

The term¹ “Travesti” in the Brazilian context: challenges of representation and insertion in international LGBTQ+ Vocabularies

A terma¹ "Travesti" e o contexto brasileiro: desafios de representação e inserção em vocabulários internacionais LGBTQ+

El término "Travesti" y el contexto brasileño: desafíos de representación em vocabulários Internacionais LGBTQ+

Le terme « travesti » et le contexte brésilien : défis de représentation et d'intégration dans le vocabulaire international LGBTQ+

Isabela Sombra da SILVA²

Pablo GOMES³

Claudio Paixão Anastácio de PAULA⁴

Correspondência

Autor para correspondência. Isabela Sombra da Silva

E-mail: isasombra@proton.me

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4915-4938>



Submetido em: 28/08/2025

Aceito em: 18/12/2025

Publicado em: 30/12/2025

¹ In the Portuguese title, the article “the” and the common noun “term” were rendered in the feminine form in reference to one of the first books that attempted to compile the Pajubá/Bajubá language, *Aurélia: a dicionaria da língua afiada*.

² Ph.D. candidate and Master’s degree holder in Information Science from the Federal University of Minas Gerais; undergraduate student in Psychology at the State University of Minas Gerais and Bachelor’s degree holder in Library Science from the Federal University of Minas Gerais.

³ Ph.D. in Information Science from the Federal University of Minas Gerais / Federal Institute of Maranhão / Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship.

⁴ Tenured Professor in the Graduate Program in Information Science at UFMG (PPGCI/UFMG) and Associate Professor at the School of Information Science at the same institution.

ABSTRACT

This article discusses the challenges of representing the *travesti* gender identity within the international vocabulary Homosaurus. Based on a historical-sociocultural review of the construction of *travestilidade* (travesti identity) in Brazil, the study adopts a qualitative and interpretive approach. The corpus consists of the Homosaurus itself, analyzed in its alphabetical, hierarchical, and search formats. Terms, scope notes, and semantic relationships linked to “travesti” were examined to identify gaps and universalizing descriptions that render Brazilian specificities invisible. The analysis demonstrates that the existing term (“Travestis”) does not account for the political-identity dimension of Latin American travestis, reproducing a binary perspective centered on the Global North. It is thus proposed to include “Travesti (Brazil)” as a controlled term, with a scope note that recognizes its hybrid, historical, and autopoietic character. The article concludes that managing semantic vocabularies without attention to intersectionality reinforces epistemicide; on the other hand, critical adjustments in Knowledge Organization Systems can promote cognitive justice and broaden access to information for trans and travesti populations.

Keywords: vocabulary control; gender; information representation; controlled vocabularies.

RESUMO

O artigo discute os desafios de representar a identidade de gênero travesti no vocabulário internacional Homosaurus. Partindo de revisão histórico-sociocultural sobre a construção da travestilidade no Brasil, o estudo adota abordagem qualitativa e interpretativa. O corpus consiste no próprio Homosaurus, analisado em seus formatos alfabético, hierárquico e de busca. Examinaram-se termos, notas de escopo e relações semânticas vinculadas a “travesti”, identificando lacunas e descrições universalizantes que invisibilizam especificidades brasileiras. A análise demonstra que o termo existente (“Travestis”) não contempla a dimensão político-identitária latino-americana, reproduzindo visão binária centrada no Norte Global. Propõe-se, então, a inclusão de “Travesti (Brasil)” como termo controlado, com nota de escopo que reconheça seu caráter híbrido, histórico e autopoietico. Conclui-se que controlar vocabulários semânticos sem atenção à interseccionalidade reforça epistemicídios; por outro lado, ajustes críticos em Sistemas de Organização do Conhecimento podem promover justiça cognitiva e ampliar o acesso à informação para populações trans e travestis.

Palavras-chave: controle de vocabulário; gênero; representação da informação; vocabulários controlados.

RESUMEN

Este artículo discute los desafíos de representar la identidad de género travesti en el vocabulario internacional Homosaurus. Partiendo de una revisión histórico-sociocultural sobre la construcción de la travestilidad en Brasil, el estudio adopta un enfoque cualitativo e interpretativo. El corpus consiste en el propio Homosaurus, analizado en sus formatos alfabético, jerárquico y de búsqueda. Se examinaron términos, notas de alcance y relaciones semánticas vinculadas a "travesti", identificando vacíos y descripciones universalizantes que invisibilizan especificidades brasileñas. El análisis demuestra que el término existente ("Travestis") no contempla la dimensión político-identitaria latinoamericana, reproduciendo una visión binaria centrada en el Norte Global. Se propone, entonces, la inclusión de "Travesti (Brasil)" como término controlado, con una nota de alcance que reconozca su carácter híbrido, histórico y autopoietico. Se concluye que controlar vocabularios semánticos sin atención a la interseccionalidad refuerza epistemicidios; por otro lado, ajustes críticos en Sistemas de Organización del Conocimiento pueden promover justicia cognitiva y ampliar el acceso a la información para poblaciones trans y travestis.

