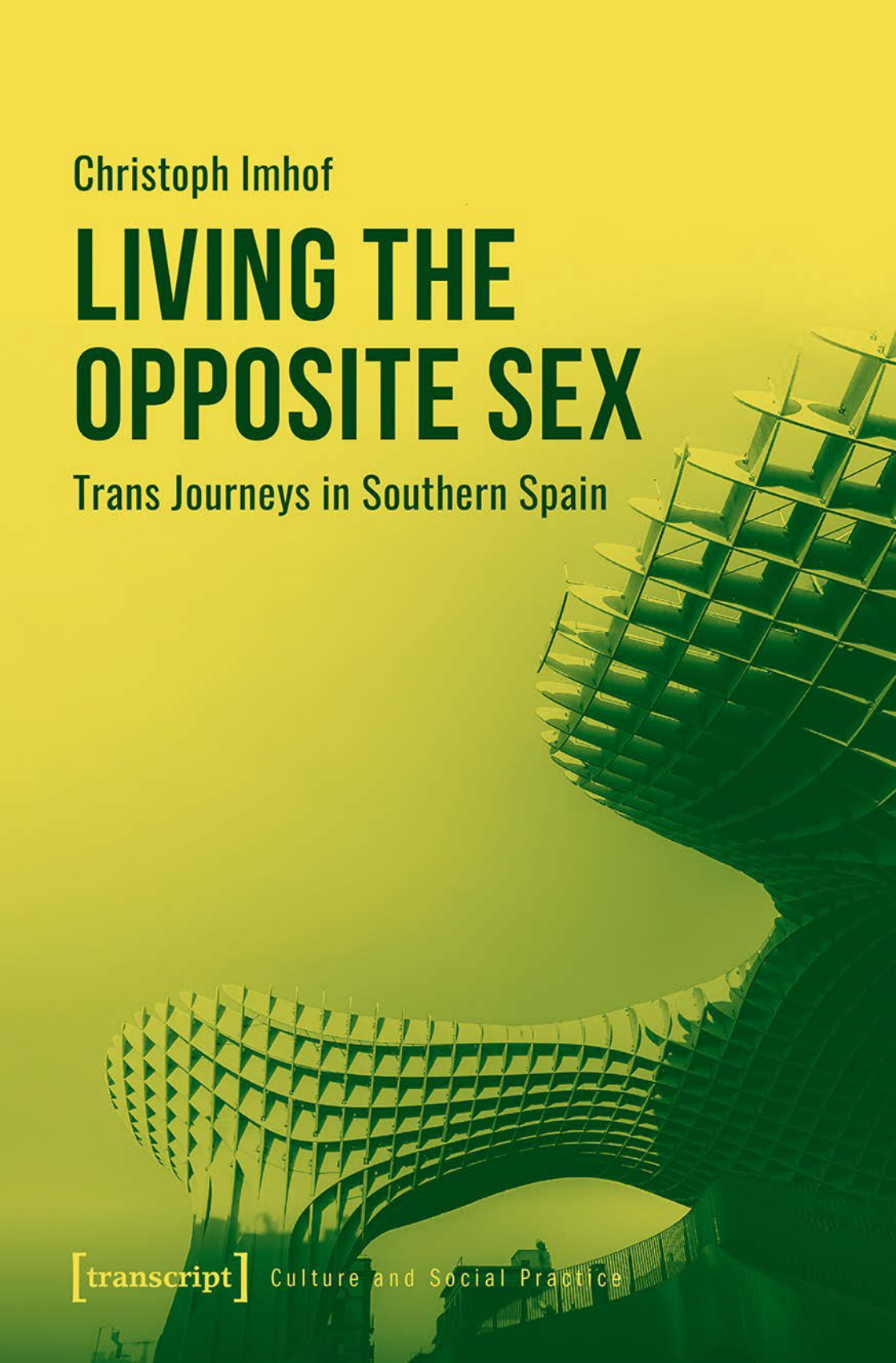
Christoph Imhof

LIVING THE OPPOSITE SEX

Trans Journeys in Southern Spain



[transcript] Culture and Social Practice

Christoph Imhof
Living the Opposite Sex

Culture and Social Practice

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The Open Access edition is published with the support of the Swiss National Science Foundation.

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at http://dnb.d-nb.de

First published in 2023 by transcript Verlag, Bielefeld

https://www.transcript-verlag.de/

Cover layout: Maria Arndt, Bielefeld
Cover illustration: Photo by Daniele Buso / Unsplash
Printed by: Majuskel Medienproduktion GmbH, Wetzlar
https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839465653
Print-ISBN 978-3-8376-6565-9
PDF-ISBN 978-3-8394-6565-3
ISSN of series: 2703-0024
eISSN of series: 2703-0032

Printed on permanent acid-free text paper.

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Acknowledgements

This book is based on my dissertation at the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Bern.

First and foremost, I am deeply grateful to my research partners in the field, who were willing to share with me insights into their life worlds and who provided the material and spice for the PhD-thesis. I would also like to thank my supervisor Prof. Dr. Heinzpeter Znoj from the Institute of Social Anthropology of the University of Bern for his long-term support, his critical encouragements and his ongoing interest in my research project. In addition, my thanks go out to Prof. Dr. Andrea Maihofer from the specialist field of Gender Studies at the University of Basel, who agreed to become my second examiner. Dr. Maihofer provided me with valuable input by discussing part of my paper with me. I am also sincerely grateful to the PhD students at the Doctoral Colloquium in Social Anthropology at the University of Bern for their ongoing critical and supportive comments on my paper in progress. I would also like to thank the participants, the programme management and the programme committee of the Graduate School Gender Studies at the University of Bern for welcoming me onto their interdisciplinary PhD-programme, and for the inspiring discussion during one of the annually held symposiums from which I was able to benefit enormously. Spending time in the field (especially the second field research period) and writing down the PhD-thesis were sometimes a balancing act between meeting my work obligations and progressing with the thesis. I would also like to thank the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland, School of Social Work, especially the Institute of Integration and Participation, for granting me leave to complete this research project. I am grateful to Monty Sufrin, who was helpful in the final phase of my endeavour by editing the manuscript.

Because this research spans many years, many people have been involved, at different times. Thus, my heartfelt thanks go to all those persons and friends who supported me in the field and at home, who enabled contacts, spent time with me, gave me feedback, accompanied and motivated me in both better and more difficult times. A very special thank you goes to Gionatan Zappola, to José Oropesa and to my late mother Erika Imhof-Bieri.

List of abbreviations

ATA Asociación de Transexuales de Andalucía Sylvia Rivera
BAG Federal Office of Public Health, Switzerland (Bundesamt für Gesundheit, Schweiz)
DNI Documento Nacional de Identidad (National identity card)
DSM Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric Association)
FtM Female-to-male trans person
GID Gender Identity Disorder
HIV Human immunodeficiency virus
IAS International Aids Society
ICD International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (WHO)
ILGA International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association
IU-CA Izquierda Unida
LGBT+ Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and more
MtF Male-to-female trans person
PP Partido Popular (Popular Party)
PSOE Partido Socialista Obrero Español (Spanish Socialist Workers Party)
SAS Servicio Andaluz de Salud (Andalusian Health Service)
STI Sexually transmitted infections
TVE Televisión Española
UGT Unión General de Trabajadores (General Workers Union)
UTIG Unidad de Trastornos de la Identidad de Género / Unidad de Transexualidad e Identidad de Género
WHO World Health Organisation
WPATH World Professional Association of Transgender Health

Introduction

"[…] de no ser a ser."
(Diego, 2015)[1]

This work concerns individuals in Andalusia who do not fit the sex and gender assigned to them at birth. Moreover and more generally, it is about past and contemporary society, reflected through the experiences, memories, activities, and daily life of these individuals and their social environment. Andalusia is the southernmost autonomous community in Spain, bordering the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. This region was of special interest to European and North American anthropologists in the second half of the 20th century, in conjunction with the anthropological interest in Mediterranean societies (cf. Pitt-Rivers 1971). Beginning around the 1950s, a Mediterranean Anthropology emerged as a subdiscipline of Social Anthropology (Giordano 2012). Ecological and societal common features were emphasised to define a culture area that encompassed the societies bordering the Mediterranean Sea (cf. Davis 1977). A concept of honour and shame linked to sexuality and gender emerged as a central topic by these anthropologists, depicting a society structured by clearly defined concepts of men and women, of manliness and femaleness (cf. Blok 1982; Brandes 1981; Gilmore 1990; Giordano 2001; Peristiany 1966).

As a marker of his virility, the ideal Andalusian man was described as tough, strong, aggressive, sober, free, and responsible for his family. "The quintessence of manliness is fearlessness, readiness to defend one's own pride and that of one's family" (Pitt-Rivers 1971: 89). He was expected to demonstrate a masculinity which is physically situated in the sexual organs, specifically the testicles, which appears in expressions like *tener cojones* (literally "to have balls", signifying to have courage). "To be masculine is to have *cojones* (testicles) […]" (Pitt-Rivers 1971: 90). The Andalusian man was typified as someone who constantly had to reaffirm his virility to guard his honour and the honour of the family, which was threatened by the sexuality of his wife (and daughters). This threat included fear of feminisation if he could not accomplish and maintain his manly role. Consequently, he constantly had to express his homophobia as well. His honour (and that of the family) depended

1 "From not to be to be." (Diego, 2015)

on the (sexual) conduct of his wife and unmarried daughters. Therefore, the Andalusian man was typified as "[u]n hombre valiente, autónomo, capaz de defenderse a sí mismo y defender lo que es suyo, en el ámbito de actuación que le es propio por excelencia, 'la calle', lo público" (Mozo González and Tena Díaz 2003: 163).[2]

The same corpus of social anthropological literature put the Andalusian woman (as a representative of Mediterranean culture) on the other side of the scale. To quote Pitt-Rivers again: "The male social personality has been related to the conception of manliness. The feminine counterpart of the conception, which expresses the essence of womanhood, is *vergüenz*a, or shame" (1971: 112). She had to be faithful and was bound to the house and its surroundings.

> Una mujer casta, un modelo de casada obesa, que no ha oído hablar de emancipación, educación o liberación sexual, recatada en sus comportamientos, vestida con ropas oscuras para ocultar su cuerpo, y que, en definitiva, manifiesta con el decoro el valor de su pureza sexual, su 'vergüenza', que constituye la base de la posición moral de su familia en esta sociedad 'tradicional'. (Mozo González and Tena Díaz 2003: 164)[3]

Embedded in an idea of purity and chastity, she had to conserve her virginity, following the footsteps of the Virgin Mary. This 'discovery' or 'construction' (depending on the viewpoint) of a Mediterranean culture area with its culture-specific characteristics was widely debated and critisised (for earlier critics see Boissevain 1979; Goddard et al. 1994; Llobera 1986; Pina-Cabral 1989). Mozo González and Tena Díaz (2003) criticise that Mediterranean anthropology put forward the issue that Andalusia (like the rest of the societies bordering the Mediterranean Sea) could be characterised by a rigid and accentuated separation of the sexes, thus, labelling these societies as 'the others', as more traditional and less developed than the anthropologists' countries of origin, where feminist movements were starting to question gender roles and gender hierarchies.

Consequently, (concerning gender roles and gender images) in the second half of the 20th century anthropologists wrote about machismo and faithful, pure women, thus, depicting a chauvinistic and patriarchal society. The texts not only sexualised men and women in different ways, but also took heterosexuality as the

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2 "A brave, autonomous man, capable of defending himself and those he is responsible for, in 'the street', in public, which is his field of action [own transl.]" (Mozo González and Tena Díaz 2003: 163).

3 "A chaste woman, faithful to marriage, who has not heard of emancipation, education or sexual liberation, demure in her behaviour, dressed in dark clothes to conceal her body, and who, ultimately, manifests with her decency the value of her sexual purity, her 'shame' that constitutes the basis of her family's moral position in this 'traditional' society [own transl.]" (Mozo González and Tena Díaz 2003: 164).

natural form of relationships, with sexual intercourse as its utmost expression (Mozo González and Tena Díaz 2003).

At the same time, these ethnographies depicted a sexually seductive Andalusian woman, whom, to maintain honour, the father or husband had to control. The image of the tempting and disloyal woman was a continuation of the notion of the sexes 'found' by the romantic travellers (*viajeros románticos*) in the 19th century, who had already contributed to a creation of topics about men and women, and which, according to Mozo González and Tena Díaz (2003), contributed to an exotic image of Andalusia. The travel literature of the 19th century focussed on marginalised groups, such as bandits, smugglers, and attractive, unemployed men, on drinkers with an inclination to aggression, bullfighters, gypsies, lustful female dancers or wage-earning cigar-makers. This literature characterised Andalusian men as wild, cruel and indolent, and the women as endowed with a passionate sexuality (e.g. the image of Carmen by Mérimée).

In rare cases, the travel literature of the 19th century mentioned women who were courageous and behaved like *medio-hombres*, and men with feminine behaviour who behaved like *medio-mujeres*. In the texts of the early 'Mediterranean anthropologists' the only references to non-normative gender roles or non-normative sexual desire (if any) were linked to homosexuality. However, this happened only in an indirect way. Mozo González and Tena Díaz (2003) note that homosexuals did not appear as authentic social subjects in these ethnographies. Unlike other informants who could be heard in the texts, homosexuals were just talked about. The same authors conclude that in this genre of writing, homosexuality appears as a phantasmagorical nightmare for the Andalusian men, depicted as something marginal, negatively connoted and vehemently rejected. Homosexuality exists, but the homosexuals are invisible. Mozo González and Tena Díaz (2003) criticise writing about men and women in this way, because it portrays Andalusia as a society quite closed to sexual plurality, and where the heterosexist order and homophobia are always present. This reaffirms its traditional character.

The criticism is appropriate because this representation of Andalusian men and women served to distinguish between 'traditional' Mediterranean countries and the 'modern' countries of the mostly Anglo-Saxon anthropologists (cf. Goddard et al. 1994). However, on one hand, these descriptions matched the *zeitgeist* of anthropological academic work, and on the other, the political-ideological situation in Spain in the middle decades of the 20th century. To write about homosexuality was not a key issue in anthropological work and questioned the authors' professional academic career. Anthropologists interested in writing about homosexuality were suspected of being homosexuals themselves and, thus, of lacking the necessary objectivism necessary for scientific research, or of becoming too entangled with the research subjects. Furthermore, it was hardly a topic to be financially supported by funding agencies (Lewin and Leap 1996).

The gender images represented were also congruent with the political-ideological situation in Spain in the middle of the 20th century under the dictatorship of Franco, which lasted from 1939 until his death in 1975. These decades were characterised by a consolidation of rigid rules of sexual behaviour and repression of sexuality in the service of a catholic morality, which coincided with Franco's policy and ideology (Nieto 2011). Sexuality was meant exclusively for the purpose of procreation; the nuclear family was highly valued; and the woman's role was to complete the man. Against this background, 'homosexuals' were perceived as a danger.

Today, approximately fifty years later, Spanish society presents itself very differently. One of my interlocutors, Valentín, a social worker who does prevention work for sex workers in Seville, states: "Mmh, la sociedad española está cambiando muchísima. ¿Eh? Desde que se murió el dictador, está en continuo cambio." (Valentín, 2003)[4]

After Franco's dictatorship ended, Spain leapt through a transition into democracy and into the European Community. Gender equality is now on the political agenda, as in many other 'modern' European countries, and regarding marriage equality, Spain legally recognised marriage between same sex couples (including the right of adoption) as early as 2005, during the government of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (cf. Jefatura del Estado 2005). Ban states that "[i]n 2004, after eight years in opposition, the Socialist Party had become one of the most progressive center-left parties in the world on gender parity, gay rights, the environment, and other postmaterial policy issues […]" (Ban 2016: 59). Regarding respect for human rights, full equality and non-discrimination, the ILGA-Europe, in their ranking of 49 countries, rates Spain in seventh place (with 70.19%). In comparison, Switzerland is rated at 33.15%, and is put 25th (ILGA-Europe 2016). As for the visibility of homosexuals, Madrid, the capital of Spain, has become one of the top gay destinations in the world.[5]

However, this does not mean that homophobia has been erased. On the International AIDSImpact Conference on HIV/Aids in Barcelona in 2013, one of the Spanish keynote speakers at the opening session expressed his concern that homophobia in Spain was still a very troubling issue in daily life. He referred to a recent incident, among others, where a gay man died in a violent confrontation with the local police *(Mossos d'Esquadra)* in Barcelona (personal note). In addition, Valentín, the social worker mentioned above, notes a prevailing rejection of homosexuals, despite increased tolerance due to better information and legalisation. Often, this rejection manifests itself in the form of making fun of them.

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4 "Ehm, Spanish society is changing a lot. Ever since the dictator died, it is in constant change." (Valentín, 2003)

5 See e.g. URL: http://www.madridorgullo.com/en/worldpride/madrid/madridlgtb

Thus, thinking in traditional gender roles is not easily extinguished, despite all the politically progressive changes towards non-discrimination, equity and diversity. During my last field research trip for example, I told the male landlord where I was staying that I had cleaned the refrigerator and had to throw quite a few mouldy things away. He responded: "*Esta [the fridge] es cosa de mujer*"[6], thus rejecting any responsibility. This evoked images of traditional gender roles, where a woman's work is bound to housekeeping, and to the private sphere, while men had their obligations in the public sphere. The metaphor of 'not having balls' (to offend somebody and question his authority) has endured the decades as well. One of my research partners, Anabel, a trans woman, working as a bus driver told of an incident with a passenger a few years ago. It was during the Easter week *(Semana Santa)* when there was a special bus schedule, due to the many religious processions taking place in the city during that week. While driving, Anabel was speaking to a newly arrived passenger who needed information about the changed schedule. An elderly man in the back of the bus, irritated by their ongoing talk, started to protest in a loud voice. Although Anabel asked him to be quiet, he continued to yell at her. This distracted her from driving. She told him to get off at the next stop if he was not willing to be quiet. He started to insult her: "Me dice: '¡Tú no tienes cojones!' Y yo le contesté: 'No, que no tengo, caballero'. Y él me dijo: 'Porque te lo han cortado'." (Anabel, 2013)[7]

This insult was intended to reduce Anabel to a state of 'not having balls', the very metaphor referred to above. Indeed, *los cojones* are not just a biological quality of maleness, but are also linked to social reputation: "[…] he has no *cojones*, that is to say that he is lacking in the full social personality of an adult male, and is a person who can be overridden with impunity" (Pitt-Rivers 1971: 90-91). However, Anabel did not want to be 'overridden with impunity'. Now really upset, she ordered him to get off at the next bus stop, which he refused to do. She called the police, but they did not force the man to leave. He had paid for his ticket, they argued. After finishing her daily work, she reported him to the police and the case had to be judged in court. Anabel, who is convinced that people look at trans persons in a stereotypical way and laugh at them (which always upsets her) reflected on her reaction: "Yo lo que buscaba que el tío este le pusieron claro que no puede ir así por la vida, y ya está." (Anabel, 2013)[8]

The romantic travellers of the 19th century have left their mark as well. According to Mozo González and Tena Díaz (2003) their techniques of representation (e.g. on the basis of travel literature) were successful in constructing 'the other', which

6 "The fridge is a woman's thing."

7 "He says: 'You have no balls'! I replied: 'No, I really don't have them, Sir'. And he said: 'Because they cut them off'. (Anabel, 2013)

8 "All I wanted was for them to make it clear to this guy that he could not go on that way in life, and that's it." (Anabel, 2013)

they compare with Edward W. Said's concept of Orientalism. Said viewed 'Orientalism'

> [...] as a Western discourse that essentialises the Muslim world in pejorative ways, one intimately entwined with imposition of imperial power and offering ideological justifications for it. (Ansari 2013: 3)

For Andalusia, Mozo González and Tena Díaz (2003) note that part of the Andalusian people accepted (even essentialised) the images depicted by these educational travellers of the 19th century as 'natural' markers of their collective identity. This might partly explain why pictures of folkloric elements, such as passionate women dancing *flamenco*, are used by travel agencies, promising to encounter the 'true' Andalusia, or why a contemporary travel guide to Spain describes Seville, the capital of Andalusia, as "[...] home of flamenco and all the clichés of southern Spain" (Baskett et al. 2015: 5). Some of my informants are quite unperturbed about accepting these images although they fail in actually performing them. Two of the research partners joked that they could neither sing, nor dance flamenco.

It might have been the 'queering' of such 'true' Andalusian traits through trans individuals which awakened my interest to learn more about their life-worlds. It was towards the end of the 1990s when I first saw Imelda performing in a gay night bar in Seville. Every Sunday night, there was a show, where different actors, mostly drag queens, performed a playback show. Most of them imitated modern pop songs. Imelda, a trans woman, interpreted songs by Isabel Pantoja only.

During this time, *la Pantoja* was a respected contemporary singer of *coplas*. *Coplas* are narrative ballad-like songs, full of emotion, telling stories of love and hope, of loss and suffering, and of devotion to the homeland. They treat issues of ordinary life mostly, and are associated with Southern Spain, but are famous all over the country (cf. Sieburth 2014). In the times of Franco, they were glorified as the expression of Spanish culture, but lost popularity after Franco's death, because many people related them to Franco's regime. Nowadays, *coplas* have reclaimed their popularity. Imelda appeared in wonderful costumes which she sewed herself (as I later learned) and imitated the songs in a deeply emotional manner, her whole body and face expressing the pain and the suffering of the song, her eyes looking far away. When the song ended, she entered into a joking, entertaining conversation with the audience, and charmed the room with her self-confident appearance. Imelda's queer performance and the audience's enthusiastic reception were symbolically laden. In slipping into the role of *la Pantoja*, whose fame was heightened by the fact that she had been married to a *torero* killed in a bullfight, a symbol of Spanish identity that can hardly be matched, Imelda represented the essence of the modern Andalusian woman, but strongly tied to traditions. In short, Imelda, who was born in a male body, represented in her shows one of the highly adored women in Spain.

In contrast to the rather milieu-specific ambiance in which Imelda was performing, talk shows in television served as a popular place where trans women appeared before the public. However, unlike Imelda, the trans women who participated in talk shows often represented the typical transsexual woman many people have in their minds: showing accentuated feminine sexual characteristics, such as a stately-sized bosom, enlarged lips, and a readiness to entertain. Entertainment, while stereotyping trans people, seemed to be the purpose of these talk shows.

Thus sensitised, I saw or heard about further trans persons and developed a growing interest to explore the life worlds of these people in this region of Europe. What was it like for a person, biologically assigned to one sex but aiming to be acknowledged as the other, to live in a society that had been represented as being structured in a rigid gender system? Where it was said that a real man must have *cojones* (balls) and be the guardian of the family, and where women were once said to be sensual and chaste at the same time? What were the consequences a person faced on the individual, familial, and societal level in 'removing' or 'adding' testicles (symbolically speaking)? What were the available strategies these people used to cope with their sex/gender non-conformity and how did legal and societal transformations affect these strategies? How did inclusion or exclusion correlate with medical practice? Moreover, was it possible to detect dominant contemporary gender models and societal norms in unveiling the everyday life of people who seemingly act against hetero-normative expectations?

Hence, this research attempts to look at contemporary notions of the sexes by unveiling societal challenges confronting trans people in Andalusia, which was represented in earlier years as marked by a strong heteronormative sex/gender order and rigid characteristics concerning maleness and femaleness. Here, I start from the assumption that modes of being that diverge from the norm provoke individual, familial and societal points of friction. Particularly among minorities, these points of friction do not comply with familial and societal expectations. Trans people interfere with and challenge a purported natural order by not accepting their assigned biological sex. To gain insight into the life-worlds of trans people in Southern Spain, and to analyse their individual, familial and societal situation reflects not only the individual, but in the broadest sense societal traits in general. Embedding the subject into the structures of its social and political environment, into the structures of medicine, law, economy and spirituality, it draws on Goffman's idea about the explanatory power of interactions: Although "[…] it is individual actors who contribute the ultimate materials […]" (Goffman 2005: 2) it is not only about people and their situation, but also (or rather) about the situations and their people (cf. Uzarewicz 2011). Furthermore, Andalusia is not an isolated province, but is embedded in the nation state and the European Community. In this sense, the study intends to combine individual (local) experiences with these wider structures as well. Thus, the 'trans' perspective should reveal dynamics (be they oppressive or

supportive) that are otherwise less (or not at all) visible, and contribute to an understanding of past and contemporary challenges, not least for contemporary western society in general.

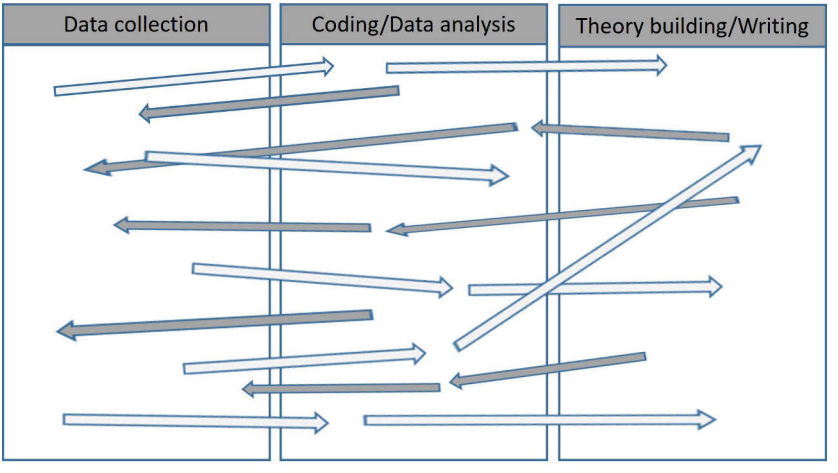
Having outlined these aspects and intentions, this introductory chapter continues with explanations of the methodology and theoretical framework before discussing terminology. It concludes with an overview of the structure of this work.

Methodological and theoretical framework

Methods and data collection

This study is an ethnologically-oriented, qualitative piece of research, and follows the principles of Grounded Theory (cf. Strauss 1998; Strauss and Corbin 1996). One of the strengths of Grounded Theory is its refusal to separate data gathering and data analysis as a strictly chronological process (i.e. first data gathering, then data analysis), but rather emphasises the on-going ties between both processes to finally develop its own theory. When Grounded Theory is understood as encompassing the whole research process (from data collection to the written text), then there is an ongoing process between data collection, data analysis and final product (see illustration 1.1).

Illustration 1.1. On-going process between data collection, data analysis and theory building/final product



(cf. Strauss 1998: 46; Strübing 2014: 12)

I conducted field research and collected data during two research periods which were rather far apart: an extended field trip in 2003, where the first results emerged, and several research trips between 2013 and 2015, where I intended to meet former and new informants and concentrate on the changes that had happened during this decade.

During summer to autumn 2003, I spent several months in the field. Geographically, I started with and focussed on the urban area of Seville, where I initially made contact with my first informants. Through the unveiling of part of their networks, and growing information, I extended the geographical focus to other parts of Andalusia. One was Malaga as a further urban metropole, where some of my informants, aspiring for sex reassignment, received medical assistance. Due to the domicile or summer holiday stays of some of my informants, or festivities, the focus also included suburban, rural and coastal regions. This research period turned out to be very valuable in knowledge production, and nerve-racking at the same time. The search for interlocutors (initially through persons of trust), the establishment of contact, and the accessibility of potential research partners was time-consuming and required persistence and patience. Nevertheless, valuable contacts developed and with seven out of the dozen or so trans persons I met (and with whom I entered into informal conversations), I conducted in-depth interviews which I was allowed to record. Six of them were male-to-female trans persons (MtF), and one female-to-male (FtM). During this research period, FtMs were hard to reach. A staff member of Colega (a gay and lesbian association in the city) enabled the meeting with the latter (who was accompanied by his girl-friend and her little daughter). The association also provided a quiet room for the interview.

Overall, the research partners I met in 2003 gave me valuable insights into their lifeworlds, which provided me with a broad picture of the general situation. From a methodological point of view, this explorative research trip confirmed "[t]he validity, meaningfulness, and insights generated from qualitative inquiry [which] have more to do with the information richness of the cases selected […] than with sample size" (Patton 2002: 245). Patton argues: "While one cannot generalize from single cases or very small samples, one can learn from them – and learn a great deal" (2002: 46). Furthermore it "[…] can tell you something important about what's going on in society" (2002: 46). To look at a 'case' as an independent examination unit is one of the central characteristics of Grounded Theory as well. Methodologically, a 'case' in Grounded Theory is understood as an autonomous entity with a story. This can be a person, a family, an institution, or a social context (cf. Hildenbrand's introductory remarks in Strauss 1998).

Two visits to the hospital in Malaga, where transsexual people from Andalusia were officially referred to in 2003, allowed me to meet and interview one of the surgeons for sex reassignment surgery. At this time, Andalusia and the Extremadura were Spain's only two autonomous communities that had integrated the sex re-

assignment process into their Public Health system, which covered the costs (see Chapter 1).

Furthermore, I established contact with two staff members of an NGO (Médicos del Mundo), who visited the sex work venue once a week where some of my informants worked as transsexual sex workers in the inner city. These two social workers arrived in a camper that served as a mobile information and counselling centre, mainly regarding HIV and STI (sexually transmitted infections) prevention work.

To get to know as broad a diversity of lifeworlds of trans people as possible, I intended to meet people with diverse socio-demographic and personal backgrounds: age; MtF; FtM; different intentions and experiences concerning surgical interventions, different milieus, and whatever turns out as characteristic of and enriching for my research. In this sense, according to the principles of Grounded Theory, by a theoretical sampling (for the production of comparisons) I aimed to achieve a theoretical saturation, which means that additional empirical data and their analysis would not alter the final product in a substantial manner (cf. Charmaz 2006; Strauss 1998; Strauss and Corbin 1996; Strübing 2014).

Qualitative data collection consisted on one hand of recorded semi-structured interviews (when allowed, I videotaped the interview), participant observation and many informal conversations. On the other hand, document analyses and Internet research were further tools I relied on. Furthermore, I kept a field research diary. After a first data collection and the transcription of the interviews, I analysed the material by coding, starting with open coding to work out preliminary categories and to make first comparisons (for a more detailed description of the coding process cf. Charmaz 2006; Strauss 1998; Strübing 2014). This early analysis provided primary insights into the research object, revealed missing aspects and opened new questions. Although I was granted with rich insights of different lifeworlds and their societal embedding during this initial field research, there remained some hidden aspects. I knew of some elderly trans persons, from whom I hoped to learn more about the situation during the dictatorship of Franco. I tried to contact them by trusted third parties, but they could not be convinced to meet me. This reflects once again one of the methodical challenges of anthropological fieldwork: to build up trust, which takes time. I also wished to speak to some more FtM, but this scene was quite invisible at that time. And last but not least, I did not meet trans persons who could talk about their experiences after sex reassignment surgery. However, four of my informants I met in 2003 were on the hospital's waiting list for genital sex reassignment and were waiting impatiently to be called in for surgery.

Obligations and other projects led to an interruption of this research. I resumed it after ten years with the intent to look for my former informants, to learn how their lives had developed, to see the individual and societal transformations, and to establish new contacts as well. Between winter 2013 and spring 2015, I went back

into the field several times. Except for one informant, who still lived at the same address, it was not an easy task to find my former interlocutors again. Addresses and phone numbers were no longer valid. However, in the end, insistence, coincidence and a social network all helped me to re-establish contact with five of the trans persons I had met ten years earlier. I also met new individuals, whose narrations further helped me to complete the remaining gaps of my research (two elderly trans persons, two more FtMs, additional MtFs). By writing case descriptions and –reconstructions, I worked out the most formative life events of the research partners, which helped me in the further analysis of the empirical data (cf. Strauss 1998).

Where I was able to re-establish contact, to my surprise, it turned out to be mostly very familiar. Despite the years without contact, meeting each other again and remembering earlier times created an atmosphere of mutual familiarity. I visited some of these people several times at their home, where I also met family members, and where we had lengthy conversations. We looked at or listened to the recordings I made in 2003, reflected about their situation and their attitude at that time, and spoke about the changes and the current situation.

I was able to contact one of the former informants only via Facebook. Having undergone all the sex reassignment surgeries, feeling completely a woman, having her boyfriend, living abroad and working in the show business, she had no wish to revisit the subject of transsexuality. I met the two social workers again. They were still working for the same NGO, doing HIV&STI prevention work, but due to urban gentrification processes, and shifts in sex work migration patterns, their outreach prevention had undergone changes concerning locations and target groups. Two of the trans women I met during my initial research in 2003 had died.

The division of my research into these two periods, and the experiences I made during my field stays had an influence on my research intentions and goals, which I had to adapt. The initial look and analysis from one timely, singular piece of research expanded into a look at transformations. Next to individual life events, structural changes (the legal situation, trans activism) brought forth new topics.

Theoretical framework

Theoretically, this research follows a phenomenological approach, and uses insights acquired from queer theory, discourse analysis, gender research and trans studies as inspirations for critical thinking. Critical thinking is understood as reversing one's gaze, which means a lesser focus on the (sexual) deviances of the individual, but rather analysing the construction and implementation of norms, which was an early postulation of Queer Theory (Jagose 1996). Thus, questions encompassing politics, nation state and social movements (among others) and their interconnectedness gain in importance.

Phenomenologically, I try to approach the reality of my informants through their everyday experiences, respectively through a glimpse into their everyday world and lifeworld. This is another reason I chose Grounded Theory as a methodological approach. Schütz, who further developed Husserl's thinking about the *Lebenswelt*, demonstrated that everyday understanding and scientific understanding of human activity are structurally indistinguishable (cf. Strauss 1998). Grounded Theory, which is strongly based on empirical data stemming from the everyday world, but intends to build its own (scientific) theory out of this data, respects the continuity of everyday and scientific thinking (cf. Strauss 1998). Additionally, I intend to reflect on everyday and lifeworld experiences to topics on the macro level, thus, contextualising individual experiences in a broader societal context.

Since Husserl, phenomenology as a philosophical concept has been perceived and deployed in different ways, by many different scholars, and different disciplines (for different approaches by sociologists, see, e.g. Eberle 2012). There is also the distinction between old phenomenology (starting with Husserl) and new phenomenology (starting with Schmitz), the latter with an explicit focus on the body *(Leib)* (cf. Gugutzer 2012). Depraz emphasizes that phenomenology defines itself through its ability to exemplify and to describe (in contrast to other philosophical approaches of reasoning and definitions) (Depraz 2012).

The object of my research, the trans phenomena, is a deeply 'bodied' issue. The body matters. For my informants, their bodies manifest a non-conforming between a felt sex/gender and one that has been assigned to them at birth, embedded in and reflecting a 'reality' they are somehow forced to deal with. Berger and Luckmann describe "'reality' as a quality appertaining to phenomena that we recognize as having a being independent of our own volition (we cannot 'wish them away')" (Berger and Luckmann 1967: 1). For my informants, not feeling comfortable with the sex they have been assigned at birth is a reality that cannot just be 'wished away'. (Like one research partner, who said that as a little girl, at the sight of a falling star, he wished to wake up the next morning as a boy and be treated as a boy). Their reality confronts the reality of the existing social norms and legal structures. Thus, it raises questions of agency and of the possibilities and limits to alter 'reality'.

Due to the importance of the body (and bodily expressions) for my interlocutors, I rely on a phenomenological approach that considers the subject to be embedded in the world as *leiblich Handelnde* (Taylor 1986). In doing so, and drawing more on a physical-phenomenological *(leiblich-phänomenologisch)* approach as is attributed to Merleau-Ponty (cf. Gugutzer 2012; Taylor 1986), I will probably give bodily matters more importance than 'classic' phenomenology would have it as a phenomenon in the search for meaning (cf. Eberle 2012; Gugutzer 2012; Uzarewicz 2011).

The body is seen and perceived as a sexed body, not only by oneself, but also by others. This expands the field of analysis to the topic of interaction. Interaction is an important part of the phenomenological analysis of the *Lebenswelt*. Hitzler and Eberle (2008) state that the subject shares their concrete lifeworld with others. Thus, it is necessary to include the significant surrounding (the ones that give meaning) of the people concerned, in order to further understand their lifeworlds. This includes social relationships (e.g. family and partnership), their work situation and (in the case of my informants) interactions with health care professionals and administrative bodies. Taylor (1986) notes (referring to Merleau-Ponty) that if we want to make statements about a person, describe their condition, our characterising has to take into account important fields of their environment. The underlying thought is that the subject is *in* the world (according to Merleau-Ponty, *être au monde*); that this world is their field of meanings which allowed them to become the subject they actually are, and that they perceive the world as a *leiblich Handelnder*. The fact of being irrevocably *in* the world, implies that one cannot describe the subject without considering their surroundings and their meaning to the subject. To be *in* the world signifies that the subject acts, orients themselves, and makes experiences in it, and actually cannot escape it (Taylor 1986). The latter might imply some kind of being trapped. Some of my informants clearly manifested this being trapped *in* the world (that is, to have to live in an unwanted sexual body) and the desire to escape this kind of being *in* the world. However, as Taylor (1986) states, the consciousness of the world in which one finds oneself physically *(leiblich)* cannot be turned on and off at will. My informants live in a world where a binary thinking of sex and gender dominates. They have to deal with the seeming impossibility to escape from this *être au monde*.

Addressing the research subjects: The crux of labelling

There exist many terms to address people with an atypical gender identity. Furthermore, the definitions of existing terms are changing, and new terms are introduced (cf. World Professional Association for Transgender Health 2012). Aizura remarks: "Trans subcultures seem to invent a new term every week, and render others obsolescent at the same rate" (Aizura 2006: 296). But the problem of neat and stable categorisation (like e.g. transsexual vs transgender) is also due to the fact "[…] that categories describing gender variance are incredibly diverse, localised and multiplicitous" (Aizura 2006: 296).

The term *transsexuality* is widely regarded as inappropriate nowadays, because it focusses on sexuality rather than gender, and because historically it is linked to the psychiatric literature and pathologisation of individuals with an atypical gender identity. To circumvent these linkages, some prefer to speak of *transidentity*,

or use the term *transgender* which implies a stronger focus on the *felt* gender (cf. Remaides Suisse 2014). Haas et al. speak of *transgender* as an umbrella term for describing "[…] people with gender identities, expressions or behaviours which differ from their biological sex at birth" (2011: 14). They point out that the term *transgender* is sometimes used synonymously with *transsexual*, but that the term transsexual "[…] more commonly describes a subset of transgender individuals who undergo gender reassignment surgery and/or hormone treatment to align physical sex and gender identity" (Haas et al. 2011: 14). Thus, whereas the term *transsexual* might be more closely connoted to „medicalized bodily transformations of sex-signifying physical attributes" (Stryker and Currah 2014: 5) with the goal to achieve a permanent social and legal change, the term *transgender* might refer more to individuals who live possible incongruences between the social gender und the biological sex without relying on medicine or law. Stryker and Currah point out that "[…] from the beginning, the category 'transgender' represented a resistance to medicalization, to pathologization, and to the many mechanisms whereby the administrative state and its associated medico-legal-psychiatric institutions sought to contain and delimit the socially disruptive potentials of sex/gender atypicality, incongruence, and nonnormativity" (2014: 5). Although the term *transgender* as an umbrella term has a history that dates back to the 1970s (Williams 2014), it was in the 1990s that it became an all-encompassing term for gender variation. A broad inclusion of a wide group of people in the term *transgender* is found by Boza and Nicholson Perry who see *transgender* "[…] used as an umbrella term to describe a number of diverse and distinct gender identities including transgenderists, transsexuals, cross-dressers, androgynous persons, intersex persons, drag queens and kings, and bigendered and genderqueer persons" (2014: 35). Applied in this sense, the term transgender allows integrating a broad diversity into a single category, and is the favourite term in contemporary public health discussions, human rights discourses, HIV-prevention programmes etc. On the other hand, it often functions reductively to overlook differences that should be distinctly articulated (cf. Stryker and Currah 2014). Due to these difficulties to find a single word which appeals to all concerned, some see in the term *trans*people* (or just *trans**) a good compromise, because every person is free to imagine and to express what he/she/they feels behind the asterisk. Hence, *trans** would include all the people who have been born with an unequivocally male or female body, but who do not feel they belong to the sex that they were assigned at birth, who identify as the other sex, as between the sexes, or as a little bit of both (cf. Remaides Suisse 2014; Transgender Network Switzerland 2016). In its report about "Being Trans in the European Union", the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights uses the term *trans person* without an asterisk as a shorthand and umbrella term for persons "[…] whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex assigned them at birth" (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2014: 14). Furthermore, they formed sub-categories that correspond

to the terms selected by trans respondents themselves, and include: transsexual, transgender, cross dresser, gender variant, queer or differently gendered people.

Additionally, terms like *transwoman* (woman, classified male at birth), *transman* (man, classified female at birth), *MtF* (male-to-female) and *FtM* (female-to-male) are also widely used.

With the focus on Spain, Nieto (2011) (a social anthropologist from Andalusia) distinguishes transgender (*transgénero*) from transsexuals (*transexuales*), although he concedes that they belong to the same collective. He notes that contrary to the USA, the transgender movement in Spain is just beginning. It is still the medical profession that dictates what these people should aspire for, namely sex surgery. He defines transgender persons as those who do not obey this medical order, who want to decide for themselves how they will live their life. Additionally, he observes that the clinical setting censors the voice of transgender people (Nieto 2011). This is consistent with the understanding of the terms of some of my informants. Magdalena is explicit in distinguishing between transsexual and transgender: "Transexual es la persona que se someta al proceso integral del cambio de sexo. Entero. Su único objetivo preparar su cuerpo para la operación." (Magdalena, 2003)[9]

When I met her in 2003, at the age of 24, this was exactly what she aimed for. She contrasted her bodily aspirations with the attitude of transgender persons, which had nothing to do with her, as she emphasised:

> "Aquel individuo que [...] caracteres primarios y secundarios es decir apariencia, habido nacido varón, apariencia femenina, caracteres primarios y secundarios, atributos sexuales como son el pecho, pómulo, pelo largo, pero, continúan aceptando su genitalidad masculina, se le nomina transgenérico, porque no hacen el tránsito, no transgreden los géneros, están entre los dos géneros, una imagen contra ellos su sexualidad biológico pero mantienen el genital lo que nacieron. No necesitan la reconstrucción para refirmar su condición de hombre o mujer." (Magdalena, 2003)[10]

In contrast to Magdalena's neat distinction between transsexual and transgender, Ramira, who is many decades older than Magdalena, and started to live a female gender during the dictatorship of Franco, switches between a variety of terms in her

9 "Transsexuals are the persons who submit themselves to the integral change of sex. Entirely. Their unique goal is to prepare their body for the operation."(Magdalena, 2003)

10 "The individual whose primary and secondary characteristics are to say appearance of being born a man, female appearance, primary and secondary traits, sexual attributes such as breast, cheekbones, long hair, but they go on accepting their male genitality, is called transgender, because they do not do the transition, they don't transgress the genders, they stay in between two genders, a picture against themselves, their biological sexuality, but keep the genitals they were born with. They don't need the reconstruction to reaffirm their condition as man or woman." (Magdalena, 2003)

narration. During the dictatorship, she and her kind 'mixed' with the homosexuals, which were labelled *mariquitas*, and were supposedly recognisable as men behaving in a feminine manner: "Íbamos como homosexual. Ehm … mariquita. Afeminado. Pero en la época de Franco." (Ramira, 2015)[11]

Furthermore, she identified with the terms *travestí* and *transsexual*, whereas the first term had a stronger connection to her professional situation. Showing me a picture of herself from the beginning of the 1980s when she appeared in a cabaret in León, she remarks: "Bueno, yo era travestí. Yo ya tenía aquí pecho y todo." (Ramira, 2015)[12]

She distinguished herself from another actor she labels as *transformista*: "Este es transformista. Y yo, soy transexual." (Ramira, 2015)[13]

The *transformista* acted only on stage as a woman; otherwise, he lived as a man, in contrast to Ramira, who emphasised: "Yo de mujer día y noche." (Ramira, 2015)[14]

In Ramira's narrative, the terms 'homosexual', 'transvestite', 'transsexual' and 'woman' appear (depending on place and time) as identifying terms. This reflects that she has been confronted with different terms during her life. It also reminds us of the statement of Cock-Daniels that "[t]he current generations of transgender elders represent virtually the full history of the transgender experience […]" (2016: 285).

Despite current and ongoing discussions of proper terms, most of my interlocutors (as in everyday language) did not complicate conversation with trans terminology. When identifying terms were not explicitly the topic of our conversation, they hardly made a distinction between *transexual* and *transgénero*, but used the term *transexual* regardless of surgical aspirations, which is regardless of seeking or rejecting genital surgery. I encountered *trans* as a defining term only in the context of a trans organisation's political activism in setting up a *Trans Pride* (see Chapter 6). Nevertheless, in their press release, they again used the word *transexual*, perhaps as a compromise to stay closer to the readers' vocabulary. However, this does not mean that the term transsexual (or any other trans term) really serves the purpose when it comes to self-attribution. One research partner, Ronaldo, told of a medical examination he had undergone at work, which illustrated his struggles with sex/gender identity terminology. When the doctor saw the scar on his chest, he asked Ronaldo if he had a pneumothorax operation (to remedy an abnormal collection of air in the pleural space between the lung and the chest wall). Ronaldo told him that he had had a mastectomy (the surgical removal of the breasts):

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11 "We were homosexuals. Ehm … poofs. Effeminated. But during the times of Franco." (Ramira, 2015)

12 "Well, I was a transvestite. I already had breasts here and everything." (Ramira, 2015)

13 "This is a transformer. And I, I am transsexual." (Ramira, 2015)

14 "I am a woman day and night." (Ramira, 2015)

> "Y eso entonces dice ¿porque ten- porque tiene hecho la mastectomía? dice, digo … porque soy transexual. Eso lo que más trabajo me cuesta de responder, ¡lo que soy! (emphasised) Porque no puedo definirme cómo soy. A mí no me gusta decir que soy transexual porque no lo soy." (Ronaldo, 2003)[15]

My handling of terminology will, on the one hand, bear in mind the ongoing political and academic discussion around trans terminology, and on the other hand, it will rely on the terms of my informants. In the hope of doing individuals and situations justice, this will include different terms. However, 'transsexual' might appear in the analysis of the empirical data as a descriptive term to approach the everyday world of my interlocutors. Terms like trans, FTM etc., are used as analytical terms in a more general or theoretical context.

Cook-Daniels, emphasising the heterogeneity and diversity among transgender individuals notes: "[I]t is critical that those working with the transgender community not become wedded to any particular term or definition, as they are in constant flux and vary from individual to individual" (Cook-Daniels 2016: 286).

Structure

This work spans an arc from the individuals' perception of their gender/sex nonconformity and the resulting consequences to their embeddedness in kin structures, and to contemporary political endeavours. It starts from the individual, expands the view to family and kin, and addresses the issue of citizenship and community. This arc from the individual person to collective endeavours corresponds at the same time to a shift from the private to the public. However, the reproduction of subjective experiences and their embeddedness in social networks and political-legal structures cannot always be neatly separated when telling a story. Thus, despite the intent to start from the micro level and continue to the meso and macro level, all of these levels sometimes get intertwined.

To situate the topic, the first chapter looks at the evolving research on gender non-conforming people from an anthropological perspective to current trans studies, and contextualises it within the situation of Spain, especially Andalusia. The core of Chapter two is the body in its lifeworld. This chapter is about self-awareness and experiences of my interlocutors on bodily matters. It focusses mainly on the subjective 'inner' process, and on the evolving awareness of being somehow different. At some point in their lives, all of my informants decided to alter their situation and to start publicly living the felt sex/gender. Chapter three follows this

15 "And then this one says: why have- why did they do a mastectomy? I say, because I am transsexual. This is what I struggle the most to answer: What I am! Because I can't define what I am. I don't like to answer that I am transsexual, because I am not." (Ronaldo, 2003)

search of a solution. The body is no longer a mere object of reflection, but increasingly an object of action. The possibilities, obstacles or support they encountered to alter their situation depended not least on the respective prevailing social, political, legal and medical structures, or on questions of information and communication, which, taken together, hindered or supported their agency. Due to the broad age span of my interlocutors, the realisation of this endeavour portrays the historical context as well, thus, highlighting some changes over several decades. Chapter four deals with earning a living. It explores the ways my interlocutors earned (and still earn) their livelihood and how their trans experience influenced their possibilities and capabilities. It is also about finding one's way around, which touches issues of education and work situation as well as questions of emotions, resources and spirituality. This is what I refer to as 'making a living'. Due to the heterogeneity of my interlocutors, once again, this topic is highly embedded in different contexts of time, politics, economy, and social structure. Chapter five is about family and kinship. The way and time to start gender transition, the transition itself, and the ongoing life are not just parts of an individual, independent process, but involve the family as well. Family and kin have to deal with this transition, as became obvious by those interlocutors who actually lived within close familial bonds. Finally, Chapter six starts with a description of the activities around the Trans Pride in Seville in 2014, an event which intended to have a pioneering role for the trans community in Spain. From an activist perspective, it delves into questions of inclusion and exclusion of trans people in society, and touches the topic of citizenship embedded in the call for self-determination.

Further notes

When I address my research partners, I use the personal pronoun corresponding to the sex/gender they identify with. I also do that when I speak of their childhood, although I sometimes stumbled across the *right* use of the personal pronoun, when writing down topics of their early childhood. That is why at first glance sentences like "she, as a little boy …" may be confusing.

Due to the fact that my interlocutors spoke about and presented their sex/gender nonconformity within the binary system of male and female, in most cases the personal pronouns used in this work to address my research partners stay in the dichotomy of she or he. In rare cases, I used the form 'they' to represent the interlocutor and, thus, conform to political correctness.

Except for the president of the *Asociación de Transexuales de Andalucía Sylvia Rivera* (ATA) and the two social workers from an NGO, who are persons holding a kind of public role, all my interlocutors are anonymised.

Interview extracts are used to illustrate the analyses. The quotes are left in Spanish to keep the subtleties of the original language, and they are translated into English in the footnotes. During the translation process, I have made them more legible by omitting e.g. unnecessary repetition of words, incomplete words, or by sometimes adjusting the grammatical structure. These subtle changes serve for readability and have no influence on the content of the statements.

Chapter 1. Trans research: Of gender ambiguity, gender dysphoria and gender recognition

The interest in trans issues has increased significantly between my two field research periods, which is reflected, for example, in the rise of corresponding publications in the academic field. Newly theorising and newly emerging topics foster a continuing interest. The increased attention on trans topics has also found (and continues to find) inclusion in the political agenda of a growing number of nations and supra state organisations (e.g. the European community), and in the health-related sector (e.g. the World Health Organization) (see Chapter 6). In 2018, Halberstam states:

> In the last decade, public discussions of transgenderism have increased exponentially. What was once regarded as an unusual or even unfortunate disorder has become an accepted articulation of gendered embodiment as well as a new site for political activism. (Halberstam 2018: 17)

This increased 'public discussion of transgenderism' has also occurred in my field research area (Andalusia), and 'the articulation of gendered embodiment' (especially concerning medical and legal obligations) has become more diverse. However, many available academic publications dealing with the situation in Spain or Andalusia consider the phenomenon from a medical point of view. This was especially true at the time of my first field research trip in 2003. Among the scientific publications *in* and *about* Spain, it was striking to note the dominance of medical contributions. Publications in endocrinology told about hormonal treatment options, andrology elaborated about men's reproductive functions and their disorders, and publications in psychiatry and the neurosciences dealt with 'the transsexual phenomena'. The supremacy of the medical literature reflected the fact that the term 'transsexualism' emerged (from the 1950s onwards) together with the focus on the possibilities of medical treatment, which remained a dominant perspective (Chiland 2003). One exception was a qualitative sociological study that compared the situation of transsexual and transgendered persons in Scotland (Aberdeen, Edinburgh) and Northern Spain (Barcelona), and which focussed on their legal, social, and political situation (Soley-Beltran 2007). Soley-Beltran linked the spare theo-

rising and sparse empirical research on 'transsexualism' in Spain to its history of repression (dictatorship), which impeded their visibility. She states: "Given the repression and public invisibility of transsexuals in Spanish history, most papers on transsexualism currently published in Spain tend to be either a general introduction to its definition, its history and to the debates developed in English-speaking countries, or governmental reports advising on its legal situation" (Soley-Beltran 2007: 11).

