event. The importance of the event in Madrid guarantees a longer coverage, but still only one paper published the news on the front-page (and with a very limited content).

The multiple character of these celebrations, and the debates that intersect them are absent from news reports. However, there is an incipient tendency to ellude stereotypes. And there are also some facts that have to be thought about. The invisibility of such an enormous event in front pages, the isolation of the celebration from organizers, and the scarce reference to participants are meaningful tactics. LGTB mobilization is never equated with LGTB power (a correlation that is recurrently found in interviews), and is only slightly associated to LGTB organizations. Decontextualization, depoliticization and disempowerment of the event in some papers can have many consequences. The turn of pride demonstrations toward carnivalesque and touristic events has been largely discussed¹⁹. But this intentional depoliticization through the decontextualization is not just related to this turn: it presents LGTB claims as an individual matter that is more related to full citizenship than to social activism. More related to clichés than to identity politics. It reinstalls sexual politics in the realms of the private sphere in a context, Spain, with legal equality. Most participants are presented as partying individuals who, in some cases, claim for equal rights, but without being related to the social movements that are implied in those mobilizations. However, Pride is still about sexual politics, and in Spain there are now more than 26 Pride demonstrations. Only three of them -Madrid, Barcelona, and Seville- are organized following the triple scheme activism/ entrepreneurship/ institutions, with some differences in the power geometries among organizers. In other cities, smaller and more political prides take place exclusively organized by LGTB activism and with very little resonance in papers. What this

¹⁹ See for example Johnston (2005), Kates and Belk (2001), Chasin (2000), Markwell (2002), Peñaloza (2000), Altman (2002), Sender (2002) et al.

tells us is that in this particular case papers are playing an active role in constructing events with a particular meaning. Popular press coverage, when compared to native webs is enormous and reaches the general audience, and it will take time to make popular press aware of the complexity of this event that is 'visually and spectacularly transgressive' and whose images and ideas are indicative 'of the contradictions, exclusions, and marginalisation apparent within and outside the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) movement' (Israel, 2006: 76).

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Newspapers

Barcelona

La Vanguardia, viernes 18 de junio 2010: 'Una Ley para gays y lesbianas' (p. 29)

La Vanguardia, lunes 28 de junio 2010: 'Carrozas y ciudadanos llenan las calles por el orgullo homosexual' (p. 7 supplement 'Vivir')

El Mundo, lunes 28 de junio 2010: 'El Orgullo Gay se quita años de encima en TV' (p. 53)

El Mundo, lunes 28 de junio 2010: 'Una marcha por "la libertad y la igualdad"' (p. 22)

El Mundo, lunes 28 de junio 2010: 'ERC acusa a Duran de tener "prejuicios" sobre los gays' (p. 22)

Público (suplement 'Públic'), lunes 28 de junio 2010: 'La Barcelona Pride 2010 denuncia la manca de drets dels transexuals. Marxa festiva i canyera "per la igualtat trans"' (p. 3) ⁱ

El País (Cataluña), lunes 28 de junio 2010: 'Festivo Orgullo Gay' (p. 1)

El Periódico, 4 de junio 2010: 'Iniciativa pionera. BCN idea 227 medidas para apoyar a gays y lesbianas' (p. 37)

El Periódico, 28 de junio 2010: 'Trobada lúdica reivindicativa a la capital catalana. Milers de persones s'uneixen a la proclama festiva de l'orgull gai' (p. 33)

Avui, lunes 28 junio 2010: 'Reivindicació gai. Macrofiesta. Els carrers de Barcelona acullen la desfilada de l'orgull lesbiana, gai, bisexual i transsexual. Motius: reclamen respecte i igualtat' (p. 29)

Madrid

El Mundo, domingo 4 julio 2010: 'El calvario de ser homosexual. Declararse gay o lesbiana es ilegal en 76 países y en cinco se castiga con la muerte' (p. 38) + (opinion): 'De la reivindicación gay a la plena aceptación social' (p. 3)