Palabras clave: control de vocabulario; género; representación de la información; vocabularios controlados.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article traite des défis liés à la représentation de l'identité de genre travesti dans le vocabulaire international Homosaurus. Partant d'une revue historique et socioculturelle de la construction de la travestilité au Brésil, l'étude adopte une approche qualitative et interprétative. Le corpus consiste en Homosaurus lui-même, analysé dans ses formats alphabétique, hiérarchique et de recherche. Les termes, les notes de portée et les relations sémantiques liés à « travesti » ont été examinés, identifiant les lacunes et les descriptions universalistes qui rendent invisibles les spécificités brésiliennes. L'analyse démontre que le terme existant (« Travestis ») ne tient pas compte de la dimension politico-identitaire latino-américaine, reproduisant une vision binaire centrée sur le Nord global. Il est donc proposé d'inclure « Travesti (Brésil) » comme terme contrôlé, avec une note de portée qui reconnaît son caractère hybride, historique et autopoietico. Nous concluons que contrôler les vocabulaires sémantiques sans prêter attention à l'intersectionnalité renforce les épistémicides ; d'autre part, des ajustements critiques dans les systèmes d'organisation des connaissances peuvent promouvoir la justice cognitive et élargir l'accès à l'information pour les populations trans et travestis.

Mots-clés: contrôle du vocabulaire; genre; représentation de

l'information; vocabulaires contrôlés.

1 INTRODUÇÃO

For Brazilians, the "travesti" identity presents considerable confusion regarding its true meaning, being socially and historically associated with homosexual men, nightlife performances, prostitution, promiscuity, sexual curiosity, and strongly reinforced by television talk shows in the 1990s. In Brazil, the word "travesti" seems to amalgamate all gender dissidences and bodily expressions socially recognized as transgressive within a culture profoundly grounded in Christianity, moralism, and an obsession with resembling its colonizers.

However, over time and with the small advances in the social, legal, and medical recognition of transsexual people, an internal challenge has emerged regarding self-identification and the understanding of dissident genders in Brazil. The travesti identity — the name by which this group was identified, or rather stigmatized, causing trauma for many transsexuals (trans) who reject being called that, while many others take pride in this designation — presents a difficulty in distinguishing itself from another identity: that of trans woman. There is also a historical and symbolic heritage that differs from the experiences and lived realities of other nationalities. Recognizing that there are multiple dimensions, perspectives, and possible answers, the focus of this work was deliberately more restricted and originated from the question: how to complexly represent the travesti gender identity, in its Brazilian context, within international vocabularies? Convergent with this question, the objective was to develop a terminological and conceptual proposal for the insertion of the word "travesti" into the international vocabulary of LGBTQ+ terms known as Homosaurus. To achieve the objective and

answer the problem question guiding this research, an analysis of the aforementioned thesaurus was carried out, combined with a bibliographical investigation into travesti identity, its historicity, its cultural particularities, and the social implications in contemporary Brazil.

Initially, it should be emphasized that a person's identification with a given gender identity must be based primarily on their self-perception and on the resonance between their individual experiences and the collective experiences of the gender in question — in this case, the travesti identity, as analyzed and presented, is limited to the literature and authors referenced. Although the text presents elements that characterize collective experiences associated with travesti identity, it should be clarified that this research has an experimental character, with the general objective of proposing an initial terminological discussion for an international vocabulary with specific terms about the LGBTQ+ community, aiming to confer recognition upon Brazilian travesti gender identity in its multiple dimensions: political, historical, social, and subjective.

2 METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This research is qualitative in nature, as it seeks to understand the meanings and senses (Creswell, 2010) attributed to the word "travesti" as a term in/for Homosaurus. Regarding its objective, it is interpretive research, as it focuses on the meaning given to reality (Domingues, 2004).

Data collection employed documentary research, as we consider Homosaurus to be a primary source of information, that is, data that have not yet undergone analytical processes of interpretation (Laville; Dione, 1999). As a document and source of information, Homosaurus presents itself as a research object with broad possibilities for analysis.

It is possible to understand a given area, field, or theme through its terms, descriptions, and relationships.

For the analysis of Homosaurus, we initially used an expanded reading of the thesaurus in its alphabetical format and then in its tree format, through which it was possible to identify and understand the relationships. To confirm our reading, some searches were conducted in the search field using the term "Travesti". Data analysis focused primarily on the semantic elements of the thesaurus: the terms as presented, their descriptions (also called scope notes), and their relationships. Starting from the word "travesti", we verified paronyms (none found), homonyms, and terms with near-synonymy. The descriptions of the terms were read in light of the theoretical framework (Section 2). Finally, the hierarchical and associative relationships of each identified term were analyzed.