Another exception is the ethnographic research conducted by the Andalusian anthropologist, Fernando Tena Díaz (2008), which can be attributed to an *anthropology at home*. This is, to my knowledge, the only research that approached the topic of transsexuality in Southern Spain from a social anthropological perspective based on in-depth conversations and participant observation. I learned of Tena Díaz during my first field research stay in Seville in 2003 and contacted him. We met to exchange ideas, and just as he drew my attention to a few academic references in Spain, I provided him with insights and literature obtained during my meeting with a surgeon in the UTIG in Malaga (detailed information about the UTIG will follow later in this chapter). It happened on several occasions that interesting documents concerning the topic of my research emerged only through personal communications during the field research stays, and did not show up, e.g. in literature research. I met Fernando Tena again during my second fieldwork trip, and although he had finished his thesis in the meantime, it has not yet been published. It was, therefore, not available. However, he provided me with two articles stemming from his work (Tena 2010, 2013) and which reflected his focus on the interplay between medical practice and sex/gender identity constructions.

In the meantime, some faculties of psychology in Andalusia had started to engage in trans topics as well. The Faculty of Psychology at the University of Malaga conducted a first quantitative study in 2011 that focussed on the living situation and experiences of transsexual people in Spain. In collaboration with the *Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gays, Transexuales y Bisexuales* in Madrid, who helped to recruit the target population, they questioned 153 persons all over Spain. The majority stemmed from Andalusia and Catalonia (141 persons). Trans women and trans men were asked about their work situation, experiences of discrimination and social exclusion, the age of consciousness about their transsexuality, and the age of their 'coming out', clinical and chirurgical interventions and the supporting social network. Another aim of the study was to capture the level of life-satisfaction in relation to other psychosocial variables (Dominguez Fuentes et al. 2011).

Edelman points out that "[t]rans studies – or research on the experiences, identities, and practices of transgender, transsexual, trans*, or gender nonbinary communities of practice – is a relatively new area of focus within the discipline of anthropology" (Edelman 2019: 1). Thus, nevertheless (or because of) the above-mentioned studies, research in social anthropology, with its in-depth and participative

methods, is needed to contribute to the increasing public discussions of trans topics, and the potential implications this might have upon the life experiences (and their possible transformation) of the people concerned within their local environment.

In the following, I first outline the contributions of anthropological research on gender non-conforming persons (in the broadest sense) from a 'historical' perspective. However, anthropology itself has been enrichened by interdisciplinary research over time. Thus, it must be noted that "[t]rans studies in anthropology has both relied on interdisciplinary research but also, importantly, emerged from a focus on sexuality or 'queer studies' within anthropological research" (Edelman 2019: 1). In a second step, I will focus on Andalusia and provide a first overview.

1.1 Gender non-conforming people from an anthropological perspective: A few selected cases

In the 1990s, feminist theories experienced a growing and controversial discourse by starting to question in depth not only the social constructivist character of the gender binary men and women (gender role, gender identity etc.), but also the biological dimorphism of the two-gender system itself (Becker-Schmidt and Knapp 2011). The physical sex-dualism as natural, given and unambiguous was questioned, and increasingly viewed as a culturally specific classification and/or a semiotic construct (cf. Butler 1991, 1997; Hagemann-White 1988). Thus, the sex-gender distinction, which has served for many decades as a political tool in feminist theory, was also called into question (consequently abandoning sex/gender categories). Becker-Schmidt and Knapp (2011) point out that former research in cultural anthropology served to support this change of perspective. They note that questions of different conceptualisations concerning the relationship between nature and culture, and the socio-cultural meaning of sex as a category of order and classification had always been of more significance in anthropological research than in other disciplines. An excerpt from Ortner's and Whitehead's edited book, *Sexual Meanings* (1981), serves as an example:

> It has long been recognized that 'sex roles' – the differential participation of men and women in social, economic, political, and religious institutions – vary from culture to culture. It has also long been recognized that the degree and quality of social asymmetry between the sexes is also highly variable between cultures. What has not been generally recognized is the bias that often underlies studies of both sex roles and male dominance – an assumption that we know what 'men' and 'women' are, an assumption that male and female are predominantly natu-

> ral objects rather than predominantly cultural constructions. (Ortner and Whitehead 1981: 1)

Thus, to examine this bias of 'natural objects', the authors asked the contributors to the book to

> [...] share a commitment to the proposition that male and female, sex and reproduction, are cultural or symbolic constructs, whatever may be the 'natural' bases of gender differences and human reproduction. (Ortner and Whitehead 1981: 6)

Various social anthropological studies showed that forms of sex/gender classifications which exceeded the western-occidental understanding of a rigid, binary, two-gender system and were less bounded to physical features as 'Western culture', existed in some cultures (Becker-Schmidt and Knapp 2011). Herdt states that "[i]n anthropology's encounter with the traditional societies – especially the exotic cultures of the non-Western world – myriad examples of divergent sexualities and gendered classifications have emerged over the past century" (1996b: 12). A classic anthropological case are the *berdaches* from native North American societies. Roscoe (1998) points out that Europeans have encountered these cross-dressing people since the 16th century, since the time of the Spanish Conquest. He gives a profound and differentiated insight into the social embedding of these 'third and fourth' genders, and highlights the accepting and respectful social interactions within their societies:

> The original peoples of North America, whose principles are just as ancient as those of Judeo-Christian culture, saw no threat in homosexuality or gender variance. Indeed, they believed individuals with these traits made unique contributions to their communities. As a Crow tribal elder said in 1982, 'We don't waste people the way white society does. Every person has their gift'. In this land, the original America, men who wore women's clothes and did women's work became artists, innovators, ambassadors, and religious leaders, and women sometimes became warriors, hunters, and chiefs. Same-sex marriages flourished and no tribe was the worse for it – until the Europeans arrived. [...] people who were different in terms of gender identity or sexuality were respected, integrated, and sometimes revered. (Roscoe 1998: 4)

The legitimacy (and sometimes maybe even obligation) not to live the assigned sex was often ascribed to a dream revelation. A supernatural force orders the concerned person to live from now on as the other sex. Turner writes:

> Omaha boys, like other North American Indians, go alone into the wilderness to fast and pray. This solitude is liminal between boyhood and manhood. If they dream that they receive a woman's burden strap, they feel compelled to dress and

> live henceforth in every way as women. Such men are known as mixuga. The authority of such a dream in such a situation is absolute. (1964: 10)

Nowadays, the term *berdache* has been replaced by *two-spirit*. Murray (1997) criticises this renaming and considers it an effort to downplay sexuality and to emphasise spirituality (for a more differentiated discussion and a critical analysis of the term, *two-spirit,* see Roscoe 1998).

A further example of anthropological research on gender non-conforming people are the *xanīth* in coastal Oman described by Wikan (1977). According to Wikan, the *xanīth* occupy an institutionalised transsexual role in Oman society. They are men who are socially classified as women, and practise homosexual prostitution. They occupy an intermediate gender position in a society where there are strict rules of sexual segregation. Thus, they retain male names, and can move about freely, a privilege reserved for men (in contrast to women, who must have the husband's permission to go visiting family and friends). However, in the evening the *xanīth* must stay at home like the women (whereas men can spend their time in public spaces). Wikan explains the socially and legally tolerated sex-working practice of the *xanīth* by the essentialist view of the Omani, who consider the sexual drive to be a component of men's nature and, thus, difficult to control. In this sense, the "[*xanīth*] act as a safety valve on the sexual activity of men, and thus as a protection for the virtue of women" (Wikan 1977: 314). Taking into consideration the insights stemming from sexuality studies that understand sexuality to be less driven by biological needs, but rather scripted within a social and psychological framework (cf. Gagnon and Simon 2005), comparing the male sexual drive with a pressure cooker that needs to be relieved from time to time, must definitely be questioned (cf. Lautmann 2002).

Another often referenced anthropological contribution to the sex/gender diversity is Nanda's (1996) work on the *hijras* in India. She comments on their cultural meaning (particularly in relation to religion), and discusses their gender roles and identities. As neither male nor female, living an alternative form of gender role, and despite sometimes being a target for stigmatisation, Nanda conceives the *hijras* as an integral part of society, although they live in a culture "[…] in which male and female sex and gender roles are viewed as essential, sharply differentiated and hierarchical" (Nanda 1996: 417). She considers the example of the *hijras* to be evidence that Western sex and gender dichotomies are not universal. About twenty years later, Nanda's analysis of Indian society and culture (that it acknowledges multiple sexes and genders) has been legally confirmed. In 2014, the Supreme Court of India recognised trans people as a third gender (different from female and from male), an acknowledgment that is attributed to the cultural tradition of the *hijras* (Rojas 2014).

Clinical research and further cross-cultural studies

Together with a growing interest in clinical research on transsexuality and intersexuality in the Western world in the 1960s, there was also a growing interest in cross-cultural studies concerning these phenomena. Edgerton rediscovered the work of W.W. Hill from 1935, whose description of the attitude towards intersexual people by the Navaho (called *nadle*) offered an alternative view to the Western (US-American) response to intersexuality. Edgerton states: "American response to intersexuality combines psychological horror with social incompatibility" (Edgerton 1964: 1289). And he continues: "Our society's solution – aside from threatening such persons with the status of sideshow freaks – is to encourage the assumption of either a male or a female role" (Edgerton 1964: 1290). In this sense, the Western response was deficit-oriented and asked mainly how these persons could be fitted into the binary gender system. In contrast, the Navaho offered intersexed people a favoured position in life. Credited with special supernatural significance, they were respected, and families with an intersexed child believed to have their future wealth and success assured (Edgerton 1964). However, globally, not all indigenous societies respected intersexual people like the Navaho. During his fieldwork with the Pokot of East Africa, Edgerton found a cruel and discriminating attitude against intersexual people. Because the desire for wealth, especially measured in cattle, dominated the life of the Pokot, only 'useful' people deserved respect. Intersexed people were not allowed to marry or to have progeny, and were, thus, perceived as worthless. Nevertheless, some intersexed people managed to receive a kind of acceptance due to their hard work for the family (Edgerton 1964).

The cases of the *guevedoche* ('penis at twelve') in the Dominican Republic and the *kwolu-aatmwol* of the Sambia in New Guinea were further examples of cross-cultural studies. Herdt (1996a) was convinced that these societies had a concept of three sexes. His analysis was a criticism of the publication by a group of American medical investigators in the beginnings of the 1970s, who described the *guevedoche* as a "mistaken sex". They stated that because these people were genetically male, they were mistaken as females at birth, raised as normal girls, but changed their sex and gender at puberty to male. In Western medical terminology, they were labeled male pseudohermaphrodites due to a 5-alpha reductase deficiency. Furthermore, according to this group of medical investigators, this switch of identity and desire, from then on to act and identify as men, happened without any social or psychological influence from the social environment. Thus, they concluded that the impact of hormones (androgens) – which equals nature – has more impact in determining the (male) gender identity than (female) socialisation. Herdt unveils the sex-binary bias of these investigators and holds "[…] that these peoples in the Dominican Republic and New Guinea […] have evolved a three-category sex code in living with male pseudohermaphrodites in their midst over generations" (Herdt

1996a: 441). He concludes: "[…] these persons are not 'mistaken females' but, rather, *guevedoche* and *kwolu-aatmwol*; that is, third genders" (Herdt 1996a: 442).

The *Waria* (male transvestites) in Indonesia (Boellstorff 2004), transgendered prostitutes in Brazil (Kulick 1998), the *māhū* of Tahiti and the *fa'afafine* of Samoa (Besnier 1996; Mageo 1992) or the sworn virgins of Albania (women who live as men) (Grémaux 1996) – to name just a few – are other examples of cross-cultural studies to question the 'natural' order that fixes sex, gender and desire in a sex/gender-binary and heteronormative framework, thus broadening and questioning Western conceptions about masculinity and femininity.

Besides these anthropological observations that hinted at a variation of gender interpretations (inside certain borders), sociological studies about transsexuality (Garfinkel 1967; Hirschauer 1993; Lindemann 2011) and the beginning of the Queer Studies in the 1990s (cf. Jagose 1996; Krass 2003) also helped to question the concept of a sex-dualism as natural and given. Furthermore, there were historical studies that tried to show that the biological bias of the everyday Western understanding of the sex/gender difference is itself a product of history, shaped not least through the emergence of a 'modern' science of men in the 18th and 19th century (Laqueur 2001). Biological research itself helped to put into perspective the strict dual gender classification as everyday understanding has it. Male and female are no longer understood to be contrary, mutually exclusive categories, but as a continuum consisting of a genetic sex (chromosomes), sex of the gonads, and hormonal sex. The criteria that serve to determine sex must neither necessarily just depend on the 'little difference' (penis or vagina), nor can sex be viewed as independent from the environment (cf. Becker-Schmidt and Knapp 2011; Fausto-Sterling 2012; Roughgarden 2004).

1.2 From sexual deviance to gender fluidity

In Europe and North America, at least since the second half of the nineteenth century, medical, legal, and other scientific institutions occupied themselves with individuals deviating from a clear binary sex/gender norm (Ekins and King 2005; Stryker and Currah 2014).

> Although it is possible to cite examples of the phenomenon of transgender throughout human history, the roots of our modern conception of transgenderism are to be found in the latter half of the 19th century. This period saw the beginning of what Foucault terms the 'medicalisation of the sexually peculiar'. (Ekins and King 2005: 381)

Using a historical and chronological approach, Ekins and King (2005) work out that the first influential perspective on the topic was the role of medicine, which

was first to emerge and is in many ways still dominant today. However, the phenomenon was initially judged as a kind of homosexuality, which was understood as lacking masculinity and possessing a female soul. In the beginning of the 20th century, Hirschfeld disagreed with this concept, and argued that not all effeminate men are homosexuals (just as not all homosexuals are effeminate), and introduced the term *transvestite* for these people, who were later categorised as transsexual or transgender. When hormonal and surgical interventions for 'sex change' became a practical possibility (from the 1950s onward), and a concept of the separation of sex from gender was developing, the medical focus shifted from the body as an apparent reality that can hardly be altered (the morphological sex) to a conceptualisation of a gender identity (a kind of psychological sex), as the 'real' reality. Ekins and King note:

> The 'real reality' of what now came to be conceptualized as psychological sex – 'gender identity' – was privileged over the 'apparent reality' of the body – morphological sex. The modern 'transsexual' was 'invented'. (2005: 381)

In the 1960s, Harry Benjamin introduced his influential book *The Transsexual Phenomena* with the words: "There is a challenge as well as a handicap in writing a book on a subject that is not yet covered in the medical literature. Transsexualism is such a subject" (Benjamin 1966: vii). Benjamin counts as a pioneer in addressing the need for medical treatment for transsexual people, and was in favour of the new emerging surgical possibilities to alter the body to the conviction of the concerned individuals (in contrast to those who tried to alter the conviction to fit the morphological sex). When writing the book, he was aware that he would encounter opposition: "Even at present, any attempts to treat these patients with some permissiveness in the direction of their wishes – that is to say, 'change of sex' – is often met with raised medical eyebrows, and sometimes even with arrogant rejection and/or condemnation" (Benjamin 1966: viii). Benjamin's work was to greatly influence how medicine and society approached the phenomenon of transsexuality in the coming decades. I even came across a Spanish translation of "The transsexual phenomena" in the hands of one of my research partners during the field research in 2003. She expected this book to hold the answers to her questions (see 3.2). Benjamin's legacy is manifested by the *World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH)*, formerly called the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association. Today, one of the main goals of the WPATH – through its publication of *Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender, and Gender-Nonconforming People* – is to "[…] promote the highest standards of health care " […] (World Professional Association for Transgender Health 2012: 1) for these individuals. This means: «[…] to provide clinical guidance for health professionals to assist transsexual, transgender, and gender-nonconforming people with safe and effective pathways to achieving lasting personal comfort with their gendered selves, in

order to maximize their overall health, psychological well-being, and self-fulfillment" (World Professional Association for Transgender Health 2012: 1).

Reisner et al. (2016) observe that interest in transgender health-related research has increased significantly in the most recent years. Their analysis is based on a literature review, which included only peer-reviewed quantitative studies that were published between 2008 and 2014 in either English, French, or Spanish. They found 116 studies in 30 countries. However, most of the studies were conducted in the USA. There was no data available for the majority of the countries and for many of these 30 countries they found only one study. Spain was one of those countries represented with one study only.

At the same time, Stryker and Currah draw attention to the high degree of institutionalisation that was happening in the meantime, which they call "[t]he longterm biopolitical project of cultivating 'gender congruence' while eliminating incongruity […]" (2014: 4). Thus, the medical approach still

> […] retains a view of sex, sexuality, and gender as binary and has, on the whole, accepted existing stereotypes of what constitutes masculinity and femininity and their linkages to male and female bodies. Thus […] suitability for hormone and (especially) surgical 'sex change' is determined by the extent to which the candidate 'passes' or demonstrates sufficient masculinity or femininity. (Ekins and King 2005: 283-284)

This kind of medical (or institutional) practice has been reflected in detail by Hirschauer (1993), who unmasked the transsexual phenomenon as being constructed by medicine and an intrinsic part of the construction of the binary sex/gender-system.

Towards a transgender turn

From the beginnings of the 1960s, questioning this developing medical discourse, voices of transgendered people, who sought to avoid medicalization, started to be heard. They "[…] sought to develop their own perspective and accompanying concepts of what it meant to be male/masculine and female/feminine" (Ekins and King 2005: 384).

The political significance of trans gendering arose with the emergence of the gay and women's movement in the late 1960s. On the one hand, transsexual and transgender people were perceived as politically conservative, because they reinforced gender stereotypes (e.g. performing a hyperfemininity). On the other hand, because they somehow broke the congruity between sex and gender, they were also perceived as radical. Among feminist positions on transsexualism (strongly embedded in a gender-binary way of thinking), male-to-female transsexuals were not accepted as women, but regarded as deviant males. In searching and accepting

medicalisation and sex surgery, and, thus, submitting to a medical system that was perceived as patriarchal, trans women were accused of not using their subversive potential. Even worse, they reinforced the patriarchal structures. This kind of argumentation holds that "[…] transsexualism is not merely another example of the pervasive effects of patriarchal attitudes; it actually constitutes an attack on women" (Ekins and King 2005: 387).

In the early 1990s, alongside the consolidation of the term transgender as an umbrella term (see Introduction), and embedded in a postmodern approach, an interdisciplinary field of transgender studies began to emerge. According to Stryker and Currah, the difference between these transgender studies and the so far 'biopolitical project' lies therein that:

> Transgender studies does not […] merely extend previously existing research agendas that facilitate the framing of transgender phenomena as appropriate targets of medical, legal, and psychotherapeutic intervention; rather, it draws upon the powerful contestations of normative knowledge that emerged over the course of the twentieth century from critical theory, poststructuralist and postmodernist epistemologies, postcolonial studies, cultural studies of science, and identity-based critiques of dominant cultural practices emanating from feminism, communities of color, diasporic and displaced communities, disability studies, AIDS activism, and queer subcultures and from the lives of people interpellated as being transgender. (Stryker and Currah 2014: 4)

The emphasis started to focus on transgender diversity and gender fluidity with the goal to overcome the strict binary gender divide. "Within this approach, the idea of permanent core identities and the idea of gender itself disappear" (Ekins and King 2005: 389).

This increasing demand for a free expression of a self-defined gender identity, together with more advanced surgical techniques, is also said to have an impact on the way individuals conceive the right to own their body, "[…] and [to] make whatever temporary or permanent changes to that body the individual pleases …. A new sort of transgendered person has emerged, one who approaches sex reassignment with the same mindset that they would obtaining a piercing or a tattoo" (Califia 1997 as cited in Ekins and King 2005: 389).

At transgender conferences and conferences touching the issues of health, HIV-prevention, sexuality and gender, increased interest in the 'transsexual phenomenon' (within both the concept of gender diversity as well as on more sophisticated techniques to achieve sex/gender congruence within a binary sex/gender concept) can be observed. Around 1'000 people attended the World Professional Association of Transgender Health (WPATH) Symposium in Amsterdam in 2016. Declared as the biggest global transgender conference that had ever taken place (personal note from the morning session on Saturday, June 18th,

2016), this was almost twice the number of participants than at their previous conference two years earlier. Additionally, next to input on medical and surgical treatment, or social science studies focussing on social problems, contributions and testimonies from trans individuals increasingly emphasised their 'Pride', thus addressing issues of self-esteem and claiming one's place in society no matter what medicine, law and the social environment are up to. This growing 'pride' and 'claiming one's place in society' also became obvious in the confrontation initiated by trans individuals during the WPATH. The conference provoked local trans activists (in Amsterdam) to raise their voice and criticise the high fees for attending the conference, which would make it impossible for trans people with low economic resources to participate. They complained that discussions at the WPATH-Symposium would once again be *about* transgender people, instead of *with* transgender people, and (by distributing flyers) they drew attention to an alternative event for the opening day of the conference, called FREE PATHH (Free Event on Practicing Actual Trans* Health and Human Rights).

A further sign of a commitment to increased research on transgender issues is the foundation of the European Professional Association for Transgender Health (EPATH) – a European branch of the WPATH – in December 2013, whose focus is on the situation in Europe (www.epath.eu).

In addition, conferences that hitherto addressed trans topics under the all-embracing term LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender), started to offer specific time slots for trans issues. For example, on the 21st International Aids Conference 2016 in Durban, South Africa, trans issues were a thematic focus at this biennial and world-renowned conference on HIV/Aids for the first time. Under the slogan "No More Lip Service: Trans Access, Equity and Rights, Now!" (cf. IRGT A Global Network of Transgender Women and HIV 2016), transgender people had their own stage at the all-day pre-conference. A transgender speaker from India cherished this by declaring: "It's our day! This is a historical moment!" (Personal note from the pre-conference on Sunday, July 17th, 2016).

The annual HIV/STI-Forum, organised by the Federal Office of Public Health in Switzerland, might serve as another example (on a national level). In 2013, they dedicated the forum to the sexual health of trans people for the first time (Bundesamt für Gesundheit 2016).

It is not least due to the more insistent voices of academically trained transgender persons themselves that the above-mentioned conferences started to offer a specific platform for trans topics *and* trans people. Neither the Federal Office of Public Health (BAG) nor the International Aids Society (IAS) would have organised such a platform, if not for the insistence and collaboration of the people concerned. In this sense, contemporary transgender activism is encountering fertile ground. However, Reisner et al. conclude that despite a growing interest in research, "[t]he global disease and health burden of transgender people remain understudied, par-

ticularly in relation to the effects of stigma, discrimination, social, and structural factors that affect the health of this underserved population" (2016: 431). Being to a large extent still invisible and marginalised, trans people are a vulnerable group. A US-Study found "[…] that the transgender older adult participants had significantly poorer health in terms of physical health, disability, depressive symptomatology, and perceived stress than the nontransgender LGB older adult participants […]" (Fredriksen-Goldsen et al. 2014: 496).

Besides this contemporary increase in involvement of trans issues in both a part of the scientific community and the health sector, addressing or dealing with gender non-conformity is a recurring theme in popular media, in film, on television, in the Internet, and in the press. Fausto-Sterling remarks: "Confusion about gender categories (Male? Female? Neither? Both?) seems to be perennially newsworthy" (Fausto-Sterling 2012: 1). Ekins and King summarise this as follows:

> There are transgender plays and novels, there is transgender photography, and there is transgender art and transgender pornography. Trans people themselves have written their autobiographies, formed organizations, and produced magazines, bulletins, and guides to and celebrations of the topic. During the 1990s, in particular, a number of openly trans people made significant contributions to the academic literature. (2005: 380)

Due to this development and the current interest (and epistemological potential) in trans issues of a broad variety of critical thinking (and not only from institutions representing medicine and law), and due to the raised voices of the individuals concerned, Stryker and Currah speak of a "transgender turn" (2014: 3).

This growing focus on transgender issues is occurring in an international and global context. It can increasingly be noted that native terms describing gender non-normative people are being overlaid by the Western term *transgender*. This 'colonising' effect of the term is taking place despite the fact that transgender theory used to rely on anthropological findings, "[…] which has often focused on the idea of an institutionalized 'third' gender or liminal gender space, anticipating in many ways some of the concepts common in contemporary transgender theory" (Ekins and King 2005: 381). Without wanting to dismiss the term, Stryker and Currah feel this topic must be critically addressed within the trans studies themselves:

> Understanding the dissemination of *transgender* as a term that originated among white people within Eurocentric modernity necessarily involves an engagement with the political conditions within and through which that term circulates. Because transgender can be imagined to include all possible variations from an often unstated norm, it risks becoming yet another project of colonization – a kind of Cartesian grid imposed on the globe – for making sense of human diversity by

measuring it within a Eurocentric frame of reference, against a Eurocentric standard. (Stryker and Currah 2014: 8)

1.3 The situation in Spain and Andalusia: From criminalisation to inclusion in the Public Health System

Manolito Chen, among my interlocutors a well-respected and well-known trans woman in Andalusia, tells in a newspaper interview that she was put in prison ahead of a festive day to prevent tourists from seeing her. She refers to the beginnings of the 1960s when a new and reactionary mayor in town exercised the repression he inherited as representative of the Franco regime (Pérez 2013). Homosexual and trans persons (at this time no distinction was made between homosexuals and transgenders) were persecuted based on the law for "loafers and vagabonds" *(Ley de vagos y maleantes)*. The *ley de vagos y maleantes* had already been written in 1933 during the Second Spanish Republic. Yet during the Franco dictatorship, it was changed in 1954 to include homosexuals as well. The law allowed homosexual and trans persons to be taken to jail or concentration camps (Boletín Oficial del Estado 1954). Theology (the church), the legal system, psychiatry and civil authorities formed a dispositive, which condemned and persecuted these individuals (Ugarte Pérez 2008). The documentary film *Witnesses of a damned time (Testigos de un tiempo maldito)* from the year 2012 by the Spanish film maker Javi Larrauri reflects upon these times by portraying contemporary witnesses. There existed about 180 camps all over Spain, including the islands, e.g. one notorious one in Fuertaventura (Larrauri 2012). At a presentation of his film in Berne, Switzerland, Laurrari mentioned his difficulties finding contemporary witnesses willing to speak about this time. He connected this restraint not least to still existing tabus in Spain concerning the time of the dictatorship. People would not talk about those times, and there would be no political reappraisal (personal note at the film screening, November 8th, 2013). Among some of my interlocutors, who happened to come of age during Franco's regime, the oppression experienced at this time led to a political consciousness that keenly appreciates the achievements of democracy, but is also aware of its fragility (see Chapter 4.5).

Homosexuality was illegal in Spain until the end of 1978, and regarding transsexuality, gender reassignment surgery (then called sex change surgery) was illegal until 1983. Before the latter was legalised, the Spanish Penal Code considered 'sex change surgery' (as was the case in many other countries as well) a crime of injury on a healthy person (mutilation, castration, sterilisation), and the doctors who performed it risked imprisonment (Salván Sáez 2001). After this legislative change, medical treatment for transsexual people was no longer a crime, but an unpublished paper by Colega (an LGBT organisation in Seville) written in 2003, criticised

the lack of efforts on the part of public institutions to improve the situation of transsexual persons. They criticised the public authorities *(los poderes públicos)* for forgetting these people, and for allowing them to become the object of ridicule, persecution and even murder in "our country". Reminding the Spanish government of their duties, they emphasised that it is a constitutional obligation to "remove obstacles to the full development of the personality" (COLEGA 2003).

Gender affirmation procedures as a Public Health Issue

In Spain, the healthcare system is decentralised and organised in each of the 17 autonomous communities. The organising of a national healthcare system was undertaken during Spain's transition to democracy. Significant legal advances were the adoption of the Spanish Constitution of 1978, and the General Law on Public Health of 1986. The first guaranteed all Spaniards access to healthcare; the second delegated the healthcare policy-making to the autonomous communities. This reorganisation of competences for the autonomous communities happened step-by-step and took altogether 21 years. Andalusia was the second autonomous community in Spain (three years after Catalonia) where public health administration was transferred to its community (Aguilar and Bleda 2016).

Gómez-Gil et al. (2011) observe that Public Health attention to people with a gender identity disorder is a recent reality in Spain. In February 1999 the Parliament of the Autonomous Region of Andalusia approved that persons with a gender identity disorder were integrated in the sanitarian services of the Andalusian health system (*sistema público sanitario andaluz, SAS*). In October of the same year, the *Unidad de Trastornos de la Identidad de Género* (Gender Identity Disorder Unit), UTIG for short, was created in the Hospital Carlos Haya in Malaga as a specialised unit for the attendance of transsexual people, and as a national reference centre. Andalusia was the first autonomous region *(Comunidad autónoma)* that established such a unit, offering complete medical care to transsexual people at public expense (Giraldo et al. 2001; Soriguer Escofet 2001). For those individuals who wished to undergo surgical gender affirmation procedures, but did not have the financial resources to have it done in a private clinic, the creation of the UTIG opened new perspectives. For example, Ronaldo would have liked to start transition earlier, but:

> "Lo que pasa que no tenía las facilidades para hacerlo. Costa mucho dinero, no había la Unidad, no estaba la Unidad del Trastorno. Sabía … me informaba y sabía de lo que … de lo que valía y de costo y cual. Y era como una … utopía, no … no voy a pasar allí nunca, aunque por mucho que trabaje y tampoco, por mucho que … grite … estoy muy mal y no quiero ser así, tampoco, por mucho que me vuelva loco y me intente quitar la vida, tampoco, y por … yo que sé … con mucha que diga, yo no quiero ser así, tampoco. Entonces pues … hasta que llegó esto de las subvencio-

nes de la operación y la Unidad del Trastorno. Entonces ya sí … vi un poco más …" (Ronaldo, 2003)[1]

The UTIG in Malaga claims to adhere to the Standards of Care of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (former Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association) (Giraldo et al. 2001). (For a discussion that questions the usefulness of a standardised medical accompaniment for gender affirmation procedures due to the heterogeneity of the concerns of trans people, see Hirschauer 1997). The Unit comprises a multidisciplinary group of professionals, and coordinates plastic surgery, psychiatry and endocrinology (Soriguer Escofet 2001). The Andalusian Health Service (SAS) provided for the following procedure: 1) referral to the UTIG through the primary care network (mostly the health centres of the place of residence of the person concerned); 2) support by the psychologist of the UTIG, who conducts interviews with the person concerned and family members; 3) a real-life test for one year, whereby the 'patient' proves that he/she dresses and moves around publicly in the desired gender/sex; and 4) hormonal treatment (Tena 2010). The hospital Carlos Haya in Malaga was chosen to form the UTIG not least because there already existed a group of professionals who were experienced in attending to people with gender identity problems before the Andalusian government decided to integrate their treatment into the services of Public Health. One of the plastic surgeons had even introduced a new technique in the professional literature, called the "Malaga Flap" (Soriguer Escofet 2001).

I wondered why Andalusia was the first autonomous community that integrated attending to transsexual people in its public health system. I wondered even more when I realised that this was not especially a question my interlocutors confronted themselves with. I had the impression that simply seeing themselves as Andalusian seemed to explain it (a mixture of Andalusian national identity with some distinctive features that distinguish them from other communities). When I asked Magdalena, why Andalusia was the first one, and not another community, she states:

Magdalena: "Porque fueron los únicos, se luchó. El único lugar de la … el único lugar de España donde se ha luchado para que exista esa unidad era en Andalucía. Fuimos muy Andaluza."

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1 "I didn't have the possibility to do it. It costs a lot of money, there was no unit, no disorder unit. I knew … I informed myself and I knew about the costs and everything. And it was like a utopia that I will never reach, no matter how hard I work, and or how much I cry, how very bad I feel and I don't want to be like that, or how much I go crazy and intend to commit suicide, or … I don't know … how much I say I don't want to be like this. So, well … until this subsidy for the operation and the disorder unit came along. Then yes … I saw a bit more …" (Ronaldo, 2003)

> Christoph: "¿Cómo se ha luchado?"
> Magdalena: "Pues presentando proyectos … y, en el parlamento andaluz …"
> (She interrupts the conversation to get her tapas at the counter)
> Christoph: "Lo que no entiendo es cómo es posible que en Andalucía se ha luchado más que por ejemplo en Cataluña, porque Barcelona me parece bastante …"
> Magdalena: "… pero para … avanzada, ¿no? Cataluña ha luchado por el derecho de gays y lesbianas, no por el derecho de los transexuales. Ha sido aquí, pues fueron transexuales que se han unido para algo muy complejo. Porque normalmente en el resto de las comunidades, ellos … son grupos sociales juntos. Consiguen cosas generales. Ya que aquí los transexuales han reclamado algo necesario para ellos. Por eso solo en Andalucía, porque ha sido el único colectivo, el único grupo social de personas transexuales el que se ha movido. Y la persona que lo consiguió fue Kim Pérez. Es la presidente de la Asociación de Identidad de Género de Granada. Que es profesora du un colegio, de un instituto en Granada." (Magdalena, 2003)[2]

The pioneering and influential role of Kim Pérez as an activist and "líder histórica del movimiento asociativo transexual andaluz" (historical leader of the Andalusian transsexual movement) (Tena 2013: 51) is generally acknowledged. According to a newspaper article in El País (and confirming Magdalena's statement) it was due to the Association of Gender Identity of Andalusia *(Asociación de Identitad de Género de Andalucía)*, which Kim Pérez presided, that Andalusia was the first autonomous community in Spain to include the complete treatment process and genital sex reassignment surgery in its sanitary service catalogue *(catálogo de prestaciones sanitarias)* (El País 2007).

Besides the outstanding role of Kim Pérez, another interlocutor proposed that Andalusia implemented this service to distinguish itself as a socialist autonomous community from the conservative rightwing-governed national government.

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2 Magdalena: "Because they were the only ones that fought. The only place in Spain, where people were fighting for such a unit, was in Andalusia. We were very Andalusian."
Christoph: "How did they fight?"
Magdalena: "Well, presenting projects … and, in the Andalusian parliament …"
Christoph: "I don't understand why it was in Andalusia that people fought harder than for example in Catalonia, because it seems to me that Barcelona is quite …"
Magdalena: "… but for … developed. No? Catalonia has fought for the rights of gays and lesbians, and not for the rights of transsexuals. It was here where transsexuals united for something very complex. Because normally, in the rest of the communities, they … the social groups are together. They achieve general things. Here, the transsexuals have claimed something necessary for themselves. That's why only in Andalusia, because it was the only collective, the only social group of transsexual persons that has moved. And the person who achieved it was Kim Pérez. She is the president of the Association of Gender Identity from Granada. She teaches in a college, in an institute in Granada." (Magdalena, 2003)

Another reason (but never mentioned to me) might also be of a symbolic nature because it concerns the reputation a healthcare system has among its citizens. According to Aguilar and Bleda: „[A] national healthcare system is generally considered one of the cornerstones of a country's well-being since a healthy population is an indication of a nation's social progress and economic prosperity" (Aguilar and Bleda 2016: 307). Thus, the inclusion of transsexuals in the public health care system might be regarded as a sign of social progress and well-being. However, one could also argue that this assistance helped to maintain the 'traditional' binary sex order. Since 2007, due to the state's economic problems and conservative political forces, the Spanish Health Care system risks a backlash and the beginning of privatisation (Aguilar and Bleda 2016).

Meanwhile, the UTIG changed its name to *Unidad de Transexualidad e Identidad de Género* (Transsexuality and Gender Identity Unit), which avoids the mention of the gender identity disorder. As Tena (2013) suggests, the change in the name was motivated through an agreement in the European Parliament in September 2012 to abandon the pathologisation of transsexuality. This led the UTIG to change the T for *trastorno* (disorder) to a T for transsexuality.

Between my two field research periods, two laws were introduced to facilitate the legal situation for trans people in Spain. In 2005, Spain legally recognised same sex marriage (Jefatura del Estado 2005). This implies that those individuals who transition their sex/gender within a married partnership, no longer have to divorce. Additionally, since 2007, a Gender Identity law has enabled trans individuals to change their name *and* sex on their legal documents without having to undergo any more sex reassignment surgery (Jefatura del Estado 2007) (this topic will be addressed in detail in Chapter 6). Thus, it is no longer a matter of simply choosing an ambiguous name. However, one of my interlocutors still perceives a lack of progress for the *"personas transexuales"* (transsexual persons) since the implementation of the Spanish Constitution after Franco's death. There was the legalisation of gender surgery in the 1980s. There was the first judgment in the 1990s that allowed trans persons to change their identity documents after surgery. And in 1996 there was the first case of a marriage of an operated trans person (after a judgement as well). (Prior to this, even trans persons who had undergone surgery and changed their identity documents were not allowed to marry.) Additionally, there was the law of 2007 that facilitated the process of changing identity documents. However, the fact of being diagnosed, judged by the medical system, and treated differently than *"cualquier ciudadano"* ("any citizen") still exists, thus:

> "Bueno mira, las personas transexuales en treinta y seis años de … o treinta y siete años que lleva la constitución española aprobada, hemos avanzado poquito (em-

> phasised), poquito, poquito y lo poquito parece que son como limosnas." (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)[3]

1.4 Some numbers

There are different numbers of population estimates circulating. A first estimate of the number of transgender people globally was published in the Lancet in June 2016. It suggests that 0.3% to 0.5% of the global population identify as transgender (Reisner et al. 2016). However, there is also an unknown number of transgender adults that blend into mainstream society and no longer identify as transgender (Fredriksen-Goldsen et al. 2014).

A Swedish study analysed the prevalence of transsexualism out of studies from different regions (Western European countries, Poland, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, and Japan). For male-to-females, the figures range from 1:2'900-1:100'000; and for female-to-males from 1:8'300-1:400'000. The authors also mention that their numbers do not represent all persons with transsexualism or gender dysphoria, be it for not needing or wanting medical transition, or for it having been denied by health care professionals. They conclude that some of their analysed studies

> [...] suggest that some degree of gender dysphoria is more common than the number of persons who actually decide to proceed with a gender reassignment. If societal changes result in increased awareness and acceptance of gender change, a further increase in incidence cannot be excluded. (Dhejne et al. 2014: 1043)

In Spain, there was hardly any information about the prevalence of transgender persons, that is to say, persons with a gender identity disorder (to use the medical term) before the approval of integral treatment in Andalusia in 1999. The estimated numbers were obtained from studies that were conducted in Sweden, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Germany and Singapore between 1968 and 1996. However, as Esteva et al. (2006) observe, it is a difficult task to estimate the frequency of gender identity disorders in the general population, not least due to different methodologies in these studies, especially where the definition of the cases is concerned. Some studies included only patients that had already undergone sex reassignment in their statistics. Others estimated the number based on the initial cases that consulted the specialised clinics, independent of their clinical presentation or therapeutic stage. Nevertheless, emanating from these studies, the *Agencia*

3 "Look, the transsexual persons, in these thirty-six ... or thirty-seven years since the approval of the Spanish Constitution, we have made little progress, only little, little, and the little things seem like alms." (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)

de Evaluación de Tecnologías Sanitarias (AETS) from the *Ministerio de Sanidad y Consumo* guessed that there could be between 387 and 2,187 man-to-woman transsexuals, and 167 to 571 woman-to-man transsexuals all over Spain. The *Consejería de Salud de Andalucía* expected that 100 to 300 persons would request this integral medical service in Andalusia. Five years of work in the UTIG in Malaga showed that 2-3 patients per week had been registered. They concluded that the prevalence of transsexuality in Andalusia was higher than expected, and higher than what had been published in studies from other western countries (Esteva et al. 2006).

In a descriptive and comparative study, Gómez-Gil et al. (2011) evaluated the demand for public health services during the period of 2000 to 2009 in this Andalusian unit, and compared the data with the unit in Barcelona, Catalonia. The latter was approved in 2006 as the second unit in Spain to attend to trans people. For the unit in Malaga (Andalusia) they counted 828 subjects having requested clinical assistance, of whom 88% fulfilled the criteria for gender dysphoria. The male/female ratio was 1,6:1, with a predominance of man-to-woman trans people. Over the last years, the demand of woman-to-man trans persons has risen. Therefore, the authors guess that the prevalence of woman-to-man cases could have been underestimated historically. The mean age was 28 years. This average was quite stable during this study period, but the range has widened, and is now between 11 and 64 years. In the study period, 284 sex-reassignment surgeries were performed, which included 115 vaginoplasties (a plastic surgery and cosmetic procedure to construct a vagina) in male-to-female trans persons, 100 mastectomies (the surgical removal of the breast), 45 hystero-oophorectomies (the surgical removal of the uterus and ovaries), and 24 metoidioplasties or phalloplasties (two different kinds of techniques to construct a penis) in female-to-male trans persons. Furthermore, the authors observe that more individuals from other regions of Spain requested assistance in Andalusia (15.2%), compared to Catalonia with 4.7%. They explain this by the fact that the unit in Malaga was the first and the better known, because it functions as a reference unit on the national level. In contrast, the unit in Catalonia is just a reference centre in its own autonomous region. However, the latter has attended to more patients born outside of Spain; one quarter of the man-to-female trans persons were born in Central- or South-America. The number of new cases each year has been quite stable, with around one hundred in the last few years. This number has been compared with studies in Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands and Belgium, with the resulting conclusion that this number in Spain can be considered high (Gómez-Gil et al. 2011).

In the UTIG in Malaga, the waiting list for any surgical procedure was initially 2-3 years (Gómez-Gil et al. 2011). The authors claim that this waiting list has actually shortened, which they attribute to several factors: the handling of a large number of cases in previous years (they refer to it as 'a bag of history' due to the fact that for many years they have been the only reference centre in Spain to of-

fer sex reassignment surgery), the substantial endowment of the operating room, and a more selective choice of surgery procedures for some of the patients. Of particular note is the reduction in demand for masculinising genitoplasty techniques because of the elevated risk of complications and insufficient functionality. However, my interlocutors who underwent genital surgery had to wait longer than 2-3 years. Anabel had to wait five years for the operation, and all of them experienced this long waiting period as highly arduous. Regarding the decreasing demand for masculinising genital-plastic surgery by FtMs, these were no longer offered by the UTIG in Malaga during my second field research stay (see the case of Bittor in Chapter 5, who regretted this fact). Ronaldo experienced the long waiting periods and then finally being invited for surgery as a kind of "being left in the middle":

> "Y nos quedamos a media. Pero son ellos los que nos quedan a media. Son ellos los que nos quedan a personas que tienen … ya no tienen ambigüedad, y nos quedamos durante mucho más tiempo sin operar y no nos sentimos bien. El fin … la causa final se trata de conseguir porque somos muchos operados a media." (Ronaldo, 2003)[4]

In summary, the demand for clinical assistance for people with a gender dysphoria in these first two units in Spain was initially higher than expected, based on prevalence assumptions from European studies. However, in the meantime, there are no significant differences in relation to the percentage that fulfils the criteria of gender dysphoria, the sex ratio, and the median age, neither between the unit in Andalusia and in Catalonia nor with Western European countries (Gómez-Gil et al. 2011).

The intention of this chapter was to approach the state of the art of the topic, as well as to break it down to the situation in Andalusia. Having outlined this background information, I will now turn to the memories and experiences of my interlocutors on their journey towards a new awareness of their sex/gender.

4 "And we're halfway between. But they are the ones who leave us in between. They are the ones who leave us as persons who show … no longer ambiguity, but we stay for much more time without surgery and we don't feel good. The purpose … the root cause, what we aim for … because we're a lot of half operated." (Ronaldo, 2003)

Chapter 2. Embodied feelings: The sense of self-awareness of others

> "There is hardly a person so constantly unhappy (before sex change) as the transsexual."
> *(Benjamin 1966: 47)*
>
> "Yo soy una mujer con pene y feliz."
> *(one of my interlocutors, 2015)*[1]

In this chapter, I focus on the self-awareness and experiences of my informants on bodily matters. However, because self-awareness and body image are not formed by the individual alone, but are also shaped through the awareness of others, i.e. experienced through confrontation with the social environment, I will also refer to family, peers and further players. First, I concentrate on the memories of my informants of how a gender ambiguity came to consciousness and manifested itself. Second, because of its central role in sex ascription, I look at the meaning of the genitals in relation to sex/gender awareness. When it comes to questions of sex/gender identity by my informants, these body parts cannot be neglected. It is then, at the latest, when questions about the necessity (or no necessity), possibilities and limits of genital reassignment surgery emerge. Third, the explanatory models of my informants about the sources of their gender-nonconforming will be addressed because they reveal information about their body concepts as well.

By focussing on bodily matters based on the above-mentioned topics, I switch between gender behaviour, concrete body parts, bodily functions and sensations/emotions. My reluctance to analyse this topic in a more selective way reflects the interplay between the individual's body and their social surrounding. Douglas (1973) speaks of two bodies; the social body and the physical body, which are in a continual exchange:

> There is a continual exchange of meanings between the two kinds of bodily experience so that each reinforces the categories of the other. As a result of this in-

1 "I am a woman with penis and happy."

> teraction the body itself is a highly restricted medium of expression. The forms it adopts in movement and repose express social pressures in manifold ways. (Douglas 1973: 93)

Thus, the human body, seen as a system, expresses meanings in reacting upon the social system. "The two bodies are the self and society: sometimes they are so near as to be almost merged; sometimes they are far apart. The tension between them allows the elaboration of meanings" (Douglas 1973: 112). Villa refers to the embodiment of social norms: "[…] Entscheidungen über den eigenen Körper [sind] als Entscheidungen über das Selbst hochgradig normativ, sie sind getränkt von Sozialität" (Villa 2008a: 8).[2] Besides social interaction, Le Breton also mentions the impact of history and culture upon the body, and emphasises the symbolic meaning of physiology : "La physiologie de l'homme ne fonctionne jamais dans une sorte de pureté, de virginité biologique qui la tiendrait hors de l'histoire, hors de l'inconscient, hors du social. Elle est traversée de symbolismes sociaux et culturels" (Le Breton 1995 : 111).[3] This approach to writing about the body is congruent with newer insights from within the field of 'the anthropology of the body', "[…] that bodies cannot be divorced from their lived experiences, requiring a focus on embodiment: a way of inhabiting the world as well as the source of personhood, self, and subjectivity, and the precondition of intersubjectivity" (Mascia-Lees 2011: 2).

Referring to his state of bodily transformation from female to male, Ronaldo hints in an exemplary way at this interaction of individual body awareness and social and cultural expectations (and by the way, it also gives insights into concepts of the border of the body):

> "Ya no … ya no puedo cambiar más … de lo que estoy … de lo que estoy cambiando. Ya no tengo menstruación, no tengo … tengo barba, me afeito, tengo la voz masculinizada, tengo … la sangre la tengo totalmente androgenisado … sea ya tengo todos los andrógenos en el cuerpo." (Ronaldo, 2003)[4]

Growing a beard and having a lower voice are culturally normed as male markers and are visible/audible from the outside. Displaying these markers helps Ronaldo to

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2 "[…] decisions about one's own body [are], as decisions about one's self, highly normative, they are imbued with sociality [own transl.]" (Villa 2008a: 8).

3 "Human physiology never works in a kind of purity, of biological virginity that would keep it out of history, out of the unconscious, out of the social. It is crossed by social and cultural symbolisms [own transl.]" (Le Breton 1995: 111).

4 "I can no more … I cannot further change … that what I am… what I am changing. I have no more menstruation, I have no more … I have a beard, I shave, my voice is masculinised, I have … the blood is totally androgenised, that is, I already have all the androgens in my body." (Ronaldo, 2003)

pass successfully as a man. The confirmation of his social environment strengthens his self-awareness of his felt sex/gender, which in turn, is additionally strengthened by the fact that not only has his menstruation cycle stopped (in western concepts definitely a female attribute), but he also has to shave his facial hair (perceived as a male act). In mentioning his androgenised blood, he transgresses the visual border of the body and holds to an endocrinological understanding of masculinity that cannot be seen by the naked eye. In sum, his statement about his body status reflects a wide spectrum of culturally learned concepts, which include knowledge about the existence and functions of hormones, and knowledge about socially accepted sex/gender attributes. It demonstrates the entanglement between individual, social and cultural factors when looking at something which is, at first glance, as natural as the body. It reflects his dealing with 'nature' to meet the requirements of the 'webs of significance' (Geertz 1993: 5) of his culture.

To understand how this entanglement unfolds within the body concepts of my informants, I start by looking back at their childhood memories.

2.1 Memories of sex and gender

Tracing back the incongruence between the sexed body and the felt gender to early childhood is a prominent narrative in the life stories of trans people. The discourse of a stable identity that reaches back to childhood supports the arguments for the necessity of gender affirmation procedures especially when medical attendance concerning gender non-conformity is sought. The discourse is that of always having been locked up in the wrong body (cf. Tena 2010). Not all, but the majority of my interlocutors reflected this discourse. Bittor stated: "Porque yo lo tenía claro desde que yo tengo razón, y tengo memoria." (Bittor, 2015)[5] And Luisa: "Yo cuando yo nací, cuando yo empecé a tener uso de razón con tres años yo tenía un comportamiento de una niña normal corriente." (Luisa, 2003)[6]

Bittor and Luisa both aimed for the complete gender affirmation procedures. Their formulation *"desde que yo tengo razón"* ("since I have use of reason") or *"cuando yo empecé a tener uso de razón"* ("when I started to have use of reason) seems to reflect the guidelines that the Spanish Society of Endocrinology and Nutrition *(Sociedad Española de Endocrinología y Nutrición)* elaborated in a clinical guide from the year 2002 for the diagnosis and treatment of people with a gender dysphoria. The appendix to this guide contains a declaration of consent, which the trans person who is looking for hormonal treatment has to confirm. Point 2 reads as follows:

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5 "I was clear about it ever since I have use of reason, and a memory." (Bittor, 2015)

6 "When I was born, when I started to have use of reason at three years old, I behaved like an ordinary normal girl." (Luisa, 2003)

> DECLARO: 2. Que *desde que tengo use de razón* [italics, CI], y a pesar de mi apariencia externa y caracteres sexuales y genitales de ……, yo siempre me he considerado un / a …… (Grupo de Trabajo sobre Trastornos de Identitad de Género 2002: 28)
> *(I declare: 2. That since I've been using reason, and despite my outward appearance and sexual and genital characteristics as a ……, I've always considered myself a ……)*

These memories of early childhood are often reconstructed in quite a stereotypical manner, such as referring to clothes and toys that are ascribed to a certain sex. Ronaldo, for example, who is also very explicit in emphasising a stable identity in the wrong body, states: "[…] yo he nacido hombre. Con un cuerpo equivocado, pero nací hombre." (Ronaldo, 2003)[7]

He dates the consciousness of being a boy and not a girl to the age of four, when he remembers his parents buying him a girl's dress. He rejected the dress and wanted trousers.