El Mundo (M2/ La revista diaria de Madrid), domingo 4 de julio 2010: 'El día de los orgullos. La fiesta y la alegría invaden Madrid: decenas de miles de personas celebran eufóricas en la calle la emocionante victoria de España ante la selección de Paraguay y una descomunal marea humana y multicolor festeja el Día del Orgullo Gay en el centro de la capital' (pp. 6-9)+ 'Kylie Minogue se transforma en Afrodita' (p. 6) + 'En Chueca están vacíos todos los armarios. Homosexuales y 'heteros' abarrotan el barrio en unas fiestas cada vez más multitudinarias. Algunos vecinos, huyen'. (p. 7) + 'El ambiente regresa a la calle. Un año más el desfile convoca a cientos de miles de personas en un ambiente lúdico y festivo que este año ha hecho hincapié en la igualdad 'trans' (pp. 8-9)

El Mundo (M2/ La revista diaria de Madrid) viernes 2 de julio 2010: 'Un orgullo de 40 millones' (p. 6)

Público, domingo 4 de julio de 2010: ' El orgullo clama por los derechos transexuales. Cientos de miles de personas celebran en Madrid la decimonovena marcha del colectivoLGTB// Aído reivindica que los 'trans' dejem de ser considerados "enfermos" en otros países' (p. 32) + 'El activismo quiere vencer sus diferencias. La hegemonía gay contrasta con la invisibilidad transexual' (p. 33) + front-page: 'Los gays reivindican los derechos de los "trans"'

El País, domingo 4 de julio 2010: 'Transexuales y familias, orgullosos. Madrid celebra el quinto aniversario del 'sí' a las bodas homosexuales' (p. 42)

El País (suplement Madrid) , domingo 4 de julio 2010: 'Un desfile entre goles. Un millón de personas celebra el Orgullo 2010 con la transexualidad como bandera. 35 carrozas y mucho jolgorio acompañana a la manifestación' + '¿Quién te ha dicho que a los gays no nos gusta el fútbol?' (pp. 1-3)+ 'La ilusión de ir en una carroza. Un millón de personas arroja el desfile del Orgullo dedicado a los transexuales' (p. 2) + 'Kylie y el duro oficio del divismo. La cantante australiana clausura la marcha del Orgullo' (p. 4).

El Periódico, domingo 4 de julio de 2010: 'Masivo apoyo a los transexuales' (p. 36)

ABC, domingo 4 de julio 2010: '¿Chueca, a 24 horas de recuperar la paz. La ministra Aído llegó tarde a la marcha del "Orgullo Gay" y se fue en media hora"' (p. 56) + 'Otra de carrozas. Día del orgullo gay' (p. 11 'Enfoque')

La Razón, domingo 4 de julio 2010: 'El "Orgullo" más político. Miles de personas marcharon ayer "Por la igualdad trans. La carroza de Tel Aviv, vetada, finalmente no salió' (p. 52) + 'La carroza de Hamás faltó a la cita gay' (Opinión, p. 9)

Webpages²⁰

Oficina de Justificación de la Difusión (OJD), a división of Información y Control de Publicaciones.
http://www.ojd.es/OJD/Portal/diarios_ojd/_4DOSpuiQo1Y_FOivPcLIIA (retrieved october 2010; not active in 2013)

Official Pride Barcelona page: <http://www.pridebarcelona.org/es/>

Official Madrid Pride page: <http://orgullolgtb.org/>

Madrid Orgullo: <http://www.madridorgullo.com/es/>

COGAM (Colectivo LGTB de Madrid): <http://www.cogam.es/>

FELGTB (Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gays, Transexuales y Bisexuales):

<http://www.felgtb.org/>

AEGAL (Asociación de Empresas para LGTB de Madrid): <http://aegal.es/>

ACEGAL (Catalan Association for LGTB entrepreneurs) : http://acegal.org/?page_id=11

Fundación Triángulo: http://fundaciontriangulo.es/educacion/dossier1998/e_historia.htm (retrieved 13 July 2008; not active in 2013)

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