3 WHAT IS A "TRAVESTI"?

The word "travesti" has French origins, initially relating to the world of burlesque, where it designated a type of "disguise." Between 1870 and 1920, there was an interest from academic and artistic productions in understanding the phenomenon of men and women who appropriated characteristics and artifacts of the opposite sex (Arruda; Araújo; Araújo, 2021; Fernandez, 2004). Green (2000) notes that the word was already used in the media since at least the 1940s to designate the practice of men dressing as women during Carnival. In the following decade, it began to be adopted by individuals who self-identified as homosexuals and adopted feminine gender performances, some of whom worked professionally as "travesti actors" or "transvestites" in theater (Green, 2000).

In Brazil, the presence of travestis in performances consolidated

during the 1960s, when cultural producers began to invest in European artistic languages, following trends already established in large international urban centers. The Brazilian elite, in their effort to align with European conventions, became important mediators in transforming the visibility regime of "professional travestis." By consuming these performances and their artists, this social segment contributed to a certain recognition of the existence of these people (Soliva, 2018).

The organization of the first travesti groups and associations – mostly focused on confronting the epidemic of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) – and the tensions with homosexual groups made the 1980s the period in which the word "travesti" began to be used as a political identity distinct from homosexuality (Carvalho; Carrara, 2013).

Recognition of trans identities by the Brazilian State is slow and permeated by setbacks. Only in 2014, with Joint Resolution No. 1 of the Ministry of Justice, of April 15 of the same year, were legal parameters established for the treatment of penitentiary incarceration cases for trans people and travestis, with the separating element for these cases between trans women and travestis being the genitalia in the recognition (or not) of possible womanhood for the "prison cis-system" (Lima; Gitirana; Sá, 2022, p. 1139), or even as the last frontier between the zone of being and the zone of non-being. The presence of the phallus in bodies that perform femininity is thus used to legitimize the denial of the enjoyment of rights, citizenship, and full and possible humanities (Lima; Gitirana; Sá, 2022).

Considering the historical, political, and social context surrounding the word "travesti" in Brazil, we advocate for maintaining the expression in its original form, without translation into other languages. The construction of travestilidade (travesti identity) and

transsexuality in the Brazilian scenario was marked by hegemonic, hygienist, and specific political processes. Travesti identity configures itself as a Latin American identity, with roots particularly in the Brazilian context, emerging from struggles for existence and social recognition. Therefore, we argue for the preservation of the term in Portuguese in other linguistic contexts, since its translation could mischaracterize the original political meaning it acquired in its sphere of origin (Araújo, 2017; Arruda; Araújo; Araújo, 2022; Tomaz; Filipe, 2024).

The word travesti, used mainly by cisgender people (cis) in Brazil, is often associated with the verb "travestir" (to disguise), being signified and linked to the idea of falsity, disguise, maleficence, something or someone not genuine or original, and even dirt, disease, and marginality. However, when shedding light on the history of the word travesti, the entire meaning of struggle, resistance, survival, the power of sociopolitical contestation, and the effort for recognition of rights and citizenship of dissident bodies is revealed. Contrary to common sense imagination, being a travesti means recognizing and assuming in oneself the possibility of another possible body, beyond normalized bodies, constituting a real identity that presents itself in the materiality of its body and that moves through the alleys of social and political spaces in search of its place and its rights, while breaking with the binary and limiting imaginaries of the society in which it is inserted (York; Oliveira; Benevides, 2020).

Travestis, in the Brazilian context, perform a specific experience of gender transit that transcends the limits of Western binary gender culture, especially the North American Christian-rooted culture, which understands only the existence of the masculine or the feminine. They assume in their biologically male bodies signs and performances of the female sex, while still preserving masculine physical, behavioral,

and/or sexual characteristics, without major dilemmas or crises of gender dysphoria (American Psychiatry Association, 2014, p. 451). The difference between trans women and travestis is that travestis do not transit from one gender to the other. They perform femininity and are a feminine trans identity, but they do not consider themselves women; they are essentially travestis. Travesti is an identity born on the margins of society and resists, often resorting to work such as prostitution to stay alive (Jesus, 2012; Tomaz; Filipe, 2024).

This hybrid gender performance of travestis evidences how binary rigidity between genders and the idea of "misconduct of genders," as well as "gender dysphoria," are phenomena originating from a North American and Christian context. The hybridization of the body thus assumes a monstrous and ungraspable character for this Brazilian society subordinate to the symbolic control impressed by North American cultural, political, and economic industries (Denizart, 1997; Henriques; Leite, 2019; Leite Júnior, 2012). The hybridization assumed by travestis is an evident element in their constructions of performance and identity, going beyond simply not being bothered by their biological genitals, given "that there are transsexuals who do not reject male genitalia, as well as travestis who do not necessarily identify as women" (Lima; Nascimento, 2015, p. 85).