Carmina's account corresponds strongly to the narration of a stable gender identity as well. Born in a male body, she remembers always having seen herself as a girl. She exemplifies this by means of her hairstyle, which had the effect that people perceived 'him' as a girl. Anecdotally, she tells how, as a little child, accompanying 'his' father, outsiders reacted to the child's feminine appearance (which she ascribes primarily to her hairstyle) by asking if she was his daughter: "Con el pelo rizadito, rubia, muy blanca, y todo el mundo le decía que si era su hija." (Carmina, 2015)[8]

Carmina felt pleased by this reaction, but her father got so annoyed that he stopped taking his little son out.

Tamara also identified herself as a girl from childhood. Although a boy, she stresses that she also had the physical appearance of a girl, which outsiders confirmed through their reaction by exclaiming what a pretty girl she was. Her parents always corrected the misunderstanding, and in contrast to Carmina, she was ashamed, knowing she was supposed to be a boy:

> "[…] siempre me identificaba con las niñas, sabes? Incluso físicamente parecía una niña desde pequeña también. A mi llame … cuando era chico … me daba pudor […] de ir a las tiendas o si mis padres encuentran a algún conocido siempre le decía 'ay que chica más guapa' y a mí me daba pudor porque era chico, y mi padre 'no' corrigiendo 'no, no es una chica es un chico'" … (Tamara, 2003)[9]

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7 "I was born a man. With the wrong body, but I was born a man." (Ronaldo, 2003)

8 "With curly, blond hair, very white, and everybody asked him if I was his daughter." (Carmina, 2015)

9 "I always identified myself with the girls, you know? Even physically, I seemed to be a girl too, since a small age. They addressed me … when I was small … I was ashamed … to go to

Others emphasise the internal process that led from a diffuse feeling of a kind of otherness to the recognition of being the other sex. For example, Diego, who, although he states he has few memories from his early childhood, remembers with certainty that something was wrong, but there was nobody around to explain it:

> "[…] en realidad mh que yo sup- o sea yo sabía que algo ni va bien. Pero tampoco sabía el que era porque era muy pequeño y no tenía nadie al lado que me hiciera entender que a lo que me estaba pasando." (Diego, 2015)[10]

He relies on some anecdotes stemming from his mother to trace back his gender incongruence:

> "Por ejemplo con cinco años yo decía yo me miraba en el espejo e hice: Yo soy muy fea. Yo no, yo no me gusta. Yo soy muy fea. O yo no soy feliz. Y mi madre, pues, se ponía triste '¿porque no eres feliz?' Y yo 'porque yo yo no soy feliz yo soy muy fea'." (Diego, 2015)[11]

Diego's awareness of his body as a little girl (that is, his negative judgement) was linked to the fact that his mirror image did not represent the boy he felt he was. To cope with this feeling, he created his own history, his own world, where he changed family structures and the sex: "También eh muchas veces yo le decía a mi madre: Ustedes no sois mi familia. Y yo me creaba mi propia historia. Yo soy un niño." (Diego, 2015)[12]

One could argue that this wish to create an imagined world where he fits in is an expression of an already felt discrepancy of (outer) norms versus (inner) feelings concerning his sex and gender. Or, using a description from Butler: "[…] there is the norm, and it is externally imposed, communicated through a set of expectations that others have; and then there is the world of feeling and being, and these realms are, for him, distinct. What he feels is not in any way produced by the norm, and the norm is other, elsewhere, not part of who he is, […] what he feels." (Butler 2004: 69). Diego had no words yet to articulate his sensation, which, using a concept

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the shops or when my parents met somebody they knew they always said 'oh, what a most beautiful girl' and I was ashamed because I was a boy, and my father 'no', correcting them, 'no, it is not a girl, it is a boy …'" (Tamara, 2003)

10 "In reality, ehm, I knew something was not all right. But I didn't know what it was, because I was very small and I had nobody at my side who could have helped me understand what was happening to me." (Diego, 2015)

11 "For example, at the age of five, I said, I looked at myself in the mirror and said: I am very ugly. I don't, I don't like myself [physically]. I am very ugly. Or I am not happy. And my mother, then, was sad, 'why aren't you happy?' And I, 'I am not happy because I am very ugly'." (Diego, 2015)

12 "And also, many times I said to my mother: You are not my family. And I created my own history. I am a boy." (Diego, 2015)

of Plessner (1982), could be described as a *leibliche* sensation. A sensation which transcends the rationally comprehensible. In the words of Jäger (2014), who draws on a philosophical and therapeutic approach of Gendlin, this sensation could be described as a *Felt Sense*, a kind of part of the unconscious, which will probably soon come to the surface, which is first felt through the body, but has not yet found its way into the language.

Others did not reject their assigned sex. Anabel's memories of her childhood as a boy differ from the previous examples. The desire to live in the opposite sex was not something she reconstructs back to her childhood. Furthermore, she doubts this kind of narration: "Pero yo no creo … no creo mucho en las transexuales de nacimiento." (Anabel, 2003)[13]

Rather she sees it as something developing, as progressive. Although she sometimes took up the discourse of a stable gender identity in our conversations and mentioned that she thinks that she has always felt this way, that she thinks that she has always been a woman, she explains in more detail, that as a child, she considered herself a boy like the other boys, although different: "Yo no me veía igual que los demás niños. A mí me parecía que yo algo tenía distinto. Pero sin embargo me reconocía como niño." (Anabel, 2003)[14]

She thought she could be homosexual. In grabbing first for the concept of homosexuality to explain the different feelings, Anabel represents the history of the evolution of the western definition of transsexuality/transgender. "Early manifestations of what later came to be seen as transgenderism were first seen as variations of homosexuality" (Ekins and King 2005: 382). Later, she became aware that she was also attracted to women, and thought she was bisexual. Only as she learned about the term transsexual, did she find an explanation for her evolving wish to live and to be socially accepted as a woman, and that it had nothing to do with her sexual orientation.

Ronaldo experienced the difficulties distinguishing sexual orientation and gender identity from part of his social environment. It was not helpful to be labelled a lesbian, because he did not feel attracted to women as a woman, which he was supposed to be.

> "Lo que pasa que aquí se decía lesbiana. Que yo era lesbiana. Entonces eso a mí no me ayudó mucho. Hasta que yo conocí el problema de la transexualidad, que

13 "But I don't believe … I don't believe so much in transsexuals of birth." (Anabel, 2003)

14 "I did not see myself the same as the other boys. It seemed to me that I had something different. But nevertheless, I recognised myself as a boy." (Anabel, 2003)

> yo me … digo yo no, yo no soy lesbiana. A mí me gustan las mujeres, pero yo no soy una mujer. Yo no soy lesbiana." (Ronaldo, 2003)[15]

Just as troublesome were questions from people inquiring 'what' he was, almost implying that he was something outside the human species. In such a context, he put more emphasis on the fact that he is a person, rather than any gender category:

> "'¿Tú que eres?' (laughing), como si yo fuera, mh, mamífero, cuadrúpedo y palmípedo. '¿Que tú que eres?' '¿Tú que cosa eres?' Nh, ¿a ti [addressing CI] no te preguntan, verdad, a ti no te preguntan ¿tú que eres?, verdad? Tú eres un hombre normal corriente y no te preguntan nunca que eres ¿no? Porque a ella [su novia] tampoco le preguntan ¿que eres? A mí porque me preguntan '¿y tú que eres?' … Nh … yo…verá, no sé cómo explicarlo. Hay hombres y mujeres y punto se ha acabado. Porque yo no hice así eh con el género. Y ya resulta que hay subdivisiones de … eres transexual, eres lesbiana, eres gay eres esto eres otro. *Yo soy persona* [italics, CI]. Yo tengo ojo, boca y cara y trabajo y me divierto y el uno y el otro." (Ronaldo, 2003)[16]

By referring to himself as a 'person', he evokes a philosophical concept of being, which leaves many possibilities open. Haucke notes that for the philosopher and sociologist, Helmuth Plessner, 'person' is the trinity of *Körper*, *Leib* and *Kultur*: "'Persona' ist die Maske, die verhüllt und enthüllt in einem, die einzig angemessene Erscheinungsweise für eine Substanz, der Verhüllung und Enthüllung wesentlich ist, weil sie ewige Potenzialität, unbestimmte seiende Möglichkeit ist" (Haucke, 2000: 157).[17]

However, enduring an 'ewige Potenzialität' (eternal potentiality) with 'unbestimmte seiende Möglichkeit' (indeterminate possibility of being) proves difficult while having to cope with the reality of gender binary everyday-life. This might be a reason Ronaldo shifts in his self-description from "person" to "man": "Yo soy per-

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15 "What happens here is that they said lesbian. That I was a lesbian. But this did not help me much. Until I got to know the problem of transsexuality, that I… I say to myself, no, I am not a lesbian. I like women but I am not a woman. I am not a lesbian." (Ronaldo, 2003)

16 "'What are you?' (laughing), as if I were, ehm, a mammal, quadruped and web-footed. 'What is it that you are?' Ehm. They don't ask you, right?, they don't ask you, what are you? Right? You are a normal common man, and they never ask you what you are, do they? Because to her (his girlfriend), they don't ask her either, what are you? Why do they ask me 'what are you?' Ehm … I … really, I don't know how to explain. There are men and women, point, end of story. But me, I did not do it like this with the gender. And it turns out that there are subdivisions of … you are transsexual, you are a lesbian, you are gay or you are this or that. I am a person. I have eyes, a mouth and a face and I work and I have fun and I do this and that." (Ronaldo, 2003)

17 "'Persona' is the mask that veils and unveils in one, the only appropriate appearance for a substance to which disguising and revealing is essential, because it is eternal potentiality, indeterminate possibility of being [own transl.]" (Haucke 2000: 157).

sona. Y soy … pues si quiere que te diga … un hombre. No hetero ni esto ni el otro, soy un hombre." (Ronaldo, 2003)[18]

Other interlocutors relied on ideas of sexual orientation to confirm their awareness of a gender incongruence by emphasising their stable heterosexual attraction. In doing so, they reassured themselves that their body must be wrong, that is, that their gender identity must be right. For example, Imelda states:

> "Yo nunca me he sentido … hm … desde pequeña, pequeña, pequeña, siempre, me he sentido muy mujer, siempre me he fijado los hombres, siempre me han gustado mucho los hombres". (Imelda, 2003)[19]

Luisa expresses it in even more detail:

> Luisa: "Yo por ejemplo yo me considero una chica heterosexual porque pues obviamente me gustan los hombres y mis parejas han sido heterosexuales siempre. Nunca han sido ni bisexuales ni mucho menos gay. Mis parejas (lengthened) no he tenido muchas, pero las que he tenido han sido heterosexuales. Han sido y son (laughs briefly) heterosexuales. Pero por eso yo nunca jamás he tenido un comportamiento masculino en la cama. Ni en la cama ni fuera de la cama, pero hablando ya de sexo yo nunca jamás he tenido un comportamiento masculino en la cama. Ni … me negaría a tenerlo si alguien me propusiera hacerlo. Que puede darse el caso ¿no? De que alguien te proponga hacerlo, me negaría rotundamente. Y además rompería los vínculos con esta persona porque me daré la sensación de que no me ve como una mujer. Me daría la sensación de que me ve pues como no sé, como un travestido o algo así. Y para nada quiero esto. Entonces rompería los vínculos con esta persona."
>
> Christoph: "¿El comportamiento como hombre en la cama sería a utilizar el pene?"
>
> Luisa: "Hmh (affirmatively). Sí sí, exactamente." (Luisa, 2003)[20]

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18 "I am a person. I am … well, if you want to know … a man. Not hetero, neither this nor the other, I am a man." (Ronaldo, 2003)

19 "I have never felt … hm … ever since I was little, little, little, I have always felt like a woman, I was always been driven towards men, I always liked men very much." (Imelda, 2003)

20 Luisa: "I, for example, I consider myself a heterosexual girl because I obviously like men and my partners have always been heterosexual. They've never been bisexual, let alone gay. My partners, I haven't had many, but the ones I've had have been heterosexual. They have been and are (laughs briefly) heterosexual. That is why I've never ever had a male behaviour in bed. Not in the bed, not out of the bed, but speaking of sex now, I've never ever had a male behaviour in bed. Even, I would refuse to have it if someone proposed it to me. Which may be the case, right? If anyone were to propose it, I would absolutely refuse. And I would break my ties with this person, because I would feel that he does not see me as a woman. It would give me the feeling that he sees me, I don't know, as a transvestite or something like that. And I don't want this at all. So, I would break off ties with this person."

Yolanda, who, as a little boy wished to have a small slit *(una rajita)* like her sister, tells of having been attracted to her male peers since childhood. Although her female peers asked her to play with them, Yolanda preferred to stay with the boys, play football with the boys, etc. Consequently, her female peers taunted her, calling her homosexual. She remembers how she went home, crying, to tell her mother what the girls had said. Yolanda is explicit in describing her bodily confusions, which culminated during a masturbation session with her male peers around the age of twelve or thirteen. One day, some of the boys proposed jerking off *("vamos echar una paja")*. Up to this moment, she had never seen a penis, except her own. When she saw her friends' penises, she was frightened, because her penis was much smaller and there was a problem with the foreskin. She describes her impression of her genitalia as "having nothing", "just something where the urine came out". This discovery left her helpless because she did not know where she fitted in:

> "Cuando yo vi la picha y vi eh eso, yo no tenía yo ouch mujer (amazed), yo no tengo esto. Ahora yo digo, yo pensaba, yo, vamos a ver ¿yo que soy? Si yo no tengo lo que tiene mi hermana … que es una rajita, y yo no tengo lo que tienen mis amigos … yo me quedé en blanco. Digo oy yo tengo un problema. Yo no soy como las personas. Yo no soy un hombre, ni soy una mujer. ¿Que soy?" (Yolanda, 2014)[21]

She was ashamed of her genitals, and spiraled down into existential doubts:

> "Que no puedo disfrutar de la vida. Yo pensaba. Que no puedo disfrutar de la vida. Por yo decía, mi padre tiene hijos, eh el padre de este tiene hijos, la madre está casada, y a mí no puedo de tener ni hijos ni me puede casar. […] Ni poder tener relación con nadie." (Yolanda, 2014)[22]

Hearing this story, my emerging presumption that Yolanda had not yet told me that she might be intersexual turned out to be wrong. She later explains that at the age of seventeen she underwent surgery for phimosis, which she remembers as solving her problems. Thenceforward, she dared to enter sexual relationships (with both men and women).

Although some of my informants told of disturbing experiences already in childhood, it is not surprising that for several of my informants the situation

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Christoph: "Would the male behaviour in bed be to use the penis?"
Luisa: "Hmh (affirmatively). Yes yes, exactly." (Luisa, 2003)

21 "When I saw the dick and saw, eh, this, I don't have that. I say, I thought: What am I? If I don't have what my sister has … which is a little slit, and I don't have what my friends have … I had no idea. I say, oh, I have a problem. I am not like others. I am not a man, nor am I a woman. What am I?" (Yolanda, 2014)

22 "That I can't enjoy life. I thought. That I can't enjoy life. Because I said, my father has children, that one's father has children, the mother is married, and I can neither have children nor can I get married … nor can I have a relationship with anybody." (Yolanda, 2014)

became more unbearable when they entered puberty. In their survey of transsexual people in Spain, Dominguez et al. found that transsexual sensations were perceived at an average age of 10.8 years. They related this to the onset of puberty, which they situated between 10 and 12 years (Dominguez Fuentes et al. 2011). Although some of my informants told of a kind of awareness at a much earlier age, sexed bodily characteristics and 'deviating' interests and behaviour (compared to their same-sex peers) became more evident and less tolerated during puberty. Luisa summarises this in an exemplary way:

> "Entonces ya con catorce años ya es algo que te resulta molesto. Que la gente te mire de manera rara ya te resulta más incómodo que con diez años a lo mejor. Que no, no es tanto, porque claro entre niños de diez años pues no resulta tanto. Pero entre personas ya de catorce años o así ya sí te resulta más incómodo. Para mí era incómodo, sí. Porque me sentía diferente." (Luisa, 2003)[23]

While there is diversity in the lived experiences of my informants while growing up (be it due to family background, degree of acceptance or rejection, capacity of resilience, hiding or not hiding, etc.), a noticeable difference concerning the possibilities to live the preferred gender to some extent can be seen between the MtF- and FtM-trans individuals I spoke to. For example, Diego, as female, experienced fewer problems at this age. His haircut blended with male fashion at this time, and he was often mistaken for a boy, which pleased him:

> "Nh cuando tenía doce o trece años me confundían con un niño. Porque siempre iba con el pelo así por aquí, y en esa época todos los niños iban con el pelo (indicates hair length) más o menos … me confundían con un niño y yo no les corregía, me gustaba." (Diego, 2015)[24]

Furthermore, all of the FtMs refused girlish clothing and insisted on sports apparel or trousers, which was finally more or less enthusiastically accepted by their parents, without any further consequences. This was true even in situations where there was no escaping wearing a skirt. For example, when Ronaldo attended a school that was run by nuns and he had to wear a uniform which included a skirt, he could wear a jogging suit beneath the uniform, because they practised gym every day. The wearing of the jogging suit helped him to endure the skirt. These kinds

23 "Then, already at the age of fourteen, there is already something that bothers you. That people look at you in strange ways and it is more uncomfortable than perhaps at the age of ten, which is not that much, because, of course, between children at the age of ten, this does not show that much yet. But between persons of already the age of fourteen or so, it is more uncomfortable. For me it was uncomfortable. Because I felt different." (Luisa, 2003)

24 "When I was twelve or thirteen, they took me for a boy. Because I had my hair like this, over here, and at that time, all the boys went with the hair (indicates hair length) more or less … they took me for a boy and I did not correct them, I liked it." (Diego, 2015)

of strategies were not possible for the boys who wished to pass as girls. All of the MtF-trans persons I spoke to passed their school years in the male role. Correspondingly, Ronaldo notes that the FtMs (in contrast to the MtFs) do not have to change their clothes and lead a double life: "Nosotros vivimos así de muy pequeño. No tenem- yo no … no llevan una doble vida. No nh salimos con falda y después nos cambiamos [la ropa]." (Ronaldo, 2003)[25]

However, although my FtM-informants experienced more tolerance in wearing the opposite sex's clothes, this did not resolve their emotional problems. Diego remembers that he was often sad and cried a lot. When he entered the age his sister started to wear make-up and dress up, he was not interested in doing this, which surprised his parents. He also never went to a disco, out of fear of encountering discriminating situations.

2.2 The meaning of the genitalia in relation to sex/gender awareness

> "[…] como yo no llevo el pito fuera, pues no sabe nadie lo que … nadie va con sus genitales fuera."
> *(Carmina, 2015)*[26]

West and Zimmerman (1987), drawing on the work of Kessler and McKenna, point out

> […] that genitalia are conventionally hidden from public inspection in everyday life; yet we continue through our social rounds to 'observe' a world of two naturally, normally sexed persons. It is the *presumption* that essential criteria exist and would or should be there if looked for that provides the basis for sex categorization. (West and Zimmerman 1987: 132)

This might explain why my informants point to the preponderance of questions concerning their sexuality and their genitals when confronted with questions by outsiders. It also supports the judgement of the president of the ATA that we live in a "genital culture":

25 "We live like this, ever since very little. We don't have … I did not … they don't have a double life. We do not leave home dressed with a skirt and then we change [clothes]." (Ronaldo, 2003)

26 "[…] as I don't have my dick outside, so nobody knows what … nobody goes around with their genitals outside." (Carmina, 2015)

> "Sí que es verdad que la sociedad eh nos impone una cultura genitalista ¿no? Sobre todo cuando dice: Si no tienes una vagina no eres una mujer. Si no tienes un pene no eres un hombre. ¿No?" (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)[27]

During my first field trip, I asked some of my informants what kind of questions people mostly confront them with, and which questions bother them most. This question aimed to find out my research subjects' sensitive issues (and it probably also served me to avoid a faux pas). It turned out that it was not so much the questions that bothered them (however intimate they might be) as the person who asked the questions, in which context they were asked and how the questions were formulated. However, the issues people were most interested in were related to the sexuality of the trans person, sometimes with their sexual orientation due to the confusion the person who was asking found himself in, and direct questions addressing the genitals (e.g. if they were operated). Paquita expressed her aversion when being asked questions about her sex by people she did not know:

> "Yo entablo una amistad con alguien y bueno pues yo soy suficientemente, tengo suficientemente capacidad como para saber que se lo tengo que explicar cuando llegue el momento. O cuando se salga la conversación. Pero directamente que venga alguien a querer saber de mi vida, en una discoteca, en un bar. Y que alguien se encuentre con la autoridad de venir y preguntarme 'oye perdona' te hace una pregunta '¿tú que eres chico o chica?' Este tipo de pregunta me fastidie mucho. Eso que me pregunten de momento '¿tú estás operada?' (mimicking). A lo mejor, no sé, gente que no te conocen de nada y … no sé, este tipo de preguntas es la que más te molestan también." (Paquita, 2003)[28]

Luisa told of frequent questions about sexual matters and gender appearance as well. In her case, questions about sexuality and sexual organs arose when she met a man she was interested in. Before she underwent genital surgery, she felt the need to tell the truth about herself in advance. In doing so, she intended to avoid a potentially embarrassing situation. Here she was confronted with many questions directly addressing her penis, like the impact of the hormonisation on the penis

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27 "It is true that society imposes a genitalised culture on us, right? Especially when they say: if you do not have a vagina, you are not a woman. If you don't have a penis, you are not a man. Right?" (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)

28 "I start a friendship with somebody and then, ok, I am sufficiently … I have sufficient capacity to know that I have to explain when the moment comes. Or when the conversation comes up. But that somebody directly comes to ask about my life, in a disco, in a bar, and that somebody has the cheek to come and ask 'sorry, may I ask, are you a boy or a girl?' This type of question bothers me a lot. When they ask me "are you operated"? I don't know, people who don't know you and … I don't know, this type of questions disturbs me the most." (Paquita, 2003)

(if the penis gets small), if she used it in her sexual relationships, etc. Luisa summarised it in the following manner: "Ehm, la mayoría de las preguntas son esas. Son esas relacionadas con el sexo, con lo que es los genitales y, y con la apariencia física." (Luisa, 2003)[29]

The latter question about her physical appearance (including the sound of her voice, or if people notice when she walks along the street) were asked by persons she met in an internet chat and who did not see her.

There seems no way to avoid the subject of the genitals in the search for ultimate 'truth' (and self-reflection), although there exist other sex/gender characteristics to self-identify or to be perceived as either man or woman. Ronaldo, who mentioned his transition status: "*Ya no tengo menstruación, tengo barba, me afeito*" ("I have no more menstruation, I have a beard, I shave"), and lives his life as a man, nevertheless states:

> "Pero yo no me siento totalmente hombre si no tengo unos genitales masculinos. Porque esa ya no (softly) … yo ya no me puede engañar más a mí mismo. Yo sé que yo me siento hombre tal cual, pero si yo no tengo mis genitales masculinos no me siento un hombre." (Ronaldo, 2003)[30]

This statement points to the strong symbolic power the genitals signify for Ronaldo in order to be aware of himself as a full man. This is all the more noticeable (and hints to the societal pressure for clear sex classification) because his narration reveals that, rationally, he is totally aware that neither femaleness nor maleness is necessarily bound to the physical characteristics the norm dictates. At some other point in our conversation, he mentioned:

> "Hay gente que lo … se operan y hacen cosa con el dinero suyo, y entonces se ponen teta porque se ponen teta y se ponen labios de silicona ¡cuando ser mujer no significa ponerte mucha teta y ponerte labio de silicona! Ser mujer significa algo distinto. Igual que ser hombre no significa ponerte barba ni pelo ni estar fuerte, ni nada de eso. Ser hombre es llevar una vida … yo que sé … de hombre, lo que es sentirse hombre. Porque hasta ahora no está muy claro lo que es ser hombre. Socialmente, ¿no? Porque si ser hombre es no llorar y ser hombre no es … es tener un trabajo de camionero y ser hombre es … otra cosa, ¡yo no voy por

29 "Ehm, the majority of the questions are these. They are related to the sex, to the genitals and the physical appearance." (Luisa, 2003)

30 "But I don't feel entirely like a man if I don't have some male genitals. Because this … I can't delude myself anymore. I know that I feel like a man like this, but if I don't have my male genitals, I don't feel like a man." (Ronaldo, 2003)

> allí! Ser hombre es sentirte, socialmente aceptado como hombre. Con el rol de hombre." (Ronaldo, 2003)[31]

The fact that Ronaldo longed for a penis to feel totally like a man (despite his deconstruction of stereotypical gender attributions) might be related to his view that being a man depends on social/societal acceptance. When social/societal acceptance is understood as not only 'passing' within the nearer social environment (in this case, a penis would not be absolutely necessary), but also 'passing' in the bureaucratic and administrative context, where identity cards, which reveal all the personal data, must be shown, his aim for genital surgery had to do with the legal situation in 2003. Genital reassignment was necessary to have documents changed (name, sex), which would facilitate encounters with official organs, or potential employers, etc. Ronaldo criticised this procedure and the practice of law courts that (although they had all the medical reports) insisted that the transsexual person show up and have their genitals examined by a forensics expert for final proof:

> "Si tú llevas todos los informes psicológicos de que eres transexual, de que ya estás hormonado, de que ya eres, de que ya eres el otro, pero … no sé, porque se hace así, de que tienen que testificar visualmente que eres un hombre. Y entonces, por sí, por … pagas … dice ' yo voy a cobrar tres mil euros hoy por' … por no hacer algo … el médico es lo único que tiene que verlo físico. Y lo físico son los genitales. Por lo tanto tienes que bajar los pantalones." (Ronaldo, 2003)[32]

Examination of the genitals by 'professionals' for 'social acceptance' is an intervention which began clearly before the times of 'sex change' surgery. An analysis of the practices during the Inquisition in early modern Spain by Soyer (2012) reveals parallels, especially concerning law courts and medical opinion that favoured biological definitions of gender. Soyer (2012) analysed inquisitorial records from the

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31 "There are people who … get operated and do things with their money, then they get tits because they get themselves tits, they get themselves silicone lips – when being a woman does not mean getting a lot of tits and putting on silicone lips! Being a woman means something else. Equally, being a man does not mean having a beard or hair or being strong, nothing of this. Being a man is to lead a life … I don't know … of a man, that feels like a man. Because until now it is not very clear what being a man means. Socially, right? If being a man means not crying, or being a man means having a job as a truck driver, or being a man means … these things. I don't go for this! Being a man is feeling like, being socially accepted as a man. With a man's role." (Ronaldo, 2003)

32 "When you bring along all the psychological information that you are transsexual, that you have already been 'hormoned', that you are already the other, but … I don't know why it is done like that, that they have to visually test that you are a man. Then, yes … you have to pay … they say 'this will cost three thousand euros' … for nothing … The doctor is the only one who needs to see it physically. And physically it is the genitals. Therefore, you need to let down your trousers." (Ronaldo, 2003)

18th and 19th century to examine the phenomenon of gender ambiguity in early modern Spain and Portugal. Next to providing a context for understanding gender identity, sex, and hermaphroditism on the Iberian Peninsula in this epoch, he concentrates on a few selected case studies. Amongst them is the case of a person being married as a man but suspected of being a woman. Another is the case of a (male) priest, accused by several men of having had sex with them as a woman and of having only female genitals. And there is also the case of a sister of a convent who was suspected of having made a pact with the devil to obtain a penis to have sex with other women in the convent. Soyer describes in detail the process that led the Holy Office to decide the case. He worked out that in early modern Spain and Portugal people constructed and defined an individual's gender identity on the basis of quite rigid social norms relating to physical characteristics and behaviour, as much as from the possession of male or female genitals. For the former he states that in everyday life

> […] a well-established set of norms governing sexual behaviour, social conduct, clothing and outward physical appearance played an extremely important role in influencing perceptions and formulating how early modern Spaniards and Portuguese determined an individual's gender when they could not observe his or her genitals. (Soyer 2012: 287)

However, in the secular and religious law courts, the definition of sex/gender extended to the physical appearance of the individual's genitalia. The inquisitors usually tried to settle doubts surrounding the sex/gender of the accused person by ordering a physical examination by medical practitioners, such as doctors, surgeons and midwives. This consisted mostly of an external examination of their genitals. In general, the opinion of the medical experts carried more weight than witness statements. "The inquisitors were usually prepared to wholly discard the testimony of witnesses, even when it was particularly detailed, if it was contradicted by expert medical opinion" (Soyer 2012: 298).

Keeping Ronaldo's statement in mind when he mentioned that they have to *bajar los pantalones* (to let down their trousers) to be legally accepted, one is tempted to say how little has changed since the times of the Inquisition. Except that it was no longer the devil or demonic powers who could alter the sexual organs of an individual, a belief which according to Soyer, "[…] played a significant part in the rise of rumours circulating in towns and villages regarding the gender of the individuals whose cases have been examined" (Soyer 2012: 290). Compared to the tremendous changes that happened in other dimensions of life since that time era (technologisation and digitalisation, space science, reproductive medicine, artificial intelligence and cyborgs, just to mention a few) that forced (and continue to force) people to deal with accustomed ideas of a 'natural order', to think about mul-

tidimensionality and fluidity, it is striking to notice the adherence to the dualistic thinking based on a natural order when it comes to sex and gender. However, since the implementation of the gender identity law in 2007 (Jefatura del Estado 2007) that abandoned the requirement for genital surgery to change identity documents, the examination procedure has become much more bearable than Ronaldo anticipated. For Lora, for example, there was no necessity to *bajar los pantalones* anymore to have the documents changed from male to female (birth certificate, identity card, etc.). It was sufficient for her to produce the medical report certifying that she had been taking hormones for two years, and that she has no mental disorder.

Lora started the transition process (including her coming out) in 2007, at around the age of fifty, although her self-conception as female had existed since childhood. Her gender affirmation procedures consisted just of taking hormones to alter her body. She was not even sure if she will have a breast implantation, because she is quite satisfied with their growth due to the hormone intake. Initially, she thought that she would need the genital reassignment in order to be a real woman. She has since arrived at a different view, explaining that she feels stable enough as a woman, "[…] tenga lo que tenga entre las patas"[33]. There might be different reasons which led to this decision. Ultimately, she argues that she had already been able to live fifty years with her body without sex reassignment, and that her incongruent feelings towards her sex never caused suicidal ideation. Therefore, she concludes that her gender dysphoria must be only slight. Finally, she gives more importance to mentality than anatomy and gets along well with her male body part: "Vamos decir no mh no odio mi cuerpo en sí. Pero mi cerebro decía que no era eh un hombre." (Lora, 2015)[34]

The reconstruction of our conversation revealed some other influencing factors that reduced her yearning for gender affirmation surgery. First, she struggled long and hard to dare to leave the house dressed in women's clothes. But having dared to take that step, she gained much self-confidence because her passing for a woman got smoother and smoother and she had positive reactions. Second, her experiences with the UTIG were not very satisfactory because she had the impression she was not being taken seriously and feared that it would take too long until the staff in the UTIG would finally agree that she could start the bodily transformation process. She decided to look for an alternative and found a solution with her family doctor (with financial support by the *Seguridad Social*), who agreed to prescribe the needed estrogens. In addition (although Lora did not link her changing views to the influence of other trans people), her social environment includes trans women who feel completely female without genital surgery.

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33 "[…] whatever's between my legs" (Lora, 2015)

34 "Let's say, I don't hate my body as such. But my brain said that I was not a man." (Lora, 2015)

This applies, for example, to Carmina, who emphasises the uncertainties of the results of genital surgery, the risk of lifelong complications and the loss of sexual sensuality, a risk she sees no necessity to take to feel completely like a 'real' woman. For Carmina, being a woman is independent from genital surgery: "[…] no hace falta tener eso ahí. Para sentirte mujer. […] Hay muchas de nosotras que somos más mujeres sin necesidad de reasignarte." (Carmina, 2015)[35]

Similar to my many other informants, Carmina located sex and gender in the brain. She attached great importance to gender appearance and representation, which might also be related to her growing up in an aristocratic family and her dealing with a strict upbringing and etiquette: "¡Que es lo importante! No lo que tú seas, sino lo que tú representase." (Carmina, 2015)[36]

Sex/gender must be represented by outer appearance, by dressing and acting in a womanly manner to pass perfectly as a woman: "A cara a los demás, primero el físico. Que te vea una mujer. Y digan ¡mira!, no se dan cuenta." (Carmina, 2015)[37]

She considers the wish for surgical sex reassignment as something very individual and does not judge the individual who aspires for it. Yet, she criticises some trans persons for neglecting an adequate sex/gender representation, and for wanting to undergo the sex reassignment too fast. In this regard, her opinion is clear: "Primero que tú pases como señora." (Carmina, 2015)[38]

Carmina's self-conception as a woman has been confirmed by others in various occasions. On one occasion she had been photographed to promote Chanel perfume. Her portrait won first prize among five thousand pictures of women, she recalls. She also remembers that at a public relations event for the ATA, journalists, referring to Carmina, asked another trans woman: "*¿Esa señora que hace aquí?*"[39], because they did not judge her to be a trans person. In addition, a few months before I met her for the interview, she posed for a campaign for Tolentino, which is an haute couture enterprise specialised in women's hats.

Luisa attaches great importance to a feminine appearance as well. Her appearance is her bodily capital to earning a living. She performs in clubs, which include striptease (see 4.5). However, unlike Carmina and Lora, the penis meant something uncomfortable for her. When I met Luisa during my first field research trip, she was on the waiting list for genital reassignment. She was impatiently awaiting the date

35 "It is not necessary to have this down here to feel like a woman. There are many of us who are more womanly without the necessity of surgery." (Carmina, 2015)

36 "This is the most important! Not what you are, but what you represent." (Carmina, 2015)

37 "In the eyes of the others, first the body. That you look like a woman. And that they say: Look!, but don't realise." (Carmina, 2015)

38 "Firstly that you pass as a lady." (Carmina, 2015)

39 "This woman, what is she doing here?" (Carmina, 2015)

to be summoned by the hospital for the surgery, and expressed her bad sensations towards her male body in the following statement:

> "El no poder desnudarme y me ver al espejo para mhm eso parecen tonterías, pero es muy duro. En el fondo es muy duro. El tu verte en el espejo y no, no, no verte a ti. Ver algo extraño en ti pues es es bastante duro." (Luisa, 2003)[40]

Her narration concerning the penis reflects her understanding of what it means to be a woman. Although it did not depend so much on the actual presence or non-presence of a penis, the important thing to be a full woman for Luisa meant to have at least the wish to get rid of it. She acknowledges some reasons why a transsexual woman has not yet had genital reassignment done (e.g. the costs, or being on the waiting list, like herself). However, in her understanding, 'full' women did not make sexual use of it:

> "Realmente una mujer es la que, aunque lo tenga, no lo utiliza. Porque tú puedes tenerlo pues porque no te puedes operar porque no tienes dinero o porque estás en una lista de espera. Entonces sí eres una mujer porque lo tienes por obligación, pero no por gusto. ¿Entiendes? Entonces si lo tienes por obligación pues sí por eso no eres ni más ni menos mujer**.** Eres igual de mujer, simplemente pues tienes una cosa allí, pero está … tu pensamiento es deshacerte de esa cosa. Pero si tu pensamiento es mantenerla, entonces para mí no es una mujer." (Luisa, 2003)[41]

For Luisa, being a woman is ultimately linked to anatomy, which surgery can correct, and which she is waiting for herself: "Pero yo ahora, no tengo realmente por completo un cuerpo de chica. Un (lengthened) un diez por ciento de mi cuerpo sigue siendo de chico." (Luisa, 2003)[42]

She expects this operation to help her feel more balanced, to give her more security in life, and thus to facilitate her everyday life:

> "Porque por ejemplo yo tengo un problema, y este problema puede tenerlo otra persona. ¿No? Pero a mí se me hace más pesado, porque yo además de tener

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40 "Not being able to undress and to see myself in the mirror for mhm this seems to be silly, but it is very hard. Deep inside, this is very hard. To look at yourself in the mirror and not to see yourself. To see something strange in yourself, well, this is rather hard." (Luisa, 2003)

41 "Really a woman is someone who, even if she has it, she does not use it. You can have it, because you can't operate, because you don't have the money or because you are on a waiting list. Then yes you are a woman, because you are obliged to have it, but not for joy. Do you understand? So, if you have it out of obligation, then yes, that's not a reason to feel more a woman or less a woman. You are a woman all the same, you simply have a thing there, but it is … your thinking is to get rid of this thing. But if you think to keep it, then for me it is not a woman." (Luisa, 2003)

42 "But me, now, I don't really have a complete woman's body. Ten percent of my body is still male." (Luisa, 2003)

> este problema tengo el el malestar de que no me siento bien conmigo misma, entonces cualquier tontería hace que sea más grande." (Luisa, 2003)[43]

In that sense, genital surgery will eliminate the sex/gender discomfort that makes all the everyday problems more difficult. There will always be problems in life, but she would no longer have to bother with her gender identity, and would, thus, feel more confident:

> "[…] pues este problema es simplemente un problema, no es un problema grande. ¿Entiendes lo que te quiero decir? No es que … dejes de tener problemas, pero los problemas son más llevaderos. Porque eres una persona más segura, porque la operación te crea más seguridad, en ti misma, a la hora de salir a la calle, a la hora de entablar una conversación con un desconocido. Eh hm … te cambia, pero o sea te cambia la vida pero no te cambia la personalidad." (Luisa, 2003)[44]

Some of my informants who refused genital surgery emphasised the uncertainty of the outcome (sensual feelings, orgasm, libido, etc.), a risk they did not want to take (as mentioned above in the case of Carmina). Imelda even compared this practice with playing Frankenstein, somehow interfering with a natural divine order, and which ultimately would not change anything for her:

> Imelda: "Yo particularmente, el cambio de sexo de abajo yo no lo haría."
> Christoph: "¿No?"
> Imelda: "Yo no. Yo particularmente no. A mí me da muchísimo miedo. Porque además le que te he dicho antes, todavía hay muchísimo rechazo, y después hay muchísimas contraindicaciones, tú no sabes si sientes… mmh… la manera de sentir… desde que te pones hormona, ya es diferente. Tú no sientes como un hombre, tampoco sientes como una mujer, porque nosotras nunca debemos olvidar lo que somos. Y creo que ya bastante vamos contra la naturaleza como para ahora operarte y tener… eso yo creo que ya es jugar un poquito a… a Frankenstein. A mí eso ya me da muchísimo miedo, lo respeto que cada una haga con su vida lo que sea, pero yo, teniendo lo que tengo o lo que dejo de tener, nadie tiene porque saber lo que tiene entre las piernas, si es una raja u otra cosa, pero para mí … ¿tú te crees que no me gustaría ser una mujer completa? Pero si Dios me ha… me ha

43 "For example, I have a problem; a problem another person can have as well. No? But for me it gets more serious, because additionally to this problem, I have the discomfort that I do not feel well within myself. So, any nonsense makes it bigger." (Luisa, 2003)

44 "[…] so, this will be just a problem, not a big problem anymore. Do you understand what I mean? It's not that you stop having problems, but the problems become more bearable. Because you're a more confident person, because the operation makes you more self-confident, when going out on the street, when engaging in conversation with a stranger. It changes you … well, it changes your life but it doesn't change your personality." (Luisa, 2003)

> hecho así. Yo porque voy a cambiarme eso, si a mí mis sentimientos, mis cosas no van a cambiar." (Imelda, 2003)[45]

Those of my informants who thought that they could not go on without genital surgery, did not deny the complexities of the operation. However, the prospect of having the genitals that suit their gender identity weighed more. Magdalena, a 23-year old trans woman, who, like Luisa, passed all the medical clarifications in the UTIG and who was on the waiting list for sex reassignment surgery when we met in 2003, declared:

> "La operación es muy complicada y el postoperatorio es criminal. Pero… es la única vía para sentirse feliz, para mí, como mujer y como persona. No concibo ser mujer sin eso. Lo siento. No puedo." (Magdalena, 2003)[46]

In addition, Anabel, whose biography differs significantly to Louisa's and Magdalena's (Anabel started the transition process later in age and had fathered a child) aimed for genital reassignment as well and expressed her conflicted attitude towards her penis:

> "Esa es la parte quizás más importante, los genitales te sobran esos genitales aquellos no es … no lo vives como tuyo ¿no? Y llegas casi un poco a odiarlos al final porque dices … por culpa de esto … estoy pasando por todo lo que estoy pasando ¿no?" (Anabel, 2003)[47]

In the cases of the trans men, all of them wished for genital surgery. While some trans women expressed clearly that sex/gender is independent from genital

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45 Imelda: "Me, I would not do the sex change below."
Christoph: "No?"
Imelda: "Not me. Me not, really. It scares me a lot. Because besides what I have told you before, there is still a lot of rejection, and then there are many contraindications, you don't know if you will feel … mmh … the way you feel … when you start to take hormones, it is already different. You don't feel like a man, you don't feel like a woman either, because we should never forget what we are. And I think that we are already going enough against nature, for now to operate and have … this, I think, is already to play a little bit Frankenstein. This scares me a lot. I respect that everyone does whatever with their lives, but me, having what I have, or what I stop having, nobody has to know what you have between the legs, if it is a slit or something else, … but for me… Do you think I would not like to be a complete woman? But God created me this way. Why should I change this, when my feelings, my being doesn't change." (Imelda, 2003)

46 "The operation is very complicated and the post-operational process is criminal. But … it is the only way to feel happy, for me, as a woman and as a person. I can't conceive of being a woman without that. I am sorry. I can't." (Magdalena, 2003)

47 "This is maybe the most important thing, you have enough of those genitals … it is not as if they are yours, right? And finally, you start to hate them a bit because you say, because of all this am I going through everything I am going through, right?" (Anabel, 2003)

anatomy (and therefore genital reassignment is not a necessity to feel like a woman), some trans men mentioned a similar understanding of sex and gender, but still wished to possess a penis. However, genital surgery techniques by FtMs pose an obstacle to fulfill this wish. The construction of the penis is said to be more complicated than the construction of the vagina, and, during my second field research visit, the UTIG was no longer offering this surgery due to bad results. During my first field research trip, Ronaldo told of his aversion toward his vagina when touching it. He managed to have the operation done, before the UTIG stopped this offer. Because it was more important for him to maintain the sensibility of his genitalia, than aspects of size, he went for a metoidioplasty (a micropenis constructed from the enlarged clitoris), instead of a phalloplasty (a neopenis using tissues from another body part like, e.g. arm or leg, which would have been bigger in size). Still, he experienced severe complications.

Another trans man, Diego, is cautious about genital surgery, but nonetheless clear in his attitude: "Yo si hubiera una técnica que me dijera que es fenomenal, yo lo haría." (Diego, 2015)[48]

However, because he knows of several discouraging results in his social environment, he regards this step as too risky, given the current technological possibilities. He has the patience to wait:

> "Entonces como tengo tan eh tantas malas experiencias pues no (lengthened) de momento no. De momento no me operaría. En un futuro. Bueno. La ciencia (laughs) avanza ¿no? Yo, estoy esperando." (Diego, 2015)[49]

For Bittor, who is much more impatient than Diego to have this operation done, it was a moral setback that the UTIG stopped this offer: "Yo esa cirugía me la quiero hacer. Yo lo tengo muy claro." (Bittor, 2015)[50]

Although he is aware of the risks, he would do it in a private clinic with a good reputation, if he had the financial resources.

2.3 It's in the brain: The dualism between body and mind

Although I never asked, some of my informants felt bound to explain to me the sources of the incongruence between their gender self-awareness and their biological sex. Their explanatory models had to do with hormones and the brain. For

48 "If there were a technique that they would say it's phenomenal, I would do it." (Diego, 2015)

49 "So, because I have had so many bad experiences, so, no, not at the moment. At the moment I wouldn't have surgery. In the future. Well. Science (laughs) advances, doesn't it? I, I'm waiting." (Diego, 2015)

50 "I want this surgery. I'm very clear about that." (Bittor, 2015)

example, Anabel, who studied psychology, locates the causes in some part of the brain. In her view, it was due to specific hormonal dysfunctions during the development of the fetus that determined this phenomenon. She compares transsexuality with diabetes, thus, this biological bias serves to judge her gender non-conformity as a disease: "Como yo digo. Hay mujeres diabéticas, hay mujeres (lengthened) no sé que, y yo fui una mujer transexual. Y punto. No lo puedo evitar." (Anabel, 2013)[51]

For Luisa as well, transsexuality is a kind of pathology. She informed herself in the internet, and remembers some pictures she discovered in a neurological study. She learned that men and women distinguished themselves as male or female in a part of the brain. Whereas there was no difference between homosexual and heterosexual men, this part of the brain was the same between a transsexual woman and a biological woman. This illustration convinced her on the one hand to be a woman; on the other hand, it confirmed for her that transsexuality had nothing to do with homosexuality (see 2.1). Furthermore, Luisa incorporated the theory that the foetus is female in the beginning, but holds the information to develop as female or as male (her misinterpretion of the scientific findings that the foetus starts out indifferently, or bipotentially, see Fausto-Sterling 2012, is not relevant for what I want to depict here). Thus, she understands that transsexuality arises out of a mismatch between information and a hormonal bath:

> "Entonces decían pues que la transexualidad era cuando este feto tenía en su cerebro que era femenino y recibía un baño de hormonas superior al que debía recibir. Entonces se desarrollaba masculinamente. Entonces desarrollaba un cuerpo de varón. Pero claro la información era equivocada, sea no era equivocada la información es la que es, la que está equivocado es el baño de hormonas que debe recibir. O al contrario. Cuando ese feto eh trae la información para ser un varón, y no recibe este baño de testosteronas, y se queda pues de forma femenina. Entonces ya desarrolla como una niña. Y decían, eh leí que de allí mh venía la transexualidad." (Luisa, 2003)[52]

Matching the prevailing medical requirements to be diagnosed as transsexual for entitlement for gender affirmation procedures, Luisa agrees that she has a gender

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51 "As I say. There are diabetic women, there are women … I don't know what, and I was a transsexual woman. And that's it. I can't avoid it." (Anabel, 2013)

52 "Then, they said, ok, transsexuality was when this foetus had in its brain that it was female and received a higher dose of hormones than it needed to receive. Then it developed the male way. Therefore, it developed a male body. But of course, the information was misguided, well, the information was not misguided as such, misguided is the shower of hormones it has to receive. Or the contrary. When this foetus gets the information to be male, and does not receive the shower of testosterones, and then stays female. Then it develops as a girl. That's what they say, what I read, that transsexuality comes from there." (Luisa, 2003)

dysphoria. By comparing it with the Down Syndrome, she addresses the problem of social acceptance:

> "O sea, no entiendo porque pueden, eh porque pueden tener algo en contra de una persona transexual, cuando es una patología igual que el síndrome de Down. Yo no creo que nadie con síndrome de Down, le tengan, tengan nada en contra de esta persona. ¿No? La sociedad en si. Entonces porque una persona que es transexual sí, si es lo mismo, una patología. Han nacido con eso. ¿Entiendes lo que te quiero decir? Es un problema ¿no? que que ha tenido tu cuerpo al desarrollarse. No es una cosa que tu hayas elegido ni … es algo que tu que tu cuerpo pues se desarrolla malamente, a eh siendo feto antes de nacer. Entonces pues no entiendo porque una persona con síndrome de Down tiene el respeto de los demás, ¿no? Y son personas pues que son respetadas porque no … son personas que han nacido con este problema, en su cerebro. Y nosotras que nacemos con el problema en el cuerpo pues no … no lo ven igual." (Luisa, 2003)[53]

Both Anabel and Luisa hold to a biological essentialism at whose core is the belief that bodily, psychological and behavioural differences between men and woman can be traced back to the interplay of masculinising or feminising hormones, which in turn are controlled by the genes (cf. Gerschick 2005). Haraway (1988) and Fausto-Sterling (2000, 2012) (both biologists engaging in critical feminist theory) point out that one has to be careful in relying on reductionist biological models, because "[…] the hard truth is that there are probably so many contributing streams, and they probably interact in so many different ways, that we will never have a single story to tell about gender development" (Fausto-Sterling 2012: 57). However, in the case of transsexual people, Fausto-Sterling observes:

> Because of the strength of their desire to bring anatomy and identity into synch, and because often they recall wanting since childhood to *be* the other sex, many adult transsexuals believe their condition to have a biological origin. Many suspect that there is something unusual about their own brain development. (Fausto-Sterling 2012: 58-59)

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53 "I don't understand why they can hold something against a transsexual person, if it is a syndrome similar to the Down syndrome. I don't think that anybody has anything against this person with Down syndrome. Right? Society as a whole. So, why against a person who is transsexual, if it is the same, an illness? They were born like this. Do you understand what I would like to say? It is a problem, right? that your body has had as it developed. It is not a choice you made …. It is your body, which developed the wrong way, when it was a foetus, before birth. Therefore, I don't understand why only a person with Down syndrome has the respect of others, right? And these are persons who are respected, because … these are persons who were born with this problem, in their brain. And we are born with the problem in the body, but no … they don't see it as the same." (Luisa, 2003)

She calls it the "hormone-brain-identity nexus" (Fausto-Sterling 2012: 46) and observes that the commonly sought treatment was to 'correct' the anatomy to conform to the identity (which consists of hormone treatments, surgical transformations of the genitals and alterations in secondary sex characteristics) (Fausto-Sterling 2012). This aim suits Luisa (and some of my research partners who went for all the gender affirmation procedures) who stated distinctly:

> "[...] realmente soy una persona normal. Que no soy una persona extraña, sino que tengo un comportamiento como lo de cualquier otra chica. Sino que tengo un un defecto en mi cuerpo pues que tengo que corregir." (Luisa, 2003)[54]

Despite the above-mentioned critiques for a more nuanced understanding of gender development, the prevailing discourse among my informants (independently of their bodily aspirations) was that gender identity is located in the brain. A posted picture on the website of the ATA reflected this discourse (see illustration 2.1). A finger points upward to the brain, indicating where sexual identity is located, another finger points downwards, indicating that all those who think that sexual identity or sexual behaviour has something to do with the genitals, are wrong.

The following statement from the president of the ATA serves as a neat description of this explanatory model:

> "Lo que prima es el sexo psicosocial y no el sexo genital. ¿No? La persona se auto-percibe hombre o mujer eh en el cerebro no en los genitales (amused). Eh cualquier persona eh por ejemplo tú si perdieras los genitales en una operación o en un accidente ¿qué serías? Un hombre ¿no? Lo cual demuestra que los genitales no determinan ni la orientación de las personas pero tampoco la identidad." (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)[55]

Congruent with the current appropriate terminological handling, she criticises people when they speak of 'sex change'.

