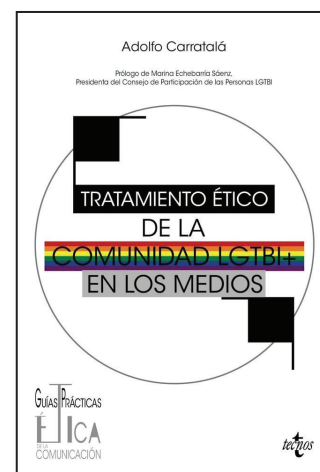


Tratamiento ético de la comunidad LGTBI en los medios

Adolfo Carratalá Simón
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Towards an ethical and situated treatment of LGTBI realities in the media

The book *Tratamiento ético de la comunidad LGTBI en los medios* (*Ethical Treatment of the LGTBI Community in the Media*), by Adolfo Carratalá (2025), is presented as a tool for communication professionals in the Spanish-speaking world interested in improving news coverage of LGTBI realities. From the outset, the book has a dual purpose: on the one hand, to offer deontological criteria and recommendations applicable to journalistic practice; on the other, to situate these criteria within a critical framework that takes into account the persistence of cisheteropatriarchal structures and a socio-political context marked by tensions, setbacks and dynamics of polarisation. This two-fold dimension reinforces its relevance at a time when media coverage of LGTBI people runs alongside the resurgence of exclusionary discourses.

The book opens with a foreword by Marina Echebarria Sáenz, president of the Consejo de Participación de las Personas LGTBI [Council for the Participation of LGBTI People], which stresses the urgency of establishing clear ethical parameters in the treatment of these realities in the news media. Her intervention not only legitimises the author's work, but also underlines the need for the media to take an active role in preventing misinformation and the reproduction of prejudices. This approach aligns with the criteria promoted by regulatory bodies, which emphasise the media's social responsibility as agents that shape collective imaginaries.

One of the main pillars of the work is the defence of a situated reading of information, understood as a contextual understanding that considers the impact of socio-political frameworks and professional routines on the representation of sexual and gender minorities. Carratalá recovers theoretical perspectives that explain the media construction of "otherness" and analyses how discourses on identities that challenge the norm are normalised or delegitimised through audiovisual and journalistic narratives. His approach combines references to cultural studies, the sociology of language and the theory of representation, offering a solid and accessible framework for non-specialist readers.

The author uses the metaphors of the media as "mirrors" and "windows" to illustrate the dual function of public communication. As mirrors, the media reflect certain social realities, often selectively; as windows, they determine which worlds are shown and which remain invisible (Carratalá, 2025). This distinction, typical of communication studies, but here applied to the LGTBI reality, allows us to understand the relevance of editorial decisions in the reproduction of stereotypes, silences and hierarchies of visibility.

The book offers a careful analysis of historical and contemporary representations of marginalised groups, avoiding simplistic readings and emphasising the relationship between representation, stigmatisation and inequality. Carratalá stresses that representation is not a neutral phenomenon, but rather a process with concrete effects on social perception and on the guarantee of rights.

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In this sense, the work engages directly with legislative frameworks, codes, and professional documents that seek to establish minimum standards for respectful and rigorous treatment of LGBTBI people. The review of the activity of observatories, regulatory bodies and style manuals is particularly useful for professionals operating in newsrooms, communication offices or audiovisual environments.

Another of the book's relevant contributions is the analysis of the dynamics of disinformation that affect LGBTBI people. Carratalá points to the way in which these identities have been used as scapegoats in coordinated campaigns, in a news ecosystem characterised by the speed of circulation of content and the fragmentation of audiences.

The text highlights the media's responsibility to avoid the uncritical amplification of LGBTBIphobic narratives and to contextualise discourses that are presented as artificially constructed "controversies". The concept of "liberal homophobia", clearly incorporated into the argument, highlights the conditional acceptance that tolerates sexual diversity only when it remains in the private sphere, which contravenes the journalistic principles of clarity, accuracy and social responsibility.

The book also looks at the stereotypes that consolidate a restrictive and reductionist collective imaginary. The author explains how these discursive devices simplify and depersonalise LGBTBI experiences, making it difficult to understand the internal diversity of the collective and reinforcing prejudices that have discriminatory effects.

From this approach, the work identifies a hierarchy of visibility in which gay, white and normative identities predominate, while other realities such as trans, bisexual, intersex or racialised identities remain underrepresented. This analysis connects with current debates on intersectionality and representational justice, as well as offering arguments for promoting a more pluralistic view of LGBTBI experiences.

Beyond its conceptual analysis, the book is noteworthy for its practical applications. Carratalá reviews media cases in which sensationalist, pathologising or paternalistic approaches have been used and from these he proposes concrete recommendations that can be integrated into professional practice. This case study approach makes it possible to illustrate structural patterns beyond isolated anecdotes. This pragmatic perspective is a valuable contribution for those working in journalism, as it helps to identify recurring errors and to adopt ethical alternatives without compromising newsworthiness.

One of the most important elements is the Decalogue for ethical coverage of LGBTBI realities. Conceived as a quick reference tool, it summarises basic principles that guide professionals towards more rigorous and respectful treatment. The Decalogue incorporates an explicit emphasis on intersectionality, highlighting the fact that discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation is

intertwined with economic, racial or territorial inequalities. It also calls for the diversification of sources, with a focus on the direct participation of those affected, and for collaboration with specialised organisations.

The book pays special attention to the use of language, a central aspect of any journalistic style guide. The author clearly details the distinction between *gender identity*, *sexual orientation* and *gender expression*, and analyses the relevance of certain terms in the Spanish-speaking context. He warns against the pathologising or inaccurate formulas that persist in some media and advocates for terms that recognise the self-determination of individuals and respect the internal diversity of the collective.

In relation to the coverage of LGBTBIphobic aggressions or crimes, the book devotes a section to deontological criteria aimed at avoiding sensationalism and contextualising these events as manifestations of structural violence. Recommendations include: diversifying sources, incorporating academic and associative voices, focusing responsibility on perpetrators of violence and providing information on support resources. This section is particularly relevant in a context where certain media tend to present these episodes as isolated incidents or as decontextualised media controversies.

Finally, the book is intended as a tool for professional self-assessment. Carratalá proposes a series of questions that allow journalists and media teams to identify whether their reporting procedures are in line with basic ethical principles. In the same vein, he underlines the relevance of rectification as a responsible professional practice, not only in the event of occasional errors, but also as a mechanism for improving internal processes and updating style manuals. The text explicitly dialogues with existing ethical codes and provides specific criteria linked to sexual and gender diversity.

The book is set in a complex political and media landscape, characterised by the resurgence of reactionary discourse questioning advances in LGBTBI rights in Spain and other Spanish-speaking countries. In this context, Carratalá's work offers a clear, well-founded and practical approach. Its main strength lies in combining critical analysis, conceptual tools and applicable proposals without losing clarity or precision, making it a relevant and timely reference for those who wish to review, question and improve the ethical treatment of LGBTBI realities in the media.