Both trans women and travestis suffer violence and discrimination, and in both cases, they are excluded from heteronormative society and its spaces, being equally marginalized bodies whose basic rights are disrespected and denied. In many cases, these groups are even denied access to education, being expelled from the school environment both by the norms of educational institutions and by discrimination from teachers, students, and the community, leading them to drop out of school, hindering their professional training, their social formation, and access to jobs (Cruz;

Silva, 2017; Tomaz; Filipe, 2024).

However, Benedetti (2000) proposes that travestis differ from transsexual women because they come from poorer social classes or because they find themselves in more exhausting situations of vulnerability. Thus, travestis have less or no access to current medical and psychological discourse, thereby developing their own holistic worldview. Travestis share with the popular classes a holistic ideology for understanding the world, in which the understanding of gender and sexuality is not dissociated into distinct dimensions of experience and identity, contrary to transsexuals and the middle and upper classes, who dissociate and classify such dimensions into an individualistic ideological vision (Barbosa, 2015).

Due to the context of marginalization presented, historically, travestis communicate to society the image of dangerous people, constituted by their resorting to the use of physical force to impose their presence in public space, because between the 1950s and 1960s, they were assaulted, and in the process of moving from the ghetto to the streets, they needed to learn to face those who posed a danger, it not being uncommon for them to use bladed weapons, such as knives or other types of blades, to intimidate aggressors (Ferreira, 2009). Another form of self-defense for travestis in prostitution situations was the creation of Pajubá or Bajubá, a vocabulary created as a strategy to communicate among themselves, in order not to be understood by police officers and other people, making use of slang mixed with words of Yoruba origin (Nascimento; Mariano; Santos, 2021).

It must be said that a possible third gender is a human possibility of conquest and (re)discovery about oneself. When observing outside the North American axis, we can find other experiences of gender transit, which offer different inflections and existential reflections on our

identities (Henriques; Leite, 2019; York; Oliveira; Benevides, 2020). Travestis are profane, mythological, supernatural entities, distant for many and, simultaneously, real and vulnerable people; they are sirens, dryads, or harpies and almost always urban; they are simultaneously two dimensions seen as antagonistic. They are objectified, exoticized, demonized, hypersexualized, pathologized, abused, dehumanized, trivialized, and useful to many groups when convenient. But at the same time, they are always owners of themselves, of their bodies, and of their identities, to the point of doing whatever they want with them (York; Oliveira; Benevides, 2020) — perhaps that is why they bother so much those who do not have the freedom to be, those who let themselves be controlled.

4 KNOWLEDGE ORGANIZATION AND RESPECT FOR DIVERSITIES

Knowledge Organization (KO) is a theoretical and practical specialized field of Information Science (IS) in which strategies are conceived and developed for representing information that directly act upon its retrieval and access. According to Gomes (2023, p. 32), KO:

[...] focuses on a set of actions (construction, description, cataloging, management, classification, storage, communication, etc.) necessary for the registration, dissemination, and preservation of human knowledge, for the purpose of generating information and new knowledge.

Considering KO as a field in which informational strategies are created and which allow the generation of new information and knowledge, and also understanding that Gomes (2023) treats thesauri, KO instruments, as devices from a Foucauldian perspective, possible to be used to broaden access but also to restrict it, enabling or not the generation of new information and knowledge, we understand that KO

can then be used as power devices to advance or not the development of a society that respects diversities, such as respect for travesti gender identity.

Paying attention to this "functionality" of power exercised by KO, especially with Knowledge Organization Systems (KOSs), some research has stood out in the Brazilian IS scenario in unveiling, bringing to light, the mechanisms used by these KOSs in maintaining the status quo of certain groups to the detriment of the oppression of others. Considering this context, we will present three of these important studies (Moura, 2018; Romeiro, 2024; Trivelato, 2022) that show how KOSs establish and reproduce deviant discourses about gender, directly aimed at the feminine gender.

The research developed by Moura (2018) reaffirms the non-neutrality of KOSs and their potential to control "codes of intelligibility in processes of knowledge production, organization, and circulation" (Moura, 2018, p. 14) related to gender by analyzing terms related to women in Eurovoc and in the Gender Equality Glossary and Thesaurus. Eurovoc corresponded to the research with more generic terms, whereas the Gender Equality Glossary and Thesaurus presented a greater quantity of more specific terms. Thus, taking into account the possibilities of information representation, documents indexed with the Gender Equality Glossary and Thesaurus would have a greater possibility of matching user searches due to their more specific and retrieval-oriented terms, since this corresponds to a smaller quantity of documents for the user to analyze.

Trivelato (2022), in their research, which analyzed five KOSs, identified that these information representation systems reproduce sexist discourses that did not keep pace with women's demands for building a more respectful society. The research evidenced that:

[...] the arrangements of this instrument, in addition to potentially sedimenting social conditions that reinforce patriarchal, white, and Eurocentric/United States-centric concepts, also produce official discourse effects; they exercise their social role in framing discourses, in the representation and retrieval of information.