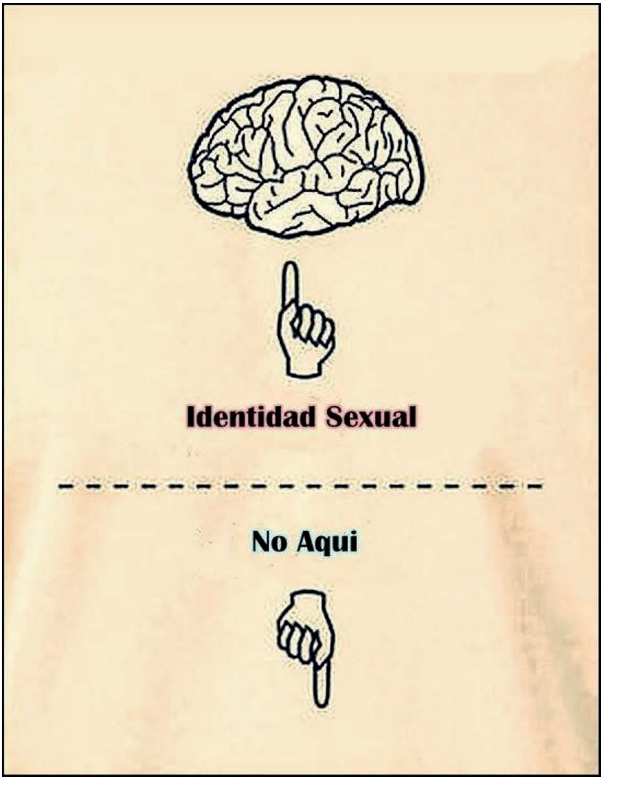
> "Yo no cambio de sexo. Yo ya nazco con un sexo. A mí una cirugía me puede hacer es una reconstrucción genital, o un tratamiento hormonal, me puede ayudar a

54 "Actually, I am a normal person. I am not a strange person, but I behave like any other girl. I have a defect in my body that I have to correct." (Luisa, 2003)

55 "What comes first is the psycho-social sex, not the genital sex. Right? The persons perceive themselves as man or woman in the brain and not in the genitals. Any person, for example, if you lost your genitals in an operation or an accident, what would you be? A man, right? This proves that the genitals determine neither the [sexual] orientation of the persons nor the identity." (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)

tener un físico más de acuerdo como yo me siento. Pero no me cambia el sexo. El sexo yo ya lo tengo." (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)[56]

Illustration 2.1. Sex/gender identity is in the brain



http://www.atandalucia.org, CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

For her, the concept of a dominating *sexo psicosocial* is the reason why only a small portion of the trans people aspire for a genital operation, whereas all undergo hormonal treatment: "Porque es aquello que hace que nuestro cuerpo ¿eh? se ajuste al sexo que tú sientes y vives como proprio." (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)[57]

56 "I don't change the sex. I was already born with a sex. Surgery can give me a genital reconstruction, or a hormonal treatment, it can help me to look more like I feel. But it does not change the sex. The sex I already have." (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)

57 "Because it's that what makes that our body adjust to the sex you feel and you live as your own." (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)

In their quantitative study with trans people in Spain, Dominguez et al. (2011) show that the majority of them had undergone hormonal treatment to adjust physical traits to match sexual identity. A lesser part had undergone surgical interventions (which the authors do not specify), and only 15% underwent genital sex reassignment surgery.

It is striking to note that the 'brain discourse' serves as an explanatory model, that is to say, it is essentialised and politicised (e.g. demanding legal recognition of the felt sex/gender) by both groups, those like Anabelle and Luisa, who aim for genital sex reassignment, and those like Carmina and Lora, who do not. The former classify their gender incongruence as a kind of disease, which should and can be treated by altering the body. They accept the diagnosis gender dysphoria, which is the medical requirement to be approved for sex/gender confirmation treatment. For the latter, the 'brain discourse' serves as proof that their felt sex and gender has nothing to do with their anatomy, and that the individuals themselves can judge best about their gender incongruence. Therefore, this perception holds that the decision for gender transition (including the right to obtain medical assistance) is up to the individual, and should not be determined by gate keepers, like medicine and law, to construct societal and legal mechanisms of inclusion or exclusion.

2.4 Further thoughts about the concept of the body and dualism

The following concluding reflections of this chapter is a first attempt to scrutinise the dominant dualistic perception of the body, which renders it 'technically' adaptive. Far from complete, these reflections try to outline a different phenomenological approach to the body, and relate it to my research partners.

The recurrent narrative of living in the wrong body implies that sensations/emotions and body can be divided, thus reflecting our dualistic understanding of the world. The body equals anatomy, and sensations/emotions are located somewhere in the soul, mind, or psyche. Medicine promises to restore this duality. Hormones and surgery serve as a means for this unifying process. It is striking to note that (with regard to the location of the sensations) the 'brain discourse' has somehow replaced the 'soul discourse', although the latter is still used occasionally. For example, a recent documentary on 3Sat broadcast in January 2019 was titled *Das Geschlecht der Seele* (The sex/gender of the soul). However, illustration 2.1 shows that actual discussions locate gender identity in the brain (and not in other body parts or the soul). Nevertheless, as far as this dualistic thinking is concerned, both types of discourse (body and soul / body and brain) maintain an explanatory model that remains in the framework of a Cartesian way of thinking. The divide of body and soul shifts to a divide of body and brain (which might reflect the contemporary upturn of the neurosciences). According to Schmitz (2011), the externalisation of

the soul from the body can be traced back to the Greeks of the second half of the 5th century BC, where it was common

> […] das am Menschen, was in seinem Körper nicht unterkommt, als seine Seele auszulagern, der manchmal, eine Stufe höher, der Geist hinzugefügt wird, und sich vom Körper in diese Seele, diesen Geist als den eigentlichen Sitz des Menschseins zurückzuziehen; dafür spricht die geläufige Möglichkeit, sich von seinem Körper zu distanzieren, gleichsam auf ihn herabzusehen und ihn als Werkzeug zu gebrauchen. (Schmitz 2011: 1)[58]

He further argues that this philosophical tradition ignored the *Leib* (understood as a more holistic concept of the body). That is, it broke with the dynamic interplay of *Körper* (body) and affections, and thus divided "[…] den Menschen in Körper und Seele – manchmal ergänzt durch einen der Seele unklar zugeordneten Geist […]" (Schmitz 2011: 77).[59] The soul was perceived as a kind of house, on top of which the *Vernunft* (reason) resided that should direct the involuntary motions that were housed below. The soul was conceived as a private inner world, where (emotional) experiences take place. However, these were accessible only through the senses, which pass it on to the mind/reason. Thus, the latter is able only to gather these emotions, but cannot control them directly. Schmitz notes that this dualistic perception " […] das private und öffentliche menschliche Selbstverständnis weitgehend kolonisiert [hat] und auch durch die heute wieder einmal vorpreschenden materialistischen Versuche, an die Stelle der Seele einen Körperteil (das Gehirn) zu setzen, nicht wesentlich geändert worden [ist] " (Schmitz 2011: 77).[60]

An approach to overcome this dualism of body and psyche/soul can be found in the philosophical anthropology by Helmuth Plessner, who notes:

> Bodily existence forces on man a dual role. At *one and the same time*, he *is* his body and *in* or *with* a body. In expressing this being-with and being-in, we also say: we have a (living) body. Being and having continuously shade off into each other in the fulfillment of existence, just as they are entwined with each other.

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58 "[…] to outsource that which does not find its place in the human body to the soul of the human being, to which sometimes, one step higher, is added the spirit, and to withdraw from the body into this soul, this spirit as the actual seat of humanity; the common possibility of distancing oneself from one's body, looking down on it as it were and using it as a tool, speaks in favour of this [own transl.]" (Schmitz 2011: 1).

59 "[…] the human being in body and soul - sometimes supplemented by a spirit unclearly assigned to the soul […] [own transl.]" (Schmitz 2011: 77).

60 "[…] has largely colonised the private and public understanding of one`s human self and has not been substantially changed by today`s pressing and materialistic attempts to replace the soul with a body part (the brain) [own transl.]" (Schmitz 2011: 77).

> At one time the human person confronts his body as an instrument, at another he coincides with it and is a body. (Plessner 1970: 148-149)

This perception of *having* a body *(Körper)* and *being* a body *(Leib)*, both being intertwined, allows Plessner to show that

> Körperlichkeit nun nicht mehr automatisch in einem dualistischen Gegensatz zu Geist und Seele gedacht werden muss. Durch die kernhafte Mitte kommt dem Ding in seiner Körperlichkeit etwas zu, was sich wie Geist und Seele der Erscheinung entzieht. (Haucke 2000: 43)[61]

Thus, the human being is no longer just a dualism of objectified body or an object of psychology, but a kind of a holistic entity. Additionally, Plessner argues that the human being inhabits a world full of possibilities that must be taken as reality, however without advising which possibilities are the most appropriate to choose. Yet, the necessity to choose or to decide is not arbitrary, but is always bound to the situation the person finds himself in, in the "[…] „hier und jetzt, gebunden an einen Leib" (Haucke 2000: 14).[62]

Following this thought and coming back to the meanings my research partners attribute to body parts or psyche, Plessner's understanding of the body might have some impact on their self-awareness and on the role of medicine. The society they are living in offers two kinds of sex and gender (male, female), and medicine promises to 'unify' that which is sex/gender incongruent between anatomy and brain/soul. However, if *Leib* and *Körper* are intertwined, are anatomy, soul and mind in one, and if the situation the trans person finds himself in were not divided in just two sexes/gender, a 'unifying' sex/gender affirmation surgery decision might be redundant.

If it were not for the dominance of an explicit sex/gender-binary appearance (the representatives of both groups were aiming for an appearance as either man or woman), one could argue that the latter group (formerly called transgender, or those who do not aspire for genital surgery,) somehow blew the frame of dualism, thus making use of their 'subversive potential' (see 1.2). They incorporated „[…] eine Erfahrungsstellung, in der die Differenz simultan erfasst werden kann, in der nicht Entweder-oder-, sondern Und- sowie Auch-Verbindungen sichtbar werden […]" (Haucke 2000: 30).[63] However, the above-mentioned dominance of an explicit

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61 "Physicality no longer automatically has to be thought in a dualistic opposition to spirit and soul. Through its very core, the thing gets something in its corporeality, which, like spirit and soul, eludes the apparition [own transl.]" (Haucke 2000: 43).

62 "[…] here and now, tied to a body [own transl.]" (Haucke 2000: 14).

63 "[…] a position of experience in which the difference can be grasped simultaneously, in which not Either/Or-connections but And-connections and Also-connections become visible […] [own transl.]" (Haucke 2000: 30).

sex/gender binary appearance/role of my research partners clearly shows that for them the *Und- sowie Auch-Verbindungen (And-connections and Also-connections)* are difficult to live. They incorporated and lived the societal expectations to be *Entweder-oder (either-or)*.

The next chapter takes up this thread of thought once more and focusses on the agency of my research partners, and the available possibilities on their way to an *either-or*.

Chapter 3. In search of a solution: Of agency and changing structures

> "Te metían mucha en la cabeza que había que seguir."
> *(Diego, 2015)*[1]

The previous chapter discussed the evolving awareness of the gender non-conformity of my informants. At some point in their lives, all of them decided to alter their situation and start living the felt sex/gender publicly. Striking life-experiences sometimes motivated this process. In altering their situation, the body is no longer a mere object of reflection, but also an object of action. Rohr argues that in the course of a reflexive modernity, the nature of the body is itself questioned, and the correction of its nature becomes an unquestioned privilege, is even declared a right of the modern subject (Rohr 2004). In addition, Villa (2008b) observes that we can almost dispose of our body *(Körper)* in the same way we can dispose of any object. However, she puts this statement into perspective by referring to the concept of the simultaneity of *Körper* and *Leib*, a concept that goes back to Plessner's distinction between *Körpersein* and *Körperhaben* (see Chapter 2.4). Villa notes:

> […] als Menschen haben wir eben nicht nur einen Körper, wir *sind* zudem ein Leib. Und zwar beides gleichzeitig und gleichursprünglich. Die leibliche Dimension ist weitaus weniger instrumentell verfügbar als der Körper, da sie das radikal subjektive Binnenerleben bezeichnet, zu der keine (etwa kognitive) Distanzierung möglich ist. (Villa 2008b: 251)[2]

According to Gugutzer, "Plessner's distinction between being a body and having a body is significant because it provides an anthropological justification for the entanglement of natural and culturally shaped bodies [own transl.]" (2012: 44). While

1 "They put a lot in your head, what you have to do" (Diego, 2015)

2 "[…] as human beings we do not only have a body (Körper), we are also a lived body (Leib). Both at the same time and of the same origin. The dimension of being a body (Leib) is much less instrumentally available than 'having a body' (Körper), since it describes the radically subjective inner experience, to which no (e.g. cognitive) distancing is possible [own transl.]" (Villa 2008b: 251).

searching for a solution of how to live their gender non-conformity, my research partners once again had to deal with this 'entanglement of natural and culturally shaped bodies'. Besides the possibility of dressing and performing according to the gendered self (be it in private or in public), this also includes the possibility of medical interventions of different degrees in the body. This searching and dealing involves knowledge, information, and the availability of certain services and drugs. It also involves dealing with individual and social expectations, and addresses the simultaneity of agency (subjective empowerment) and compliance with sex/gender standards (society).

This chapter reconstructs the ways my research partners look for solutions to dealing with their non-conforming sex/gender identity. It looks at the possibilities of my interlocutors to inform themselves, highlights pivotal life experiences that impeded or motivated their decision to start transition, and points to obstacles and consequences my informants faced. Due to the different ages of my informants and the significant changes that have happened over the last decades, it is also possible to outline a historic dimension (based on my empirical data) that reflects on gender non-conformity discourses at the local level. I start by giving insights into one of my research partners, Anabel.

3.1 Stopping a snowball in Andalusia

When I met Anabel in summer 2003, she was in her mid-thirties and living with her wife and her eleven-year-old daughter in a village near Seville. Climatically, they live in a place that gets unbearably hot in summertime. Snow in winter would definitely be something very exceptional. Nevertheless, she compared her disquietude and growing dissatisfaction in not having been able earlier to reach her goal of living openly as a woman, with a snowball, that, if not stopped gets out of control:

> "Y bueno, a partir de este momento es como una … como una bola de nieve, que va rodando y va engordando, y va engordando, y cada vez te resulta más difícil pararla ¿no? Hasta que llegó el punto que llegó hace tres, cuatro años así, en que ya dije bueno, hasta aquí llegó la bola de nieve, y aquí se rompe la bola de nieve, y ya no rueda más, porque … porque cada vez me va a costar más, más trabajo para todo esto." (Anabel, 2003)[3]

3 "It's like … like a snowball that rolls and gets bigger and bigger, and each time it's getting more difficult to stop it, right? Until the point was reached three years ago, or four years ago, when I said, well, the snowball came up to this point, and here the snowball breaks down, and will no longer roll on, because … because each time it costs me more and more work for all this." (Anabel, 2003)

The symbolism of this metaphor is striking. Snow is incongruent in this place and she experienced her situation in the 1990s as getting out of order.

Anabel had been born in a male body. She had studied psychology. In her living room hangs her framed university certificate. It shows the whole graduation class; there is a little picture of every person and their corresponding names. Anabel is amongst them; the photo showing a young man labelled with her male birth name. When we met in 2003, she was working as a mason, a job she eventually got from the parish hall *(ayuntamiento)* with the help of a charity organisation (Caritas), because she needed an income to support her family. Prior to that she had been looking for jobs in all kinds of areas: in burger restaurants, like Burger King and Mac Donald's, in Telepizza chains, in a petrol station, in bars, in teleassistance companies, in clothing stores, or in organisations caring for the elderly or the sick. However, she got no employment, which she relates to the high unemployment rate (see Chapter 4) that was making life difficult for everybody, and, as she states, even a bit more difficult for herself. Concerning gender transition, she considered herself a late bloomer, because she started hormonal treatment only three years earlier, when she was in her thirties. When she dressed openly as a woman, started treatment and, thus, changed her physical appearance, many of her former friends turned away. Some other friends told her how brave she was to make this step. Yet, she considered herself a coward because she had not been able to start transition at an earlier age.

With respect to the growing awareness of her non-conforming sex/gender sensations, she found an explanation when she learnt about the term 'transsexual' (see 2.1). At the beginning, she did not know anybody who could tell her more about transsexuality or what to do. Thus, to inform herself, she started to frequent a site in town where transsexual sex workers went about their business, and spoke with them.

At around the age of twenty Anabel was already thinking about starting gender transition. Then her partner, Inés, got pregnant. She left the decision to her partner to abort, or have the baby and face the consequences. Inés wanted to have the child. Anabel considers herself a person who takes responsibility for their actions. So, because Anabel experienced Spanish society, that is to say, her social environment as rather traditional – meaning that you should be married when you have children – they married. For Anabel it was clear that she could not start gender transition at this point. However, shortly after the marriage she started to talk to her wife, gradually, about her transsexual feelings. They decided that Anabel should not live this openly until their daughter's communion. Nevertheless, sometimes, during the night, she dressed as a woman and went out in the city. At the age of 26, Anabel recalls a key moment in her life that strengthened her intention to live openly as a woman. She had had a traffic accident. There, she realised that she could have died and nobody would ever have known her 'real' self. She felt like she had betrayed all

the people all her life: "[…] estaba engañando prácticamente todo el mundo. Nadie sabía cómo era de verdad." (Anabel 2013)[4]

Thus, in Anabel's case, the urge to come out was related to a life event that made her realise that life can suddenly be over, and the time to live authentically is limited. However, the years went by, and whenever she thought that now was the right time to start gender transition, family or financial circumstances prevented her from making the step and led her even further away from her goals:

> "Fueron pasando los años, ahora … ahora la niña, ahora se falta un trabajo, ahora tenemos que comprar un coche, no hay dinero para afrontar esto y … y va rodando va rodando y pasar los años y por eso ya en un momento en que ya cumplo yo treinta … treinta años y (lengthened) y digo estoy todavía como cuando tenía veinte, y no he avanzado nada en lo que yo quería avanzar ¿no?" (Anabel, 2003)[5]

As mentioned above, Anabel described this situation as a moving snowball, getting bigger and faster and out of control. When she realised that she was starting to blame other people for her situation, she decided to stop and destroy this snowball. Anabel and her partner also decided not to have any more children. (This decision was revised after Anabel's sex reassignment surgery and they had tried unsuccessfully to have another child through artificial insemination). Anabel consulted the pharmaceutical vademecum as to which hormones she needed and went to the pharmacy to buy them. Although officially one needed a medical certificate to get these hormones, Anabel always found a pharmacy that sold them to her. After two years of self-medication, Anabel entered the Gender Identity Disorder Unit (UTIG) in the Carlos Haya Hospital in Malaga.

Anabel felt sure about her aim to undergo all the gender affirmation procedures. However, she was unsure about the consequences for her partnership. Yet somehow she was confident that her wife would stay with her, despite her changed physical characteristics.

Anabel's narration points, among others, to three issues I would like to compare (and contrast) with the narrations of further interlocutors: (1) finding an explanation for the non-normative gender feelings; (2) the way information can be acquired; (3) and the capability of altering the situation. Comparing these three topics not only provides insights on the individual level, but mirrors once again the legal and societal changes that have happened over the last decades (see Chapter 1.3).

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4 "Practically, I was deceiving almost everybody. Nobody knew who I really was." (Anabel, 2013)

5 "The years went by … now the daughter, now without work, now we have to buy a car, there is no money to face this and … and it turns and turns and the years are passing and so in a moment when I had already reached thirty years, and I say I am still like I was at twenty, and I hadn't advanced in anything I would have liked to advance. Right?" (Anabel, 2003)

3.2 Sources of information and ways of adapting

According to Nieto (2011) (an Andalusian social anthropologist working on the topic of gender diversity and sexuality), the transgender movement in Spain (those who do not aspire for genital surgery) is an incipient one. He relates this to the dynamic of information processes, which, in turn, influence the strategies the trans individuals choose. He locates four sources where transsexual and transgender individuals can get information about the phenomenon they are concerned about: (1) professional medical literature, (2) reports in journals and newspapers, (3) information from other transsexuals and transgenders who went ahead with subjective experiences, and (4) in the physical and emotional feedback of their lovers. He criticises the medical profession for focussing primarily on transsexuality from the perspective of assistance and treatment, and observes that the medical profession in Spain lacks a generating theory, as is partially undertaken in other parts of the world. Furthermore, he notes that the major part of the literature that would question a gender-binary framework is written in English and not translated into Spanish, and is, therefore, rather absent in Spain. Thus, he concludes that the medical reference in Spain made itself central in surgery but less in theory (Nieto 2011). In omitting sociocultural explanations, they "[a]puestan por la transexualidad y silencian el transgenerismo" (Nieto 2011: 249).[6] With regard to reports in journals, Nieto judges them as mostly banal, and looking for the spectacular, the freaky. Especially in television, being transgender was represented as a phenomenon that moved between fascination, horror, attraction and rejection. Nieto concludes that in Spain the medical practice, the media, and the subjective information are giving each other feedback that makes of transsexuality a biological reading with a narrow focus that censors the transgender person (Nieto 2011).

Nieto's analysis that a dominant source of information comes from professional medical literature reminded me of my first encounter with Sara in the office at Colega, where she worked part-time as a volunteer. She was sitting behind the desk, and at a certain point in our conversation, she reached down and brought forward the Spanish translation of Harry Benjamin's 'The transsexual phenomenon', a benchmark book on transsexuality in its time, written in the middle of the 1960s (see 1.2). "That's the book I'm working through right now", she exclaimed. "It will explain everything." Although sex-reassignment surgery was not possible for her at that time due to her being HIV-positive and having bouts of bad health, she wanted to know exactly how medicine handles her condition (with regard to a possible sex-reassignment in the future). During our conversation, she supported some of her arguments with reference to the book. For example, when we spoke about young people who decided to undergo sex surgery, Sara argued that some young people

6 "They bet on transsexuality and silence transgenderism [own transl.]" (Nieto 2011: 249).

were not really prepared for this, and referred to Benjamin, where he seemed to mention that people who had had sex surgery at a very young age ended badly.

Informal information

Information from other trans people who went ahead with subjective experiences was and is of major importance among my informants. This was the case not only earlier, when there was hardly any reporting of this phenomenon, but also in today's digital information age. As outlined above, Anabel (after becoming aware of the term *transexual*) first sought advice from transsexual sex workers. Resorting to locating trans persons on the sex worker scene mirrored their societal marginalisation. Although there existed trans persons who worked in socially more respected areas of life, it was generally assumed that transsexuals entered sex work to earn a living.

In the case of Carmina, information depended on a chance personal encounter. Carmina, who grew up in an aristocratic family, recounted that up to the age of thirty years, somewhere in the beginnings of the 1980s, she did not know anybody who felt like her. One day, when she went to the Corte Inglés (a big supermarket in the city centre, in front of which there is a marketplace) she saw Tamara, who had a sales booth with eardrop earrings and necklaces. Seeing this person with her make-up, ladies-hat and miniskirt, she felt a kind of identification: "Y la vi digo ¡uih! Digo ¡qué loca! Digo está loca, ¿quién es? […] digo uih esto es nh está como yo." (Carmina, 2015)[7]

She approached her; they started to speak, and a friendship developed. Soon Tamara brought her to places where there were more of her kind. For Carmina, it was another world: "Pero claro, era otro mundo. Yo no conocía ese mundo." (Carmina, 2015)[8]

Similar to Carmina, who only got to know this 'other world' after meeting Tamara, for Diego, too, (decades later and in an environment that differed a lot from that of Carmina's time) it was a personal encounter at the age of sixteen with an FtM of the same age that Diego remembers as the initial booster for agency. Living in a village and having passed his school years there, he continued his education in an institute in Seville in 2002, where he met *un chico* who was transsexual: "Y entonces al verlo, yo ya dije: Ah, pues esto es lo que me pasa." (Diego, 2015)[9]

Diego confided in him that 'she' himself was experiencing the same, and got the answer: "Ok, there's no problem". Diego remembered that from then on everything

7 "And I saw her and say, oi! I say, how crazy! I say she is crazy, who is she? I say, oi, she is like me." (Carmina, 2015)

8 "But of course, it was another world. I did not know this world." (Carmina, 2015)

9 "And then when I saw him, I said: Ah, this is what is happening to me." (Diego, 2015)

went very fast because now he knew who he was and this schoolmate served as his role model:

> "En el momento que supe lo que era y sabía que que bueno que que como él es lo tenía yo en frente, decía bueno, a ti te pasa lo mismo que a mí, sientes lo mismo y encima eh te hablan como hombre, vives como hombre, entonces yo dije bueno, pues ¿porqué yo no?" (Diego, 2015)[10]

It can be stated that the importance of face-to-face encounters with other trans individuals has survived the decades, despite the growing possibilities the Internet (especially social media) was starting to offer. What changed was the way my informants enacted their agency to start gender transition, due to legal improvements and the inclusion of transsexuality in the Andalusian health care system. I will illustrate this, using hormone intake as an example.

From self-medication to medical assistance

The majority of the trans women I spoke to started treatment on their own by self-medication. Information and hormones were often shared among each other. Anabel is somehow an exception, because she started hormonal treatment by consulting a pharmaceutical vademecum (see 3.1). She stopped self-medication when she entered the UTIG in 2000, where she had to restart her treatment.

With regard to the intake of hormones before she met Tamara, Carmina did not know about any procedures. Nor did she think this was possible in Spain:

> "Porque yo no sabía que existía. Yo no sabía que había un procedimiento de hormonas para que se … para la barba, para el pecho … yo pensaba que eso existía solo en el extranjero." (Carmina, 2015)[11]

Tamara told Carmina about the hormones that she bought from a woman, who, in turn, got them in Andorra. Carmina started to inject these hormones and watched her bodily features feminising:

> "[…] y entonces nos traía las hormonas, nos pinchábamos, y ya empezó a salir los pechos, y entonces ya poco a poco te va tú dejando ya el pelo más largo, mh, ya

10 "The moment I knew what it was, I knew that, well, that I was like the person I had in front of me, I said, ok, the same is happening to you as to me, you feel the same, and on top of everything they talk to you as to a man, you live like a man, therefore I said, ok, then, why not me?" (Diego, 2015)

11 "Because I didn't know it existed. I didn't know that there was a hormone procedure to… for the beard, for the breast … I thought that this only existed abroad." (Carmina, 2015)

> los rasgos se te van afeminando … y así es como yo empecé. Igual que ella. Igual que muchas de nosotras." (Carmina, 2015)[12]

There were contrasting statements about the availability of hormones during the beginnings of the 1980s among my research partners. Carmina, as just mentioned above, refers to imports from Andorra. Another trans woman, Ramira, who started to take hormones around 1981 while she was earning her living in the autonomous community of Castilla y León, got the hormones in the pharmacy, that is, from staff members who brought them to her home. However, in any case, it was something done (half)-illegally and secretly.

A further trans woman, Imelda, started with self-medication at the age of seventeen. She did not want to disclose her age, but this must have been somewhere in the beginnings of the 1990s. Since 1999, she has been supervised by an endocrinologist in a hospital in Seville:

> "Yo me puse hormonas, empecé a ponerme hormonas con diecisiete años … empecé, pero … con diecisiete años … y … pero antes claro, te las ponías a lo loco, no, porque antes no había la cosa que hay hoy de … como te explicarlo a ti … bueno, los conocimientos que hay hoy y el saber que hay hoy. Tú hoy vas al médico y el médico pues te receta lo que tú necesitas a recetar y … a la Seguridad Social, pues, está ya abierto todo eso, pero cuando yo empecé, que tampoco hace tanto, todo eso era tema tabú, tú ibas al médico y le pedías hormones y el médico te decía que, como te va a recetar hormonas que eso es una cosa que no podía hacer." (Imelda, 2003)[13]

Prior to the medically controlled delivery of the hormones, she depended (like many others) on the experiences of other transsexual people. In saying *"pero antes claro, te las ponías a lo loco"* ("but before, of course, you took them madly"), she expresses the effect of the risk and incertitude such an informal and uncontrolled hormone intake had on their health. She expressed her relief that she did not have to cope anymore with these risks nowadays, due to regular medical check-ups:

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12 "…and then she brought us hormones, we injected them, and the breasts already started to grow, and then little by little you're already letting your hair grow longer, mh, and the features become more feminine … and that's how I started. Same as her. Same as many of us." (Carmina, 2015)

13 "I took hormones for myself, I started taking hormones for myself at the age of seventeen … I started, but … at seventeen … and … but before, of course, you took them madly, because earlier there was not what there is today of … how to explain it to you … well, the expertise, the knowledge of today. Today you see the doctor and the doctor prescribes you what you need … [the bill goes] to the Social Security, well, it's all open now. But when I started, which is not so long ago either, all this was taboo, you went to the doctor and you asked for hormones and the doctor said how should he prescribe hormones to you, that this is something he can't do." (Imelda, 2003)

> "Yo por ejemplo lo que me pongo es una inyección al mes. Y eso es mandado por el médico y … visto por él, y controlado por él, que ya no tengo riesgos de nada." (Imelda, 2003)[14]

Ramira also remembered this uncontrolled hormone intake as very risky and painful: "Te dolía, horroroso." (Ramira, 2015)[15]

Some did not survive it, which led Ramira to give up this practice.

During the times when trans people were persecuted under the Franco dictatorship and medical interventions for gender reassignment were illegal in Spain, some went to Morocco to undergo sex reassignment. There was a clinic in Casablanca, well known among trans people all over Europe and the USA, which was credited (among surgeons) for their pioneering techniques in vaginoplasty (cf. Goddard and Vickery 2007; Green 2008). On the one hand, there exists documented testimony from MtFs who were grateful for the uncomplicated and non-moralising procedures when receiving surgical help in their transition (cf. Morris 1993; van Erp 2013). On the other hand, one of my research partners, Carmina, is convinced that for many the trip to Casablanca turned out to be fatal. Contrary to the appreciative reputation in professional medical journals, she compares the surgeon's practice at this clinic with a butchery. Furthermore, because of the illegality and the clandestine actions, those who died, disappeared:

> "Y morían allí. De la carnicería que las hacía. Y como iban solas, pues se morían, pfh, y la quemaban. […] con la ropa, pasaporte, y nadie sabía nada. Porque claro, porque … eso estaba prohibido. Y hacían … verdad de las matanzas. Han muerto muchas. Muchas (whispering). Ahora no. Ya no. Pero también hacen destrozo ¿eh? En Málaga han hecho mucho destrozo. Han hecho unos, unos genitales horrorosos." (Carmina, 2015)[16]

(The last remark, aimed at the UTIG, gives a hint of how controversial this competence centre was perceived among my informants). The risk of disappearing without a trace in Casablanca if the surgical procedure was fatal is also documented by MtFs who went to Casablanca for this operation. In the documentary film "Im Herzen bleibt alles gleich", a trans woman from Germany remembers that she had

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14 "I, for example, I inject myself once a month. And this is prescribed by the doctor and … supervised by him, controlled by him, so I have no risks of any kind." (Imelda, 2003)

15 "It was painful, horrible." (Ramira, 2015)

16 "And they died there. From the butchering they did to them. And since they went alone, they then died, and they burnt them. With the clothes, passports, and nobody knew anything. Because, of course, because this was prohibited. And they … really committed killings. Many have died. Many. Not now. Not anymore. Yet again, they ruin people. In Malaga they destroyed a lot. They have created some really horrible genitals." (Carmina, 2015)

been told that she would be sunk in the sea and her passport would be burned if there were deadly complications (Bruch 2014).

In Spain, according to some of my research partners, the willingness on the part of some doctors to supervise and treat trans people (thus preventing self-medication) increased around the middle of the 1990s. Tamara relates this shift to a more open attitude towards trans people, thanks to a better understanding of their trapped situation. She thinks that politics and medicine had then started to take the needs of transsexual people more seriously and no longer perceived their behaviour as a kind of mood:

> "Eso [el paso de la automedicación a la supervisión médica] ha cambiado, pues, digamos, hace siete u ocho años atrás ¿no? que ya pues ha habido una abertura en todo esto, que digamos hemos salido más, la medicina ha entendido que esto no es una opción por gusto ni por capricho, sino que es una opción que verdaderamente impide una persona que vive en un conflicto personal y hay que dar una salida esto como cualquier otra problemática que tenga un ser humano." (Tamara, 2003)[17]

Yet, during this shifting to medical assistance, an adequate therapeutic procedure depended very much on the knowledge and preparedness of the physician. Therefore, when it comes to the care in Seville, my informants refer mostly to the same endocrinologist in a hospital in Seville. Luisa's search for a solution to alter her body, which started around 1998, one year before the UTIG in Malaga opened, illustrates this. Luisa, who was 22 years old when we met in 2003, had already realised at an early age that she wanted to live as a woman. However, until the age of around fifteen, she did not dare to tell this to anybody. She remembers that she developed a rebellious attitude around this age, and caused problems for her family; a behaviour that she traces back to her unshared emotional state. Her mother brought her to a psychologist, but Luisa did not tell him anything, because she did not trust him, not least because he was a man, as Luisa recounted. After two sessions without results, these consultations were cancelled. However, Luisa's inner pressure grew with the increasing feeling that her whole existence was just a lie. At the age of seventeen, she found persons of trust in one of her aunts and in her former nanny. Together with the aunt, Luisa consulted her family doctor, yet he did not know how to proceed. A social worker who was called in also had to inform herself. Luisa realised that it would take a long time until she was allowed to

17 "This [the shift from self-medication to medical supervision] has changed, well, let's say, seven or eight years back, there was an opening up in all of this. Medicine has understood that this is not an option for pleasure or fancy, but is an option that really impedes persons living in personal conflict, and there has to be a solution, like for any other problem a human being has." (Tamara, 2003)

start treatment with a specialised physician. Describing herself as impatient, she was not willing to wait any longer and started self-medication with hormones she obtained in a pharmacy. Because she had respect for the risks of this self-medication, she was cautious and took lower doses than a friend of hers, who served as a reference person. Her friend injected two ampules of a certain hormone. Luisa injected one. Finally, she was able to continue the hormone intake under the supervision of an endocrinologist in a hospital in Seville; the doctor that several of my informants had referred to. There was practically no need to alter her medication, which confirmed for Luisa the correct dosages of her self-medication. When she learned about the special unit for transsexual people in the Carlos Haya Hospital in Malaga (UTIG), she went there, but the treatment was totally changed.

In Luisa's case, a mixture of mainly three factors motivated her to start treatment on her own, despite the medical opportunities which were already legally available. On the one hand, there was her family doctor's and social worker's lack of knowledge of how to proceed. On the other hand, there was Luisa's impatience to alter her situation, which was exacerbated by the lengthy clarifications the doctor and social worker had ahead of them. However, also under the supervision of the UTIG, Luisa had to learn to deal with her impatience. Although she managed to fulfill all the psychological and medical expectations within two years, and to be put on the waiting list for sex reassignment surgery in 2003, she did not know when the operation would take place. It could take months or years until a call for the operation would occur.

Because of the perceived time-consuming proceedings and lengthy clarifications of the UTIG, some of my informants did not consider this competence centre to be an adequate provider. Lora, for example, entered the UTIG in 2007 at around the age of fifty. She soon realised that the psychological clarifications would take too long until she could start with hormone intake, and searched for an alternative. She spoke to her family doctor in Seville, who prescribed her the hormones. Because she no longer has the wish to undergo sex reassignment surgery, she feels comfortable with the status quo and her medical supervision.

Medical care and society's perception of trans people as a mediator of standards

Diego reflected on the quality of the information he received while starting his transition around 2005. Although coming of age as a trans person in a time when LGBT issues were on the political agenda and specific health services for trans people were available, his statements concerning the information received from part of the medical staff (combined with social expectations) reflected the pressure of the *normalizing society* (Foucault 1990) he found himself embedded in. Diego had initially aimed for the total gender affirmation procedures at the beginning of his

transition around 2005. In retrospect, he thinks that the medical support and the societal perception of transsexualism had a disciplinary effect. Diego judged the available information as insufficient and one-sided, thus, as a trans person, he felt he had little choice and was doing what the doctors expected:

> "Te metían mucha en la cabeza que había que seguir. Que que si tú eres transexual, tú tienes que hormonarte, tú tienes que cooperar y tienes que … ¿no? Todos esos pasos." (Diego, 2015)[18]

The orders from the doctors, combined with the societal pressure he felt to aspire for a masculine appearance, left him no space for alternatives:

> "Tú eres hombre, pues tienes que ser … tú te sientes hombre pues tienes que ser hombre (emphasised). […] ¡Un hombre! Con las características tal y cual." (Diego, 2015)[19]

When we met, Diego was worrying about his disturbed hormonal balance that he associated with his removed ovaries. Years ago, he had had this operation because he did not feel comfortable, and feared that cysts might develop in connection with the masculinising hormone therapy. Now, at the age of twenty-nine, he is experiencing menopause:

> "Pero ahora mismo, a mí me provoca una menopau- una menopausia. Porque yo no tengo ningún órgano que me segregue ninguna hormona femenina. Y artificialmente tengo la hormona masculina. Total, que tengo sofoco, lo paso mal." (Diego, 2015)[20]

His hormones are out of balance, which worries him, and he has osteopenia (low bone mineral density). All these problems are considered a long-term side effect of the hysterectomy. Although Diego remarks that he probably would have had this operation anyway, he nevertheless criticises the doctors for not telling him about the pros and cons, and in not doing so, gave him no choice:

> "Y eso, verá, cada mejor seguramente me hubiera operado. Pero nadie me informó. No me dijeron, Diego, tú te quieres operar, pero te puede pasar esto, esto

18 "They put a lot in your head that had to be followed. Like if you are transsexual you need to take hormones, you need to cooperate and you need to … all these steps." (Diego, 2015)

19 "You are a man, so you need to be … you feel like a man, therefore you need to be a man … A man! With such and such characteristics." (Diego, 2015)

20 "But right now, it is triggering menopause in me. Because I have no organ that releases any female hormone. And artificially, I have the male hormone. In total, I have hot flashes, I am not well." (Diego, 2015)

esto y esto. Pero nh puedo elegir ¿no? puedo y no elegí, creo que no elegí tan con la insuficiente información." (Diego, 2015)[21]

3.3 Media as a source of information, representation and communication

Television and radio

Several of my informants can tap into their own experiences with films and television. Back in 1977 Ramira acted in a film about the life of a Brazilian trans woman who died of an infection after genital surgery. Although she states that it was not a good movie, she recalls it nevertheless as a *bombazo* (a match). She has good memories of this experience because she acted with famous people. In 2009 Anabel was one of five trans women who participated in a documentary that portrayed their lives. In contrast to the dramaturgy and the tragic ending of the film in which Ramira acted 32 years ago, the contemporary documentary where Anabel participated represented the protagonists in a plain and unexcited manner, letting them speak for themselves. Yet, although the media representation of trans people has changed over the years (mainly by means of documentaries), Nieto's initial commentary – that being transgender is presented as a phenomenon that moves between fascination, horror, attraction and rejection, especially in television – did not seem to lose on reality. When I asked Paquita why she thinks trans women can be seen so often in television shows, she somehow confirmed the above-mentioned reasons:

"Pienso que que nos sacan, pero nos sacan … no aciertan con los temas. Siempre quieren frivolizar mucho sobre esos temas. Y a parte de frivolizar, quieren también como … mucho espectáculo. Eh la gente lo que quieren es un poco de espectáculo. De de escándalos. De mh … no sé cómo explicar bien … que la gente no quiere cosas serias de nosotras. Cuando salen algunas que saben hablar, y defienden nuestros derechos, la gente eso después lo lo … hombre, le gusta porque dice 'vaya como habla' o 'que bien se expresa', pero la gente la mayoría la mayoría de la gente quieren un poco el circo. Quieren un poco el escándalo. Quieren un

21 "And this, you see, most likely I would have had surgery. But nobody informed me. They didn't say, Diego, you would like to have surgery, but this and this and this could happen to you. So, I could have chosen, right? But I did not choose, I think I did not choose because of the insufficient information." (Diego, 2015)

> poco la vulgaridad. Eso es lo que quiere la gente de nosotros en la televisión." (Paquita, 2003)[22]

Thus, seeing an entertaining and frivolous aspect of gender non-conformity in these shows, for Paquita, the spectators are misled in almost every way, but especially in the fact that behind this 'entertaining' person is a human being that has to cope with the good and the bad moments of life just like everybody else:

> "Porque la gente tiene una equivocación. Piensan que decir homosexuales nh decir mh pues no sé … nh … estar de buen humor, estar siempre riéndose estar siempre riéndote de todo lo que te rodea … y aparte de eso también hay una vida … dentro de esa persona, esa persona no puede estar veinticuatro horas feliz (emphasised). Pues también eh tenemos nuestros momentos … de bajo, y momentos tristes, que eso la gente no … no lo comprende. Piensan que tenemos que estar siempre de (lengthened) pues vestida de flamenca. Y eso no puede ser tampoco." (Paquita, 2003)[23]

Paquita appeared several times on television shows where she was expected to speak about her life. She knows how to express herself and (being aware of the exploitative aspect these shows might have in trying to inquire about the intimate life of the guests) she challenged the questions very consciously:

> "Las preguntas que yo quise contestar las contesté. Las que no, mentí. Porque creo que a nadie le importaba. Como si yo estaba operada, creo que en en la televisión a nadie le importa si estoy operada o no estoy operada. Yo contesto las cosas que yo podía a saber que podía llegar a la gente. Y que yo podía protectar, que yo podía mh … decir cosas que me doliesen a mí, que yo no estuviese de acuerdo, pero algo que no (lengthened) como si estoy operada, como si en la

22 "I think that they pressure us, they don't meet us with the topics. They like to be very frivolous about these topics. And besides being frivolous, they also like … a lot of fuss. The people, they want a show. Scandals. I don't know how to explain, well … people don't want serious things from us. When some come forward who know how to speak and defend our rights, afterwards the people … well, they kind of like it because they say 'how well she speaks' or 'how well she expresses herself', but the majority of people like the circus a little. They like the scandal. They like the vulgarity. That's what people want from us in television." (Paquita, 2003)

23 "Because people have a wrong idea. They think that homosexuals … well, I don't know, means being in a good mood, always laughing, always laughing about everything that is around us … but apart from this there is a life, inside that person, this person can't be happy twenty-four hours a day. We also have our moments … of downs, and sad moments, but people don't understand this. They think we should always be dressed in flamenco. And this can't be true either." (Paquita, 2003)

cama lo que hago cosas intimas lo que a la gente le importa en la televisión." (Paquita, 2003)[24]

Despite the sometimes offensive questions trans persons are confronted with in television shows, Paquita thinks it is worth the hassle in the long run. Television programmes reach people who will never come into contact with trans persons. Just becoming aware of them through television might somehow serve to establish a connection:

"Sí, positivamente lo que nos viene muy bien es que la gente se conecta un poco con nosotras. Nos conozcan porque hay gente que que conocen la vida del transexual, lo que conocen a muchos transexuales, pero hay mucha gente que están viviendo en pueblos del interior, y entonces les llegan esas noticias pues por la televisión. Entonces por alguna manera conectan con nosotras, nos ven, ven que bueno de entre comillas somos personas pues muy normales, que tenemos una vida como cualquier persona, tenemos los mismos problemas, las mismas inquietudes, nos enamoramos, no nos enamoramos, y que vivimos por tal tal como cualquier otra persona. Y está bien para eso para para llegar un poco a la gente. Porque la gente tiene el tema de la transexualidad como muy escondida. Como que salimos de noche, como que solamente estamos en unos sitios en unos ghettos, y y eso no es así. Y ven que salen algunas que porque hablan bien, otras hablan peores, unas son más finas otras son más … más vulgares, pero la gente ya por intenta ver un poco esa mezcla que hay y se identifican un poco también conociera que eso es bueno también. Porque no todas las que salen, salen para hacer un (lengthened) un un circo. Ni para montar un (lengthened) escandalo. Hay personas que salen que hablan muy bien." (Paquita, 2003)[25]

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24 "I answered the questions I wanted to. To the ones I didn't want to, I lied. Because I think it's none of anyone's business. If I was operated, I think on TV it's nobody's business if I am operated or not. I answer the questions where I knew I could reach people. Where I could say things that are hurting me, with which I am not fine … but something that is not [for the public] like if I had surgery, like what intimacies I live in bed, these kind of things people would be interested in on TV." (Paquita, 2003)

25 "Yes, positively, what is good for us is that people connect a little with us. There are people who know the life of transsexuals, who know transsexual persons, but there are a lot of people who live in the villages in the inland, and therefore news like this gets to them only by television. Therefore, they connect with us in some way, they see us, they see, well, in quotation marks, that we are very normal people, that we lead lives like any other person, that we have the same problems, the same worries, we fall in love, we don't fall in love, and that we live like any other person. And this is good to reach out to people. Because the topic of transsexuality is very hidden. Like that we go out at night, that we just stay in places a little like ghettos, and it is not like this. And they see that some speak well, others speak worse, some are more refined, some more … more common, but people can see the mix and they identify and get to know a little, too. Which is good. Because not all who are on television

Anabel is less tolerant of these television shows because the kind of transsexual persons they would be looking for do not serve the trans community but rather reinforce prevailing prejudices of a secret, despicable lifestyle:

> "Yo creo que muchas veces las desfigura. La … la estropea, digamos, ¿no? Aunque hay (lengthened) hay veces que sí, salen transexuales que, que bueno, que van de verdad con, con seriedad ¿no? Pero la mayoría de los programas lo que buscan es la transexual que haga reír a la gente. Una (lengthened) transexual que … que sea muy caradura, que tenga muy poca vergüenza, que largue que hable hm … con mucho desparpajo. Que enseñe. Y a mí eso no me gusta. Porque después voy yo por la calle y la gente piensa que … que yo voy a ser seguramente igual que ella. Que voy a ser más puta que una gallina, y que … es verdad ¿no? Eso piensan en eso. O que si no lo soy, lo he sido antes, o … Entonces no me gusta. Porque además la televisión busca eso (lengthened) descaradamente, vamos. Yo (lengthened) he escuchado en Colega [an LGBT organisation], me han dicho gente de Colega por ejemplo, que han llamado desde la televisión, y les han preguntado que si conocían ellas algún tran- alguna transexual. Pero además se la pedían con unas determinadas características. A lo mejor. Que tenga mucho pecho, que sea una descarado hablando, que no le importe hacer esto en la tele, y buscan una imagen en concreto. Sea no buscan … una transexual. Entonces a mí no (lengthened) … no me gusta. Pa' eso mejor que no salgan en televisión ni en ningún sitio. Por eso porque a las demás, que eso grupo son la mayoría ¡eh! La mayoría será gente, pues normal y corriente como yo. No folclóricas ni … ni gente del espectáculo. Pero esas tres o cuatro que salen continuamente en televisión, deforman la imagen de las demás. Entonces no me gusta. No … para eso mejor que no. Que no salgan en la tele, vamos." (Anabel, 2003)[26]

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are there to make a circus out of it. Or to scandalise. There are people in television who speak very well." (Paquita, 2003)

26 "I think that many times they are disfigured. It ruins it. Right? Even if sometimes there are transsexuals on TV that are serious. But the majority of programmes they look for is the transsexual that makes people laugh. A transsexual who is very cheeky, who has very little shame, who speaks very sassily. Who shows freely. And I don't like this. Because then I walk in the streets and people think that I'm going to be just like them. That I will be a bigger bitch than a hen, and that … right? They think like this. Or if I am not that way now, I used to be before or … So, I don't like it. But moreover, TV is looking for this blatancy. I have heard in Colega [an LGBT organisation], people from Colega for example told me that the television called, and asked if they knew any transsexuals. But in addition, they asked for certain characteristics. Maybe she'll have a lot of bosom, it should be somebody brash who has no problem with doing this in TV, and they look for a concrete image. That is, they don't look for … a transsexual person. Therefore, I don't like this. For this reason, it would be better that they were not on TV or in any other such place. Because to the others, and this is the majority, the majority are people who are normal and common like me. Neither folkloristic nor show people. But those

Imelda, who can draw on her own television experiences, does not have much hope that participating in television has an impact on positive societal development:

> "Yo he salido mucho en televisión, he hecho muchas cosas. No me arrepiento. Pero que no ha servido de nada. Todas esas cosas, nunca sirven de nada, porque la mentalidad de la gente, desgraciadamente, que ya estamos en el … en el año 2000, no, nadie cambia la mentalidad, todavía es … es una cosa pacito lento, pacito lento, pacito lento, que sí, que se ha adelantado mucho, pero, todavía esto está muy atrasado, y es una pena […]. Cuánto perjuicio hay. Y eso es muy duro." (Imelda, 2003)[27]

Ronaldo was once invited to appear as a trans man in a television show on *Tele Cinco* in Madrid: "No fue una buena experiencia." (Ronaldo, 2003)[28]

He went there with a friend. They were the only trans men. The other participants were trans women. He criticised the programme for not being done seriously and for not reflecting the challenges trans people face in life. He remembers the trans women (formerly living as ordinary men and having children) as being dressed up, with silicon in their lips and not really being aware of what they were doing: "Iban por el morbo, por el dinero, por… por… la gente se reía de ellas, y no…" (Ronaldo, 2003)[29]

Although (as a trans man) he had the impression he had been taken more seriously and laughed at less than the trans women, the programme's lack of seriousness transferred an image of capriciousness:

> "Nos tratan más seriamente y la gente no se reía tanto de ese problema porque cuando lo explica una persona que no tiene eh … la seriedad de que por ejemplo yo puedo tener, o una persona puede tener, pues la gente se lo toma como a que … tú te quieres cambiar de sexo como si te quieres cambiar la nariz, igual, no es … y no lo identifican como un problema real. Entonces yo no fui … no he ido más. Me llamaron …" (Ronaldo, 2003)[30]

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three or four who constantly appear on TV distort the image of the others. Therefore, I don't like it. For this, better they don't show up on TV." (Anabel, 2003)

27 "I have been on TV a lot, I did a lot of things. I do not regret it. But it didn't help for anything. All these things, they never help because the mentality of the people, unfortunately, even though we are already in 2000, no, nobody changes the mentality, it still is a thing of very slow pace, slow pace, slow pace. Of course, a lot has gone forward but still a lot is behind, and it is a shame. How much prejudice there is. And this is very hard." (Imelda, 2003)

28 "It was not a good experience." (Ronaldo, 2003)

29 "They were going for curiosity, for the money, for… for… people laughed about them and it… no." (Ronaldo, 2003)

30 "They treat us more seriously and people laughed less about this problem because if it is explained by somebody who has not eh … the seriousness that, for example, I can have, or somebody can have, then people take it like… as if you want to change your sex like you want

Later, Ronaldo was again asked to participate in the programme, but he refused to do so. Instead, he watched it on television. Although this time it seemed to him more serious, which he explains had to do with the participation of trans men only, but changing the title of the programme did not suit him:

> "Y mi ha parecido más serio del que yo fui, porque solamente he visto a chicas que quieren ser chicos. Incluso han cambiado el título del programa 'Yo nací mujer y quiero ser hombre', que no yo, yo he nacido hombre. Con un cuerpo equivocado, pero nací hombre. Y no es 'nací mujer y quiero ser hombre', no." (Ronaldo, 2003)[31]

Despite the slightly more serious broadcasting, Ronaldo considered these television programmes to be generally searching for the sensational, giving pleasure to the audience at the cost of the suffering of trans persons. He has no wish to participate in such a scenario:

> "Y, lo único eso que no me … no me resulta agradable ir a ese tipo de programa porque es el morbo … ¿Estás operado? ¿No estás operado? ¿Cómo lo hiciste? ¿Cómo le ha que hacerlo? ¿Te ponías falda? ¿No te ponías falda? Y … desde un punto de vista que a veces el sufrimiento de los demás, producen o morbo o sonrisa, en los otros. Y a mí no me gusta causar … nh … nh … broma ni nada de eso porque no hay ningún tipo de broma a lo que … a nosotros, no, a mi." (Ronaldo, 2003)[32]

Luisa had also been asked several times to participate in a discussion about transsexuality on television. She refused because she is not willing to reveal her secret: "Porque para mí es eso, un secreto." (Luisa, 2003)[33]

As a dancer and model, she places great value on her body and her female appearance. She wants to be seen as completely a woman. Participating on television, speaking about her life, and being recognised in public as something special, would endanger her goal of fitting completely in society as a woman. These concerns weigh less in respect to radio programmes or in maintaining her webpage:

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to change your nose. As if this would be the same, which it isn't. And they don't see it as a real problem. Therefore, I have not been … I didn't go again. They called me …" (Ronaldo, 2003)

31 "To me it seemed more serious than the one I was on, because I only saw women who wanted to be guys. They also changed the programme title, 'I was born a woman and would like to be a man', not me. I was born a man. With the wrong body, but I was born a man. And it is not 'I was born a woman and would like to be a man'. No." (Ronaldo, 2003)

32 "That is what I don't … it is not nice to go to this type of programme because it is the curiosity … Did you have surgery? Didn't you have surgery? How did you do it? How does it have to be done? Did you wear skirts? Didn't you wear skirts? And … from a standpoint that sometimes the suffering of others produces fascination or smiles in others. And I don't like to cause … jokes or anything like that because there is no type of joke about this … to us … to me." (Ronaldo, 2003)

33 "Because this to me is a secret." (Luisa, 2003)

> "Yo he decidido vivir como mujer. Entonces a mí no me pueden obligar a tener una vida especial. Yo quiero tener una vida normal como mujer. Entonces no … no quiero entrar en un debate por televisión, me han dado la oportunidad muchas veces. Ni nada por el estilo. Ni a la televisión a contar a lo mejor pues mis experiencias simplemente no tienen por qué ser un debate. Tampoco. Prefiero darla por radio o por mi página Web por ejemplo. La página web es algo que hice, porque al pesar de estar en el internet es algo que no es … eh que yo salgo a la calle aquí y la gente no lo ha visto. Que sí que lo ha visto mucha gente pero en todo el mundo. ¿Entiendes lo que te quiero decir? Si yo salgo ahora mismo en la tele, a mí mañana en la calle me conoce todo el mundo. Pero yo por tener una página web en internet no me conoce todo el mundo en la calle. A lo mejor pues puede dar la casualidad de que una persona de mil, me vea y me conozca. Pero una de mil. No es lo mismo que salir en la calle y que te conozca todo el mundo. Y a mí el anonimato como transexual, quiero mantenerlo. De hecho, si puedo lo mantendré pues siempre." (Luisa, 2003)[34]

Another research partner, Yolanda, has not yet been allowed to start hormonal treatment, but she already dresses publicly in female clothes. She has been to the UTIG a few times, but complains that the psychologist asks questions which, in her view, have nothing to do with her transsexuality (e.g. if she consumed drugs? If she has been in jail?). Her wish for gender transition was confirmed and reinforced through an interview with a trans woman she heard on the radio. This person told her that prior to hormone intake, people in the street looked at her as a man dressed as a woman. The situation changed for the better after she started hormonal treatment and became more feminine. The trans woman being interviewed on the radio had the impression that people stared less at her, and she felt more at ease:

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34 "I decided to live as a woman. So, they cannot oblige me to lead a special life. I want to have a normal life as a woman. Therefore, I … I don't want to enter into a TV debate. They gave me the opportunity many times. Not anything of the sort. Not on TV to tell at best my experiences, simply because there's no need for a debate either. I prefer doing it on the radio or via my website, for example. The website is something I made because even though being in the internet, it is something that is not … I go out into the street here and the people have not seen it. Well, yes, many people have seen it, but around the world. Do you understand what I mean? If I am on TV now, everybody in the streets knows me by tomorrow. But when running a website not everybody in the streets will know me tomorrow. Maybe, there might be the chance of one person out of a thousand who knows me, seeing me and knowing me. But it is one out of a thousand. It is not the same as going out and everybody knows you. And I would like to keep my anonymity as a transsexual. In fact, if I can, I will keep it up forever." (Luisa, 2003)

> "Y dice que ya eh se sentía más a gusto. Y es verdad. Yo, yo el deseo mío es ese. De empezar y de que yo ve yo note, yo note algo de cambio en mi cuerpo en mi vida." (Yolanda, 2014)[35]

Yolanda, who (as already mentioned) had not yet started hormonal treatment when we met, could identify very well with this person on the radio, because she herself was experiencing a lot of disrespect in the streets.

The internet and social media

Yolanda's goal was to reach unambiguousness as a woman because she felt like a divided person: "En parte de hombre, y en parte de mujer. Y eso, eso es muy doloroso por una persona psicológicamente." (Yolanda, 2014)[36]

To rid herself of this distress, she wished to be eligible for the gender affirmation procedures. She had seen a vaginoplasty implemented on an MtF on the Internet and was convinced of the result:

> "He visto la operación por Internet, que la he visto, como lo hacen. Y en verdad que es auténtico. Es igual. Te lo hacen igual (emphasised). Por lo menos lo que yo he visto en la eh en el Internet. Te lo hacen los médicos. Te lo hacen. Te hacen lo mismo que como una mujer." (Yolanda, 2014)[37]

During my first field stay in 2003, the internet was not yet a source of information for all of my informants. Ronaldo did not yet have access or (thus it seemed) the practice of entering the World Wide Web:

> "El Internet, para quién tenga acceso al Internet, para que sea informático, yo tengo una edad que no … verá … no soy ni viejo ni joven ni mucho menos, pero yo cuando yo estudiaba no se estudiaba informática ni nada de eso." (Ronaldo, 2003)[38]

This was in contrast to Luisa, for whom the internet was already serving as an important source of information and to getting to know other people. On our first meeting in the flat of a friend, who had arranged a dinner for us to meet, she

35 "And she says that she already felt more at ease. And it is true. For me, this is my desire. To start [with hormones] and that I notice some change in my body, in my life." (Yolanda, 2014)

36 "Partly man, partly woman. And this is very painful for a person, psychologically speaking." (Yolanda, 2014)

37 "I saw the surgery on the internet, I saw how they do it. And really, it is authentic. It is the same. They do the same to you. At least what I saw on the internet. It is done by doctors. They do it. They make you like a woman." (Yolanda, 2014)

38 "The Internet, for those who have access to the Internet, to be computerised … I have an age, look, I am not old, or young, or far from it, but when I was studying, there was no informatics or anything like that." (Ronaldo, 2003)

started his computer and showed me some webpages she often consults. The first one was a webpage initiated by a young man who had an admiration for trans women, as Luisa explained. She had personal access to this webpage to reply to comments or answer questions in the forum. Then there was Carla Antonelli's webpage (www.carlaantonelli.com), which is, according to Luisa, the most visited webpage concerning transsexual issues in Spain. While surfing through the internet, she paused quite a long time on pictures showing genital surgery. She must have realised that I was not yet accustomed to these kinds of pictures. Thus, she pointed out that at the beginning, she had been affected by these photos as well, but after looking at them several times, they were no longer extraordinary. She clicked on pages from Thailand, which she judged to be very good, and where the surgery costs half the price, and proceeded to the page of a private surgeon in Barcelona, of which she also approved. Then she opened Alexia Costa's webpage, a Mexican trans woman who lived in the USA, as she explained. There was not much text, but many photos and videos. Luisa paused on pictures showing very feminine and beautiful trans women, admired their appearance, and judged their bottoms. It was then that I realised the importance of the physical for Luisa, who herself aimed for the perfect feminine body, and who would have fitted well in this collection of photos. Her accompanying remark reflected her emphasis on the constructivist possibilities of the body: "Es un placer trabajar con tu cuerpo que tú misma has hecho" (Luisa, 2003)[39]

Although the availability and possibilities of the internet increased in the years that followed (even Ronaldo is now very active on his Facebook account), Bittor, a young transman, relativised its benefit as a source of information when we met in 2015. Before coming out to anybody about his gender non-conforming feelings, he looked for information on the Internet. He stated that he found little, and now as he knows about the topic, he judges the little he found as incorrect. He found information about operation techniques and costs, but what he missed was step-by-step counselling on how to proceed:

> "Que ahora lo que pasa que buscaba antes, buscaba informaciones en Internet, pero es que hay poca, y la poca que hay, no es correcta. Ahora que sé cómo va todo el tema este, es, no es correcta y además que hay mucha nh hay muchas formas, y muchas, muchas formas de ayudar y demás, pero no te da la información que tú estás buscando. Nada más que te ponen operaciones muy- está operación, muchísim- mucho dinero, no te ponen en camino ni nada que tienes que seguir." (Bittor, 2015)[40]

39 "It is a pleasure to work with your body that you have made yourself" (Luisa, 2003)

40 "What happens is that before I looked for information on the internet, but there was little, and the little there was, was not correct. Now as I know how everything goes, as I know about the subject, it is not correct and on top of it, there are many, many forms to help and so forth.

Despite the availability of the Internet to look for information or to search for people, the first two trans persons he met *in persona* was after his coming out, when he had already attended the UTIG in Malaga. Moreover, it was only about a year after initiating the transition that he started to visit the *Asociación de Transexuales de Andalucía Sylvia Rivera (ATA)*. Once there, he quite rapidly met other *chavales* (buddies), who, in turn, knew other people. He created a second Facebook-account (besides his personal one) which he coded with FTM: "[…] para conocer gente como yo." (Bittor, 2015)[41]

Over this account he met trans men from many parts of Spain. They asked each other how they were doing, spoke about operations, told each other what had happened, spoke about treatment and so on. He knew the majority of these Facebook contacts only virtually. To those he had more confidence in (although he had never met them *in persona*) he also contacted over WhatsApp. But something went out of control with this Facebook-account. Bittor suspected somebody of swindle, but could not prove it. Finally, he closed this account, keeping contact with the closer persons on his personal Facebook-account and on WhatsApp.

Magdalena is critical of the Internet as a source of information as well, and would not use it for this purpose. She saw images of operations she considered fakes, or unknown people commenting on experiences that were misleading. "Para mí el internet parece una … me parece que confunde mucho a la gente." (Magdalena, 2003)[42]

She used it mainly as a medium of communication with trans women she already knew.

Between my two field trips, social media as a way of communication became a fast and powerful tool. On the afternoon when I was waiting for Diego, he sent me a short message at the appointed hour that he would be arriving later because he had to see the doctor. Because we were meeting for the first time, I did not want to be too obtrusive, and did not inquire about his visit at the doctor's. Nor did he mention it. However, it must have preoccupied him, because the next day, he posted a message on Facebook, asking to share experiences about the new endocrinologist he had visited the day before:

> "Alguien ha acudido al endocrino (name of the endocrinologist) en el hospital (name of the hospital)? Es el nuevo endocrino que atiende a las personas transe-

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But it does not give you the information you are looking for. Not more than showing you operations, that it costs a lot of money … They don't guide you, they don't inform you what you need to do." (Bittor, 2015)

41 "To get to know people like me." (Bittor, 2015)

42 "To me, the internet seems to me … seems to confuse people a lot." (Magdalena, 2003)

> xuales en Sevilla. Ayer me atendió y me gustaría compartir experiencias ya que la mía no fue del todo agradable. un saludo" (Diego, message on Facebook, 2015)[43]

3.4 Associations as points of information, support and political action

During my fieldwork in 2003, I came across two associations in Seville that served as contact points for trans people and people interested in trans issues. One originated from the *Asociación de Identitad de Género de Andalucía* (Association of Gender Identity of Andalusia). This association, presided by Kim Pérez from Granada, was the pioneering movement in Andalusia to give a voice to trans people (see Chapter 1.3). To cover more parts of Andalusia, the association initiated platforms in different provinces, amongst others in Seville. However, they offered no rooms to meet in person. Contact with a representative of the respective branch could be established only over a website or by e-mail.

Colega was the other association I came across, a gay and lesbian organisation that had an office in the city. Colega, as an LGBT-Association, had started to actively include trans issues in its agenda, offering information and counselling for trans people as well. Sara, who worked there in 2003 as a volunteer, described her function as follows:

> "Vienen personas que a lo mejor tienen dudas … vienen a preguntar si conocían alguien iguales que ellas. Buscan informaciones y orientación mayormente." (Sara, 2003)[44]

In sum, in 2003 there existed some, but still little, organised structure for trans persons in Seville. Furthermore, an incident mentioned by Sara illustrated that trans people, who were looking for help, were not always familiar with these existing contact points, and sometimes reached them indirectly. Sara told of a young trans woman of eighteen from Almeria (a province in the east of Andalusia) who was mistreated at home. She fled to the Institute for Women (*Instituto de mujeres)* in Seville. There, she hoped to get shelter and advice. However, because they only accommodated 'real' women, they contacted Colega to find a solution. A psychologist from Colega and Sara went to the institute, listened to the young trans woman,

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43 "Somebody turned to the endocrinologist (name) in the hospital (name)? It is the new endocrinologist who attends transsexual people in Seville. Yesterday, he attended me, and I would like to share experiences because mine were not entirely nice. Greetings" (Diego, message on Facebook, 2015)

44 "People come who may have doubts … they come to ask if we knew someone like them. They look for information and guidance mostly." (Sara, 2003)

informed her of her rights, organised a place to stay and supported her psychologically. It is noteworthy that the first point of contact this young trans woman sought was an institution for women, an institution which conformed to her gender identity. However, the *Instituto de mujeres* could not welcome her as a member of the institutes' target group, which was criticised by Sara:

> "Eso es una cosa que hay que trabajar mucho y reivindicar, que nosotras nos sentimos mujeres, y somos hecho mujeres, porque si actuamos, vestimos, sentimos, somos mujeres. Entonces no entiendo porque el instituto de la mujer no acoge." (Sara, 2003)[45]

When I resumed fieldwork in 2013, I learned about the existence of the *Asociación de Transexuales de Andalucía – Sylvia Rivera (ATA)* that had been founded by a group of trans women from Seville in 2007. The ATA was located in the inner city, on a busy street in a building with several floors housing different enterprises. At the entrance of the building, there was no sign indicating the ATA. This anonymity was not exceptional for LGBT organisations in Seville. You had to know in advance exactly where you had to go to find the association. Stepping out of the elevator on the 4th floor, the anonymity was unveiled. Pictures and posters pointed to the ATA office behind a closed door. There was no doorbell; you had to knock. The volunteer who was in charge this morning opened the door and asked me what I wanted. I explained that I had an appointment with Mar (the president of the association) but was a little too early. She remembered and let me in. She was very friendly. Inside, there was a bright, spacious entrance, and a room with two office desks. Posters in large format of an LGBT exposition were hanging on the walls. Flyers, different information material and preservatives were on display. Mar was not yet in house, but arrived a few minutes later. I knew her from my first field research trip in 2003. Back then, she was a self-employed businesswoman. When I told her that we knew each other, she could not remember our meeting a decade ago: *"Ah, ¿sí?"* She made the excuse for not remembering me with the fact that she had spoken with so many people in the meantime about trans issues, thus, already indicating her activity for the trans collective to which she actually dedicated her time. I reminded her that back then, she had agreed to see me because of a friend of hers who had established the contact. Hearing his name, she reacted very positively, and it made me feel more comfortable because we were able to build on something from the past. I knew from our first encounter that Mar had experience as an LGBT activist. In the 1980s, she was one of the key activists of the first movement for homosexual liberation in Andalusia. However, when we met in summer 2003, she had been running her own

45 "That is something that needs a lot of work and vindication, that we feel like women, we are women, because when we act, when we dress, when we feel like women, we are women. So, I don't understand why the women's institute doesn't welcome them." (Sara, 2003)

business for more than ten years, lived in a registered partnership (about which she felt very happy), and nothing (except maybe her critical and concise statements about the societal marginalisation of trans people) indicated that in a few years, she would be presiding over a newly founded association for trans people. She explained the necessity of the association and their working areas in such a clear and structured way (which reflects her experience in rhetoric) that I will render it here in full length:

> "Bueno pues la asociación nace en 2007 pues de las inquietudes de un grupo de mujeres transexuales que (lengthened) tomamos conciencia que bueno que la discriminación que sufrimos las personas transexuales es específica, y como es específica también necesita unas respuestas específicas. Quizás nh de las raíces de de toda discriminación, tanto de la mujer como de gay y de lesbianas, bisexuales y transexuales, sea el machismo y el patriarcado, pero las connotaciones finales son distintas. Las necesidades son distintas. Por lo tanto era necesario eh crear un (emphasised) grupo de personas transexuales, primero pues para reivindicar lo que es la (lengthened) la igualdad con respecto a la sociedad y en segundo lugar digamos la asociación tiene como tres … tres nh campos de acción … complementarios, pero al mismo tiempo distintos unos de otro. ¿No? Uno es eh hacemos una gran pedagogía social, porque entendemos que la educación es eh el arma más potente o el herramienta más potente que puede posibilitar un cambio mental y social en la sociedad, de la transexualidad se sabe muy poco, y de lo poco que se sabe, se sabe de forma errónea porque viene (lengthened) de discursos médicos, de discursos de académicos, de discursos de investigadores, pero nunca se le ha dado la voz a las propias personas transexuales. Por lo tanto era una responsabilidad de las personas transexuales, dirigirnos a la propia sociedad, primero hacia al interior decir qué es la transexualidad, quiénes somos, para después poderlo comunicar. Eso es una labor, la labor pedagógica, otra tenemos es el la la asistencial, asistencial como asociación. Somos un referente para muchas (lengthened) familias, jóvenes, personas adultas. Pues que tienen dudas, dudas con respecto a (lengthened) a su vivencia en el entorno familiar, en el entorno laboral, eh problemas de cómo acceder a la atención sanitaria. Problemas de cómo cambiarse el nombre legalmente. O problemas de discriminaciones puntuales también a ese campo asistencial lo hacemos. Y después (clears throat) tenemos muy claro que somos un movimiento social y político. Político no significa que seamos partidistas, pero es necesaria una acción política, pues para promover cambios legales que garanticen, que garanticen de alguna manera un marco jurídico eh en el que es- esté garantizada los derechos y la no discriminación pues de las

> personas transexuales. Por lo tanto son tres campos, asistencial, pedagógico, y político." (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)[46]

This statement contains a lot of condensed information. Mar recognises that gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans people experience discrimination stemming from the same sources (machismo and patriarchy), but highlights the specific circumstances and needs of the trans persons: "[…] pero las connotaciones finales son distintas. Las necesidades son distintas."[47] Thus, these specific needs must be addressed by an organisation of and for trans people. This implies (she will later articulate this directly) an accusation towards the LGBT organisations for not dealing with trans issues adequately (in Chapter 6, I will elaborate this point while speaking about the first Trans Pride in Seville). Mar highlights three main areas to which the ATA is currently dedicated: (1) pedagogical efforts (schools, education, information), which they regard as the basis for societal changes, that is to say, for normalisation of transsexuality; (2) being a contact and counselling point for trans people and their kin or otherwise affiliated persons; and (3) political activity and legal defence (as a social movement). Furthermore, the ATA intends to offer an alternative to

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46 "Well, the association was founded in 2007, out of the concern of a group of transsexual women who were conscious that the discrimination we transsexual people suffer from is specific, and since it is specific, it needs specific answers. Maybe the roots of all this discrimination, as a woman, as gay, as lesbian, bisexual and transsexual, is machismo and patriarchy, but the final connotations are different. The needs and necessities are different. For all this it was necessary to create a group of transsexual persons, firstly, to claim equality with regard to society, and secondly let's say the association has three fields of action … complementary, but at the same time each distinct from the other. Right? One is that we engage hugely in social pedagogy, because we understand that education is the most important weapon or the most potent tool to facilitate mental and social change in a society. Of transsexuality, little is known, and of the little that is known, things are known erroneously because it stems from the doctors' discourses, the academics' discourses, the researchers' discourses, but never was a voice given to the transsexual persons themselves. For all of this, it was a responsibility of the transsexual people to address our own society, firstly to communicate internally what transsexuality is, who we are, in order to be able to communicate. This is a labour, the pedagogical labour. As another, we give assistance, assistance as an association. We are a point of reference for many families, young people and adult people. So, for the ones who have doubts, doubts in regard to their lives in the context of family, in the context of work, problems of how to access health care, problems how to change their name legally, or for problems of precise discrimination, we offer assistance. And then, we make it clear that we are a social and political movement. Political does not mean that we are a party, but it is necessary to take political action, in order to promote legal changes that guarantee in some form a juridical framework that guarantees the rights and the non-discrimination of transsexual persons. So, there are three fields, assistance, pedagogical, and political." (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)

47 "[…] but the final connotations are different. The needs and necessities are different." (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)

the still dominant medical discourse around transsexuality by giving trans people their own voice. (The UTIG in Malaga as the embodiment of this medical discourse became a target, as I will show in Chapter 6).

Next to serving adult trans persons, the ATA is committed to addressing the emerging issue of trans children. According to its president, the office of the ATA hosts gatherings of parents of trans children several times a year, an event she calls unique in Spain, and which seems to be very well attended:

> "Y después también tenemos una plataforma que es novedosa en toda España, de padres y de madres de niños transexuales. Que esos se reúnen cada dos meses. Cada dos meses vienen aquí a esta oficina eh cerca de treinta familias de toda la geografía andaluza y tenemos reuniones eh pues cada dos o tres meses pues para ver cómo va la situación de sus niños y sus niñas en las escuelas, en la atención sanitaria …" (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)[48]

The ATA was well known amongst my informants. For many, it serves (or had served during a certain stage in their lives) as a contact point, and they had helped in the activities of the association. Although the demands of the ATA went too far for some, especially its criticism of the procedures of the UTIG (for those who feel well treated there), the ATA was able to gain a reputation as defender of the rights of trans people in Southern Spain and as a place to go when help is needed. Diego appreciates the existence of the ATA, which gives him a feeling of protection:

> "[…] la asociación de transexuales de Andalucía, hace mucho a nivel (lengthened) ayuda mucha a las personas transexuales cuando tienen un problema. Entonces yo sí me siento amparado porque si yo tuviera por ejemplo un problema laboral, yo sé que yo voy a ATA, y yo sé que mueven y se indignan y se manifiestan y van a donde tienen que ir, me dan recurso, mira pues entregar este papel, entonces, sí, me siento bien. En este sentido sí. Porque sé que hay gente que que eh que me va a apoyar. Que hay gente que vaya detrás que que sí que me apoyan. No me sien- me siento respalda, vamos. No por las leyes. Sino por las personas que tienen mi misma situación, que son gente que reivindican. No porque la ley me ayude mucho. ¿Sabes?" (Diego, 2015)[49]

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48 "And then we also have a platform that is new throughout Spain, for parents of transsexual children. They meet every two months. Every two months about thirty families from all over Andalusia come here to this office and we have meetings every two or three months to see how their children are doing in schools, in health care …" (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)

49 "[…] the association of transsexuals of Andalusia does a lot at the level of (lengthened) helps transsexual persons a lot when they have a problem. I do feel protected, because if I had, for example, a labour problem, I know that I will go to the ATA, and I know that they move and are indignant and show themselves and they go where they have to go, they give me recourse, so look, deliver this paper, then yes, I feel good. In this sense, yes. Because I know, there are people who are going to support me. That there are people behind me who do

The ATA seems to be well connected with other associations on which they can rely for support. In the introduction I mentioned the incident that happened to Anabel at work when a passenger insulted her while she was driving her bus route. This was in the ATA's first year. Anabel called the ATA to report the incident and to ask for advice. Mar put her in touch with the *Federación de Mujeres Progresistas de Andalucía* (Federation of Progressive Women of Andalusia), who had lawyers at their disposal and helped Anabel further.

3.5 Conclusion

The way my informants gathered information about their gender non-conforming feelings, found help and initiated gender transition was strongly connected to the particular political and legal structures which have been undergoing a major change over the last decades. In the course of political liberalisation, starting medical treatment changed from self-medication to professional medical assistance. Inclusion of this medical assistance in the public health care system not only allowed improved monitoring, but also permitted those with no financial capital for their gender affirmation procedures in a private clinic to start their transition process. The voice of medicine (concentrated mainly at the UTIG in Malaga), thus, became an important source of information for my informants, albeit, mostly within a discourse of the trans phenomenon from a gender binary point of view. By challenging the medical method (especially the psychological methods of diagnosing a gender dysphoria), the last few years have seen trans people raising their voices to question the legal and medical dictates put on gender non-conforming people. There were also increased efforts for societal acceptance of trans people, irrespective of how far they want to go with gender affirmation procedures (this topic will be elaborated in more detail in Chapter 6).

Media representation is another source whereby an image of trans people is spread. In particular, the experiences of my informants clearly reflect that television shows mostly emphasise the sensational. However, female-to-male trans persons (trans men) seem to be treated more seriously than trans women and are less a target of amusement.

The possibilities of gathering information and getting assistance have changed dramatically in the last decades. However, the importance of meeting peers and exchanging experiences remains. Despite all the almost infinite possibilities of information retrieval that are possible today, meeting and communicating with peers

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support me. I feel backed up, you see. Not by the laws. However, for the people who are in the same situation as I am, that they are people who claim. Not because the law helps me so much. You know?" (Diego, 2015)

to gain self-confidence, exchanging experiences, and receiving and giving counsel all remain of great significance for trans people in their quest to come to terms with their situation, deal with daily life, and/or question medical advice.

Chapter 4. To make a living

> "[…] somos como una fantasía sexual, dentro del mundo de la mujer."
> *(Paquita 2003, sex worker)*[1]

This chapter explores the ways the trans experience of my interlocutors influenced their possibilities and capabilities of making a living. Because in our 'western' societies formal education and employment situation are important areas of life and influence how we earn a livelihood (although not the only ones), I start with these two topics to unveil both obstacles and achievements. However, in focussing on the labour market, this chapter spans more than just the circumstances of employment. To earn a living is connected to a broad array of aspects of life. That is why, although starting with the work situations of my informants, this chapter goes beyond. It reflects, in short, finding one's way around. Furthermore, the time span of several years between my two data collection periods allows for a comparison of the *then* and *now* of my interlocutors, of imaginations of the future and the reality the years brought along.

4.1 The work situation as a challenge

A survey done by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) showed that trans people experience a disproportionate degree of discrimination in the environments of school and the workplace (bullying and negative reactions in school because of their gender expression or identity; discrimination just because they are trans when looking for a job or discrimination at work) (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2014). Many of the statements of my interlocutors in Andalusia reflect these findings. Imelda sums it up:

> "[…] nosotras desgraciadamente para el trabajo lo tenemos muy mal. Tú vas con tu currículum a donde sea, y a ti todo el mundo no te coge, es muy difí-

1 "[…] we are like a sexual fantasy within the world of women." (Paquita 2003, sex worker)

> cil que tengas un trabajo corriente, muy difícil. Nos dejan muy poco camino." (Imelda, 2003)[2]

The majority of my informants did not have regular jobs. Several were jobless. Lora did some volunteer work. Hardly any of my interlocutors who pursued further education earned their living in the corresponding work environment. Except for Diego, who had a degree in psychology. His mother was a medical doctor and Diego stated that he was lucky to obtain a space in her office where he advises trans people and their relatives.

In their quantitative study with trans people in Spain, Dominguez Fuentes et al. (2011) discovered that the participants attributed their unemployment predominantly to their transsexuality. Nowadays however, the difficulties finding a job which will earn an adequate living are not limited to marginalised groups or people with little formal education. As Schwaller shows, the current generation of highly educated young people in Spain are confronted with a generally precarious job situation – a situation not experienced to the same extent by their parents' generation (Schwaller 2019). The economic crisis that hit Spain in 2008 led, among others, to a dramatic rise in unemployment, with a peak in 2013. Around 26 percent of the population of working age were unemployed (almost 56 percent of those were under the age of 25). In Andalusia, the unemployment rate was even higher: over 36 percent of the working age population were affected, with 66 percent of those under the age of 25 (the latter was one of the highest in the European Union) (Eurostat 2018). Thus, in this already difficult labour market situation, people with all kinds of backgrounds are affected. However, the accounts of some of my interlocutors revealed that their gender non-conformity added a crucial obstacle, impacting their lives as early as during school time, and influencing decisions about further training/education, work aspirations, potential career, job opportunities or job choices.

4.2 School and education

Among my interlocutors, education ranges from not having finished compulsory school to having a university degree. Several of my informants talked about not being motivated to go to school, which they attributed to their difficulties with bonding with peers and their being different, and hence, not being accepted because of their gender confusion. Tamara, whose school years date back to the dictatorship of Franco, is explicit in her disliking school and feeling uncomfortable:

2 "Unfortunately, it's very hard for us to find work. Wherever you go with your CV, they won't take you. It's very difficult to get an ordinary job. They leave us very few possibilities." (Imelda, 2003)

> "Oh verdad la escuela me da problemas porque yo era diferente, yo era diferente. A mí no me gustaba jugar a los juegos de chico, a mí me gustaba jugar a los juegos de chica, y eso por… y sobre todo en España que la educación antes era más … más conservadora, y más clasista, más racista, por la gente te margina, se, te mete contigo los niños. Se sufre … se sufre porque tú sabes, que están diciendo que eres un chico, pero tú por dentro te sientes una chica. Y se sufre." (Tamara, 2003)[3]

The discomfort a trans person experiences in school for not being respected and treated accordingly, is one societal obstacle that, according to Tamara, disadvantages a lot of trans people in their professional training, and, as a consequence, has an impact on their social position and cultural capital, which she judges as rather low:

> Tamara: "Te puedo decir que también que digamos el nivel cultural de las transexuales pues más bien es un nivel bajo. Y yo creo que hay que profundizar porque, porque porque … a tener problemas nosotras en la escuela, los colegios, se abandonó los colegios, no porque seamos torpe sino porque te cansa, te te …. te te trata tan, tan, digamos … inaguantable que no es cómodo, no es un ambiente, digamos, de relajación …"
> Christoph: "¿… a causa de los alumnos?"
> Tamara: "… a causa de los alumnos, de la familia, del entorno … porque no vamos a ser todas torpe, pero el hecho real, el hecho real, que todas … al tener poco … poco estudio pues son de un extracto social más bien bajo ¿no?" (Tamara, 2003)[4]

The lack of formal education, along with familial and societal rejection and no possibility to find 'decent' employment were commonly perceived as the reasons trans people entered into sex work or cabaret to earn their living – a situation, which, according to Mar, speaking in her position as the president of the ATA, the trans community has managed to alter in the last few years:

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3 "Oh the truth is, school gave me problems because I was different, I was different. I didn't like playing boys' games, I liked playing girls' games, and that's why … and especially in Spain where education used to be more … more conservative, and more classist, more racist, because of the people who exclude you, the children mess with you. One suffers … one suffers because you know that they are saying that you are a boy, but inside you feel like a girl. And one suffers." (Tamara, 2003)

4 Tamara: "I can tell you that, let's say that the cultural level of transsexuals is rather low. And I think we need to go deeper because, because … we, have problems in school, in college, one quits college, not because we're clumsy, but because it tires you, it … they treat you so, so, let's say … unbearably that it's not comfortable, it's not a relaxing environment".
Christoph: "Because of the pupils?"
Tamara: "Because of the pupils, the family, the surrounding environment … because we are not all going to be clumsy, but the fact is that all … in having little education … they are from a rather low social class. Right?" (Tamara, 2003)

> "¿Qué cambió? Pues bueno cambió en que hoy la juventud está en las escuelas, hoy los padres tienen más información con lo cual no hay un rechazo familiar tan grande como había hace veinte o treinta años atrás, donde las personas transexuales casi todas tenían que sufrir un desarraigo familiar. Tenían que salir de sus casas, dejar los estudios, eh, eh, enfrentarse a (lengthened) para supervivir, sobre todo las mujeres transexuales pues a la prostitución o (lengthened) al espectáculo. Hoy ese paradigma ha cambiado. Hoy la juventud está en las universidades, está en los institutos, hoy los padres no echan de su casa a sus hijos, sí no al revés luchan junto a sus hijos para que las leyes cambien y sus hijos no sean discriminados. Eso hemos cambiado." (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)[5]

Nevertheless, and especially in the non-academic sector or public service, she still observes a lot of prejudice against trans people. This prevents employment and might explain why Magdalena, who completed her studies in social work *(asistencia social)* and whom I located during my second research period when she was working at the reception desk of a tourist hot spot in Seville (thus, in the public sector), was very careful about not disclosing anything from her sex/gender past at her work place. When I met Magdalena in 2003, she was on the UTIG's waiting list for the last step in her sex reassignment process, the vaginoplasty, which she finally underwent in 2007. Like a new birthday, she remembers the exact date and time when she was brought into the surgery room: "El treinta de enero. A las nueve y cuarto de la mañana. Entré en el quirófano." (Magdalena, 2015)[6]

In the meantime, she has had all her documents changed, and she emphasises that only her close friends and family know where she works: "Hoy yo por ejemplo casi nadie sabe dónde yo trabajo. Tengo mucho cuidado con que la gente sepa donde yo trabajo." (Magdalena, 2015)[7]

In having chosen this strategy, she is trying to prevent someone from stepping in from the past and revealing her former life. In the workplace, neither her superior nor her colleagues know about her gender reassignment. For Magdalena,

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5 "What changed? Well, it changed that nowadays young people stay in school, the parents have more information so there is no family rejection as big as there was twenty or thirty years ago, where transsexual people almost all had to suffer a family uprooting. They had to leave their homes, leave school, uh, in order to survive, especially transsexual women to prostitution or entertainment. Today that paradigm has changed. Today the youth are at universities, at learning centres, today the parents do not throw their children out of their homes, but the other way around, they fight together with their children so that the laws change and their children are not discriminated against. That is what we have changed." (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)

6 "On the thirtieth of January. At a quarter past nine in the morning. I entered the surgery room." (Magdalena, 2015)

7 "Today, hardly anyone knows where I work. I am very careful which people know where I work." (Magdalena, 2015)

a disclosure in the workplace seems impossible and she thinks that it would definitely be a reason for dismissal. It is a public service job, she observes: "Pues es un trabajo de la pública." (Magdalena, 2015)[8]

Despite the structural discriminations anticipated by some of my research partners, another trans woman, Carmina, notes a general improvement in the situation of trans persons. Carmina grew up during the dictatorship of Franco. Her family belonged to the aristocratic class in Spain. Her father (with whom she had a difficult relationship) held powerful positions in the Franco regime, and never accepted his 'son's' non-conforming gender behaviour. Carmina attributes the perceived improvements trans persons are experiencing today to the work undertaken by the ATA, improved legislation (which makes it easier to have documentation changed), and easier access to medical assistance and advances in technology. In her perception, all these factors have contributed to a decline in social rejection, so that the younger generation does not have to endure the hard times of her generation: "Las niñas de ahora lo tienen muy fácil." (Carmina, 2015)[9]

This, in turn, will benefit the trans community, because with a better education and formal skills, she expects them to be more influential at political and societal levels: "Además hay niñas más listas. Hay de niñas que te hagan la universidad que son muy listas ¿eh? Y van a ser grandes luchadoras." (Carmina, 2015)[10]

How liberating it can be not to have to hide anymore at school becomes obvious in Bittor's account. He had a severe crisis in college that forced him to go to hospital for a medical examination. His school performance dropped. Only when he was able to open up about his gender non-conformity in his social environment, and started to express openly the sex and gender he always wanted, could he begin to concentrate on his future. In Bittor's narrative the disclosure emerges as a success-story; he made up for the missed examinations, got his driving licence, started his university studies: "Fue como aquí estoy yo y ahora me siento bien de verdad. […]. Y he seguido pa'lante pa'lante pa'lante." (Bittor, 2015)[11]

However, before being allowed to officially change his documents, his father mentioned that Bittor was still having a bad time at the university, because some teachers called him by his female name, even though the hormones had made him look manly: "Él, un hombre, pelo corto, barba, y decían Carmen." (Bittor's father, 2015)[12]

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8 "Well, it is a job in the public sector." (Magdalena, 2015)

9 "The girls today have it very easy". (Carmina, 2015)

10 "Besides, there are smarter girls. There are girls who go to university, who are very clever, eh? And they will be big fighters." (Carmina, 2015)

11 "It was like, here I am, and now I feel really good. […] And I've gone on forwards, forwards, and forwards." (Bittor, 2015)

12 "He, a man, short hair, beard, and they said, Carmen." (Bittor's father, 2015)

Although they informed the faculty about this issue, some did not manage to call Bittor by his male name. Looking back, Bittor seemed to take this inability of some teachers to address him in the masculine form better than his father did. Bittor did not judge it as transphobic. He even excused it by guessing that they were uninformed and did not do it intentionally. This tolerance might be explained by the fact that apart from that, he felt generally accepted: the professors spoke with him normally, nor did he think he was treated unfairly. People knew about him, saw his physical changes, heard the deepening of his voice:

> "No tenía problema ninguno. Solo los profesores que (lengthened) algún no me cambiaba el nombre, pero digo bueno. […] Tenía buen rollo con todo el mundo, y sí … con muchísimos amigos, muchos compañeros, y no tenía ningún problema con eso." (Bittor, 2015)[13]

(For a more detailed case description of Bittor, see Chapter 5).

The mechanisms of exclusion presented so far illustrate that discrimination appears in a variety of forms. Tamara, while reflecting about Andalusian society and machismo, addressed another subtle form of discrimination not mentioned yet. Discrimination is often not violent, but emerges as uttered pity and contempt:

> "No hay una reacción muy violenta, no, no. La gente de aquí, pues, digamos hay una sensación bajo terminus equivocos. Por ejemplo un poco, digamos peyorativo, también por pena, te compara un poco como si tú fueras una enfermedad … '¡Pobrecito …!', peor que ha nacido invalido, peor que ha nacido cojo." (Tamara, 2003)[14]

4.3 The tenacity of stereotypes

As already mentioned, the ways my interlocutors earned their living turned out to be manifold. However, especially during my first field research trip, the image of the trans person as a male-to-female individual doing sex work or working in cabarets out of necessity, seemed somehow to be difficult to erase from the public consciousness. Anabel holds a Master's in Psychology, but was earning her living as a mason the first time I met her. She addressed this dominant stereotyping while

13 "I had no problem at all. Only the teachers who (lengthened), some wouldn't change my name, but I mean, well. […] I had good vibes with everybody, and yes, with a lot of friends, a lot of companions, and I had no problem with that." (Bittor, 2015)

14 "There is no very violent reaction, no, no. The people here, well, let's say, there is a feeling under the wrong terms. For example, a little, let's say deprecatingly, also for pity, they compare you a little bit as if you were an illness … Poor one! Worse than being born handicapped, worse than being born lame." (Tamara, 2003)

we were speaking about her relationship with her work colleagues. In her case, this stereotyping did not happen, which she attributed to her behaviour:

> "La relación con los compañeros es buena. Es buena porque, yo me veo … o sea yo no (lengthened) soy (lengthened) tampoco un … la típica transexual que se imagina mucha gente ¿no? Que son las más llamativas. Las que aparecen en la televisión haciendo espectáculo. Yo no sé bailar. Yo no sé cantar. Entonces, no voy a salir en la tele, así ¿no? Las transexuales que se imagina la gente, o son prostitutas o son folclóricas, o … o hacen algo de espectáculo. Estríper o … Entonces si tú te comportas como una persona, a ti te tratan como una persona." (Anabel, 2003) [15]

However, concerning her professional career, the personal and societal obstacles her sex/gender non-conformity brought along had their impact by keeping her from a career as a psychologist. Actually, she would have liked to do something with her Master in Psychology. On one occasion, she mentioned intending to continue training in the direction of psychotherapy. Yet, self-entangled in questions of sex/gender identity expression, and having gone through a phase of hard drugs, she expected not to be accepted due to the fact that in those days she was psychologically unstable. Furthermore, feeling responsible for her own family (wife and daughter), the necessity to earn money was more pressing than pursuing a career. However, she did not want to earn her money in the above-mentioned sectors (sex work or cabaret) "que se imagina la gente" ("that people imagine"). Although she concludes that that would have been easier:

> "Mis objetivos vitales digamos son otros. Yo he estudiado una carrera para algo. Y he estudiado una carrera que me gusta, y quiero ejercer esa carrera, ¿no? Mientras más se aproxime mi trabajo a eso, mejor. Entonces, aunque … yo estoy trabajando ahora los albañiles porque me hace falta dinero. Pero solo por eso. Si no … Si tuviera vivir sin dinero, no … no trabajaría los albañiles y, y me hubiera permitido más tiempo buscando otro trabajo por otro sitio. Pero llega el momento en que ya hay un mes que no puedes, que no tienes dinero, y ese mes te hace falta. Entonces, acudes a lo que hay, a lo que te salga. Y, bueno. Sé que hay otros trabajos más fáciles por ahí. Seguramente a lo mejor haciendo estriptis, lo hubiera encontrado antes el trabajo en algún club de alterne. Pero que yo eso

15 "I have a good relationship with my colleagues. It is good because I see myself … I am neither a … the typical transsexual that many people imagine, right? Who are the most eye-catching. The ones who appear on TV doing shows. I can't dance. I can't sing. So, I'm not going to be on TV like that, am I? The transsexuals people imagine are either prostitutes or folkloristic, or do shows. Strippers or … So, if you behave like a person, you're treated like a person." (Anabel, 2003)

> no quiero yo … antes prefiero limpiar en las casas o, o ir de limpiadora, alguna oficina o …" (Anabel, 2003)[16]

4.4 Sex work

Anabel mentions that there would have been easier ways to earn a living, for example *"haciendo estriptis"* ("doing stripping"), thus, using her body according to common stereotypes about the typical work possibilities for trans people. She is not the only one of my interlocutors who considered the sexually connoted investment of her body as an easy *(fácil)* way to earn a living. For example, Tamara, who used to do sex work but later left this business to open a shop, considers sex work to be the easiest and fastest way to earn money. When I met her in 2003, she guessed that the majority of trans persons worked in this field:

> "Yo creo que la prostitución es porque, digamos es la salida más fácil que tenemos las transexuales para poder ganar dinero, y para poder ayudarte a tu transformación, porque todo es costoso, ¿no? pues, ponerte un implante de pecho, si tienes que hacerte alguna modificación de ganar y en fin … de varias cosas. Esto cuesta dinero y como se va a dinero fácilmente, pues en la prostitución. También te diría yo que digamos, yo estoy hablando no de un modo científico, porque no hay estadística elaborada de ello, pero te puedo decir bueno pues que a lo mejor de hay un ochenta o un poco más por ciento de las transexuales se dedica a la prostitución." (Tamara, 2003)[17]

Tamara estimates that a high percentage of trans people engage in sex work. In the meantime, the quantitative study by Dominguez Fuentes et al. (2011) provided

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16 "I have, let's say, other life goals. I have studied a career for something. And I've studied a career I like, and I want to pursue that career, don't I? The closer my work gets to that, the better. Even though … I'm working as a bricklayer now because I need money. But only for that. If I didn't … If I didn't need money to live, I wouldn't work as a bricklayer, and I would have allowed myself more time looking for another job somewhere else. But there comes a time when there is a month that you don't have money, and you need that money. So, you go to what's out there, what comes out. And, well. I know there are other easier jobs out there. Surely maybe doing stripping, I would have found in some hostess bar. But that, I do not want … before, I prefer to clean houses, being a cleaner, in some office or …" (Anabel, 2003)

17 "I think prostitution is, let's say, it's the easiest way for transsexuals to earn money, to help you in your transformation, because everything is expensive, isn't it? To get a chest implant, if you have to make some modification, in short … of several things. This costs money, and how is it easy to get money? Well, in prostitution. I would also say, I'm not talking in a scientific way, because there are no statistics elaborated on it, but I can tell you there are maybe eighty or a little more percent of transsexuals engaged in prostitution." (Tamara, 2003)

some figures. Of the 153 trans persons who participated in their survey, almost half of them (48.2%) have been working in the sex trade.

Upon inquiring why she considers sex work as easy *(fácil)*, Tamara differentiated between *fácil* (easy) and *sencillo* (simple), which relativised the 'easiness' of earning money as a sex worker: "Es un camino fácil. No sencillo, pero fácil, ¿no? ¡Es fácil! Porque se gana dinero fácilmente … rápido, rápido." (Tamara, 2003)[18]

She also considered it to be easier, because in doing sex work, trans people met the expectations of society. Her argumentation goes that transsexual sex workers conform to societal expectations, and do not confront them. She, herself, who did not practise sex work anymore, who managed a shop in the centre of town, and who was living with her boyfriend when I met her in 2003, sees herself as someone who is more in confrontation with society:

> "Yo quizás he elegido un camino más de confrontación con la sociedad, porque he querido vivir con una persona normal, entre comillas. […] He querido ejercer un trabajo normal y demostrar a la gente que mi conducta sexual no tiene nada que ver para mis posibilidades profesionales." (Tamara, 2003)[19]

Between my two stints of field research, the transsexual sex work scene in Seville changed dramatically. This was principally due to urban planning, gentrification processes, a real estate boom (until the financial crisis), and immigration. In 2003 there used to be mainly two places in town where sex work was performed: in the Alameda, a neighbourhood in the historic centre, and in Nervión, a neighbourhood further away from the town centre. In the Alameda, transsexual sex workers offered their services mainly inside a house. (By the way, it is not always about sex, some clients just want to talk). They waited for their clients in the street or near a house entrance where (as I was told) they rented rooms from elder women. When I asked Paquita and Blanca (both working as sex workers in this neighbourhood) how it works, they pointed to a corner house:

> "Pues, aquí, esta es una casa … donde se alquilan habitaciones. […] Y la señora alquila habitaciones y tú pues te quedas en la puerta y hablas con los señores … les propones que si quiere algún servicio, y él que quiere pues entras para dentro y ya pues tú hablas del precio y ya pues … llegas a un acuerdo y entras ahí a

18 "It's an easy road. Not simple, but easy, right? It's easy! Because you earn money easily … fast, fast." (Tamara, 2003)

19 "Perhaps I have chosen a more confrontational path with society, because I wanted to live with a normal person, in quotation marks. […]. I wanted to do a normal job and show people that my sexual behaviour has nothing to do with my professional possibilities." (Tamara, 2003)

> dentro, alquilas una habitación, estás ahí dentro y después ya el señor se marcha." (Paquita, 2003)[20]

Although not yet visible at this time, the gentrification process that 'was cleaning up' the neighbourhood, had already begun. On my second field trip in 2015, there was hardly any sex work going on in this area of town, which Valentín described in 2003 as "*una zona de prostitución tradicional desde hace décadas*" ("an area of traditional prostitution for decades"). Valentín and Juan are two social workers who work for an NGO. They used to show up every Tuesday night on the Alameda. They parked their van, which had been converted into a mobile office and offered the sex workers prophylactics and information.

They started this job in 1993. In 2015, the Alameda was no longer a place for them to visit, because the sex work scene had disappeared (with a very few exceptions). Based on their experience of many years of engagement with the sex work clientel, they identify several factors that led to this change. Around the end of the 1990s the Alameda became part of urban planning fostered by a European project for the rehabilitation of central areas. This happened to coincide with the beginning of a real estate boom (bubble) in Spain:

> "Era una época en que empezaba a subir mucho, cada año subía un quince, entre un quince y un veinte por ciento la vivienda. Cada año. Si tu comprabas una vivienda, y la vendías al año siguiente, ya ganabas un veinte por ciento." (Valentín, 2015)[21]

The interplay of all the factors that led to the disappearance of the trans sex work scene in this neighbourhood might be complex and difficult to dismantle. Yet, it can be argued that the persons who rented or owned these *casas de cita tradicionales* (traditional dating houses) experienced the pressure of rising rents or the temptation to make more money with their houses:

> "Y entonces la mayoría de las casas que antes las mujeres estaban ejerciendo la prostitución, se reempezaron a reformar o a construir viviendas nuevas." (Valentín, 2015)[22]

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20 "Well, here, this is a house where rooms are rented. […] And the lady rents rooms, and you, well, you stand in the door and you speak to the gentlemen … you ask if they want some service, and he who wants, well, you go inside and you speak about the price and well … you come to an agreement and you go inside, you rent a room, you are in there and then afterwards the gentleman leaves." (Paquita, 2003)

21 "It was a time when the price of housing began to rise a lot, each year it rose fifteen, between fifteen and twenty percent. Each year. If you bought a house, and you sold it the following year, you already won twenty percent." (Valentín, 2015)

22 "And so, most of the houses where the women were formerly engaged in prostitution were reformed or new houses were built." (Valentín, 2015)

Juan and Valentín identify three further factors that led to transformations in the sex worker scene in general. One was the expansion of methadone maintenance programmes, also starting at the end of the 1990s. Many sex workers who executed their job out of drug dependency (especially heroin, or a mixture of heroin and cocaine) joined these programmes. According to Juan and Valentín, the transsexual sex workers were less affected by this, because, in general, they took better care of themselves and were less into drugs. Second, at the end of the 1990s there was an immigration boom related to the development policy which promised economic growth in Spain (at the beginning from Latin America and Africa, later from countries of the EU, like Romania). This led, on one hand, to increased competition in the sex worker trade. On the other hand, the ethnic composition of the sex worker scene was changing. Together with a legislative change which allowed sex trade procuration, there was an increase in hostess clubs *(clubs de alterne)*, mostly further away from the city in the countryside. (The liberalisation of sex trade procuration was withdrawn after a few years, not least because of difficulties distinguishing between consensual sex work and forced sex work, which was also related to human trafficking). All these factors, together with spatial-planning aspirations ('upgrading' the housing and closing the traditional dating houses, more space for pedestrians and less parking slots, more difficulties for the clients accessing by car), reduced the possibilities for executing sex work in the Alameda:

> "Entonces empiezan a proliferar, empiezan ya mujeres extranjeras, y cambia el perfil. Eso son mujeres jóvenes, muy jóvenes, y empezaran con un boom de la prostitución. En clubs de alterne. En la calle empiezan a llegar sobre todo mujeres nigerianas y (lengthened) y por lo que te he dicho antes, por el tema de los problemas de metadona, las mujeres españolas van desapareciendo, y van llegando mujeres extranjeras. A la calle. Y en los clubs son solo mujeres extranjeras, y en todo esto pues claro eh en dentro de la Alameda, cada vez hay menos posibilidades. Allí no se puede (lengthened) aparcar como se aparcaba antes, no se puede parar, las mujeres de las casas las van cerrando, y se va baleando ese una forma de prostitución. Que ahora actualmente quedan … sí queda alguna casita por allí por la calle." (Valentín, 2015)[23]

23 "So, there were more and more foreign women and the profile changed. These are young women, very young, and they started a prostitution boom. In hostess clubs. On the street, mostly Nigerian women were beginning to arrive, and what I've told you before, on the subject of methadone, the Spanish women were disappearing, and foreign women were arriving. To the street. And in the clubs, only foreign women. And in all of this, well, sure, in the Alameda there are fewer possibilities each time. You can't park there like you parked before, you can't stop, the women of the houses are closing them and that form of prostitution is going to be shut down. Now there are currently … yes, there's a house left over there down the street." (Valentín, 2015)

In the neighbourhood of Nervión, which also used to be a site for sex work (including some transsexual sex workers), a huge commercial centre was constructed and there was a lot of pressure from the neighbourhood (together with the police) to evict the sex workers. As a consequence, apart from the clubs, sex work on the streets migrated to industrial zones: "Fuera de Sevilla. Zonas industriales en las que durante la noche no hay ningún movimiento, no puede molestar a nadie, no." (Juan, 2015)[24]

In 2012 Seville introduced a law making it more difficult to perform sex work in public areas (in contrast to the clubs). In adherence to this law, clients were fined (the Swedish model).

All the above-mentioned factors taken together, and taking into account the time elapsed between my two field research trips, Valentín summaries: "Ya no es como antes que la mayoría de las m- transexuales eran españolas. O ya también han pasado los años." (Valentín, 2015)[25]

Besides reaching a certain age, the two social workers also assume that some sex workers managed to find another job, for instance in a bar. At least, this is what they were told, when they asked about someone.

The fact that nowadays Valentín and Juan hardly ever meet any younger Spanish trans women in their prevention work, might also reflect structural developments trans persons experienced (e.g. medical supervision, the existence of a Gender Identity law), and a somehow improved sensitisation in family and school (as outlined above), which might prevent individuals from taking up sex work out of necessity. However, what also happened was that sex work retreated from the public into the private sphere, as I will illustrate on the basis of Paquita, one of my research partners.