Convergently, the research by Romeiro (2024), which also analyzed four thesauri – corresponding with Trivelato's (2022) research regarding the Thesaurus for Gender and Women's Studies and Homosaurus – from the perspective of gender studies, decoloniality, and intersectionality, identified that, with respect to decoloniality and intersectionality, advances in the representation of terms related to the feminine gender in these thesauri are still modest.

Other research, such as Gomes and Frota (2019) and Gomes (2023), focuses on KOSs, thesauri specifically, from their construction onward, aiming to break with their direction toward maintaining the status quo of hegemonic groups. To this end, diversity gains a central role in the discussion of how to break, not with the power function of these KOSs, but rather to redirect it toward achieving a society more respectful of diversities.

The research presented falls within a new perspective for KO called Social and Critical Organization of Knowledge or Social Organization of Knowledge. This new perspective, among its characteristics, points to the need for surveillance of KOSs to attend to universalization and to identify deviations in representation and subsequent adjustment from an ethical perspective.

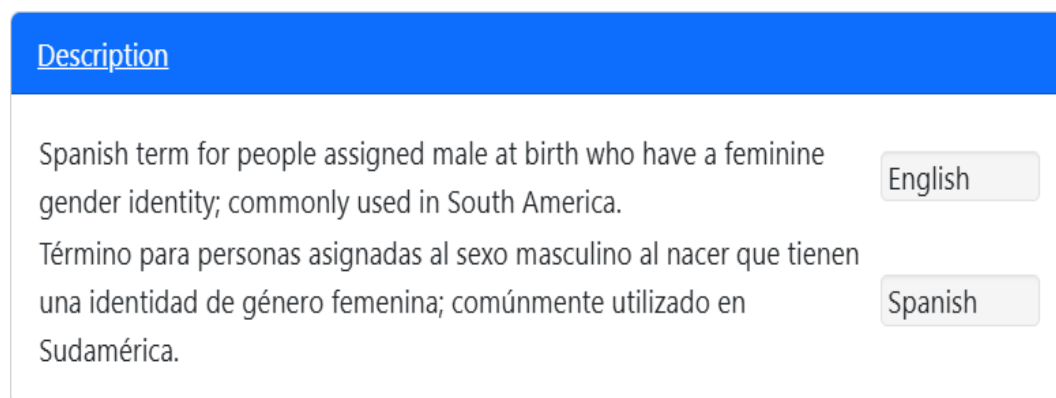
5 TRAVESTI, AN (UN)CONTROLLED TERM

Thesauri, by their characteristics and function, will in some way control the term and description of travesti identity; however, it is

crucial to avoid reproducing pathologizing or stigmatizing social constructions. This section will follow a path of analyzing the existing description for the term "Travesti" and the elaboration of a description appropriate to the Brazilian context, as well as the term, its placement, and how to present it, which safeguards important meanings regarding respect for travesti identity.

Through the analysis of Homosaurus, we located, using the search field, a term that, due to its presentation, could be erroneously used for indexing documents related to Brazilian travesti identity if the description were not understood: "Travestis." At that moment, we only focused on the approximate terminological presentation.

Figure 1 – Description of the term "Travestis" in Homosaurus



Source: Homosaurus (2025) with screenshot taken on May 21, 2014, at 6:30 PM.

It can be seen that the description (Figure 1), although presenting a continental scope in which Brazil is included, does not faithfully represent travesti identity in the Brazilian context, importing a universalizing description (Trivelato, 2022) that goes against the traditional definition of transgender woman, incurring deviations in addressing the social, political, and identity particularities of Brazilian travestis, who affirm themselves as a third gender position beyond Western binarism.

The word travesti, in the Brazilian context, resists simplistic

definitions because it encompasses multiple dimensions of meanings, as already presented in the theoretical section. However, some foundations can be highlighted: i) it is a feminine trans gender identity (Jesus, 2012; Tomaz; Filipe, 2024); ii) it does not fit the concept of "trans woman," but is not necessarily linked to rejection of male genitalia (Lima; Gitirana; Sá, 2022); iii) it is marked precisely by the hybridization of masculine and feminine characteristics (Lima; Nascimento, 2015, p. 85); and iv) historically, it maintains a relationship with travesti performances and with the processes of marginalization of dissident bodies (Barbosa, 2015; Leite Júnior, 2012). Therefore, as a term, it would be necessary to safeguard these dimensions of meaning:

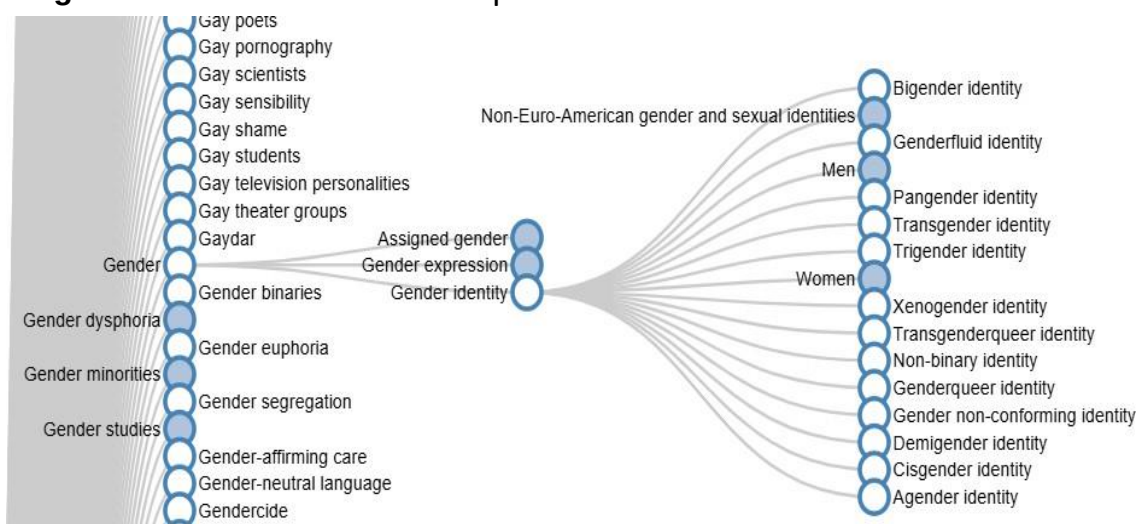
Description: Travesti is a feminine gender identity, but it does not conform to transsexual woman identity. Historically constructed in the Latin American context. In Brazil, it refers to people designated as male at birth who express femininity without necessarily rejecting their original anatomy or seeking a complete binary transition. This identity is characterized by a political self-affirmation distinct from both the category "trans woman" and homosexuality, presenting a hybrid gender performance, affirming itself as a third gender. This description is not definitive and is under constant understanding (elaborated by the authors, 2025).

Although the presented description does not encompass all the historical and cultural complexity of travesti identity in Brazil, the main intention was to concisely characterize the specificity of travestilidade as a gender experience – highlighting its differences in relation to the lived experience of trans women and mentioning, albeit briefly, its historical and political aspects.

As noted above, the term with the greatest proximity, by paronymy/homonymy, was "Travestis," taking into account the presence of the "s" as a plural. However, it does not describe the complexity of travesti identity in the Brazilian context. The placement

of the term, in its relationships, proved adequate for the description proposed for travesti identity that we elaborated above. According to the tree format visualization, the term "Travestis" is first subordinated to the term "Non-euro-american gender and sexual identities," which is in agreement with the stated understanding of a Latin American identity; then subordinated to the term "Gender identity," agreeing with Jesus (2012) and Tomaz and Filipe (2024); finally, subordinated to the term "Gender," which corresponds to the understanding of the previously subordinated term; these relationships can be better visualized in Figure 2:

Figure 2 – Semantic relationships of the term "Travestis" in Homosaurus



Source: Homosaurus (2025) with screenshot taken on May 21, 2014, at 6:30 PM.

Thus, by following the same relationships proposed for the term "Travestis," we would not be incurring ethical deviations or disrespect toward people who assume travesti identity in Brazil. Three other terminological possibilities were analyzed, mainly in their relationships and description: i) "Two-spirit identity"; ii) "Transfemininity"; and iii) "Ethnic groups of LGBTQ+ people." However, they presented limitations that we set out below:

i) Two-spirit identity: although it presents the same relationships

as "Travestis," it is a gender identity used by Indigenous peoples originating from North America, the United States of America, and Canada.

ii) Transfemininity: demonstrates correspondence with part of the meanings attributed to travesti identity. However, it is subordinated to the general term "Gender expression." Thus, it would limit the meanings of travesti identity solely to a gender expression. A double subordination relationship would be worthwhile, maintaining the relationship with "Non-euro-american gender and sexual identities."

iii) Ethnic groups of LGBTQ+ people: It could present subordination to ethnic groups, but there is no specific term for Brazil, although there are for countries such as South Africa, Russia, and Ukraine.

Therefore, we understand that, due to terminological and meaning limitations, the most adequate relationships would be those presented in Figure 2, where travesti identity in the Brazilian context would be included within the relationships of gender, as a non-North American identity.

To avoid homonymy, one of the control functions attributed to thesauri, we suggest that the presentation of the term contextualize its use in the Brazilian context, to differentiate it from the term "Travestis," used broadly in other Latin American countries, and to avoid erroneous uses. Thus, one possibility, since we did not have access to the functionalities of the system used by IHLIA LGBTI Heritage, would be to use a geographic delimiter: "Travesti (Brazil)."

The description, the form of presentation of the term, and its relationships cannot be understood as fixed and closed. As understanding of travesti identity advances, and also as Homosaurus

develops with new terms, it will be necessary to review the need for semantic movements and expansions. Even being an instrument proper to informational activity known as a controlled vocabulary – the thesaurus, or in the case of this research, Homosaurus – it can never be understood as a limiter of the meaning of travesti identity.