Paquita and Blanca were sex workers in the Alameda when I met them in 2003. Blanca had been working there for fifteen years, Paquita a few years less. Paquita had also worked in other domains before, e.g. in some company doing "well-respected work" *("trabajos bien visto")*. However, at these work places, she could not present herself as a woman, just appearing feminine, but as a man *("femenino pero chico")*. She entered sex work because she needed money:

> "Después cambié por mhm pues porque necesitaba dinero … para crearme un futuro, y era de la única manera que era más … más rápido. … Y más positivo para mi." (Paquita, 2003)[26]

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24 "Outside Seville. Industrial areas where there is no movement at night, where they can't bother anyone, no." (Juan, 2015)

25 "It's no longer like before that most transsexuals were Spanish. Or, they have already passed the age." (Valentín, 2015)

26 "Then I changed to mhm because I needed money … to create a future for me, and it was the only way …the faster way. … And more positive for me." (Paquita, 2003)

Both considered their current work to be something that should help them earn money for a future:

> Blanca: "Que no es un trabajo que lo tengamos para siempre, sino que para hacer un futuro de vida y ya cuando nosotras … nos veamos que ya tenemos hecho un futuro pues …"
> Paquita: "Dejarlo."
> Blanca: "… ya dejarlo." (Blanca and Paquita, 2003)[27]

To open a bar, to run a discotheque together with a friend, to invest in some flats to rent out, all these were ideas about the future. "Algo que no tengas que … que te de … que te deje dinero y que no tengas que ejercer la prostitución." (Blanca, 2003)[28]

The necessity to make plans in this direction was related to the fact that as sex workers, they were not part of the official labour market and could not reckon with any pension when they were older:

> "Porque lo tenemos más difícil. Porque no cotizamos, no tenemos un trabajo fijo, entonces no podemos tener un … un dinero que te pase el gobierno cuando tú seas mayor. Entonces tenemos que pensar en eso. No nos dejan otra opción." (Paquita, 2003)[29]

One evening, when I was looking for Blanca, I could not locate her anymore, and I was told that she had gone to Barcelona for a few months. She needed money, and (according to Paquita) there was more work in Barcelona. Also, the clients there used to pay more than in Seville.

Years later, during my second field research trip, I met Paquita again. She told me that after being in Barcelona, Blanca went to Palma de Mallorca to work. There she started to feel unwell, which eventually led her to return to Seville, where she was diagnosed with a malignant disease. She died and Paquita lost a close friend. Although they had experienced phases of separation in their lives, they had known each other for a long time, even before they started their gender affirmation pro-

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27 Blanca:"It's not a job that we have forever, but to build up a future in life, and when we … when we see that we have built up a future, so …".
Paquita: "Leave it".
Blanca: "Stop it".
(Blanca and Paquita, 2003)

28 "Something you don't have to … that … that leaves you some money and you don't have to engage in prostitution". (Blanca, 2003)

29 "Because it's harder for us. Because we don't pay contributions, we don't have a steady job, so we will not have money passed to you by the government when you're older. So, we have to think about that. They leave us no choice." (Paquita, 2003)

cedures: "Yo la conocí a la Blanca cuando joven. Ya cuando seamos sin tener talla ni pechos, estábamos en la eh haciendo el … el proceso." (Paquita, 2015)[30]

Paquita no longer works in the Alameda. Concerning the changes in the Alameda, she states:

> "Eh, yo hace años ya que no voy. Vamos, a trabajar. He ido a tomarme alguna copa, o a dar una vuelta pero lo que ocurrió fue ya pues que … porque empezaron a cambiar la estructura del barrio …. Lo hicieron peatonal. No sé si … si con alguna intención de quitar el barrio, y quitar la prostitución, y quitar el el ambiente que había. O bien porque tenían que hacerlo para darle más… otra, otra, otra cosa aquí a Sevilla, la capital. Pero no sé yo porque lo quitaron. Lo que sí sé casi ya dejó de ir la gente porque … la gente que van a los sitios de prostitución tú sabes tienen que ser sitios discretos, que pueden llevar con el coche y aparcar y entrar y después salir rápido." (Paquita, 2015)[31]

Although Paquita does not know exactly why the Alameda became the focus of urban planning, she realised that with the remodeling of the neighbourhood, easy access by car and the discreetness of the site had diminished, and the clients (thus, the income) stayed away. Additionally, it was not helpful for her business that new legislation introduced by the provincial government started to fine the clients in public spaces. Paquita (and, according to her, many others as well) solved this situation by withdrawing to the private sphere, that is, attending to clients in their private apartments. Paquita also retired a little from sex work because of her age. Furthermore, she inherited a little *finca* (farm) from her father in the countryside, where she now spends most weekends. Yet, she continues to attend to some clients, especially those she had known for many years. She sees more advantages in welcoming her clients at her place. The prices are higher, there is no haste, the clients are more relaxed, she has her own lavatory, and she feels much safer: "[…] y entonces pues la gente prefiere pagar un poco más, y estar en una casa." (Paquita, 2015)[32]

Furthermore (and congruent with the above-mentioned observations by Valentín and Juan) she states that migrant sex work started to dominate the streets.

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30 "I knew Blanca since we were young. Already when we were without waist or breasts, we were doing the … the process." (Paquita, 2003)

31 "It's been years since I've been going there, to work. I went for a drink, or a walk, but what happened was that … because they started changing the structure of the neighbourhood. They made it pedestrian. I don't know if … if with any intention to remove prostitution, and remove the atmosphere that existed. Or because they had to do it to give it more … something else here to Seville, as the capital. But I don't know why they took it away. What I do know is that people almost stopped going there, because … people who go to places of prostitution, you know, these have to be discreet places, which they can access by car, where they can park and get in and then get out quickly." (Paquita, 2015)

32 "[…] and then people prefer to pay a little more, and be in a house." (Paquita, 2003)

Consequently, the sex work milieu has become tougher, and the prices in the street decreased: "Ya cambió un poco la calle ya está más (lengthened) para las extranjeras, rumanas, hay más mafia ahora en la calle." (Paquita, 2015)[33]

The possibilities the Internet offers also facilitated sex work performed at home. Years ago, those who worked in private homes had to place advertisements in the newspaper, which was quite expensive. Nowadays there are internet portals like, *milanuncios*, that are free. Paquita uses this medium, too, although not very often:

> "Yo tampoco me anuncio mucho. Porque por los amigos que tengo y de vez en cuando, cuando estoy aquí, de no tener ir en el campo pues me pongo un anuncio y siempre pues viene gente, claro. Si lo ofreces un sitio tranquilo y un poco de (lengthened) de sexo… y ellos se van a sentir allí a gusto pues la gente viene. Sí." (Paquita, 2015)[34]

Reflecting about society and their perception of trans persons, Paquita does not see many changes over the last decade. She acknowledges that people are better informed because there is more information available, and because there are more movies that treat the subject of transsexuality. Furthermore, she observes that people appear to be more tolerant. However, she argues that none of this hinders people from discriminating at a given moment. She notes an existing 'double moral standard', and holds that many people still behave hypocritically. Secretly, they would enjoy non-heterosexual encounters, but to the outside, they condemn it:

> "Lo que pasa que hay una doble moral. La gente … cuando habla, habla y se siente muy (lenghtened) muy tolerante y todo. Pero después, como está la gente en su grupo después la gente s- o quieren hacer daños saben dónde atacar. Entonces aparte de que hay una doble moral, porque ya te digo que hay muchísimo aquí en Sevilla hay mucho (lenghtened) aquí en Sevilla hay muchos rollos. Aquí la gente son muy bisexuales en Sevilla. Lo que pasa que no lo son abiertamente. Los rollos son a través de eso de … de internet y de … Pero claro después si tú eres transexual o eres gay, pues entonces te enseñara muchas veces con el dedo …. Porque eres algo visible." (Paquita, 2015)[35]

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33 "It changed, the street is now more (lengthened) for foreign women, Romanians, there is more mafia in the street now." (Paquita, 2003)

34 "I don't advertise much either, because of the friends [long-term clients] I have, but sometimes when I'm here [in town], when I don't have to go to the countryside, well, I place an ad and there are always people coming. Sure. When you offer them a quiet place and a little bit of sex … and they're going to feel good, well, people come. Yes." (Paquita, 2003)

35 "What happens is that there is a double moral standard. The people … when they speak, it sounds very tolerant and everything. But afterwards, when they are among themselves, or when they want to do harm, they know where to attack. So, besides the fact that there's a double moral standard, I tell you, here in Seville people have many affairs. People are very

4.5 Cabaret and entertainment

Besides trans sex work, another domain where trans persons were 'traditionally' visible, is in cabaret or acting in shows. Among my interlocutors were three trans women who earned their living in this business: Ramira, Imelda and Luisa. They span almost three generations. None of them liked school and had either no interest or no possibility to pursue further studies. During our conversations, or when I saw them acting, all of them radiated a lot of agency and self-confidence. They did not give the impression of having chosen their way out of a lack of alternatives, but rather because they were guided by their interests. Imelda, who appears in her performances in beautiful flamenco outfits, declares: "Hago lo que quiero, vivo como quiero, vivo donde quiero, estoy feliz donde estoy." (Imelda, 2003)[36]

Luisa, whose performances are more body-oriented, states: "[…] me gusta cuidarme o sea como una mujer coqueta que soy me gusta cuidarme." (Luisa, 2003)[37]

Ramira, dressed on stage in traditional flamenco outfits and capturing the audience with her appearance and voice, sums it up: "Y yo esta vida la lleva bien, no me he metido con nadie, nunca, respecto a la gente, la gente me respecta a mí." (Ramira, 2015)[38]

In the following, I will present these three research partners at some length to provide a deeper understanding of how they earn their living on the back of their gender non-conformity. I start with Luisa, the youngest.

Luisa

Luisa is the youngest of the three. In 2003, when I met her during my first field research visit, she was twenty-two. She was explicit about her uncomfortable sensations back in school, belonging neither to the boys nor to the girls (see Chapter 2), and the fact that *"la gente te mire de manera rara"* ("people look at you oddly"). After finishing compulsory school *(Educación General Básica)*, she went on to secondary school. She also studied dance at the conservatory. She did not like studying at secondary school. Thus, she decided to leave and dedicate her time to dance. Upon my question, if it was these feelings of being different and discomfort that led her to give up secondary school, she states:

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bisexual here in Seville. The thing is, they're not openly so. The affairs are through the internet and … But of course, when you're transsexual or gay, they point the finger at you … Because you're something visible". (Paquita, 2015)

36 "I do what I want, I live how I want, I live where I want, I'm happy where I am." (Imelda, 2003)

37 "I like to look after myself, that means as the coquettish woman that I am, I like to take care of myself." (Luisa, 2003)

38 "I lead this life well, I haven't messed with anyone, never, I respect the people, people respect me." (Ramira, 2015)

> "Bueno, la causa real era que yo prefería dedicarme a la danza. Pero eso [the situation in school] ayudó. Mucho. Porque perfectamente podía haber llevar las dos cosas. Yo me sentía fuera de lugar. Porque no … me sentía diferente entre entre niñ- chicos y chicas me sentía diferente." (Luisa, 2003)[39]

The time we met, she was earning her living (besides training as a hairdresser) as a dancer and hostess, contracted through an agency. She described her work in a rather general mode:

> "[…] pues trabajo para una agencia de espectáculos y azafatas. Pues haciendo, bailando, haciendo estriptis. Eh haciendo un poco de todo. Eh haciendo presentaciones, haciendo … lo que es una agencia de azafatas y espectáculo." (Luisa, 2003)[40]

She described the meaning of these activities for her self-awareness in more detail. Presenting her body as a dancer, the physical aspect is very important for her. She perceives her work as selling an image. This is in contrast to her everyday life, where she does not want to attract attention:

> "Yo a mi trabajo, es vender mi físico. Es vender una, una imagen. Entonces yo cuando voy a trabajar sí voy vestida muy exclusiva, pero porque yo soy chica playboy. Yo he trabajado para playboy. Yo tengo que vender una imagen. Entonces pues sí voy con grande escote, minifalda. Pero porque es mi trabajo. Pero yo de un día normal, yo voy de camiseta, de, me gusta ir guapa, siempre. Y arreglada, pero porque es mi … es mi forma de ser, no me gusta ir sin peinar o sin pintar un poco. Pero por eso simplemente. Pero a mí no me gusta llamar la atención por la calle." (Luisa, 2003)[41]

Luisa's narrative reflects the investment she has put in the creation of her body, which she considers her capital for earning a living, a body she is proud of. At the same time, she needs the feedback of her audience to reassure her about her female attractiveness, to reassure her that people do not notice that she is not a biological

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39 "Well, the real cause was that I preferred to dedicate myself to dance. But that [the situation in school] helped. A lot. Because I could have perfectly well gone on with both. I felt out of place. I felt different between boys and girls. I felt different." (Luisa, 2003)

40 "[…] well, I work for a show and a hostess agency. Dancing, stripping. Doing a little bit of everything. Doing presentations, doing … whatever an agency of hostesses and spectacle does." (Luisa, 2003)

41 "My job is to sell my body. It's like selling an image. So, when I go to work, I'm dressed very exclusively, but because I'm a playboy girl. I worked for playboy. I have to sell an image. So, I go there with a deep neckline, miniskirt. Because this is my work. But on a normal day, I wear a T-shirt, a … I like to look pretty, always. But because it's my … it's my way of being, I don't like to go without combing my hair or having put on some make-up. But I don't like to call attention to myself on the street." (Luisa, 2003)

woman. Because she described the work on her body and the meaning it holds for her female identity so aptly and pictorially when we met, I quote her in full length:

> "Que como me ha costado tanto crear mi cuerpo, me gusta, me gusta que se vea bien. Que se vea bonito, que se vea armonioso, porque yo este físico no ha nacido de la nada. Este físico a mí me ha costado mucho, mucho sufrimiento. Me ha costado horas de médico, horas de de dieta, horas de muchas cosas. Entonces pues como soy orgullosa de él, pues además para mí es un orgullo ¿no? Poder trabajar con él. Que a la gente le guste verlo. Que la gente piense que es un cuerpo bonito, para mí eso es un orgullo. Porque me da la, me da la razón de que tengo un cuerpo bello como mujer. ¿Entiendes lo que te quiero decir? Sin saber la gente que soy una mujer transexual, no soy una mujer biológica. Entonces para mí eso es un orgullo. El hecho de yo trabajar y quitarme la ropa en un espectáculo, un estriptis, que es algo por supuesto es algo, eh, súper fino, súper elegante que no es para nada algo vulgar. Para mí eh es muy importante que la gente le guste. De hecho la única pregunta que hago después: ¿Te ha gustado? ¿Te ha gustado? Porque para mí es muy importante que la gente lo vea bonito, que lo vea elegante. No que lo vea borde. No me gustan las cosas bordes ni vastas ni vulgares. Me gustan las cosas elegantes, me gustan las cosas finas. Por eso para mí es muy importante que la gente me diga: Oye tú tienes un cuerpo bonito, me gusta. O tienes un cutis bonito, o tienes un pelo bonito. A mí me gusta, porque me lo he curado, porque me lo he trabajado." (Luisa, 2003)[42]

Luisa was one of the interlocutors in 2003 who aspired for genital gender reassignment, and who was on the waiting list for the vaginoplasty in the UTIG in Malaga. Besides getting rid of the last anatomical marker before feeling completely like a woman (as outlined in Chapter 2.2), she also expected this operation to make her work easier, especially in her performances as a stripper. Until now, she has been

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42 "Since it has cost me so much to create my body, I like it to look good. That it looks pretty, that it looks harmonious, because my physical appearance was not born out of nowhere. This body has cost me a lot, a lot of suffering. It has cost me hours of medical treatment, hours of diet, hours of many things. I am proud of it, it is also a pride for me, right? To be able to work with it. That people like to look at it. That people think it's a nice body, for me that makes me proud. Because it ensures me that I have a beautiful body as a woman. Do you understand what I mean? Without people knowing I'm a transsexual woman, I'm not a biological woman. So, that makes me proud. The fact that I work and take off my clothes in a show, a striptease, which is something, eh, super fine, super elegant, which is not at all vulgar. It's very important to me that people like it. In fact, the only question I ask afterwards: Did you like it? Did you like it? It's important to me that people think it's beautiful, that they think it's elegant. Not that they think it's edgy. I don't like edgy things, or overdone or vulgar. I like elegant things, I like fine things. That's why for me it's very important that people tell me: Hey, you have a nice body, I like it. Or you have a beautiful skin, or you have beautiful hair. I like it, because I've earned it for myself, I've worked for it." (Luisa, 2003)

hampered by not being able to perform a full striptease, a problem which would be resolved afterwards:

> "Después [...] pues no lo tendría limitado. Podría hacer un estriptis integral completamente que ahora no puedo hacer." (Luisa, 2003)[43]

Being trans makes her daily life in general more burdensome. She notes that she attributes every problem she encounters in daily life to her gender non-conformity, although it might not be the real cause:

> "Por ejemplo eh yo tengo un problema en el trabajo ¿no? Pues yo tengo un problema en el trabajo igual que tengo yo un problema en el trabajo lo puede tener mi vecino. Pues para mi vecino a lo mejor es simplemente un problema en el trabajo, pero para mí es un problema en el trabajo y cuando ya estoy en mi casa pues empiezo a pensar tengo un problema en el trabajo y encima tengo una operación pendiente y encima tengo yo un tratamiento y entonces ya se te hace muchísimo más gordo el problema porque tú misma empiezas a pensar en todo lo demás. Y a veces piensas que todos los problemas vienen del mismo sitio. Que todos los problemas te vienen por eso simplemente porque eres transexual y piensas que que todo gira entorno a eso. Yo no … cuando no es cierto." (Luisa, 2003)[44]

Years later, when I went back in the field, I tried to locate Luisa and was only able to find her on Facebook that situated her in Mexico. The posted photos showed her dressed as a beautiful flamenco dancer, or as one among a group of scantily dressed showgirls and gym-trained showmen. Having in the meantime undergone all the gender affirmation procedures, the time of being *transexual* was over. Upon my question if we could meet again and talk about the last few years, she refused, writing back that she was now leading a normal life and had no wish to reopen the subject of transsexuality:

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43 "After that [...] well, I will not be limited. I could do a complete, integral stripping, something that I can't do now." (Luisa, 2003)

44 "For example, I have a problem at work, right? So, I have a problem at work like my neighbour can have a problem at work. Well, for my neighbour, it is maybe just a problem at work, but for me, it is a problem at work and when I am at home, I start thinking, I have a problem at work and I have a pending surgery and on top of it I have treatment and then the problem gains weight because you yourself start thinking of all these other things. And sometimes you think that all the problems come from the same place. That all problems come to you simply because of the fact that you are transsexual and you think everything turns around it. I don't … when it is not certain." (Luisa, 2003)

> "¿Sabes? Fue la primera y la última vez que hablé sobre ese tema, la verdad nunca más he hablado sobre ello solo con las personas más allegadas a mí, […] y para mi es muchísimo más fácil hacer una vida normal sin tratar ese tema." (Luisa, 2015)[45]

Her refusal to re-examine the subject that had cost her so much trouble in life confirmed the goals and wishes she had uttered years ago: To lead a normal life as a woman, to no longer have to bother anymore with gender non-conformity, and maybe, one day, to marry in white, a wish she attributed to the majority of women:

> "Pues yo, mi sueño es de casarme, además en blanco […]. No sé, es algo … creo que es el sueño de casi todas las mujeres ¿no? Pues el mío también (laughs)." (Luisa, 2003)[46]

Imelda

Imelda is the middle of my informants, who earned her living performing in shows. She did not finish compulsory school, and described herself as having been too lazy to study, because she was not interested. She failed and quit school at the age of fourteen. She started her career in the 1980s, at the age of sixteen, singing playback and imitating Isabel Pantoja, a contemporary famous singer of *coplas* (see introduction):

> "No soy torpe, pero no me … no me gusta estudiar. […] Ya casi a los dieciséis empecé a trabajar. Empecé a hacer espectáculo y hasta hoy no he parado. Desde los dieciséis años por ahí hasta hoy no he … no he parado de trabajar. Siempre me dedicaba a hacer copla e imitar a la Pantoja." (Imelda, 2003)[47]

Her admiration for la Pantoja has existed since childhood, not least because of the singer's appearance and performance, which Imelda perceives as very feminine, and which inspired her. Although *la Pantoja* does not just sing *coplas,* but also songs that are closer to pop music, it is just the 'classic', the *copla*, that Imelda is interested in. For her, the *coplas* are an identifying part of Andalusia:

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45 "You know, it was the first and last time that I talked about that subject. Truth is that I never again talked about it, only with the people closest to me. […] And for me it's much easier to lead a normal life without dealing with that subject". (Luisa, 2015)

46 "My dream is to get married, furthermore, in white […]. I don't know, this is something … I think, this is the dream of almost all women, right? So, mine as well (laughs)." (Luisa, 2003)

47 "I'm not clumsy, but I don't … I don't like studying. With almost sixteen, I started to work. I started to perform, and until today, I have not stopped. Since I was sixteen years old, I haven't … I haven't stopped working. I always dedicated myself to singing coplas and imitating la Pantoja." (Imelda, 2003)

> "Que más me gusta de ella es la copla. Que es lo nuestro de aquí, aunque la balada, la cosa la haga muy bien. Pero yo creo que como la copla no hay nada." (Imelda, 2003)[48]

Like the Pantoja, Imelda grew up and lived until recently in the neighbourhood of Triana. Triana is a city district of Seville, divided from the city centre by a branch of the Guadalquivir River. I have often been told that the people of Triana, called *trianeros*, traditionally identify strongly with their neighbourhood. It is famous for its traditional pottery and tile industry, and is said to have a vibrant flamenco culture. According to memorial tablets found in the neighbourhood, it was celebrities stemming from Triana who helped to raise awareness of the *coplas* in the world. Two years ago, Imelda moved to the centre of Seville. It was also two years ago (in 2001) that she had her name on her documents changed. However, the 'sex box' remained masculine, because it was still before the law had changed, and at this time, the sex in the documents could only be changed after genital reassignment, which she never aspired for.

Imelda's dedication to the *copla* reflects her view about Andalusia. As there is nothing like the copla *("como la copla no hay nada")*, there is also nothing like Andalusia (although she is critical of the attitudes of the local people, as we will see below):

> "Yo creo Andalucía es una tierra privilegiada … no sé, yo creo que es lo más bonito que hay, porque Andalucía es la luz, el sol, es … tiene sus pro' y su contra." (Imelda, 2003)[49]

It is important for Imelda to cultivate and follow the 'classic' customs, especially traditional dress, which varies according to the festivity. She regrets that these customs have changed nowadays (although not disappearing), and have become more modern:

> "Y yo creo que nunca deberíamos dejar … perder nuestro … nuestra costumbre, nuestra cosa … nuestro traje de flamenca, nuestro traje para el Rocío, las costumbres del Rocío que no son las mismas que para la Feria, nuestra mujer de mantilla, esas cosas. […] Y poquito a poco […] desvaría mucha la … la costumbre, la cosa, todo muy a la moda, y eso no puede ser, yo creo que esas cosas son clásicas y deberían de seguir siendo clásica." (Imelda, 2003)[50]

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48 "What I like most by her is the copla. Which is ours. Although the ballads, she does it very well. But I think there's nothing like the copla." (Imelda, 2003)

49 "I believe Andalusia is a privileged land … I don't know, I think it's the most beautiful there is, because Andalusia is the light, the sun, it is … it has its pro and its cons." (Imelda, 2003)

50 "I think we should never let … lose our customs … our flamenco dress, our costume for El Rocío [a famous pilgrimage in Andalusia dedicated to the Virgin of El Rocío, CI], the customs of El Rocío, which are not the same as for the Feria [a springtime fair with a lot of music, dance and

Her dedication to local and folkloric customs was also visible in her worship of the Virgin, which is overtly practised in Andalusia. She offered me a glimpse of her admiration for the Virgin and the Saints when I met her in summer 2003. Shortly before I started field research, she had had an accident with her scooter. Due to a broken leg, she was forced to take time out from her acting. This was annoying for her, not least because she did not have an income during this time. Because she was not performing, she stayed only irregularly in Seville (mainly to see the doctor). On these occasions, we met in the atelier of a friend of hers, who manufactured statues of the Virgin and Christ. She also spent most of the time in her parents' house in a village on the coast of Cadiz. That is where I visited her. On our first tour through the village, we entered the church of the Patron Saint of this village, the *Virgen de la Regla*, or Yemanya, as Imelda pronounced it, a Black Virgin. To take a closer look at the Virgin, she led me to the back of the church and upstairs, passing a huge display cabinet filled with votive gifts. The wall was covered with crutches and prostheses. She also guided me to a small chapel that housed a statue of Christ she liked very much (besides a little copy of the Virgin).

Imelda was critical of the Church as an institution and of the curates, and told of a sexual assault experienced by her mother as a child, but she was very devoted to the virgin cult that is very much a part of Andalusia: "Yo soy creyente, pero yo no soy practicante. A mí me gusta mucho la Semana Santa, me encantan los santos." (Imelda, 2003)[51]

She was also a member of a *hermandad* (brotherhood) in Seville. Once I met her by chance at midday outside a bar. She was with her friend from the atelier. We had a little chat, then she remarked that she had to go, because she wanted to say goodbye to her Virgin quickly, before she headed off to her village on the coast. It seemed to me that the relation to her Virgin was like the relation to a close person you feel the urge to say goodbye to before going on a journey.

Concerning society's attitudes to non-conforming sex and gender norms, Imelda criticises the people of Seville. In her eyes, rejection and prejudices concerning other people's different sexuality or gender expression are still widespread due to a lack of education. This forces gender non-conforming people to hide. A statement from Lindeman points out the way society pushes trans individuals towards a sex/gender dichotimisation: "Es scheint so, als würde von Transsexuellen als Gegenleistung für das Durcheinander, das sie anrichten, eine als

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entertainment, CI], our women with their shawls, all these things. […] And little by little […] the custom is deviating a lot, everything getting very fashionable, and that can't be, I think that these things are classic and should remain classic." (Imelda, 2003)

51 "I am a believer, but I am not a practitioner. I like Easter week very much, I like the saints." (Imelda, 2003)

affektiv notwendig erlebte, moralisch und ästhetisch ansprechende Gestaltung der Geschlechterdifferenz gefordert" (Lindemann 2011: 194).[52]

Imelda perceives the everyday pressure in Andalusia to conform to prevailing morals and aesthetics to be very pronounced.

When we spoke about surgical reassignment, she mentioned her disinterest in a genital reassignment. Similar to Carmina (see Chapter 2.2) she dismissed it by saying that no one sees what you have between your legs. Moreover, she adds that this operation does not change how people look at you, that they still label you as homosexual when they notice a gender incongruence:

> "Lo peor es como te ven. Es el rechazo, eso es lo peor. Que de maricón no te van a bajar … por muy mujer que tú seas. En el momento que se dan cuenta … dicen mira un … no mira eso es un tío, o eso es un travesti, o lo típico, eso es un tío." (Imelda, 2003)[53]

In this sense, she regards Andalusia especially (although Spain in general as well) as backward, and draws the common picture of a more developed North compared to the South:

> "Y sobre todo aquí en Andalucía es lo peor. […] Que todavía está muy atrasado. Pero en el momento que subes de España … arriba es otro mundo." (Imelda, 2003)[54]

What she sought for herself was to elude this societal perception; to think that she can walk in the street and nobody turns around, labelling her as a 'faggot': an endeavour she considers to be quite successful. Furthermore, Imelda recognises that especially with the implementation of the UTIG (which had only existed for a few years when we met) things are opening up in Andalusia.

Despite her criticism of other people's reactions, she herself holds a rather traditional picture of maleness and femaleness, a picture that is strongly linked to how men and women perform masculinity and femininity. Similar to her previously mentioned opinion regarding attentiveness to classical customs, she notes a general blurring of the sex and gender appearance, which she regrets:

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52 "It seems as if transsexuals, in return for the confusion they cause, are called upon to create a form of gender difference that is morally and aesthetically appealing, and that is experienced as affectively necessary [own transl.]" (Lindemann 2011: 194).

53 "The worst is how they see you. It's the rejection, that's the worst. For them, you're just a faggot, even if you're very womanly. The moment they realise … they say, look … no, look, this is a guy, or this is a transvestite, or typically, this is a guy." (Imelda, 2003)

54 "Especially here in Andalusia, it's the worst. […] It's still a long way behind. But the moment you go up from Spain … north, it's another world." (Imelda, 2003)

> "Hoy en día la mujer es muy poco femenina, eso es así, y los hombres están al revés, son más femeninos que las mujeres. Hoy ya los hombres se cuidan más, los hombres siempre van más arreglado, yo lo veo muy femenino y a mí eso no me gusta, me gusta un hombre hombre. No me gusta un hombre femenino. Y la mujer igual, una mujer femenina, siempre siempre siempre se ve por la calle, tú te vuelves a mirarla por lo andar y por la cosa […]. Y esas cosas creo yo que se están perdiendo muchísimo, aunque la hay, pero lo mínimo." (Imelda, 2003)[55]

Imelda does not exclude herself from this increasing carelessness of how women dress and style themselves. Nor does she care so much about a very feminine outfit in everyday life, and wears jeans or a tracksuit, or "whatever just lies around". Although she sees the advantages of these freedoms, which also reflect a kind of progress, she nevertheless regrets this development, which corresponds with the above-mentioned attitude of not forgetting the local customs. The blurring of customs and the blurring of masculinity and femininity emerges in her narration as a blurring of local identity. However, the accusation of a declining manliness is not a new phenomenon. It was already lamented over half a century ago, as was documented by Pitt-Rivers in the 1950s: „'The modern race is degenerate', said a friend once, 'in the days of our grandfathers there was more manliness than today'" (Pitt-Rivers 1971: 91).

Years later, during my second field research trip, I was not able to locate her. The club where she used to work had shut down a few years earlier, and her friend's atelier, where she often stayed, no longer existed. There were rumours about her that she had gone through difficult times. Remembering some of Imelda's earlier statements, her social resources she mentioned years ago (the support of her family and some very close friends), and the self-confidence she radiated, had hopefully helped her to endure these times. Moreover, it might be a kind of a coincidence that Imelda's vanishing without a trace occurred in a period when La Pantoja's reputation was damaged because of tax offences. She spent two years in jail. At the end of 2016, La Pantoja resumed her career. Let us hope there will be an emerging trace of Imelda as well.

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55 "Nowadays the women are very un-feminine, and the men, on the contrary, they're more feminine than the women. Today, men take more care of themselves; men are more dressed up. I see them as very feminine, and I don't like that. I like manly men. I don't like feminine men. And the women, the same. When you see a feminine woman walking in the street, you turn around, because of the way she walks, the things she wears […]. And I think these things are getting lost. They still exist, but very limited." (Imelda, 2003)

Ramira

Ramira is the third of my interlocutors who acted on stage. Because she is the oldest of the three, having experienced the profound societal changes of the last sixty years, I will give a more comprehensive glimpse into her life. Concerning the situation of transgender elders, Cook-Daniels comments on the situation in the United States:

> No stigmatized group in U.S. history has benefited from as many policy and social attitude improvements as quickly as have transgender people. The current generations of transgender elders represent virtually the full history of the transgender experience, ranging from days when there was no word for their identity to today, when 'transgender' has become a word even the U.S. President [referring to Barack Obama] feels comfortable using on nationwide television. (Cook-Daniels 2016: 285)

For the situation in Spain, Ramira (although, with her sixty and something years, she was still a rather younger elderly) somehow represents 'virtually the full history of the transgender experience'. Her experiences range from the days of illegality and criminalisation up to today's liberal times.

I had known of Ramira for many years. A close friend told me that she was one of several rather folkloristic transsexuals from Triana, a very good *coplas* singer (not playback), but difficult to reach. Because she was rather witty and blunt, she was perhaps not the most reliable and coherent source for my research, he commented. One day we were passing by the house where she had her apartment. By chance, she was on the doorstep, ready to go for a walk with her little dog, a Yorkshire Terrier, and we exchanged a little small talk. I saw her again in June 2014, where she was performing on Friday evening at the Trans Pride party (see Chapter 6). I videotaped her acting, hoping to meet her again and show her the recordings. This eventually happened in May 2015. I had met a sculptor who told me that she sometimes visits him in his atelier. He promised to tell her about me and we managed to arrange a meeting. This was not self-evident, because I had failed in two former attempts to get in contact with older trans persons in Triana, where contact persons had also been involved.

We met in the entrance of her house and walked to a bar where she often goes for a coffee. On the way, she gave me a glimpse of how strongly rooted she feels in her neighbourhood. We passed the *Esperanza de Triana* Church, her virgin and her *hermandad*, and we entered for a short moment. Afterwards we sat at a table outside the bar, close to the *Santa Ana* Church, where she had been baptised. She also pointed to a house where her father had been born. People greeted her and she entered into a few conversations. I showed her the video recordings I had made of her acting at the *Orgullo Trans* (Trans Pride). She was pleased to see herself

performing, but complained that the organisers of the Pride had put her on stage too early, already around 7 p.m. That is why, when her friends and family arrived around half past nine in the evening, they had missed her contribution. This early schedule of her performance had upset her so much that she would refuse to act again at the next Trans Pride, if asked: "[…] mi familia no me vieron. Me pusieron muy pronto. Y este año no voy. No." (Ramira, 2015)[56]

Ramira was nicely dressed. She was very friendly, obliging and approachable. She had a normal presence, which contrasted with the powerful appearance she had while acting on stage.

Ramira left school at the age of thirteen, which was, in those times, when obligatory public school time ended (later it changed to the age of sixteen). She did not like school, which she attributed to the bad and one-sided education during the dictatorship of Franco. Richer people sent their children to private schools. At the age of fifteen, she was contracted to sing in a bar near Seville. She remembers the stair and the counter where she sang in this bar. This was in 1966, still in the time of the dictatorship of Franco. She adapted a female gender performance with plucked eyebrows *(las cejas al hilo)*, make-up *"y todo"* ("and everything"). That was her start as a *coplas* singer and performer, appearing in dance halls and cabarets all over Spain:

> "He estado cantando y estaba cantando en toda España ¿eh? […]. Yo después me fui a Madrid, me fui a Asturias, me fui a León, me fui a Canarias, me fui a toda España. Yo he recorrido toda España. Dos o tres veces, yo he recorrido toda España." (Ramira, 2015)[57]

Concerning her family, Ramira does not mention any major problems with her gender non-conformity. Her parents seemed to accept it after a while. When I asked if her parents had any problems with it, she said: "No, a lo primero sí, como siempre. Lo primero sí, porque claro no quiere … la gente. Tú sabes, por la gente. Pero después no." (Ramira, 2015)[58]

Ramira justified her parents' initially negative attitude with concern about the reaction of their social environment. However, they probably also realised that they could not change it. Because Ramira, who still lived with her parents when her 'transsexuality' became obvious, seemed to have left no space for discussion. She 'offered' to get her own apartment if they could not accept it. Eventually, by the

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56 "[…] my family didn't see me. They put me on stage very early. And this year I won't participate. No." (Ramira, 2015)

57 "I've been singing all over Spain. […] Then, I went to Madrid, I went to Asturias, I went to León, I went to the Canary Islands, I have been all over Spain. I have travelled all over Spain. Two or three times I have travelled all over Spain." (Ramira, 2015)

58 "No. At first, yes. Like always. At first, yes, because, of course, they didn't want … the people. You know, because of the people. But afterwards, no." (Ramira, 2015)

time she was fifteen, when she started working, they said no more: "Oh ya, a partir de los quince años ya mh lo que pasa que yo estaba trabajando y a mí no me decían nada." (Ramira, 2015)[59]

It is possible that her parents' acceptance was also due to her generating an income from acting and singing at an early age, which continually helped to support the family:

> "Pero vamos que actuaba porque … que tenía que (lengthened) por mantener a mis padres también. ¿Sabes? […] no que me queda… otra vida. Vamos, hubiera servido nada para otra vida. Eh tenía a mis padres, tenía a dos hermanos más chicos, dos hermanos mayores también, los dos hermanos más chicos estaban estudiando, y había que darle los estudios, también." (Ramira, 2015)[60]

She had one great love in her life, a man she was with for eight years. She accompanied him to Madrid because his assurance company sent him there as branch manager. Although they were not married, she refers to him as 'her husband': "Como mi marido, era. Como mi marido." (Ramira 2015)[61]

However, in the end, he married another woman, which she explains by having been forced by his parents, who were rich and thought that he would be happier with another woman. This must have been more hurtful than her casual tone would let one assume. Although she recalls her life in a mostly positive manner (besides the dictatorship of Franco which did not allow any freedom) it is in this broken love that lies a drop of bitterness:

> "Lo demás yo a mí me ha ido bien la vida. Lo único es lo de (lengthened) mi amigo que se casó y estaba muy enamorado de é l… él de mi … él de mí también, pero por los padres no puede ser. Los padres eran … de dinerito …" (Ramira, 2015)[62]

This broken relationship is her main reason for not wanting another lasting relationship. Furthermore, she draws a very traditional picture of what it means to live in a relationship, traditional in the sense that the woman is responsible for the household, which would be a bigger burden with a man at her side:

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59 "Oh, from the age of fifteen, I was already, mh, what happened was that I was working, and they didn't say anything." (Ramira, 2015)

60 "I was acting because … I had to support my parents as well. You know? I had no choice for a different life. Well, I would have been useless for another life. I had my parents, I had two younger siblings, two older siblings too, the two younger ones were studying, and they had to be supported as well." (Ramira, 2015)

61 "He was like my husband. Like my husband." (Ramira, 2015)

62 "Otherwise, life treated me well. The only thing is that my friend married, and I was so much in love with him … and he with me as well. But because of his parents it couldn't be. His parents were rich …" (Ramira, 2015)

> "Yo me enamoré de este y se acabó y se acabó y se acabó. Yo ya no quiero más tío a mi lado ni muerta. Yo eh más tío a mi lado, no. […] Con un tío que yo le tengo que lavar los calzoncillos, y plancharle y hacerle la comida, ¡anda vete! (exclaiming). Ya no." (Ramira, 2015)[63]

Although she refers to herself as modern, she also labels herself as *"un poco antigua"* ("a little bit old fashioned"). On the one hand, she transgressed gender roles at a young age and during an oppressive political and societal system, acted in cabarets (even though her *marido* did not want her to do so when they lived in Madrid) and earned her own money. In doing so, she seemed to transgress many societal norms. On the other hand, she calls herself antiquated regarding intimacy in public. It bothers her when she sees women kissing in public, and does not consider it appropriate. In her opinion, some *mariquitas* (homosexuals) behave too intimately in public as well, and she suspects that *la gente* (the people) do not like that. She recalls a situation not so long ago, when she was waiting at a traffic light to cross the street. Two young men, 18 or 19 years old, were kissing very intensively, "almost eating each other". Ramira, who has a reputation for being very direct, addressed them, asking if they could not wait to do that at home? Furthermore, she told them that it was thanks to her and her kind that they have these freedoms nowadays. Thus, she reminded them that these achievements had to be fought for.

She recalls that she and the man she loved, her partner for eight years, never kissed on the street. On the one hand, this was because he did not like that. On the other hand, she, too, would have felt ashamed, although she emphasised that the public saw 'a man/woman' couple. She draws a strict line between private and public: "En la casa me hace lo que quiera. En la calle no. Lo antigua." (Ramira, 2015)[64]

Ramira is content with her sex/gender, and does not wish to have been born otherwise. She contrasts her attitude with other transsexuals she knows who would have preferred to be born biological women: "Yo como no conocí otra vida a mí me da igual. Nacer igual. Yo sí." (Ramira, 2015)[65]

We were sitting near the church where she had been baptised and the bell was striking the full hour. Just as she finished the sentence, there was a last loud stroke of the bell, as if to confirm her comment: *"Nacer igual. Yo sí"*.

Her explicit statement of not regretting having been born like this contradicts the majority of the trans people in the quantitative study conducted by Dominguez et al. (2011). To measure their life satisfaction, the study contained the statement 'if

63 "I fell in love with this one and it's over, it's over. I don't want another man at my side. No. A man whose underwear I have to wash, to iron them, prepare his meals, go! Not anymore." (Ramira, 2015)

64 "At home, he can do with me what he wants. In the street not. The old thing." (Ramira, 2015)

65 "Since I didn't know another life, I don't care. To be born the same. Yes." (Ramira, 2015)

I could live my life again, I would like everything to be the same'. This statement received the lowest value of all the questions in the survey. Thus, the authors point to a very low life satisfaction among transsexual people in Spain (Dominguez Fuentes et al. 2011).

Not so Ramira. Moreover, she had never felt the need to have any surgical gender affirmation procedures done to affirm her as a woman: "No, a mí me da igual. Yo ¿para qué vaya operar? Si yo me encuentro de mujer […] ¿Qué me voy a operar? A mí no me estorba." (Ramira, 2015)[66]

She picks a faded page of a newspaper (an advertisement for the club where she worked in León) out of her purse. She was 29 years old in the photo, and stunning. She emphasises that the picture had not been taken in a studio, but instead very spontaneously as she was ready to go on stage. She also starts combing through the many pictures on her smartphone, and motivates me to take pictures of the pictures. She presents many snapshots showing her as young and beautiful. She is proud of how beautiful she looked, but emphasises that growing older does not bother her: "Yo la vejez la tomo bien." (Ramira, 2015)[67]

She contrasts her attitude towards ageing with the attitude of some of her friends, who are having operations *par' arriba* (up) and *par' abajo* (down).

Around the age of 55, she decided to retire from acting: "Cuando ya … los tíos me decían '¿Tú que edad tienes?' Digo, oih, ya hay que quitarse." (Ramira, 2015)[68]

Although she emphasises that there is no age limit for acting, especially in her genre where there are actresses who are still singing at seventy or eighty, she decided to stop officially and started to work in a restaurant as a cook. Seven years ago, she had a heart attack. Thanks to the fact that she was employed, her inability to work was covered by the insurance, and subsequently she got the medical affirmation of not being able to work anymore. As a result, she was entitled to an early pension.

Earlier in this paper, I mentioned that the people of Triana have the reputation for identifying strongly with their neighbourhood. This holds true for Ramira as well. She tells of three *amigas* and one homosexual *amigo*, who all live in Triana. The *amigas* are older trans women, who also used to work in cabarets (two of them for many years in Paris). They form a closely-knit group and Ramira's emphasis and tone about their common origin (Triana) reflects her rootedness in this neighbourhood: "Vamos, que habemos … que somos de aquí de Triana ¿eh?" (Ramira, 2015)[69]

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66 "No, I don't care. Why should I undergo surgery? When I see myself as a woman […] Why should I have surgery? It doesn't hinder me." (Ramira, 2015)

67 "I take old age well." (Ramira, 2015)

68 "When the guys started to ask 'How old are you?' I thought, it's time to quit." (Ramira, 2015)

69 "We are from here, from Triana!" (Ramira, 2015)

Rather than being part of the city with its anonymity, she refers to Triana as a village. Here, she feels respected, is well known, and feels at home.

Furthermore, she calls her neighbourhood *muy libre* and holds that she never had any problems in Triana because of her gender non-conformity (except from the police during the Franco dictatorship). She links this open-mindedness to the fact that in the past, people did not oppose homosexuals; on the contrary: "Que a los homosexuales sí le encanta la gente de … le encanta antiguamente." (Ramira, 2015)[70]

This was especially true for those homosexuals who behaved very effeminately. Lesbians were less accepted, except one, who was an accomplished flamenco singer and appeared as a man. The example of this lesbian points to the fact that it was possible to acquire cultural capital (in this case by having artistic virtue) that compensated for the social rejection. Following this line of thought, Ramira's positive experiences with the people in her neighbourhood point to her great cultural capital, which she acquired through her virtues as a folkloristic singer and her rootedness in the neighbourhood.

Upon my question as to the most difficult obstacles in her life, she first refers to the time of the dictatorship and the lack of freedom: "Yo, me creo que fue Franco. Sí. En no tener libertad." (Ramira, 2015)[71]

She holds a deep disgust towards the *franquistas* (followers of Franco), appreciates the achievements of democracy, and remembers the worrying times at the beginning of the transition (the years following the end of the dictatorship), when it was not clear if there would be another war. This kind of not fully trusting in a steady democracy is still apparent:

> "[…] yo siempre he dicho que como aquí venga (knocks on the table) entre otra dictadura (laughs dryly), yo en que tengo ochenta años me voy ya de España. Yo sí. En que tengo ochenta años, y me quede cuatro días que vivir en otro sitio. Me voy. Aquí no me quedo. No no." (Ramira, 2015)[72]

She is probably exaggerating how she would react if there were another dictatorship. However, it does reflect her bad experiences under that regime. Nevertheless, when Ramira talks about her life during Franco, she does not do this in a suffering manner (as can sometimes be seen in documentaries portraying elderly transwomen). Indeed, she emphasises how she managed to live her life without letting it get her down: "Yo … yo podía con todo." (Ramira, 2015)[73]

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70 "People loved homosexuals … they loved them in the old days." (Ramira, 2015)

71 "I think it was Franco. Yes. In not having freedom." (Ramira, 2015)

72 "I've always said, if there is another dictatorship, even if I'm eighty years old, I'll leave Spain. I will. Even if I'm eighty years old, and I have only four days to live elsewhere. I'll leave. I would not stay here. No." (Ramira, 2015)

73 "I … I could handle everything." (Ramira, 2015)

Around the age of fifteen, she was put in prison *"[…] por homosexual"* ("for being homosexual"), just for walking around as a *chico*, but wearing rather feminine accessories: "Porque en la época de Franco no podía ir de chica. ¿Sabes?" (Ramira, 2015)[74]

Her father took a lawyer who had her released after one month. (After the dictatorship, *"a la hora de la democracia"*, she was compensated with 4000 Euro for this month of imprisonment, and the entry in the police record was deleted). She thinks that her imprisonment was worse for her father than for herself. Upon my question, if it had been a hard time, she answers: "Para mi padre sí. Para mí me dio igual. A mí me dio igual. Yo … yo podía con todo. No me han pegado nunca, eh." (Ramira, 2015)[75]

During the dictatorship, the police often harassed her and her peers. She developed strategies to escape them. Sometimes they ran away. She remembers one occasion when they had gathered at a meeting point by the river. When the police arrived, she climbed up a tree and stayed there for four hours, until everybody had disappeared. Others jumped in the river and swam to the other side. In retrospect, she describes these constant encounters with the police as a farcical cat-and-mouse game: "Y ya era un cachondeo." (Ramira 2015)[76]

Especially around the *Semana Santa* (Easter week), with its religious processions that attracted the public, there was widespread repression going on. Two weeks before the ceremonies started, the streets were cleaned of 'homosexuals'. They were put in prison during these days. Ramira avoided going out then and left only in the early morning, to see her Virgin. She remembers what Franco and his followers were doing as a very hypocritical thing; banning the 'deviant' in the name of Christianity: "¿No sabes que los criminales de guerra son así? Son así, son muy cristianos y son muy malos." (Ramira, 2015)[77]

When she sees couples behaving intimately in public, like the two men kissing, she remembers those repressive days, and the struggle she and her kind had to endure, a time when such liberal behaviour was unthinkable.

However, being transsexual is no longer the main preoccupation in her life. This became obvious at some points in our conversation. When she mentioned that she had been in Madrid during the transition, I assumed that she was referring to her gender transition. However, she meant the political transition after the death of Franco. When I asked her about present day obstacles and challenges (I was alluding to the situation of trans people in Andalusia), she mentioned the high unem-

74 "Because in the times of Franco, you couldn't dress as a woman, you know?" (Ramira, 2015)

75 "My father, yes. For me, I didn't care. I didn't care. I … I could handle everything. They never hit me, eh." (Ramira, 2015)

76 "And it was already a joke." (Ramira, 2015)

77 "Don't you know that war criminals are like that? They're like that, they're very Christian and they're very bad." (Ramira, 2015)

ployment rate and the corruption of the politicians (the day we met was Election Day, and the news had been full for weeks and months of scandals of politicians who had embezzled money). Her gender experiences were no longer the *eje central* (central focus) (Nieto 2011) in her life and it was rather the prevailing conservative political situation, the lack of employment possibilities (especially for the younger generation), and the politicians' greedy behaviour ("robbery") that upset her.

4.6 Being employed

Anabel, who studied psychology in the early 1990s and earned her (and her family's) living in jobs that were not associated with the 'classic' or 'folkloristic' transsexual, faced other challenges on her journey to self-realisation. As mentioned earlier in this book (see Chapter 3.1), Anabel was aiming for the complete gender affirmation procedures, including genital surgery. This was finally done in 2007. She remembered the date exactly, and like Magdalena (see Chapter 4.2), she spoke of it like a new birthday: "[…] el día 27 de febrero de 2007, pues fue cuando me reasignaron a mí en Málaga." (Anabel, 2013)[78]

Anabel had to wait five years for this operation, which was done in the UTIG in Malaga. When we met in 2003, she had a job as a mason (see Chapter 3.1) that ended the following year, leaving her unemployed. She described the year 2007 as a turning point in her life, not only because of the long awaited operation, but also because she had finally found a job as a bus driver (after three years of unemployment). After Anabel's patience had been tested for many years, both the job offer and the call for surgery were a kind of magic: "Fue como que una barrita mágica me hizo 'pling', y me llamaron." (Anabel, 2013)[79]

The dilemma was that both calls reached her the same day. She should have started her new job the following Friday, and only two days later, on Sunday, she should have gone into hospital. She figured that the bus company would not keep her if, only one day after starting her new job, she told her boss that she had to go to hospital. Although the job was very important for her economic situation, sacrificing the sex surgery was not an option either: "Me jode mucho, pero lo otro llevo muchos años esperándolo y es vital." (Anabel, 2013)[80]

She risked contacting her future boss, explained her situation and asked to delay the beginning of her employment for one month. He agreed. Furthermore, he fulfilled her wish to record her personal data in the company with her new identity

78 "It was the 27th of February 2007 when they reassigned me in Málaga." (Anabel, 2013)

79 "It was like a magic wand went 'pling' over me, and they called me." (Anabel, 2013)

80 "I was really fucked, but for the other [the sex reassignment] I'd been waiting for many years, and it was vital." (Anabel, 2013)

in advance, even before Anabel had changed her official documents. Anabel asked him for this favour because, when starting to work, she would have to introduce her working card and her name would appear. She did not want it to be her male name.

She was hired permanently after six months, which was also due to the general obligations of the bus company to employ more women. Thus, some male co-workers, who even after three years did not have a permanent position, were sceptical. Anabel has been doing this job for many years now, although somewhere in her mind she has kept the wish to work as a psychologist someday; a wish she increasingly abandons as the years go by (she refers to it as a fact you actually know, but won't speak about).

4.7 Without a job

Several of my interlocutors were affected by unemployment. Although the unemployment rate is generally high in Spain (as mentioned earlier), some considered it particularly difficult to become part of a working environment because of their non-normative sex/gender biography. Ronaldo, as a trans man, found it especially difficult to make a living in the times when he felt himself to radiate an ambiguity. People stared at him in the streets and he felt rejected by society. This affected his job possibilities as well as his intimate life:

> "[…] no podía … pedir trabajo en cualquier sitio ni … relacionarme con … chica de cualquier manera, ni … socialmente no podía hacer lo que yo quería por mi apariencia." (Ronaldo, 2003)[81]

The more masculine his gender appearance became, the more he felt at ease, and things got easier.