6 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This research presented challenges that transcended theoretical and epistemological issues for the lead author, a trans woman. The process of developing this research made the task of synthesizing in a few words what it means to be a travesti even more complex, given the historical, social, and cultural density surrounding this identity. The recognition of travestilidade as a legitimate and national gender experience is fundamental to advancing toward a less hostile society. Including the term "Travesti (Brazil)" in Homosaurus, preserving its particularities, is a crucial step for other institutions – whether academic, legal, medical, or media-related – to abandon exoticized or medicalizing representations, adopting precise and respectful descriptions.

Understanding who Brazilian travestis are goes beyond a terminological issue; it is an exercise in decolonizing knowledge. In a world that still imposes gender binarism as a universal norm, travestilidade emerges as political and cultural resistance, challenging not only Western classifications but also the very notion that identities must fit into pre-established models. Giving visibility to this existence is to recognize that humanity does not fit into rigid categories; it is to affirm that marginalized bodies carry within themselves epistemologies capable of transforming power structures. When Knowledge Organization instruments such as Homosaurus embrace these

narratives, they not only correct historical errors but become allies in the construction of a future in which no identity needs to be explained, only lived.

REFERENCES

AMERICAN PSYCHIATRY ASSOCIATION. **Manual Diagnóstico e Estatístico de Transtornos Mentais: DSM-5**. Porto Alegre: Artmed, 2014.

ARAÚJO, M. C. Travesti não se traduz!. **Lux Online Exhibition**. Notes on Travecceleration, 2017. Available at: https://lux.org.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2021/05/Exhibition-Booklet_Notes-on-Travecceleration-1.pdf. Accessed on: Apr. 9, 2025.

ARRUDA, A. M. A.; ARAUJO, R. F.; ARAUJO, R. Travestis e pessoas transexuais na mídia alagoana: análise do discurso em portais online. **Revista Brasileira de Biblioteconomia e Documentação**, v. 17, p. 1-20, 2021. Available at: <https://rbbd.febab.org.br/rbbd/article/view/1504>. Accessed on: Jan. 24, 2025.

BARBOSA, B. C. **Imaginando trans**: saberes e ativismos em torno das regulações das transformações corporais do sexo. 2015. Thesis (Doctorate in Social Anthropology) – Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, 2015.

BENEDETTI, M. R. Hormonizada! Reflexões sobre o uso de hormônios e tecnologia do gênero entre travestis. In: FÁBREGAS-MARTÍNEZ, A. I.; BENEDETTI, M. R. (Org.). **Na batalha**: identidade, sexualidade e poder no universo da prostituição. Porto Alegre: Dacasa, 2000.

CARVALHO, M.; CARRARA, S. Em direção a um futuro trans? Contribuições para a história do movimento de travestis e transexuais no Brasil. **Salud Soc.**, Rio de Janeiro, n. 14, p. 319-351, ago. 2013. Available at: <https://www.scielo.br/j/sess/a/bwWdcsDTNwS9mxzBkX6MSmx/?lang=pt>. Accessed on: Jan. 24, 2025.

CRESWELL, J. W. **Projeto de pesquisa**: método qualitativo, quantitativo e misto. 3. ed. Porto Alegre: Artmed, 2010.

CRUZ, D. S.; SILVA, R. B. Direitos humanos, pobreza e exclusão social: um olhar para travestis e transexuais em contextos educacionais. **Revista Humanidades e Inovação**, v.4, n. 6, p. 78-84, 2017. Available at:

<https://revista.unitins.br/index.php/humanidadeseinovacao/article/view/503>. Accessed on: Feb. 27, 2025.

DENIZART, H. **Engenharia erótica**: travestis no Rio de Janeiro. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 1997

DOMINGUES, I. **Epistemologia das Ciências Humanas**. Tomo 1: Positivismo e hermenêutica. São Paulo: Loyola, 2004.

FERNÁNDEZ, J. **Cuerpos desobedientes**: travestismo e identidad de género. Buenos Aires: Edhasa, 2004.

FERREIRA, R. S. A informação social no corpo travesti (Belém, Pará): uma análise sob a perspectiva de Erving Goffman. **Ci. Inf.**, Brasília, v. 38, n. 2, p. 35-45, maio/ago. 2009. Available at: <https://www.scielo.br/j/ci/a/XBXQ4g3Xyh8PpKRw6gfZ5Wy/?lang=pt>. Accessed on: Jan. 12, 2025.

GOMES, P. **A construção de tesouros em contextos de complexidade cultural, social e política**: uma proposta para Justiça de Transição. 2023. 194 f. Thesis (Doctorate in Information Science) – Escola de Ciência da Informação, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, 2023.

GOMES, P.; FROTA, M. G. C. Knowledge Organization from a social perspective: Thesauri and the commitment to cultural diversity. **Knowledge Organization**, v. 46, p. 639-646, 2019. Available at: <https://www.nomos-elibrary.de/10.5771/0943-7444-2019-8-639.pdf>. Accessed on: June. 23, 2025.

GREEN, J. **Além do carnaval**: homossexualidade masculina no Brasil do século XX. São Paulo: Editora da UNESP, 2000.

HENRIQUES, R. S. P.; LEITE, A. F. S. A disforia de gênero como síndrome cultural norte-americana. **Revista Estudos Feministas**, v. 27, p. e56662, 2019. Available at: <https://www.scielo.br/j/ref/a/qn5qpDFDBhyPzRHZgHc7mCN/?lang=pt>. Accessed on: Jan. 30, 2025.

JESUS, J. G. **Orientações sobre a população transgênero**: conceitos e termos. Brasília: [s. n.], 2012. Available at:

<https://www.diversidadesexual.com.br/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/GÊNERO-CONCEITOS-E-TERMOS.pdf>..

Accessed on: Jan. 24, 2025.

LAVILLE, C.; DIONNE, J. **A construção do saber**: manual de metodologia da pesquisa em ciências humanas. Revisão técnica e adaptação: Lana Mara Siman. Reimpressão. Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG, 2008.

LEITE JUNIOR, J. “Transitar para onde? Monstruosidade, (des)patologização, (in)segurança social e identidades transgêneras”. **Revista Estudos Feministas**, Florianópolis, v. 20, n. 2, p. 559-568, 2012. Available at:

<https://www.scielo.br/j/ref/a/GZ4KZpZGPTjvPkMyKq4bffv/?lang=pt&format=html>. Accessed on: Jan. 28, 2025.

LIMA, H. B.; NASCIMENTO, R. V. R. “Transgeneridade e cárcere: diálogos sobre uma criminologia transfeminista”. **Revista Transgressões**, [S. l.], v. 2, n. 2, p. 75–89, 2014. Available at: <https://periodicos.ufrn.br/transgressoes/article/view/6444>. Accessed on: Feb. 4, 2025.

LIMA, F. E. N.; GITIRANA, J. H. S.; SÁ, P. P. A segregação do corpo travesti no sistema prisional brasileiro: comentários à Medida Cautelar na ADPF 527. **Revista Direito e Práxis**, v. 13, n. 2, p. 1136-1167, 2022. Disponível em:

<https://www.scielo.br/j/rdp/a/YXYPvbNS9ZpY9wj9hMMdvNy/?lang=pt>. Accessed on: Jan. 25, 2025.

MOURA, M. A. Organização social do conhecimento e performatividade de gênero: dispositivos, regimes de saber e relações de poder. **Liinc em Revista**, Rio de Janeiro, v. 14, n. 2, p. 118-135, 2018. Available at:

<https://repositorio.ufmg.br/handle/1843/36891>. Accessed on: June. 13, 2025.

NASCIMENTO, V. M. S.; MARIANO, N. A.; SANTOS, C. B. Dialeto Pajubá: marca identitária da comunidade LGBTQIA+. **Grau Zero: Revista de Crítica Cultural**, v. 9, n. 2, p. 67-95, 2021. Available at: <https://www.revistas.uneb.br/index.php/grauzero/article/view/11952>. Accessed on: Fev. 20, 2025.

ROMEIRO, N. L. **Conceituação e hierarquização das questões de gênero em tesouros**: um estudo ancorado na Organização Social e Crítica do conhecimento em diálogo com a interseccionalidade e a

decolonialidade. 2024. 300 f. Thesis (Doctorate in Information Science) – Escola de Ciência da Informação, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, 2024.

SOLIVA, T. B. Sobre o talento de ser fabulosa: os “shows de travesti” e a invenção da “travesti profissional”. **Cadernos Pagu**, n. 53, p. e185314, 2018. Available at: <https://www.scielo.br/j/cpa/a/wz4FCMgj8ZTDPwpkJn5H9Xg/?format=html&lang=pt>. Accessed on: Fev. 9, 2025.

TOMAZ, L. B. O. S.; FELIPE, C. B. M. O papel da indexação na categorização da transexualidade e travestilidade. **Revista Informação na Sociedade Contemporânea**, [S. l.], v. 8, n. 1, p. e35269, 2024. Available at: <https://periodicos.ufrn.br/informacao/article/view/35269>. Accessed on: May 25, 2025.

TRIVELATO, R. M, S. **A luta das mulheres tem muitos nomes: os Sistemas de Organização do Conhecimento frente a uma emergência conceitual**. 2022. Tese (Doutorado em Ciência da Informação) - Escola de Ciência da Informação, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, 2022.

YORK, S. W.; OLIVEIRA, M. R. G.; BENEVIDES, B. Manifestações textuais (insubmissas) travesti. **Revista Estudos Feministas**, v. 28, p. e75614, 2020. Available at: <https://www.scielo.br/j/ref/a/D5Mthwz5BKThX8JTwGjJbd/?format=html&lang=pt>. Accessed on: Feb. 12, 2025.