As an FtM, he sees advantages with regard to achieving the desired masculine appearance so that people do not notice anything. For MtFs, on the other hand, who are aiming for a feminine appearance, it turns out more difficult to undo masculine developments, such as a deeper voice or typically male physical traits. Because of societal rejection towards discernibly trans people, he thinks that this influences the possibilities on the job market as well:

> "Incluso el, lo nuestro, la transexualidad será distinto también. Yo supongo para las, para los transexuales femeninos porque … la gente es muy mala y sigue no-

81 "I couldn't ask for a job anywhere or relate to a girl in any way, or… socially, I couldn't do what I wanted for my appearance." (Ronaldo, 2003)

> tando ese cambio, y a la hora de ellos no sé del trabajo de contratar a una persona que sea … transexual, yo lo veo más fácil para mí que para ellas." (Ronaldo, 2014)[82]

In 2006, Ronaldo underwent genital surgery, which turned out to be more complicated than he had anticipated. He reckoned with one operation and a stay of fifteen days in the hospital. However, because of insufficient blood circulation, the top of the constructed micropenis (a technique that uses the clitoris to construct a penis) was necrotic when they took the bandage off, and he had to endure two more operations. He was in the hospital for three months.

With regard to the change of name and sex on the official documents, he waited until the 2007 law was enacted, which allowed this change without genital surgery; even though (because of his already performed gender affirmation procedures) he could have done this earlier. However, with the implementation of the new law in 2007, the administrative process was less expensive and less embarrassing, because there was no more need for an additional independent forensic expert to confirm the operated sex, which would have meant to *bajar los pantalones* again (see Chapter 2.2). Emilia and Ronaldo married in 2009. Although they could have married earlier (independent of the state of the gender affirmation procedures) Ronaldo did not want to marry as a 'woman' (referring to the name and the sex on the documents).

Concerning his sense of well-being at his workplaces over the years (during and after transition), the increasing physical change and being noticed as male, made him feel more accepted and more at ease because he did not have to explain himself any longer. However, when we met again in 2014, he was unemployed for the third year. Until 2011, he had worked in a nautical club where he was responsible for the maintenance of the swimming pools. According to Ronaldo and his wife, the club modified the scope of duties of his job and included medical attendance (like first Aid, physiotherapy etc.). Ronaldo was dismissed and replaced by somebody who was expected to cover all these areas of responsibility for less money. Although they did not officially admit this, Ronaldo could not help but think that his sacking had something to do with his non-normative gender history.

To their economic situation, they had bought an apartment shortly before this happened. Due to the loss of his job, they could no longer pay the mortgage, and the bank threw them out. This incident was linked to the financial crisis that hit Spain in 2008 (for an analysis of the crisis, see e.g. Ban 2016; Royo 2013). Charnock et al. argue: "The onset of the global recession in 2007 exposed the contradictions of Spain's ten-year period of economic growth, built as it was upon the expansion of

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82 "Our transsexuality is different as well. I suppose for the female transsexuals, because … people are very bad and keep noticing that change, and when it comes to … I don't know, about the job, of hiring a person who is transsexual, I find it easier for me than for them." (Ronaldo, 2014)

Eurozone-wide fictitious circuits of capital and debt" (Charnock et al. 2015: 174). Intertwined with no (or lower) income affecting the working class population due to unemployment (or lower wages), the financial crisis had a severe impact on housing provision, with a growing number of (court-ordered) evictions due to mortgage debts. Social movements emerged that, among others, strove for the right to housing (cf. Di Feliciantonio 2017; Flesher Fominaya 2015). Ronaldo and his family formed part of this social movement. For two years, they lived in occupied houses, finally in *La Corrala* in Seville. This site made headlines because the building belonged to a bank, and was occupied for two years by around 36 families. The police finally vacated the occupied building (cf. Granado 2014). Ronaldo, his wife Emilia and their daughter Nina were given a flat with four rooms in a village south-east of Seville, where they have lived on social welfare since then. Ronaldo has maternal kin in this village who occasionally contribute to Ronaldo's household, or try to support him in finding a job. Placing the families in the proximity of relatives was one of the criteria the city council used when distributing the families.

Emilia (who is a cook, and is also looking for a job) emphasised how much being out of work depresses Ronaldo. It could be argued that his unemployment, besides the economic consequences, puts an additional burden on Ronaldo because of his sense of duty as a father. This point emerged when we spoke about the consequences his gender non-normativity had for his daughter in school. Ronaldo and Emilia conclude that this posed no problem *per se* for Nina, because nobody knew. They experienced other kinds of conflicts. There was a homophobic *vecina* (neighbour) opposite their flat in Seville where they were living when I first met them. This neighbour made their lives there so unbearable that they moved out. Consequently, Nina had to undergo psychological treatment. Ronaldo wishes his daughter to be proud of him, in spite of their precarious financial situation because he was out of work. Ronaldo remembers how she always used to speak of him proudly, which in his narrative was also related to his role as a father earning money:

> Ronaldo: "[…] ella se siente orgullosa de sus padres y nosotros de ella y no … no ha tenido nunca ningún problema."
> Emilia: "Mhm" (affirmatively)
> Ronaldo: "Al contrario. Siempre mi Papá … mhh está en la piscina [refers to the workplace] mi Papá … trabaja bien mi Papá … en fin que es lo típico de los niños." (Ronaldo and Emilia, 2014)[83]

83 Ronaldo: "She is proud of her parents and we of her and never … she has never had any problem."
Emilia: "Mhm" (affirmatively)
Ronaldo: "On the contrary. Always my dad … mhh he is in the pool [refers to the workplace,] my dad … he works well my dad … in short, which is typical of children." (Ronaldo and Emilia, 2014)

Nina is successful in school, and they would like to reward her with 'a little present' (*un regalito)*; however, their financial straits (they dispose of an income of 400€ per month) make this difficult.

4.8 Concluding remarks

This chapter offered some insights into the diverse occupations my research partners performed to make a living. Except maybe for the young FtMs among my informants (like Bittor, who was able to concentrate on his university studies, and Diego, who managed to find a place where he can use his degree in psychology), the gender non-normative experiences often interrupted a possible working career. It altered (and restricted) their wishes, their possibilities and capabilities (the latter understood as the chances society offers its people to realise their potential). However, the experience of being trans intersects with other aspects of life, and this has its impact on how you find your way around.

For example, Ronaldo's unemployment and their precarity as a family (although Ronaldo cannot help but think that his dismissal had something to do with his transsexuality) are closely linked to the financial crisis that affected Spain. Their experience as squatters had much to do with the financial crisis that affected the population in general.

The case of Ramira shows that the importance of the gender non-conforming experience might somehow recede into the background as the years go by. This became obvious when her narration started to focus on political inequities and the unemployment situation of the younger generation in general. Nowadays she seems to be more concerned about political and economic problems, and no longer with being transsexual.

Diego made similar statements. From the moment he managed to have the documents changed, he has had no more problems with his former gender non-conformity, except for the consequences of medical treatment (see Chapter 3.2). He observes that he even forgets about it: "Pero no tengo la transexualidad como algo que forma parte de mi vida. Se me olvida muchas veces." (Diego, 2015)[84]

Thus, both Ramira and Diego reflect a process of normalisation that is related to temporality and improved structural factors (e.g. legislation).

The cases of Magdalena and Anabel depict very different ways of dealing with disclosure at the work place. Magdalena is afraid that she would lose her job in the public sector if anybody knew about her trans past. Therefore, she is anxious that

84 "But transsexuality for me is not something that forms part of my life. I forget it many times." (Diego, 2015)

nobody knows. Anabel took the risk of disclosing her gender non-conformity to her superior at the bus company out of a dilemma. This worked out positively for her, although she sometimes feels some tensions emanating from her colleagues at work. These opposite forms of action and their underlying reasons also reflect the diversity (and diverse life experiences concerning sex/gender non-conformity) of my research partners. However, the cases of those who try to hide their being trans (or their trans past) point especially to the fact that despite a growing public awareness of the existence of trans people over the last years, and despite legal achievements, the fear of being disadvantaged and discriminated is still omnipresent. This points to persisting societal prejudices and devaluation of trans persons, which, in turn, hamper their possibilities to make a living.

Chapter 5. Transfigured families

In Chapter two, I addressed the dominance of questions my research partners are confronted with by people curious about sexual matters; that is to say, intimate questions that focus on the trans person as an individual. However, the 'interest' of some people shifts to the topic of family and partner. *¿Cómo se lo tomaron tus padres*? ("How did your parents take it?") was a question Magdalena was often asked. A question that bothered her. Diego, too, recounts an embarrassing moment in a bank when he was about 20. He had undergone one and a half years of hormonal treatment, wore a beard, and already looked like a man. When the bank clerk saw the female name on the documentation Diego provided, he expressed pity for Diego's parents, and was curious if Diego had been operated on. In the case of Anabel, people who knew about her legal family status (husband and father) confronted her by asking what would happen to her wife after surgical reassignment (due to the missing penis). They also wanted to know what her daughter says about Anabel's gender transition (because her father is turning into a mother).

In addition, I observed a situation while attending the procession of the Virgin in a village outside of Seville on Assumption Day with some friends. The village is famous for this procession, which turned out to be a huge, crowded (and for many people, a very emotional) event. It happened that there were two young trans women among the people who were walking just in front of the *Virgen* while she was being carried through the streets. They were chanting and expressing their admiration for her in chorus: *"Reina … Reina, Reina, Reina … Guapa … Guapa, Guapa, Guapa"* (*Reina* means 'Queen', and *Guapa* means 'Beauty'). I was told that it was the first time that these two young people were seen dressed in women's clothes and expressing their trans identity during such a public event. Among my companions, their performance provoked expressions of admiration for their courage *("Mira, que coraje tienen")*, because, as they remarked, they would definitely be insulted and would have to listen to negative comments. Yet, it also provoked statements regarding possible consequences. *"Que fuerte"* ("how hard") it must be for their families, presenting themselves like this, coming out as transsexual on such an important day, so that everybody will know, one of them comments. *"Traumático"* ("traumatic") adds another.

Noteworthy in all these statements is the shift of interest from the individual to the family. As sons or daughters, partners or parents, they are embedded in a kinship system. Gender transition is no longer an individual process, but involves the close social environment as well. Based on a literature review, Dierckx et al. (2016) conclude that research on the transgender population often disregards the social and family environment in which a gender role transition takes place. They point out that "[…] a transition is never just an individual process" (Dierckx et al. 2016: 41). The narrations of my interlocutors reveal that weighing the consequences of disclosing their gender nonconformity within the family as well as an initial rejection from one or both of the parents, are often linked to the uncertainty of the impact this will have on the family. Additionally, prolonging disclosure is sometimes coupled with preoccupations of burdening the family ('I don't want to distress my parents'), as the following case of Bittor will reveal.

This chapter broaches the issue of the family that, in one way or the other, has to deal with the transition of their family member and illustrates possible implications. To begin with, I concentrate on Bittor, a female-to-male trans person, who was 22 when we met in 2015. Contrary to those trans individuals who experience rejection from part of their family, Bittor's example is characterised by complete support.

5.1 Of parents and siblings

Bittor

I got Bittor's phone number from Ronaldo, who was a friend of his. Bittor agreed to contribute to my investigation, so we arranged a meeting in the *Parque María Luisa* in Seville on a Sunday afternoon. He asked me in advance if I minded if he brought his family along. I did not. When he showed up, he was accompanied by his father, his mother, his sister, four years his senior, and his sister's boyfriend.

Bittor studies biology and lives with his parents in a village south of Seville. He was born in a female body, but as far back as he can remember, it was always clear for him that he was a boy. However, he never dared to mention it – until the age of seventeen. He remembers these seventeen years of his life as a big burden, because he had to live as someone he felt he was not: "[…] tú llevas una vida que no es la tuya." (Bittor, 2015)[1]

Although he always tried to avoid dressing like a girl, he felt forced to do so in order to avoid comments from the others. His mother vividly remembers Bittors's reluctance to wear girls' clothes. Thus, for example, at the age of nine, when they

1 "You lead a life that is not yours." (Bittor, 2015)

went to buy the clothes for his communion day, he always went over to the boys' department and she had to call him back to the girls' section. His father remembers that when he was younger, Bittor liked to go hunting with him, which Bittor confirms. 'She' had 'her' own hunting clothes and 'her' own rifle.

> "Pero vamos yo, nh que iba pensaba hay mujeres que le gusta la caza. Pero claro yo no pensaba que pudiera ser por allí. Él le gustaba él venía me acompañaba estaba siempre conmigo, pero claro, eh que que quería ser hombre." (Bittor's father, 2015)[2]

It can be argued that dressing in (men's) hunting clothes meant Bittor could live the role of the opposite sex without provoking any questions. Today, he no longer goes hunting, which Bittor explains by having to concentrate on his studies. However, maybe it was less his keenness for hunting and more his desire to live as a man, which he now does openly. (By the way, the subject of the hunt as a gender marker emerged in Carmina's narrative as well. However, in her case it was just the opposite. Her father wanted 'him' to join him in the hunt, and bought 'him' a complete set of hunting equipment. The journey remained a single event. The painful blow to the shoulder with the first shot, together with her refusal to kill animals, forced her to declare to her father that she was not interested in hunting. On the way back, she threw her hunting equipment out of the car. According to Carmina, her father could never accept that his only son showed traits which were attributed to the female sex. This also led to punishment.)

Bittors' discrepancy between the felt and attributed sex/gender, demands in school, having to deal with his peers and the prospect of living such a conflicting life until he died, provoked such insurmountable pressure and anxiety that he lost consciousness twice during class and had to be taken to hospital by ambulance. The second time he was hospitalised for twelve days, and underwent a wide range of thorough testing, including an analysis of his spinal fluid to look for infection or illness. His parents were afraid that he had something in the brain. However, the analyses revealed nothing unusual and the doctors stated: "*No tiene nada. Está sano*" ("He has nothing. He's healthy"). In retrospect, his father suspects that Bittor was weakened by his inner pressure concerning his sex/gender and his reluctance to come out to his parents.

It is striking to note that these explanatory models (that of the doctors, as well as that of Bittor's father) remain fixed in a scientific and Cartesian mode of thinking. The medical examinations, with their focus on the physical, found no clinical causes, thereby declaring Bittor healthy. This non-explanation dominated any other

2 "But well, I thought, well, there are women who like hunting. But, of course, I didn't think it could be that way. He liked it, he always accompanied me, he was always with me, but of course, he wanted to be a man." (Bittor's father, 2015)

explanatory model. Only later (after Bittor had had his coming out) did his father resort to a psychological explanation (body and mind). Here, phenomenology could add a third way to understand Bittor's fainting and offer an approach to overcoming this dualism. In his analysis, Plessner (1970) provides a different view of the relation of the person to their body and tries to overcome a Cartesian dichotomy. He describes the phenomena of laughing and crying as a kind of uncontrolled eruptions of a somehow autonomous, but not escapable body:

> Man falls into their power; he breaks–out laughing, and lets himself break–into tears. He responds to something by laughing and crying, but not with a form of expression which could be appropriately compared with verbal utterance, expressive movement, gesture, or action. He responds–with his body as body, as if from the impossibility of being able to find an answer himself. And in the loss of control over himself and his body, he reveals himself at the same time as a more than bodily being who lives in a state of tension with regard to his physical existence yet is wholly and completely bound to it. (Plessner 1970: 31)

In this sense, Bittor's fainting in school was a response of his "body as body" (in neither a medical nor a psychological sense), and of "the impossibility of being able to find an answer himself" (Plessner 1970: 31). Moreover, it was an expression of his living "in a state of tension with regard to his physical existence" to which he is "completely bound". Taylor (in reflecting the work of Merleau-Ponty) addresses the boundedness of the body to its worldly environment as well. He argues: "Das Bewusstsein der Welt, in der ich mich leiblich befinde, kann nicht nach Belieben an- und ausgeschaltet werden" (Taylor 1986: 205).[3] And he continues:

> Natürlich können wir sie [die Wahrnehmung als eine Art Tätigkeit] nicht ausschalten, noch können wir sie – wie das Zähneputzen oder das Spazierengehen – bloss zeitweilig und vorübergehend vollziehen. Selbstverständlich kann ich Augen und Ohren schliessen. Doch ich bleibe *in* der Welt, habe eine Welt um mich herum, stehe auf etwas und in der Nähe von etwas, obgleich unter diesen Bedingungen die Konturen der Welt unscharf werden. Wie unscharf die Welt auch gegeben sein mag, sie behält eine bestimmte Kontur für mich, ausser wenn ich die Orientierung [...] ganz verliere oder in Ohnmacht falle. Doch wenn ich Augen und Ohren öffne, bestimme nicht ich das Aussehen der Welt. (Taylor 1986: 205)[4]

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3 "The consciousness of the world in which I am bodily (leiblich) cannot be switched on and off at will [own transl.]" (Taylor 1986: 205).

4 "Of course, we cannot turn it off [perception as a kind of activity], nor can we – like brushing our teeth or going for a walk – merely execute it temporarily. Of course, I can close my eyes and ears. But I remain in the world, have a world around me, stand on something or near something, even though, under these conditions, the contours of the world become blurred. No matter how unsharp the world may be, it keeps a certain contour for me, unless I lose

From a phenomenological point of view, Bittor could no longer endure the perception of the world, the awareness that he cannot escape from his female sex. He fainted, thus, losing his bearings. However, when he regained consciousness, he had to realise that the world had not changed. Bittor isolated himself more and more and only left his room for college and meals, although his mother tried to motivate him to go out with his school-companions. He developed suicidal ideation: "Y estaba en mi cuarto ya comiéndome la cabeza, digo o bien salgo y lo cuento, me tira por una ventana, por así no puedo más." (Bittor, 2015)[5]

Thus, one night he saw no other possibility than to tell his parents. He explained that he had waited so long for this, not because he feared that they would react in a negative manner, but because he did not want to burden them. He knew they would have to deal with a new life. His mother describes in detail how very lost Bittor looked that night, how he cried and explained to them that he had something very worrying to tell them. Her first thought was that Bittor was pregnant, or that 'she' had been forced by teachers or peers to do something 'she' did not like. For his parents, the information their youngest was about to give about her male gender identity was unexpected. Less so, for his sister. The father remembers: "[…] yo no me lo esperaba. Mi mujer tampoco. Nadie. Mi hija tenía idea." (Bittor's father, 2015)[6]

Bittor's sister explained that she had quarrelled a lot with Bittor about the clothes he was wearing because he only wanted to wear trousers. She had called 'her' a "macho" and told 'her' that she dressed like a man. Eventually she thought that 'her sister' might be into women. When Bittor disclosed himself that evening, she said: "[…] yo lo primero que hice fue le di un abrazo y le dije: 'Aquí no pasa nada. Esto es algo normal'. Y se acabó." (Bittor's sister, 2015)[7]

His family supported him from the beginning. His mother explained how they proceeded, first going to the family doctor to inform themselves about their next steps. The doctor sent them to the psychologist at the hospital in their town. At first, the psychologist thought he would have to evaluate Bittor for one year before being able to send him to the UTIG in Malaga. However, by the second session, the psychologist was so convinced of Bittor's transsexuality that he sent him directly to Malaga, where he continued psychological and endocrinological clarifications at the UTIG for one year. Bittor's mother sounded proud when she recounted all this,

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my bearings completely or faint. But when I open my eyes and ears, I do not determine the appearance of the world [own transl.]" (Taylor 1986: 205).

5 "And I was in my room, racking my brains about it, then I say, I either go out and tell it, or I jump out a window. I can't go on like this." (Bittor, 2015)

6 "I didn't expect it. My wife didn't either. Nobody. My daughter suspected it." (Bittor's father, 2015)

7 "[…] the first thing I did was give him (her) a hug and I said: 'Here, nothing happens. This is something normal'. And that was it." (Bittor's sister, 2015)

which gave me the impression that the feedback from their local psychologist had given her strength to manage the new situation and support Bittor.

He has been on hormones for three years. Regarding the surgical interventions, Bittor speaks of three surgeries he is entitled to ("*las tres que me corresponde*"), and he wants them all. The first one is the mastectomy, the second, the hysterectomy and the third, the genital reassignment. Having the possibility to undergo these medical gender affirmation procedures in Malaga, covered by the *Seguridad Social*, is not only something he thankfully welcomes, but something he demands in return for his cooperation with the UTIG:

> "Entonces yo he seguido todos los pasos, y quiero de Málaga, como derecho que tengo por haber estar siguiendo en Málaga, hacerme las operaciones." (Bittor, 2015)[8]

He underwent the first operation, the mastectomy, one year ago and is very pleased with the result (also aesthetically): "Entonces a mí no me marca ni una marquita si quiera. Y me lo he hecho en Málaga." (Bittor, 2015)[9]

He considered the mastectomy to be both urgent and important due to the problem of hiding his breasts. Before surgery, he felt limited in taking part in activities, such as swimming, in order not to draw attention to his sex/gender incongruence:

> "Yo la que me corría prisa era la del pecho, porque es que me ya muchísimo tiempo para eh que no ir a la playa, no podía ir a la piscina por el tema de tener que ir hm llevar camiseta, llevaba dos camisetas o tres, para que no se me notara a la playa. Y ya pues dejaba de ir porque yo … yo eso no lo quería." (Bittor, 2015)[10]

When we met, he was on the waiting list for the second surgery, the hysterectomy. Bittor was looking forward to this operation, because he hoped that this would solve his discomfort with menstruation. His father thinks that the menstruation cycle is quite a burden for Bittor because he has to inject himself with hormones every two or three months. There are many types of hormones to avoid menstruation and he has tried them all, Bittor states. His father mentions patches and creams, but remarks that the injections serve Bittor best. When he feels that the menstruation cycle is starting (and he considers it especially disruptive when it starts in periods

8 "So, I've followed all the steps, and what I want from Malaga, as a right that I have for having been followed in Malaga, is having the operations done." (Bittor, 2015)

9 "I don't even have a mark. And I did it in Malaga." (Bittor, 2015)

10 "I was in a hurry for the one with the chest, because for a long time I didn't go to the beach, I couldn't go to the pool because of having to wear a t-shirt. I wore two t-shirts or three, so that it wouldn't be noticed at the beach. I stopped going, because, eh, I did not want that." (Bittor, 2015)

of stress, like exams), he calls his endocrinologist at the UTIG who prescribes the injections. For his mother, it is an achievement and a relief that the *Seguridad Social* pays for this treatment, which would otherwise put a heavy strain on their budget.

With regard to the third operation, the genital reassignment, the fact that the UTIG stopped offering this intervention due to bad results, gave him a bit of a backlash. Although he is determined to have this last operation done one day, he comforts himself by saying:

> "Ya la última, bueno, no me corre tanta prisa porque bueno es necesaria pero no tanta como la mastectomía o la histerectomía. Entonces pues si tengo que esperar un tiempo, pues esperaré, me la hago bien para no- para tener menos riesgos posibles. Porque ya que es complicado en si." (Bittor, 2015)[11]

Yet, he is discussing the possibility with his parents of having it done in a private clinic, should it take too long until new techniques convince the UTIG in Malaga to resume this kind of operation. For the moment, it is a question of money. I got the impression that Bittor would not hesitate to have this surgery immediately (in spite of the many critical reports), if the funding were possible:

> "Entonces me han dicho que las dos [refers to micropenis and phalloplasty] que hacen, tanto por lo privado como las que hacían antes, tienen mucho riesgo, además que seguramente hay que estar sondada toda la vida porque la uretra se parte, nh muchísimos problemas. Entonces, con la explicación que me dio, casi me quita hasta la gana, pero yo lo tengo tan claro que si estuviera que esperar unos años que mejore pues yo opero, pero esa cirugía me la quiero hacer. Lo tengo muy claro." (Bittor, 2015)[12]

Obviously to Bittor, to be a man means not only to be socially and legally accepted as a man, but to use all available surgical possibilities to adapt him anatomically as closely as possible to a biological man. He even seems willing to risk lifelong bodily inconveniences involved in genital reassignment.

Disclosing his transsexuality to his family, having their support and living publicly the felt sex/gender liberated Bittor, and helped him concentrate on his future

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11 "And the last one, well, I'm not in such a hurry because, well, it's necessary but not as much as the mastectomy or the hysterectomy. So, if I have to wait, I will wait, so that it will turn out well, to have fewer possible risks. Because since it's complicated in itself."(Bittor, 2015)

12 "I've been told that the two [kinds of genital plastic surgeries] they do, as much for the private as for the ones they did before [in the UTIG], are very risky. Moreover, you will probably be probed all your life, because the urethra splits … a lot of problems. So, with the explanation they gave me, it almost took my mind off it, but for me it's so clear that if I were to wait a few years until it improves, I will operate. But I want to do that surgery. It's very clear to me." (Bittor, 2015)

(see Chapter 4). After two years of taking hormones, the gender identity law (approved in 2007) allowed him to change his identity documents without having to undergo complete gender reassignment surgery. Despite this legal improvement compared to the situation during my first field research period a decade ago, this time span of two years is still a topic Bittor would change, that is, reduce most urgently: "No veo justo que haya que esperar dos años de hormonación." (Bittor, 2015)[13]

Furthermore, he complains about the long waiting list in the UTIG that does not do justice to the many transsexuals asking for treatment:

> "Que hay gente que llevan años en lista de espera, y años y años y no siguen par'alante. Y hay muchísimas personas transexuales que va que la UTIG, la unidad de allí, te atiende una vez a la semana. La cinco, seis horas en un día a la semana. Y hay muchísim- parece que no, pero hay muchísimas personas. Eso va muy lento." (Bittor, 2015)[14]

He agrees with the medical practice of clarifying the psychological and endocrinological state of the person concerned beforehand. However, he thinks that once the hormone treatment has been prescribed and started, it should be proof enough for the legal authorities to permit changing the identity documents. In his case, the psychologist gave him the papers needed to change the documents seven months after initiating hormone treatment. However, although his appearance was masculine (his parents helped him to apply by even adding photos to draw attention to his masculine look), the judge refused. He said that the law requires a waiting period of two years and he would not enter into the topic: "Y llevaba yo barba, la voz cambiada, y no llevaba los dos años, me denegaron el cambio." (Bittor, 2015)[15]

Appearance male, documents female. It would have spared Bittor some trouble if he had had the possibility to change his name before starting his university studies. Bittor notes that this obstacle is exactly the reason why some trans people stop their studies or their work.

Eventually (after waiting two years), he has now changed all his documents. His mother even managed to have his baptism certificate and the communion certificate changed by the Church. This was easier than she imagined, because she expected: "[…] con la iglesia hemos topado dice el refrán." (Bittor's mother, 2015)[16]

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13 "I don't see how it's fair to have to wait through two years of hormonation" (Bittor, 2015)

14 "There are people who have been on the waiting list for years. Years and years, and they don't go on ahead. And there are a lot of transsexual persons. The UTIG, the unity there attends you once a week. Five, six hours on one day a week. And there are many … it doesn't seem so, but there are so many people. That's going too slow." (Bittor, 2015)

15 "I wore a beard, my voice was changed, but because it wasn't two years, I was denied the change." (Bittor, 2015)

16 "With the church we have met, says the proverb." (Bittor's mother, 2015)

Figuratively, that means that the structures of the Church are perceived as an insurmountable obstacle. Thus, most of my interlocutors did not even try to change their documents with the Church because they expected great resistance, which would not be worth the hassle. Not so Bittor's mother. Bittor's mother went to the parish priest who was two months from retirement, with the court order showing that Bittor was allowed to have his legal documents changed. She did not ask him to find a solution, just to tell her how to proceed. For the parish priest, this was the first time in his fifty years as priest to encounter such a case. He told her to do nothing, that he would arrange everything, and he went himself to the Archbishop of Seville. It took only twenty days and Bittor's church registration was changed (his mother remarks that it normally takes one year until they start to move papers). She was not sure beforehand whether he would have to perform baptism and communion again, which he agreed to do if necessary. However, the priest provided this interesting answer:

> "No se tiene ni que bautizar, ni hacer la comunión. Porque su hija se lo recibió por Dios como persona, no como eh nh como hombre o como mujer." (Bittor's mother, 2015)[17]

An understanding of this attitude can be found in Marcel Mauss' reflections on the category of the 'person' and the 'I'. He shows that the concept of the 'person' and the 'I' is not something given, but is something that has gradually emerged. In the course of history, it was the Christians who turned the moral person into a metaphysical entity (Mauss 2010). Mauss refers to a passage in the Epistle to the Galatians (3:28) which reads: "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus [translated]" (Mauss 2010: 247). This understanding of the entity has been debated and dismantled over time. Mauss concludes:

> Ausgehend also vom Begriff des *Eins* wird der Begriff der *Person* geprägt, wie ich seit langem glaube: mit Rücksicht auf göttliche Personen, aber gleichzeitig auch bezogen auf die menschliche Person als Substanz und Modus, Körper und Seele, Bewusstsein und Akt. (Mauss 2010: 248)[18]

Bittor's pastor seems to be in the tradition of the entity of the person who is perceived independently of origin, social position, or sex.

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17 "He/she has neither to baptise nor make the communion. Because your daughter received it from God as a person, not as a man or a woman." (Bittor's mother, 2015)

18 "Thus, starting from the concept of the One, the concept of the person is coined, as I have long believed: with regard to divine persons, but at the same time also related to the human person as substance and mode, body and soul, consciousness and act [own transl.]" (Mauss 2010: 248).

Restoring normality

Meeting Bittor, accompanied by his family, gave me an idea of how important it was for the family to demonstrate how seriously they stand by their son. This impression was strengthened during our conversation. They emphasised that many transsexuals are not accepted by their family and stressed that they, however, judged this situation as normal: *"Es normal"*. This statement, that it is normal, emerged several times and in unison. For me, there was almost too much agreement and too much emphasis on normality. However, in the course of our conversation, the statements became more differentiated and showed that there was a process which had led to the actual perception of normality: "Hay que hacer que sea normal." (Bittor's mother, 2015)[19]

To conform to 'the norm' facilitates everyday life. As Villa states: "'[N]ormal' zu sein hat kaum zu überschätzende rechtliche, politische, ökonomische und kulturelle Vorteile. Und normal zu sein hat, soziologisch oder kulturwissenschaftlich betrachtet, immer zu tun mit normativen Prozessen der Normalisierung" (Villa 2008a: 11).[20]

There was no given normality from the beginning. Bittor's father described his changing sensations as follows: "Yo al principio … luchó. Yo no lo esperaba, yo me encontré ¡hu! No, no me entraba en la cabeza. No, no lo asimilaba." (Bittor's father, 2015)[21]

Initially, they often made the mistake of saying *hija* (daughter) instead of *hijo* (son). Today, this does not happen. For Bittor's father, it was helpful to accompany his 'son' to the UTIG in Malaga and to see all the other individuals who were in the same situation. This was helpful to find his way back to 'normality':

> "Sera que como yo estoy metido ya en este mundo, lo veo muy normal. Al principio me costó mucho. Desde entonces a hoy ha cambiado cien por cien. Ya lo veo muy diferente, lo doy muy normal." (Bittor's father, 2015)[22]

He also notes a general change in society in how transsexuality is talked about today, compared to his youth, and tells of an uncle, who has made the gender transition only now, at the age of over sixty years, and who left his wife and his three

19 "One has to make it normal." (Bittor's mother, 2015)

20 "Being 'normal' has legal, political, economic and cultural advantages that can hardly be overestimated. And from a sociological or cultural-scientific point of view, to be normal always has something to do with normative processes [own transl.]" (Villa 2008a: 11).

21 "In the beginning … I fought. I didn't expect it, I felt 'huh!' No, it didn't enter into my head. No, I didn't assimilate it." (Bittor's father, 2015)

22 "As I find myself put in this world, I already look at it as very normal. In the beginning, it cost me a lot. From then to today, it has changed one hundred percent. Now, I see it very differently, I consider it very normal." (Bittor's father, 2015)

adult children to live with a man. This uncle had been forced to marry against his will during the times of Franco. Bittor's father understands that this uncle sacrificed his entire life because he could not live his felt sex/gender:

> "[…] toda la vida ha sacrificado. Toda su vida, por no haber dado eso paso antes. Y ahora ya, a la viejez, ha dado el paso. Y ahora es cuando está viviendo de verdad, ahora. Ahora con sesenta y picos años." (Bittor's father, 2015)[23]

They also mention a cousin of Bittor's mother, also over sixty, who was thought to be homosexual, but now states that he always felt like a woman. He calls Bittor lucky to have parents who support him, and that he would have liked to grow up in a time like now *"que la mentalidad está tan abierta"* ("where there's such an open mentality"). This is all in contrast to his growing up during the dictatorship and having been subject to his father's mentality that did not permit this.

Thus, Bittor's father concludes: "Ahora hay mucha libertad, y se comprende mejor." (Bittor's father, 2015)[24]

There are more laws in this respect, says Bittor, more help, says Bittor's father, and adds, there is the hospital in Malaga that did not exist before, and that helps the transsexual people. They welcome you there with open doors, says Bittor.

Lindeman (2011) holds that the opinions of non-involved third parties can be important for the construction of a new confidence for the non-transsexual people within the circle, which helps to bring order to a possible confusion in one or the other direction:

> Erst externe Dritte erzeugen eine objektivierende Perspektive, die die Verworrenheit klärt, die durch das Zusammenspiel von leiblicher Realisierung und "ich"-bezogenen Realisierungseffekten entstanden ist. Gegen die Subversion der Geschlechterordnung durch Einzelne […] steht der durch Dritte objektivierte und damit institutionalisierte Sachverhalt des wirklichen Geschlechts des Namens und des Körpers. (Lindemann 2011: 194)[25]

A third party may include private persons as well as physicians, experts and judges, the latter reflecting institutional structures:

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23 "He has sacrificed his whole life. His whole life for not having made this step before. And now, in old age, he has made the step. And it's now that he's really living, now. Now, at the age of sixty and something." (Bittor's father, 2015)

24 "Now there's a lot of freedom, and it's better understood." (Bittor's father, 2015)

25 "Only external third parties generate an objectifying perspective that clarifies the confusion that has arisen through the interplay of the effects of bodily realisation and "I"-related realisation. Against the subversion of the sex/gender order by individuals […] stands the fact of the real gender of the name and the body, objectified and thus institutionalized by third parties [own transl.]" (Lindemann 2011: 194).

> Letztlich muss auch die Einbeziehung von Gutachtern, der Medizin und des Rechts in diesem Sinn als Einbeziehung Dritter verstanden werden, durch die ein Konflikt zwischen Personen anerkanntermassen durch eine sachliche Erkenntnis und die Überwachung der Einlösung des Zukunftsversprechens bearbeitet wird. (Lindemann 2011: 194)[26]

This insight might be applied to Bittor's parents. Third parties, for example in the form of relatives with similar experiences, or seeing other trans people attending the UTIG, relativised the uniqueness of their situation. Furthermore, medicine and law offered a solution that comes close to a 'monitoring of the fulfilment of the promise for the future'. Additionally, even the Church was willing to help them get back to 'normality'.

The fact that Bittor's sex/gender transition is not exclusively an individual matter, but is tightly linked to the nuclear family, also becomes apparent when his mother uses 'we' while speaking of Bittor's transition and the efforts they all have been involved in. Maybe it is also a sign of regret that she did not realise his dilemma earlier and an expression of the process they all underwent in saying goodbye to a former existence and welcoming a new one:

> "Por tú [refers to Bittor] has pagado diecisiete años. Y es por ahora, ya llevamos cinco, ya llevamos cinco años que vamos- que en fin coño nos conseguimos muchísimo. Porque esta puesto el tratamiento, se ha operado, hemos cambiado todo, él ya él ya no existe como su anterior esto. Nosotros hemos llevado unos meses corriendo de un de un departamento a otro de de jugado, de notaría, de todo, porque él ha dejado de existir, como una hm de una persona y ha nacido otra." (Bittor's mother, 2015)[27]

Bittor's parents always accompany him to his appointments at the UTIG in Malaga (about 200 km one way). In case they should be hindered, his sister and her boyfriend, who live about one hundred kilometres further south, take on this task. In addition to this organisational support, there is also psychological support from the family to strengthen Bittor's self-confidence. His mother reminds him

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26 "Ultimately, the involvement of experts, medicine and law in this sense must also be understood as the involvement of third parties, through which a conflict between persons is dealt with in a way that is recognised by objective knowledge and the monitoring of the fulfilment of the promise for the future [own transl.]" (Lindemann 2011: 194).

27 "You [refers to Bittor] have paid seventeen years. And now, it's been five years that we … well, we have achieved a lot. There is the treatment, he has undergone surgery, we have changed everything, and he, he no longer exists as his former self. We have spent months running from one department to the other, to the judge, to the notary, everything, because he has stopped to exist like, hm, as the former person, and another one has been born." (Bittor's mother, 2015)

regularly that he does not have to be ashamed: "Yo siempre le dije tú con la cabeza muy alta, mi alma." (Bittor's mother, 2015)[28]

Moreover, in case a former friend would turn away, she points out that he would not be losing a friend, instead this friend would be losing *him*:

> "[…] por ejemplo alguien que (lengthened) que era tu amigo. O … y te hablaba y ahora no te habla, pues se lo pierde. Él se pierde tu amistad, y él se lo pierde. Porque tú eres la misma persona." (Bittor's mother, 2015)[29]

However, they were all glad that there was no such incident. They all agreed that Bittor did not have any problems with anybody and that he is a respected person. This predominantly positive experience could be related to the openness with which the family decided to handle the situation. Upon my question of whether the laws in Spain are more advanced than the mentality of the people, Bittor's mother answered that it depends on how you approach it. They chose the strategy of accepting Bittor's transition as something natural and not hiding it in their social environment, and conclude that the people accepted it as well. They follow the philosophy: "Tú eres la misma persona. Hija, tú eres la misma persona. Entonces tú te das a respetar. Por lo demás te respeta." (Bittor's mother, 2015)[30]

In addition, they think that it must first be accepted in the family (however difficult that may be), before you can expect society to accept it:

> "[…] los primeros que tienen que aceptarlo somos nosotros que somos sus padres. Si tú no lo aceptas, como vas a esperar tú que la sociedad lo acepte. Entonces como tú lo aceptas por lucha, para que los demás lo acepten. Que es muy duro. Sí, porque te cambie una vida un esquema que tú has tenido diecisiete años una hija. Y ahora tienes un hijo." (Bittor's mother, 2015)[31]

Following Erving Goffman's theory about interaction and stigma, he shows in detail how the self is constructed in the interaction with others and how stigmatisation leads to a "damaged self" (Goffman 2012). Hence, due to stigmatisation experiences, the self of gender non-conforming persons runs a high risk of being spoiled. Thus, the support Bittor receives in interaction with his family strengthens

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28 "I always told him, you, keep your head up, my soul." (Bittor's mother, 2015)

29 "For example, someone who was your friend, or … who used to talk to you, and now he doesn't speak with you, well, he loses *you*. He loses your friendship, and it's he who loses it. Because you are the same person." (Bittor's mother, 2015)

30 "You are the same person. So, you have to respect yourself. For the others to respect you." (Bittor's mother, 2015)

31 "We are the first who have to accept it, as his parents. If you don't accept it, how are you going to expect that society will accept it? So, you accept it, fighting, so that the others will accept it. Which is very hard. Yes, because it changes your life, a strict idea that you have had a daughter for seventeen years. And now you have a son." (Bittor's mother, 2015)

him to confront stigmatisation, and at the same time illustrates how the interplay of an ensemble like the family is necessary to restore a "spoiled identity", helps the presentation of the "new" self, and maintains normality.

Bittor's gender transition also brought with it material and organisational implications for the household. He formerly shared the bathroom with his sister, now he shares a bathroom with his father. All his clothes, pictures on the walls, photos and personal belongings that pointed to his female past were removed. His mother states: "[…] ya no hay cuadros de él, fotografías, ya no hay ropa suya, ya no hay recuerdos suyo de la vida anterior. Ya no hay nada." (Bittor's mother, 2015)[32]

Previously she asked Bittor if the photos bothered him. He did not ask them to be taken away because he knew that this would be hard for his mother. Instead, he answered: "Mama, esa no soy yo." (Bittor's mother, 2015)[33]

She remembers that taking down all the pictures of her former daughter and removing all the photo albums was the most difficult moment. It was also the only moment she cried, because she felt that a piece of her life was gone. She even had tears in her eyes when she recounted this story: "Cuando estaba quitando sus sus … sus cosas porque entonces parecía que estaba quitando un trozo de mi vida." (Bittor's mother, 2015)[34]

However, she knew this was an inevitable step to accepting Bittor as male and their son: "[…] tengo que cerrar la p- … para que él venga. Ella se fue, pero ha venido él." (Bittor's mother, 2015)[35]

Bittor's parents see their task in helping their son wherever they can: „Nosotros estamos para apoyarlo. Y lo que haga falta. Porque estamos con él, encantado." (Bittor's father, 2015)[36]

They accept his wishes, because: "Es que vivió una vida que no es la suya." (Bittor's mother, 2015)[37], and: "Está en un cuerpo que no es el suyo." (Bittor's father, 2015)[38]

Expressing this kind of explanatory models for Bittor's situation (having lived a wrong life, being in the wrong body) once again reflects their sympathy and helps Bittor to talk to them openly. However, his parents' understanding and compassion

32 "There are no more pictures of him, photographs, there are no more of his clothes, there are no more memories of his previous life. There's nothing left." (Bittor's mother, 2015)

33 "Mama, that's not me" (Bittor's mother, 2015)

34 "When I was removing his … his things, it seemed that I was removing a piece of my life." (Bittor's mother, 2015)

35 "I have to close [the past] … for him to come. She left, but he has come." (Bittor's mother, 2015)

36 "We are with him to support him. Whatever he needs. Because we are delighted with him." (Bittor's father, 2015)

37 "It's just that he lived a life that wasn't his." (Bittor's mother, 2015)

38 "He's in a body that's not his." (Bittors father, 2015)

(be they rational or emotional) are limited. They do not replace the kind of understanding from the people with whom he shares bodily *(leiblich)* experiences. This might be the reason why Bittor emphasises the exchange with 'people like him' (referring to other trans individuals): "[…] porque te sientes bien hablando si es una persona que me entiende." (Bittor, 2015)[39] (See also Chapter 3.2)

As for the future, Bittor's life plans are not something to worry his parents. On the contrary. It seems that the above-mentioned 'normality' they attribute to his sex/gender transition, their support and their efforts to maintain the family ties are reciprocated by Bittor's socially valued life plans. These are to finish the sex reassignment process, to concentrate on his studies, to pursue a working career, and, "*si Dios quiere" (Bittor, 2015)* ("if God wills") to find a partner and raise his own family.

5.2 Of partners and children

So far, I have dealt with how Bittor's parents and sister dealt with the sex/gender transition of a family member. Although not explicitly emphasised, there already emerged some consequences with regard to same-sex and different-sex arrangements, especially the use of the bathroom that has been rearranged. With regard to tensions emerging out of changing same-sex and different-sex relations, Lindemann considers non-transsexual people to be as vulnerable as the trans person themselves concerning their sex/gender:

> Bezüglich der Relation von Gleich- und Verschiedengeschlechtlichkeit werden Nichttranssexuelle durch ihre Beziehung zu Transsexuellen ebenso verwundbar, wie es bei Transsexuellen hinsichtlich ihres Geschlechts der Fall ist: Nicht-transsexuelle sind genauso auf das Verständnis anderer für die sich am neuen Geschlecht orientierende Relation von Gleichheit und Verschiedenheit angewiesen wie Transsexuelle, wenn sie ihre Selbsterkenntnis offenbaren. Aufgrund der Tatsache, dass Personen ihr Geschlecht nicht allein, sondern nur im leiblichen Ineinanderverhaktsein sind, löst die Realisierung des transsexuellen Wunsches ein regelrechtes Kuddelmuddel aus, das alle Beteiligten zumindest vorübergehend um ihre leibliche Sicherheit bringt. (Lindemann 2011: 193)[40]

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39 "Because you feel good talking if it's a person who understands me." (Bittor, 2015)

40 "With regard to the relation between same- and different sex/gender, non-transsexuals, through their relationship to transsexuals, become just as vulnerable as transsexuals with regard to their sex/gender: Non-transsexuals are just as dependent on the understanding of others for the relation of equality and difference oriented to the new sex as transsexuals are when they reveal their self-awareness. Due to the fact that persons are not their sex alone, but exist only in the interlocking of their bodies *(Leib)*, the realisation of the transsexual de-

Although every kind of relationship is forced to deal with such changing same- or different-sex/gender relations, an intimate partnership that involves sexuality and gender transition occurring within an existing partnership take on a whole new dimension.

Anabel and Inés were married and had a little daughter when Anabel started to disclose her sex/gender feelings to her wife. Inés remembers that at first Anabel tried to indicate that she (Inés) should leave her, because she (Inés) would have less trouble and less confrontation with people. When Anabel decided to start gender transition and undergo treatment, Inés eventually decided to stay with Anabel. She declared: "Sigue este proceso, pero yo voy a seguir contigo." (Inés, 2015)[41]

Moreover, it was not a revelation that came unexpectedly. They used to talk about Anabel's gender feelings long before Anabel eventually decided to start treatment (see Chapter 3.1). Furthermore, Anabel had sometimes secretly dressed herself as a woman at home, which Inés was well aware of: "Entonces a mí de sorpresa no me pilló por eso porque lo habíamos hablado … habíamos hablado mucho." (Inés, 2015)[42]

However, initially, Inés had some preoccupations because of their daughter and the family *per se*. Therefore, they decided that Anabel should delay starting transition officially until after their daughter's communion day. Today, Inés perceives their relationship as even better than before. She notes that prior to Anabel's gender transition, they had more problems in their relationship, which she relates to the fact that Anabel did not feel comfortable with herself.

Before Anabel started gender transition, they were perceived as a heterosexual couple. Now they are two married women. Inés no longer feels the need to fit a defined sexual orientation. She coments:

> "Es que tú te sientas ni lesbiana ni heterosexual, ni nada. Simplemente tú conoces a esta persona. Yo … yo cuando me casé, me casé con un hombre, claro." (Inés, 2013)[43]

However, after starting gender transition (and before she underwent genital surgery) Anabel had difficulties entering into sexual contact with her wife. She thought that during these moments, Inés still perceived her as a husband. Yet, Inés seems to have adapted to the changing situation right from the beginning and considers Anabel's perception as misconceived and unfounded. She calls Anabel

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sire triggers a real muddle, which at least temporarily deprives all participants of their bodily *(leibliche)* security [own transl.]" (Lindemann 2011: 193).

41 "Follow your way, but I will stay with you." (Inés, 2015)

42 "So, I didn't get caught by surprise, because we had talked about it … we had talked about it a lot." (Inés, 2015)

43 "You feel neither lesbian nor straight, nor anything. You just know this person. When I got married, I married a man, sure." (Inés, 2013)

a little bit 'paranoid' in this respect, and emphasises that for her, once Anabel decided to 'go forwards', the 'other' person ceased to exist: "Entonces yo … la otra persona no … para mí no existe." (Inés 2013)[44]

Today, having been together longer as two women than as man and woman, she remembers her former life with Anabel as husband much less clearly than the current situation:

> Inés: "Si yo echo la vista atrás ahora, si te digo la verdad, la recuerdo más ahora que antes."
> Christoph: "¿Más a mujer que a hombre antes?"
> Inés: "Sí. Claro. Porque yo, por de hecho que llevo más tiempo con ella de mujer que el de hombre, entonces por eso (amused). Entonces yo, para mí, es como la veo. Yo como la veo, como es. Pero bueno, para mí es una mujer." (Inés, 2013)[45]

In general, Inés does not care much about what people say (in contrast to Anabel). However, if she is directly attacked (and this includes attacks against her family), she is prepared to shoot back. She remembers a situation some years ago when she was working in a fruit store. One evening, when Anabel arrived by car to fetch her, five temporary day-labourers started to insult Anabel. Inés got upset and started to insult the men back, with the effect that they turned on Inés. She was prepared for them to start to hit her, hoping that one of the staff of the fruit company would interfere. To avoid further excesses, Anabel made her run to the car: "Ellos estaban ofender a una persona, que era mi pareja, y yo la estaba defendiendo. Punto. Igual que cualquier pareja defiende a la suya." (Inés, 2015)[46]

Their daughter, Vanessa (she was studying medicine when we met during my second field research trip) turns out to be a 'fighter' as well. She remembers, amused, how back in school nobody dared to provoke her because she defended her mother (Anabel) "*a caballo y espada*" ("with horse and sword"). She once had a fight with a schoolmate who labelled her mother (Anabel) as gay: "Me decía que mi madre … dice, 'tu padre es maricón', no sé qué, y yo, me cabré." (Vanessa, 2015)[47]

A similar situation occurred years later when she was at secondary school, a time which spans the years of 12 to 16. Similar to Luisa (see Chapter 2.1), whose

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44 "So, for me … the other person doesn't exist." (Inés, 2013)

45 Inés: "If I look back now, to tell you the truth, I remember her more as she is now than before."
Christoph: "More as a woman than as a man before?"
Inés: "Yes. For sure. Because actually, I spent more time with her as a woman than as a man. That's why (amused). So, for me, that's how I see her. I see her as she is. For me, she is a woman." (Inés, 2013)

46 "They were offending my spouse, and I was defending her. Period. Just like any couple defends theirs." (Inés, 2015)

47 "He said that my mother… he says 'your father is a fag', I don't know what, and I was pissed off." (Vanessa, 2015)

discomfort with her schoolmates increased as they entered puberty, Vanessa perceived this age span as "very bad", because assumed weaknesses were exploited: "La adolescencia es muy mala, como yo digo. Entonces los niños pues empiezan a-cualquier cosa por donde te ven débil es por donde te atacan." (Vanessa, 2015)[48]

However, these were the only occasions where she encountered problems. She is not sure if it is because people just pretend to accept this kind of family constellation, or if they really do not care: "Ya siendo más mayor no tenía problema nunca. No sé si porque la gente es muy falsa, o porque de verdad, no le importa." (Vanessa, 2015)[49]

However, she is well aware that there are people out there who do not understand and might one day try to harm her.

Concerning the times when Anabel was her 'father', and concerning Vanessa's sensations when Anabel started gender transition, Vanessa has very few of her own memories, which she justifies by having been "quite young". However, her mothers have told her anecdotes over and over, so that her memories may actually stem from their narratives rather than her own sensations. Thus, she was told that at the age of ten, after communion, Anabel informed her about her planned gender reassignment. Apparently, Vanessa started to weep. When asked why she was weeping, it turned out that she was worried because Anabel would have to undergo surgery: "[…] y como yo era tan pequeña a mí la palabra operar era como, te va a pasar algo y yo no quiero que te pase nada […]." (Vanessa, 2015)[50]

The same happened when Anabel went to the UTIG for genital surgery. Vanessa, fourteen years old, clearly remembers this situation:

> "Y además cuando ella la llamaron para que se operase en Málaga, yo eso sí me acuerdo porque ya era más mayor, y yo no me quería venir del hospital. Yo llorando porque se quedaba ella allí en Málaga y yo me tenía que venir, y además era el día que yo tenía una excursión, y yo me pasé toda la excursión en Cádiz, llorando. Porque yo no quería." (Vanessa, 2015)[51]

48 "Adolescence is very bad, as I say. So, the kids start to-, anything where they see you are weak is where they attack you." (Vanessa, 2015)

49 "When I was older, I never had a problem. I don't know if it's because people are so fake, or because they really don't care." (Vanessa, 2015)

50 "Because I was so young, for me the word operation was like, something will happen to you [refers to Anabel], and I don't want anything to happen to you." (Vanessa, 2015)

51 "And when they called her from Malaga for the operation, yes, I do remember that, because I was already older, and I didn't want to leave the hospital. I was crying, because she had to stay there in Malaga, and I had to go, and it was also the day I had an excursion in Cadiz. I spent the whole excursion crying. Because I didn't want this." (Vanessa, 2015)

Vanessa's account reveals that Anabel's gender reassignment, which also reassigned her 'father' to 'mother' has never been a problem in itself. Her only preoccupation was the fear of losing one of her parents:

> "A mí, a mí me preocupaba esto porque ¡que es mi madre! Que yo no quería que le pase nada a mi madre. Yo no… a mí a mí operar antes era como… es que la gente cuando se opera siempre se muere y a mí eso me preocupaba." (Vanessa, 2015)[52]

Anabel is thankful for her family's support and guesses that she would probably not have achieved her present wellbeing without her wife and daughter.

Vanessa's more or less unproblematic way of dealing with the non-normative gender of one of her parents might reassure one of my FtM research partners, Diego, who was living together with his female partner and their little son of eighteen months when I met him in 2015. To produce a child, they relied on artificial insemination by an anonymous donor with Diego's characteristics. He is somehow worried about how his son will grow up and how he will deal with his father's non-normative sex/gender history. Diego's preoccupations reflect societal prejudices. As a psychologist counselling parents of trans children, he knows, in theory, the way he must behave. However, being directly affected, there are emerging fears. He does not think that his son will have problems with him as a 'transsexual' father *per se*, and he intends to be open: "[…] porque él va vivir en un ambiente de diversidad […]. […] creo que no lo voy a ocultar nada." (Diego, 2015)[53]

However, Diego is worried how people in society in general will react because Diego does not disclose his trans history. In society, he passes as a man, yet "[…] yo no voy a ir contando que soy transexual ¿no?" (Diego, 2015)[54]

He mistrusts society. Thus, the dilemma is that, on the one hand, he will have to explain to his son that his father's transsexuality is something natural, on the other hand, he will have to advise him not to tell other people.

> "¿Cómo lo explicas tú a un niño? Que es algo natural y que no pasa nada, y sin embargo le tienes que decir que no se lo puede contar a todo el mundo. Entonces es complicado. Pues dice 'bueno Papa, ¿pero si esto es algo natural porque no se lo puede contar a mí amigo?' 'Porque tu amigo a lo mejor no le sienta bien'. Y

52 "I was worried, because, she is my mother! I didn't want anything to happen to my mother. To me… operating before was like … that people who have surgery always die, and I was worried about that." (Vanessa, 2015)

53 "Because he will live in an environment of diversity. I think I will not hide anything." (Diego, 2015)

54 "I'm not going to go telling everyone that I am transsexual. Right?" (Diego, 2015)

> (lengthened) me parece muy duro explicarlo a un niño desde muy tempranero que no toda la gente admita a todo el mundo." (Diego, 2015)[55]

As already mentioned above, Diego lives in a partnership with a gender conforming (biological) woman. The same applies to Ronaldo. Like Anabel, both experience support from their partners. In regard to sex reassignment aspirations, it is striking to note that their wives (similar to Inés) express a less 'disciplined' (Foucault 1976) sex conformity than their husbands do. They seem to focus on the wellbeing of the person rather than the anatomical congruence expected (until some years ago) from legislation. They do not expect an anatomy congruent to biological men or women, and are rather cautious concerning sex surgery. Ronaldo states:

> "Ella [referring to his partner, Emilia] me lo dice muchas veces, se … mh a mí no me importa que tú no te operes o que tú no termines la operación." (Ronaldo, 2003)[56]

Diego also recounts that his partner is reluctant to see him undergo genital surgery. She prefers his actual state of being to his taking the risk of losing sensitivity.

5.3 Who first to tell

Many of the male-to-female research partners mentioned that mothers and sisters adapted more easily to the new situation and had more understanding than the male members of the family. This is congruent with the findings of the quantitative study conducted by Dominguez Fuentes et al. (2011) in Spain that showed that of those transsexual persons who indicated having first spoken to a family member about their transsexuality, in almost half of the cases (48%) it was the mother. (Approximately one third of the participants in their study were FtM). The next person of trust within the family was the sister (13%), or both parents together (10%). The father as the first person of trust was the least mentioned (3%). This corresponds to a common sense notion of gender that depicts the mother as more understanding and caring.

Even where the mother was not the first person to tell, many of my interlocutors felt more supported by their mother than by their father, like Luisa, who, towards

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55 "How do you explain it to a child? That it's something natural and nothing happens, and yet, you have to tell him that he can't tell it to everybody. So, it's complicated. Well, he will say, 'Dad, but if this is something natural, why can't I tell my friend?' 'Because it might not suit your friend'. So, I find it very hard to explain to a child from a very early age that not everyone accepts everyone." (Diego, 2015)

56 "She [referring to his partner, Emilia] often tells me … I don't care if you don't operate or if you don't finish surgery." (Ronaldo, 2003)

the end of the 1990s first came out towards an aunt she trusted very much. She did not address her mother at that time because her mother had been preoccupied with problems of her own. Thus, Luisa did not expect any help from her at that moment. She had a bad relationship with her father and had never really had a confidential conversation with him. Therefore, he was not the person to confide in, although she knew that she could rely on him in case of an urgency. After a while, her mother started to support her. Her father had more difficulties accepting the situation and it took several years before they managed to find their way back to a relationship which, though distanced, was less conflictual.

Carmina (a generation older than Luisa), whose family belonged to the upper society, and whose father (an official under Franco) never accepted the feminine behaviour of his (only) son, was supported by her mother as well. Her mother's support was complicated, due to her socially expected loyalty towards her husband. Carmina describes her father as an authoritarian person and her mother obedient to his authority. She describes both of them as man and woman of their time:

> "Mi padre era un hombre de su época. Con putas, con queridas, con juegos de cartas, todos los vicios. [...] [Mi madre] como mujer de su época. [...]. No decía nada. Ella lo que él decía era misa. Ella no se metía en nada, porque … era una mujer que la criaron para que … fue eh para que eh acatar las ordenes de su marido." (Carmina, 2015)[57]

Her father wanted 'him' to study in Madrid to become an official, to enter into politics, and commented: "Y ya tienes un sueldo de por vida" (Carmina, 2015)[58]

Yet, Carmina was interested in painting and decoration, and wanted to study the fine arts. Her opposition to his will provoked such nasty verbal conflict that Carmina remembers this as the moment when they ceased to speak to each other. It was her mother who financed her studies. During different periods in her life, her father's rejection went so far as to distance her from the family (like hiding her). For example, at the age of ten, she was put in a Catholic boarding school run by curates, where she stayed until she finished her bachelor at around the age of eighteen. Or, another example: when she was called to do her military service, instead of using his influence to exempt her, he arranged for her to do the service in Ceuta (a Spanish enclave on the north Coast of Morocco), not least to hinder her mother from intervening. Thus, at his funeral, she made a striking appearance as a woman, and people asked who she was. Carmina sums it up:

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57 "My father was a man of his time. With whores, with lovers, with card games, all the vices. My mother, a woman of her time. She didn't say anything. What he said was 'the word'. She didn't go into anything, because … she was a woman who was raised to … it was for her to obey her husband's orders." (Carmina, 2015)

58 "And you'll have a lifetime's salary." (Carmina, 2015)

> "Yo contacto con él … poco. Porque no (lengthened) él no quería nada conmigo. Porque se avergonzaba de mí. […] Bueno, cuando él murió, no me conocía nadie. Conocían a mis hermanas, a mí no. Porque nunca me presentó a nadie." (Carmina, 2015)[59]

5.4 Without familial support

Most of my informants emphasise the importance of familial support, especially because self-awareness and the urge to disclose non-conforming gender feelings often happen at a vulnerable age (that is, adolescence). Paquita, for example, judges the backing of the family (especially the parents) as the most important kind of support; a support that helps to master all the emotional and social obstacles to which the affected individual is exposed to:

> "En nuestra vida los padres son muy importante. El apoyo de unos padres, sí, porque cuando tú te ves … que no tienes apoyo y hay una edad en que es muy difícil cuando tú tienes una edad que tú no (lenghtened) no sabes lo que te ocurre, ni asimilas muy bien las cosas, entonces … el el … lo que piensan los demás, en ese momento, no te importa. Lo que te importa es lo que piensan las personas que te quieren. Que en este caso son tus padres. Si tú no tienes un buen apoyo de tus padres … si lo tienes, todo lo demás, puedes con ello. Ahora por mucho que tú tengas en la calle, mucho apoyo. Si no lo tienes en tu casa, no te vale para nada. […] No te vale para nada porque (lengthened) porque yo he conocido amigas que no tenían apoyo en su casa, y lo pasaban fatal." (Paquita, 2015)[60]

Among my informants, Yolanda was one who lacked familial support. When we met in 2014, she had neither economic nor social resources (e.g. close friends), and had hardly any possibility to retreat to a private place. She lived in a shelter for homeless people in Seville. Being homeless and transsexual, she felt doubly marginalised:

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59 "I, contact with him … little. Because he didn't want anything to do with me. Because he was ashamed of me. Well, when he died, no one knew me. They knew my sisters, not me. Because he never introduced me to anyone." (Carmina, 2015)

60 "Parents are very important in our lives. The support of your parents, yes. Because, when you're at a difficult age, when you're at an age you don't know what is happening with you, when you can't grasp it, so … at this moment, you don't care what other people think. What you care about is what those persons who love you think. Which, in this case, are the parents. If you get no backing from your parents … if you get it, you can handle everything. Now, for all the help you receive in the street, if you don't have it in your home, it's worth nothing. […] It's worth nothing, because I've known friends, who didn't have help in their home, and they had a terrible time." (Paquita, 2015)

"[…] es muy mal muy mal muy mal. Para una persona transexual. Estar en la calle. Y no tener ayuda familiares, ni tener ningún recurso. Nada." (Yolanda, 2014)[61]

She was born in the middle of the 1960s, growing up in a marginalised neighbourhood of Cordoba together with two sisters. Her father was *un castillano* (a Castilian), her mother *una gitana* (a gypsy); thus, she labels herself *gitana* or *mestiza*. Yolanda describes her parents as having been marked by the dictatorship and remembers her father as a closed and stern man. He did not tolerate a son who behaved like a girl, that is to say, like her sister. He did not permit 'him' to play with dolls (like her sister did); instead he wanted 'him' to play football. Yet, Yolanda wanted to wear girl's clothes (like her sister), and adorn her hair (like her sister). She cried when her father forbade her to play with her sister. Her mother was a little more tolerant. Nevertheless, she scolded 'him', when 'he' "painted" his face and looked like a girl. "Me sentía más niña, no niño. Yo pensaba así. Y entonces pues mi vida pues surgió mh muy mal." (Yolanda, 2014)[62]

Because of this parental reprehension, she suppressed her gender feelings. In retrospective, she felt psychologically abused:

> "[…] dicen que claro, hay personas que nacen así, nacen así. Pero … es según también en el ámbito que te críes. Y como te críes. Aunque tú quieras ser así, si tu … tu padre rechaza eso, se vuelve loco, te mata, y te hace … no puedes. Tienes miedo. Tienes miedo a expresar." (Yolanda, 2014)[63]

Yolanda led an unsteady life. She also recalls that for a long time, she did not feel like a "person", but like something "abnormal". She was imprisoned for four years due to a drug offence. Two years ago she came to Seville, where she went to see a doctor. After telling him that she felt she was a woman, he referred her to an endocrinologist, who, in turn, referred her to the UTIG in Malaga. However, this was not the first time that Yolanda had intended to start transition. Sometime before, when Yolanda lived in Cordoba, she had already gone to a doctor to tell him about her gender feelings. This doctor also referred her to an endocrinologist. However, due to the long waiting time and emerging "problems", which forced her to leave Cordoba, she missed the appointment.

In Yolanda's case, the definite decision to start transition intersected with her move to Seville and her being homeless, all of which had happened only two years

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61 "It's very bad, very bad, very bad. For a transsexual person. To live in the streets, with neither familial help nor having any resources. Nothing." (Yolanda, 2014)

62 "I felt more like a girl, not a boy. I thought that way. And so, my life, well, it turned out very badly." (Yolanda, 2014)

63 "They say, for sure, there are persons who are born like that. But … it also depends on the environment you grow up in. And how you grow up. Even if you want to be like that, if your … your father rejects that, he goes crazy, it kills you, it makes you … you can't. You're scared. You're afraid to express yourself." (Yolanda, 2014)

before we met. Although leading an unsteady life, she nevertheless seemed to have had some shelter in her parents' house. After the death of her parents, one of her sisters claimed the house and bought out her siblings. Yolanda considered this an opportunity to start a new life:

> "[…] y entonces yo firmé y me fui. Y yo me … y yo entonces fue cuando yo me fui, yo pensé, yo pensé que yo (lengthened) quería vivir otra vida. Y la vida que quería vivir que yo yo me sentía yo, me sentía incomoda, me eh mi vida de hombre me sentía … no sabía, que no sabía lo que yo lo que yo era. […] Hasta que me descubrí por mí misma, que yo, lo que quería ser es una mujer, lo que yo era una mujer. Y entonces pues me reconocí y me estoy reconociendo y (lengthened) y me (lengthened) me identifico como una mujer. Y yo desde que yo empecé hacer el paso de mujer, yo soy diferente." (Yolanda, 2014)[64]

Yolanda has no contact with her sisters and depends on professional assistance, like social workers or the persons in the shelter where she lives. An NGO enables the trips to the UTIG in Malaga. She also finds personal and emotional support in the ATA.

Yolanda has not yet been admitted (by the UTIG) for hormonal treatment. She is tall and has a strong, stringy body, which reveals her anatomical male sex. Nevertheless, this does not stop her from showing skin and dressing up in a miniskirt, commonly attributed to women who like to call attention to themselves. Her gender performance, indeed, calls attention. In this sense, Yolanda has not yet obeyed society's call to "[…] return for the confusion [she] cause[s] […] to create a morally and aesthetically appealing form of gender difference that is experienced as affectively necessary [own transl.]" (Lindemann 2011: 194). (See Chapter 4.5). Yolanda is well aware that her gender performance attracts attention, which sometimes provokes reactions she interprets in a contradictory way. Hence, when men in cars or on motorbikes honk their horns when they see her, she feels perceived as a woman and not as a transsexual person This makes her proud. On the other hand, when the kids in the street stare at her, she is well aware that her physical traits and gender appearance are a mismatch, that the kids know she is "a man". Because she causes this confusion, Yolanda experiences problems due to her gender non-conformity and sometimes feels threatened in public. This limits her access to public space. Occasionally, she takes detours to avoid groups of young men, who tend to

64 "And then I signed and left. And I … it was when I left, I thought, I thought I wanted to live another life. And the life I wanted to live … I felt, I felt uncomfortable, I felt my life as a man … I didn't know, I didn't know what I was. Until I discovered for myself, that I, what I wanted to be is a woman, that I was a woman. And then I recognised myself and I'm recognising myself, and I identify myself as a woman. And ever since I started to make the step to be a woman, I'm different." (Yolanda, 2014)

hurt her. However, she does not avoid confrontation in general, quite the contrary. She is prepared to defend herself (a characteristic she attributes to her term of imprisonment), which led then to physical confrontations. Yet, she learned that an emerging violent group dynamic is hard to stop:

> "A uno solo le digo '¡Vente pa' acá! Vamos hablar y tú'. Que me voy a cambiar. No habla. Y se caga. Pero cuando hay tres o cuatros y están de aquí, es cuando ya se fortalece. ¿Me comprende? Y ya … ¿me comprende? se pone chulo. Y porque hay … está protegido. Porque a mí ha pasado eso. Cuando me veía con un había dos o tres, se han liado. Cuando han visto que yo respondo, se han liado a otro. ¿Me comprende? Por yo respondo. Yo estaba cuatro años en preso. En mi vida anterior, estaba cuatro años en la cárcel." (Yolanda, 2014)[65]

Legal improvements for trans individuals in Andalusia (and Spain) over the last years have helped Yolanda pursue her gender transition aims. Access to treatment for her and others with little or no economic resources, fewer obstacles to changing the legal documents according to the 'new' identity (although in Yolanda's case she must officially be permitted hormonal treatment, which is not done yet), and the establishment of a supply centre like the ATA, all point to a modern and progressive state. Yolanda is well aware of this. Nevertheless, her everyday experiences reveal that these structural improvements have not yet reached society in general. Yolanda, who, during her life, seems to have mastered serious personal and societal confrontations, perceives her environment as still violent and backward, with a lack of respect towards trans persons:

> "Hay mucha violencia eh a una persona transexual. Mucha violencia. Físicas, psicológicas, de todo. Esta, esto, yo no sé, yo no sé porque, porque en un (lengthened) en un país como estamos ya tan avanzado, como estamos en España, en un país como vivimos, que vivimos con burros catetos, porque esos son cateto burro, las personas que no comprendan a otra persona su forma de vivir, su forma de ser. Que no que … que se la rechace. Y haciéndole daño. Haciéndole daño. Porque a mí eso me hace daño. A mí lo que más me duele la vida, lo que más me duele la vida, si una persona se ría de mí. Eso no aguanto nunca. Una persona que se ría de mí, eso me da la puñala y (lengthened) y me duele. '¿Tú te rías de mí?', yo por

65 "If there's only one, I tell him 'Come here! Let's talk'. That I'm going to change. He won't say anything. He's scared. But if there are three or four, he already feels stronger. Do you understand me? And then … do you understand me? he gets pimpy. Because he feels protected. This has happened to me. One saw me, but there were two or three, and they get involved. When they've seen that I talk back, they hook up with someone else. Do you understand? Because I respond. I was four years in prison. In my previous life, I was four years in jail." (Yolanda, 2014)

> no puedo callar. '¡No me ríes de mí! ¡No!' Y no. Porque yo me gusta es respetar. ¡Y que me respeten!" (Yolanda, 2014)[66]

I do not intend to generalise the problematic outcome a lack of familial support might have on the trans individual, as in Yolanda's case (e.g.: no familial support results in living on the street). From an intersectional perspective, which emphasises the need to consider the impact of diverse social categories of disparity, the social class where Yolanda grew up (a marginalised neighbourhood) must surely be included in the analysis. Nevertheless, my interlocutors made clear that the authoritarian suppression of a non-conforming gender expression of a family member and the lack of familial support were not helpful and had a long lasting negative impact.

5.5 Concluding remarks

My interlocutors experienced different kinds of family support. Some experienced complete familial support. Some could rely only on one parent, mainly the mother. Others found support in their partnerships, and still others had no support at all on the part of the family. Tendentially, where support was anticipated, transition was started earlier. However, due to the different age groups among my informants, it might be risky to generalise because the capacity to start transition was related to societal hegemonic norms as well, which have been liberalised in the last decades. Family support entailed different kinds of coping strategies on the part of the family members. As the case of Bittor shows, the available medical support seemed to strengthen his parents in their conviction to support their son. In other cases, professional medical support was important mainly for the trans individuals themselves. Inés, for example, (Anabel's partner) did not rely on professional medical guidance. Her support was motivated by her affection for her partner as a person, and not for her partner as a clearly defined sex/gender. Where support was denied, gender non-conforming individuals experienced repudiation, which can be titled a coping strategy on the part of family members as well. Not one of my interlocutors spoke of being 'kicked out of the house', and, thus, of experiencing a

66 "There's a lot of violence towards a transsexual person. A lot of violence. Physical, psychological, everything. This is … I don't know why, because in a country where we are already so advanced, such as in Spain, in this country we live with jackasses. Because these are jackasses, these persons who don't understand that other people have their way of life, their way of being. They reject them. And are hurting them. Hurting them. Because this hurts me. What hurts me most in life is when a person laughs at me. I can't stand that. A person who laughs at me, that's like a stab, and it hurts me. 'You laugh at me?' I can't shut up. 'Don't laugh at me! No!' Because what I like, is respect. To be respected!" (Yolanda, 2014)

forced spatial dissociation. However, in Carmina's case, after her father's threats and punishments failed to have the desired effect, there happened a 'privileged' spatial dissociation (in addition to the emotional one), by putting her in a Catholic boarding school. For the sons of the upper classes (this applies to Carmina) it might have been usual to get an education in a boarding school. Yet, for her father, this proved to be a convenient strategy to hide her from his friends and acquaintances. Finally, Yolanda's case reveals that the lack of familial understanding of her gender non-conformance did not prepare her (maybe even hindered her) to adequately confront an array of everyday life situations (including the delay in starting gender transition).

5.6 Summary

This chapter showed that the well-being of some trans individuals is closely related to family and law. Legal improvements and the availability of public supportive structures not only serve these trans persons on the individual level (i.e. the psychological and biological aspects), but may also facilitate familial acceptance and support. When parents and partners are confronted with the gender transition process, as kin, they themselves experience a transition. The topic is new, unexpected and not of their own choice, and they have to deal with it. Encountering supportive structures (in one case, even the acceptance of the Church) may help family members in this process. This, in turn, has a positive effect on the self-esteem of the trans person concerned. In the opposite case, family members who refuse to accept the new gender status of their trans kin risk disrupting the family system and charging their trans kin with an additional burden of guilt. Thus, to improve the daily lives of trans people, attention should not only be focussed on the individual, but should also consider the importance and involvement of family members.

Chapter 6. The quest for citizenship

> "[…] se piensa que nosotras somos gente que han venido de otro planeta."
> *(Blanca, 2003)*[1]

The first Trans Pride ever to be held in Spain was celebrated in Seville on Saturday, June 21st, 2014. The organisers emphasised that it was even the first Trans Pride in Europe. Pride days serve to raise political and societal awareness for social groups who experience discrimination and lack of acceptance. Better known are the annual Gay Prides in many parts of the world, which are reminders of the growing 'pride' and resistance of homosexual people against police powers in the aftermath of Stonewall in 1969 (cf. Jagose 1996). Their call for equal rights serves to foster societal awareness for current inequities (structural inequities, homophobia, transphobia, discrimination); Pride days are embedded in the ideals of human rights and democracy; they repeat the question of who is 'in' and who is 'out', thus, touching issues of identity and citizenship.

Blanca addressed the existing societal rejection towards trans people in her environment by stating: "[…] hay mucho rechazo a nosotras, se piensa que nosotras somos gente que han venido de otro planeta." (Blanca, 2003)[2]

And Paquita adds: "Sí. Piensan que somos otra historia. Que no tenemos derecho a nada." (Paquita, 2003)[3]

The comparison to 'extra-terrestrials' *(de otro planeta)* and being 'another story' (*otra historia*, like a kind of time-traveller) hints to the societal Othering of trans individuals. Additionally, Paquita's statement about their 'having no rights' addresses society denying the civil rights of trans people, thus burdening them with a sense of 'not belonging'. Volpp speaks of a double face (Janus-face) that characterises citizenship "[…] simultaneously projecting the warm embrace of inclusion while excluding those who are outside the borders of belonging" (Volpp 2017: 153). In this

1 "It is thought that we are people who have come from another planet." (Blanca, 2003)

2 "We are vehemently rejected, it is thought that we are people who have come from another planet." (Blanca, 2003)

3 "Yes. They think we're another story. And that we have no rights at all." (Paquita, 2003)

sense, the Trans Pride, with its goal to foster societal awareness towards the problems trans people face, must be seen simultaneously as an event to accuse society of its exclusionary practice. This awareness raising also implies that inclusion should not depend on the treatment of a declared gender identity disorder (thus, on the obedience of the trans individuals to undergo sex/gender treatment and to fulfill the binary norm), but on the insight that society is wrong. A statement on the website of the ATA illustrated this concern in declaring: *No somos personas atrapadas en un cuerpo equivocado sino en una sociedad equivocada*.[4]

The Trans Pride in Seville (it was embedded in different activities over the week) serves as an opportunity to look at questions of inclusion and exclusion of trans people. The activities were a mixture of political manifestations, art, and festivity. On the macro level of law, politics and associations, general demands, drawbacks and achievements were formulated. On the individual level, the Pride offered an opportunity to gather with similar-minded people in a somehow protected environment.

The chapter starts with a description of the Pride, based on my observations, encounters, and conversations. Additionally, media communication (television, newspaper, and the ATA website) is analysed as well. Both the political dimension and personal encounters created stories around the Trans Pride, which will serve as a backdrop to discuss questions of intimacy and its connection to citizenship in contemporary society.

6.1 The *I Orgullo Trans* (The first Trans Pride)

The underlying ideas of a Trans Pride cannot be separated from the underlying ideas of the Gay Prides. The latter have a history of approximately half a century. Resistance against the police raid on a weekend in June 1969 in the Stonewall Inn (a gay bar also frequented by drag Queens and transgenders on Christopher Street in New York) followed by a weekend of riots, is generally acknowledged as the beginning of a growing gay pride. Although it is hardly possible to attribute the growing self-confidence of a social group to one single event, Stonewall symbolises the emergence of a lesbian and gay identity as a political power (cf. Jagose 1996). The annual festivities on Christopher Street Day on June 27th, or the annual Gay Pride Parades held in the same month, and which are performed in many countries of the world (in some countries they are forbidden), are expressions of this resistance against heteronormative societal coercions.

4 We are not people trapped in a wrong body but in a wrong society. (Source: http://www.atandalucia.org)

The emerging public appearance of homosexual persons with their claim to a gay identity has had its impact on other 'sexual' minority groups. Weeks notes that "[a]s the homosexual ways of life have become more open and variegated, more consciously political, so in their wake other claims to valid sexual identity have been heard" (Weeks 1985: 186). Referring to Gayle Rubin, he notes: "'The mobilization of homosexuals [...] has provided a repertoire of ideology and organisational technology to other erotic populations'" (Weeks 1985: 186). The construct of an LGBT+-community (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and more) is rooted in the voicing of some of these 'other erotic populations'. In this sense, a Gay Pride is thought to include and to serve the needs of a whole LGBT+-community, despite its heterogeneity. Gay Prides are usually events that try to unite all kinds of individuals who somehow identify, sympathise or solidarise with a lesbian, gay, trans, queer or (in the widest sense) non-binary, non-heteronormative 'pride'. Until now, this has been no different in Andalusia. Hence, the creation of their very own Trans-Pride in Seville, performed one week before the Gay Pride, seemed to break with the custom of a common Pride, and, thus, might be a pivotal event for the LGBT-community there.

As mentioned before, the first Trans Pride ever to be held in Europe (according to the organisers) was celebrated in Seville (Andalusia) on Saturday, June 21st, 2014. It was both the high point and the ending of the *Semana Trans Cultural* (trans cultural week). This week included several activities to foster the visibility of trans persons, and to sensitise the public to their fight for legal rights and societal acceptance. The week with its Pride was also marked by the imminent ratification of a new law called *Ley integral para la no discriminación por motivos de identidad de género y reconocimiento de los derechos de las personas transexuales de Andalucía*, approved by the Andalusian Parliament the following week, 25 of June 2014 (Parlamento de Andalucía 2014). It entered officially into effect at the beginning of July 2014 (Junta de Andalucía 2014). This new law (in short, *Ley Integral de Transexualidad*) addresses a broad range of topics (related to administration, healthcare, working environment, education, social assistance, and the specific situations of underage and elderly trans people). The overarching aim of this law is for Andalusia to accept and respect *la libre autodeterminación del género* (the free self-determination of gender), which will e.g. facilitate changing identity documents (name and sex) according to the self-identified sex/gender, and no longer according to the current practice, which demands a medical diagnosis (that is, the diagnosis of a gender dysphoria) and two years of hormonal treatment. According to the ATA, it was a political fight of more than five years to reach final approval of this law. The association emphasises its importance as a further step on the way to equal rights for trans people. Furthermore, the approval of this law is considered to be an expression of the progressive role Andalusia will play on national and global levels. The accompanying

trans manifest reads: "Con esta Ley, Andalucía se situará a la vanguardia de España, Europa y el Mundo" (Asociación de Transexuales de Andalucía 2014b).[5]

The slogan for the week was *Trans Formando Igualdad* (Trans Form Equality), and was organised by the ATA under the patronage of the *Consejería de Administración Local* (Department of Local Administration) and the *Ayuntamiento de Sevilla* (Seville City Council).

According to the programme, the week would start with a press conference on Monday at 11.30h where the *Orgullo Trans* was to be presented. Additionally, the programme announced a *Charla-Debate* (chat-debate) about Transsexuality and Human Rights on Wednesday 19.30h, a performance in a public place in the city, titled *Genocidio/Feminicidio Trans** on Friday at 11.30h, and three short films, also on Friday at 19.30h. Besides, there would be an exposition from Wednesday to Saturday in the civic centre where most of the activities were to take place, with photos, a multimedia installation and paintings from local trans people on show. The *Semana Trans Cultural* would end with the festivity (the Pride) on Saturday night.

A few months prior to the trans cultural week, I asked Anabel to watch out for and collect related articles in the newspaper, because I was interested in the way the press would report on this forthcoming event. However, she bluntly countered by saying that she could already tell me. There will not be much information about this event, she said; the press will be rather quiet. She indulged herself in memories about a Gay Pride (called *Orgullo Sur*) that took place in Seville a few years previously, and she remembered the broad and very positive news coverage, the big rainbow flag on the Parliament Building, and the generous financial support. That will not happen this time, she concluded, because the *Partido Popular* (a right wing party) is in power, and there will be neither a flag on the Parliament building, nor comparable financial support.

The Semana Trans Cultural

Episode one: The press conference

On Monday, I approach the civil centre where the press conference is due to take place. The building is situated on the same public square where the festivities are to be held at the end of the week. If I had not known that a trans-week was to start today, nothing would have made me aware of this event. Neither a poster nor any other publicity, like a trans-banner, was to be seen. I enter the building. Pictures of former Gay Prides are displayed in the entrance hall. A side room has been set up in preparation for the press conference; chairs are arranged in rows and a camera team from *Televisión Española* (TVE) is making arrangements. Lora, a trans woman

5 "With this law, Andalusia places itself at the forefront of Spain, Europe and the World" (Asociación de Transexuales de Andalucía 2014b).

I do not know yet, approaches. She suggests that I visit the upper floor to see more exhibition samples and art objects. I explain my research interest and my intention to visit the press conference. She shows interest for my project and starts talking about herself. It turns out that she works sporadically at the ATA and remembers having me on the phone when I called the association.

There are some more trans persons around I have not yet met. The press conference starts at around a quarter to eleven. Six persons (Mar as president of the ATA included) are facing the audience. The audience consists of 13 persons (three from TVE). Mar is the first speaker. She addresses the situation of trans people *(transexuales)* in general, the goals of this week, and keywords like *colectivo trans* (trans collective), *discriminación* (discrimination) and *igualdad* (equality) are uttered. After she finishes, each of the plenary speakers get a chance to speak, one by one. They represent all the political groups (from right to left) from the city council of Seville (PP, PSOE, IU-CA, UGT and Partido Andalucista). They all support further rights for trans people. There is a question from the audience. Mar answers at length and in her lively manner. She is a very committed and talented performer. Terms like *segregación* (segregation), *discriminación* and *igualdad* are mentioned again, thus, expressions to emphasise the disparate societal situation trans people experience. The press conference is over. It has lasted around 40 minutes.

In the TVE1 news at 14.15h there is a short reference to this event and the *Semana Trans Cultural* is mentioned. This is followed by a report on the flamingos in Coto Doñana, a national park south of Seville. In the news at 15.00h, the *Semana Trans Cultural* is not mentioned anymore, contrary to the story about the flamingos, which is broadcast again. A programme called *entretodos* follows the news. Selected persons talk about their money troubles, sometimes even crying with despair. The aim is to collect money for this person; an appeal to the solidarity among Spanish people. Television viewers call and express their pity; a man donates 100€, a woman 50€, and so on. The recipient expresses his gratitude in a manner that is quite theatrical, somehow exuberant, yet submissive. The first candidate this afternoon is Ursula, a young woman from Barcelona. She has four children, and she would like to open up a bar. Her first husband has turned out to be a *transexual,* (what a coincidence) who told her that he never loved her. An accompanying text reads: *Ursula quiere dinero para montar un bar, su marido es transexual.*[6] Her second husband, a Muslim, who fathered her two youngest children, forced her to wear a headscarf for ten years. Although the moderator once mentions that her first (transsexual) husband probably also suffered in their partnership, the overlaid written comments show pity for Ursula only. Ursula seems to represent the citizen worthy of support: a single mother of four, hit by the economic crisis and exploited by subjects of two

6 Ursula wants money to open up a bar, her husband is transsexual. (In: Entredodos, TVE1, 16.06.2014)

societally and politically controversial groups: trans persons and Muslims. Thus, the 'victims' of the press conference held just that morning became the 'perpetrators' in Spanish afternoon television.

A review of the four main newspapers (Diario de Sevilla, El País, ABC y El Correo de Andalucía) revealed that there was not much interest in this first trans-week. Only the ABC covered the event, with just a few lines (cf. Barahona 2014). The fact that the only reference whatsoever appeared in this newspaper was particularly amazing, because the ABC has the reputation for being right wing and conservative. I was given different explanations for this, which ranged from the political left objecting to the request of the trans community, to the support of some individuals from the political right due to personal connections. Whatever the true reasons, it illustrates that at a local level, party politics might be less rigid than expected and support can hardly be separated from personal networks.

There might be several reasons for the scanty news coverage of the *Semana Trans Cultural*. On the one hand, it might be a reflection of the marginal role trans persons occupy in society. On the other hand, two prominent topics dominated the news during that week. King Juan Carlos had just announced his resignation, and his son, Felipe VI, had been announced to be the new king from Thursday, 19th of the same week, all of which provoked a lively debate about the monarchy in Spain. Additionally, there was the World Cup football championship going on that attracted a lot of attention.

Episode two: The 'Charla-Debate' (the chat-debate)

Wednesday, 19.30h. The programme promises a discussion about transsexuality and human rights, titled *Charla-Debate* in the above-mentioned civic centre. To enter the centre, you have to climb some stairs before you reach the entrance that leads to an atrium. When I approach the building, I see Yolanda, whom I do not know yet, standing at the top of the stairs, exposed somehow to the square below. A middle aged, tall, tanned, muscular, male figure, she is wearing a tank top and a very short denim skirt. Her hair is swept up and she shows a lot of skin. She appears somehow worn-out. Her performance of the female gender seems exaggerated and contrasts with her male body. A group of teenagers passes by. Some of them look up at her and giggle. Mar and two others arrive. It is not yet sure if the panel discussion will be held because there are only a few people on site. Nevertheless, at 19.45h, Mar decides to start the *Charla-Debate*. We enter a room to the left of the atrium. The door stays open. We are seven persons now and we form a circle with our chairs. Mar starts to lecture about the new law (*ley integral de transexualidad*) that will be approved by the Andalusian Parliament the following week, and where people from the ATA and other trans persons will be present. Mar had told me previously that trans people had threatened twice with a hunger

strike; that is to say, she also threatened to chain herself to the parliament building and start a hunger strike, because the politicians were not taking their requests seriously in the beginning. This threat caused the politicians to address the subject (according to Mar) to avoid bad publicity. Le Breton (1995) relates the strategy of a hunger strike (amongst other actions) to the experience of pain. He points out that those persons who have no other means to draw attention to their situation, use an innermost condition, like pain, to exert a kind of outward pressure, which is based on the value of the human being. He argues that a hunger strike is one means for exteriorising suffering and using it as a control tool or a political weapon:

> A l'inverse, retournée contre soi la douleur est aussi un outil de contrôle de l'autre. Le chantage à la souffrance est l'arme redoubtable de ceux qui sont dépourvus de tout autre moyen de se faire entendre. Elle est une arme politique comme l'illustrent les grèves de la faim, ou ces détenus qui se mutilent d'un doigt, avalent des couteaux ou des fourchettes pour rappeler leur existence à une administration indifférente. Le plaignant parie sur la valeur absolue de l'existence de tout homme dans une société démocratique. (Le Breton 1995: 188-189)[7]

The threat of a hunger strike and its impact on the politicians (as representatives of a power system) might also be partially understood through Michel Foucault's analyses of power. He concluded that power is not neatly divided between those in power and those without power. Rather, he considers resistance to be inherent in power structures. "Where there is power, there is resistance […]" (Foucault 1990: 95). Resistance coexists with power and is "[…] absolutely its contemporary" (Foucault 1988: 122). Thus, according to Foucault, there is not just one single 'revolutionary' point of resistance directed from outside against a power system. Rather, there exist diverse kinds of resistances, which reflect the relational aspect of power relations:

> Hence there is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary. Instead there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case: resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable; others that are spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or violent; still others that are quick to compromise, interested, or sacrificial; by definition, they can only exist in the strategic field of power relations. (Foucault 1990: 95-96)

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7 "On the other hand, when turned against oneself, pain is also a tool for controlling the other. Emotional blackmail is the dreadful weapon of those who have no other way of making their voices heard. It is a political weapon, as illustrated by hunger strikes, or those prisoners who mutilate a finger, swallow knives or forks to remind an indifferent administration of their existence. The complainant bets on the absolute value of the existence of every man in a democratic society [own transl.]" (Le Breton 1995: 188-189).

The threat of a hunger strike is one of 'these special cases of resistances'. Yet, due to this inscription of resistance in power, and being "[…] spread over time and space at varying densities […]" (Foucault 1990: 96), he notes that (although radical divisions might happen),

> […] more often one is dealing with mobile and transitory points of resistance, producing cleavages in a society that shift about, fracturing unities and effecting regroupings, furrowing across individuals themselves, cutting them up and remolding them, marking off irreducible regions in them, in their bodies and minds. (Foucault 1990: 96)

Considering the legal achievements trans people in Andalusia have gained in the last years, the threat of a hunger strike (as emotional blackmail) seems a bit theatrical. For example, the implementation of the *Ley reguladora de la rectificación registral de la mención relativa al sexo de las personas* (Jefatura del Estado 2007) (gender identity law, for short) in 2007 has facilitated the legal recognition of their sex for many of my informants. This law enables trans individuals of legal age and with Spanish nationality to change their name and sex on their documents without having to undergo sex reassignment surgery (Jefatura del Estado 2007). Yet, the approval of this law was already related to a threatened hunger strike by trans people. According to the president of the ATA, the preliminary work of this law of 2007 went hand-in-hand with the preliminary work for the equal treatment of marriage for gay people, and was supported by a class of intellectuals and artists, who assembled in broad numbers, especially in Madrid. Yet, whereas the *ley de matrimonio igualitario* (gay marriage) (cf. Jefatura del Estado 2005) was approved in 2005, an additional effort on the part of the trans community was obviously necessary to enact the law of 2007 (gender identity law):

> "Sin embargo aun siendo un compromiso del gobierno, aprobar una ley de matrimonio igualitario, y una ley de identidad de género para las personas transexuales, se aprueba en 2005 la ley de matrimonio igualitario, y la ley de identidad de género se queda en el cajón (knocks on the table). No la querían sacar del cajón sin las personas transexuales no amenazamos con una huelga de hambre en 2007. Y es a partir de que se anuncia una huelga de hambre, cuando se aprueba la ley de identidad de género, que aunque he dicho tiene aspectos positivos, tiene otros tantos negativos." (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)[8]

8 "However, even though it was a government commitment to pass an equal marriage law and a gender identity law for transsexual people, the Equal Marriage Act was passed in 2005 and the Gender Identity Act was left in the drawer. They didn't want to take it out of the drawer, not until we transsexual persons threatened with a hunger strike in 2007. And it is from the moment a hunger strike was announced that the gender identity law was approved, that

She criticises the fact that the law of 2007 still coerces trans people into a medical examination. They have to comply to a binary sex norm expressed through bodily characteristics that are socially attributed to men or women. For example, article 4 lists the *requisitos para acordar la rectificación* (requirements for allowing the rectification). It demands the diagnosis of a gender dysphoria carried out by a doctor or a clinical psychologist. Additionally, medical treatment (normally the prescription of hormones) of at least two years is required *"[…] para acomodar sus características físicas a las correspondientes al sexo reclamado*" ("to accommodate their physical characteristics to those corresponding to the sex claimed" [own transl.]) (Jefatura del Estado 2007: 2).

Thus, on the one hand, Mar acknowledges the improvements of this law for trans persons because it allows the name change independently from genital surgery, and because the civil status of the person does not matter:

> "Es cierto que la ley de 2007 es una ley positiva en dos aspectos. Primero: porque no es necesario una cirugía genital para acreditar el nombre, algo que ya estaba contestado por pues por el propio Parlamento Europeo por el comisario de los derechos humanos, que dice que no se puede pedir eh la esterilización de las personas transexuales para acceder a un cambio legal, puesto que eso es vulnerar los derechos de las personas transexuales y sobre todo porque no corresponde a la a la realidad. ¿No? Lo que prima es el sexo psicosocial y no el sexo genital. […] Pues esta ley es positiva en esto, es positiva también en que no cuestiona el estado civil de las personas. Hay otras leyes eh … en el mundo, donde las personas transexuales tienen que estar solteras. Si no, no pueden acceder al cambio de nombre. En España no sucede esto." (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)[9]

On the other hand, she criticises the shortcomings of the law of 2007:

> "¿Pero qué tiene de negativo? Pues tiene de negativo pues que (lengthened) ha dejado fuera a los menores, a inmigrantes, y ha dejado … y nos exige eh de alguna manera acreditar como un requisito para el cambio de nombre, un certificado

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although I said it has positive aspects, it has just as many negative ones." (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)

9 "For sure, the law of 2007 is a positive law in two aspects. First, because you don't need genital surgery to accredit the name, something that was already contested by the European Parliament itself, by the Human Rights Commissioner, who says one can't ask for sterilisation of transsexual persons to access a legal change, since that's violating the rights of transsexual persons, and most of all, because it does not correspond to reality. No? What matters is the psychological sex, and not the genital sex. […] Thus, this law is positive in this. It's also positive because it doesn't question the civil status of the persons. There are other laws, eh … in the world, where transsexual persons have to be single. If not, they can't access the name change. In Spain this does not happen." (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)

> médico donde diga que yo estoy enferma mental. Eso es lo que tiene de negativo. Eso es lo que pedimos que se cambie en esta ley. ¿No? Porque eh suponer a priori que todas las personas transexuales son sospechosas de ser enfermas mentales nos parece altamente discriminatorio, atentar contra la dignidad, contra la intimidad, y contra el derecho a la propia imagen." (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)[10]

Diego holds a similar position. He perceives the new upcoming law as recognising sex as a change from "the sex of the body" to "the sex of the brain". He claims that the 2007 law has to be changed, because in order to get legal recognition, people are forced to hate their bodies. He comments that trans individuals have to be diagnosed with a gender dysphoria (which signifies feeling uncomfortable with their body) to qualify for hormonal treatment.

Yet, not all of the requirements of the 2007 law are perceived as discriminatory by some of my informants. A few expressed their concern about the impact of the upcoming approval of the *Ley Integral de Transexualidad*. To identify oneself as *transexual* and to be able to change name and sex without any medical or psychiatric consultation is not welcomed by all of my informants (see Chapter 6.3).

Nevertheless, the endeavours and the insistence of the ATA have proven successful, somehow confirming Foucault's statement about the possibilities of resistance:

> [...] as soon as there is a power relation, there is a possibility of resistance. We can never be ensnared by power: we can always modify its grip in determinate conditions and according to a precise strategy. (Foucault 1988: 123)

The draft of the law has now passed through all the barriers and the politicians even contacted Mar (as president of the ATA) on two occasions during its preparation phase to discuss some issues they intended to address. This *Ley integral de transexualidad* involves some important changes to the current situation. Inter alia, a special identity card is mentioned, which contains the individual's name and sex based on self-identification and without any further medical requirements. This identity card can be used when dealing with public authorities, yet it will be valid only in Andalusia, and will not replace the national identity card.

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10 "But, what's negative about it? Well, it's negative that it has left out the minors, the immigrants, and left out … it requires us in some way to demonstrate, like a prerequisite for the name change, a medical certificate that states that I am mentally ill. That's what's negative about it. That's what we ask to be changed in this law. No? Because to assume a priori that every transsexual person is suspected of being mentally ill, that seems to us highly discriminating, it's against dignity, against intimacy, and against the right to one's own image." (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)

During the *Charla-Debate*, four women join us, so we are finally eleven persons in the circle. *"No es una ley de identitad de género, pero una ley integral de transexualidad"*[11], Mar lectures. There are questions, the participants all speak at once, and the mood becomes chatty. Mar mentions that the WHO (World Health Organisation) recently suggested that the practice of forced medical treatment of trans people be stopped because this was comparable to torture. She was probably referring to the interagency statement elaborated by several agencies of the United Nations, which considers the compulsory sterilisation of transgender persons, among others, to be a human rights violation, and recommends that the laws which require forced sterilisation of transgender people should be removed (World Health Organization 2014). Mar's reference to this organisation and its global presence gives authority to her arguments and goes alongside other official statements which emphasise that the demands of diagnosis, treatment and surgery conflict with human rights. For example, the Yogyakarta Principles, which apply to human rights in respect of sexual orientation and gender identity, declare:

> Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law. Persons of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities shall enjoy legal capacity in all aspects of life. Each person's *self-defined* [italics, CI] sexual orientation and gender identity is integral to their personality and is one of the most basic aspects of self-determination, dignity and freedom. No one shall be forced to undergo medical procedures, including sex reassignment surgery, sterilisation or hormonal therapy, as a requirement for legal recognition of their gender identity. (International Commission of Jurists 2007: 11-12)

Some of the participants share their experiences with the UTIG and reveal that they have been asked questions which (in their view) were in no way related to their transsexuality. Yolanda (the person who had caught my attention at the top of the stairs in front of the civic centre) complains about the psychologist who told her that she does not fulfil the *imagen* (image) necessary to start with gender transition. Mar supports Yolanda's indignation and calls the UTIG staff *sexista* (sexist) because they insist on a certain gender image; they want the trans women to be very feminine. Once again, she emphasises her struggle for depathologisation and is very activistic. They will have to *"¡coger al toro por los cuernos!"*[12] to achieve this, she states. Further anecdotes of treatments rejected by specialists are told. Mar opines that each person should be able to decide for him- or herself about the kind of treatment they want and in which order. She is already two steps ahead in her

11 "It's not a law about gender identity, but a comprehensive transsexuality law." (Mar, president of the ATA, 2014)

12 "To take the bull by the horns!" (Mar, president of the ATA, 2014)

struggle. Next, she intends to blame the responsible persons for the harm they have done to transsexual people.

After the *Charla-Debate* has ended, we visit the exhibition room, get background information on the artists, their works (paintings, audio-visual art, children's drawings), and end the meeting with a drink in a nearby bar. Sitting outside the bar around a table, Mar turns out to be a sympathetic listener, as she hears out the complaints raised. Her feedback is understanding. She agrees and encourages each person as they describe their experiences of injustice.

Episode three: The 'Genocidio/Feminicidio Trans*' performance

On Friday, at about 11.30h, I reach the *Plaza Nueva*, the square where the performance titled Genocide/Feminicide Trans* was scheduled to take place. This square leads to the town hall, and a group of elderly persons is protesting noisily near the entrance of the building. They are booing and whistling. It is all about pension cuts. From the expected performance, there is so far nothing to be seen. Only Rubina is already waiting, alone.

When I first met Rubina a few days before, I could not tell from her appearance or her rather low voice, if she was transitioning from man to woman or from woman to man, or neither. Since she was unshaven and wore trousers and a shirt, I guessed she was a trans man. One evening, she joined my partner and me for dinner. We were going to meet some friends in a restaurant. While sitting together and chatting, one of the friends addressed us all with the term *chicos*. Rubina protested and insisted on being called *chica* (and not *chico*). Thus, I learned that she was intending to transition from male to female.

Back at the Plaza. With some delay, the ATA group arrives and starts the performance. There are eight participants, all standing quietly behind a banner. Rubina joins them. The banner reads in big, capital letters: *NI UNA +*, *LA TRANSFOBIA MATA*, and *STOP GENOCIDIO TRANS* (Not one more, transphobia kills, stop trans genocide). In front of them lies a pile of high-heeled shoes on a white, blood-stained piece of fabric. Twelve pairs of high-heeled shoes are neatly aligned in two rows. Each pair of shoes stands in a puddle of blood (painted in red). A cardboard poster, decorated with the flag of the corresponding country, is put next to each pair of shoes. The name of the country and the number of murdered trans persons are written on each piece of cardboard: e.g. United States, 69 *muertes* (deaths); Turkey, 30 *muertes*; Spain, 6 *muertes* (see illustration 6.1); Honduras, 41 *muertes*; Venezuela, 54 *muertes*. The performance aims to draw attention to the worldwide and murderous impact of transphobia. A crew from TVE is present again. They are interviewing Mar.

The performance attracts the attention of passers-by. People pause, look at the scene and take pictures. For a while, there is even a small crowd. However, as time

Illustration 6.1. Part of the performance highlighting the impact of transphobia in Spain

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goes by, interest fades, the crowd disperses, people leave and the ATA group starts to clear up. Every article used for the presentation ends up inside the waste container of a nearby newspaper stand. The owner of the newspaper stand complains that they just overfilled it. Thus, to avoid trouble, they drag the waste container across the square to another one to empty it.

Episode four: The projection of short films

Three short films are shown on Friday evening in the attic storey of the civic centre. With twenty-two spectators, it is the best-visited event so far. Mar and her entourage are sitting in the front row. The audience is watching quietly. After the projections, a young woman stands up and introduces herself as being affiliated to a university, and looking for trans people willing to answer questions about stigmatisation and transphobia. This Q&A would last for about ten minutes. Mar rebukes me for not having sent the photos I took during the past days to the ATA yet.

Episode five: I Orgullo Trans – the festivity

The festivities took place at the front of the public square in the Alameda. The rear part of the square was destined to hold the *Día de la Música* (Day of Music), which took place the same night (different musicians were playing on several sites

in town that night). Despite the gentrification process this neighbourhood has experienced in the last years (see Chapter 4.4), the Alameda was well suited for the trans festivities because of its alternative-trendy and gay-friendly atmosphere. A stage with light system, loud speakers and screen had been installed. The trans flag was hoisted above the stage. This banner consists of five horizontal stripes; the top and bottom in light blue, two in rose, and one in white in the middle of the flag. Light blue and rose symbolise the traditional gender roles: light blue for male, and rose for female. The white stripe stands for gender non-conforming individuals, such as intersexual persons, trans persons, or individuals who consciously do not want to define themselves according to the binary gender system (http://www.andersartig.info/index.php?article_id=116, accessed 08. April 2019). To the left and right of the stage are two clouds of balloons in these colours. A bar hosted by members of the trans community has been set up on the square as well, next to a gay bar.

At lunchtime, Paella is offered at the 'trans-bar', thus, there are already people around at this time of the day, although the actual Pride will only take place in the evening. Rubina joins us. The beard stubbles have been shaved; she has put on some make-up and earrings. She is wearing white women's sandals, jeans, and a T-shirt. A kind of crinkled paper serves to form breasts under her T-shirt. Her performance is not exaggerated, rather discreet. She is feeling a little nervous, she confesses. Living in Madrid, she has come to Seville especially for this week. It is her first time to appear in public as a woman. It is easier to do it here than back home in Madrid, she explains. Although she stems from a 'good house' (her mother is a university professor) and describes her parents as having a liberal attitude, she tells us that they do not know about their son's gender feelings (or at least they do not speak about it). Only an elder cousin, who defines herself as a lesbian, knows about it. There is an UTIG in Madrid as well, but Rubina does not intend to go there, not until she appears more feminine. Up to now, it would make no sense, she states: "*Ellos tienen el poder*" ("They have the power"). Nevertheless, she aims to receive the female hormones to make the gender transition. She is not yet sure if she wants the genital reassignment as well. She feels attracted to women. That is why she started to define herself as a lesbian (somehow simultaneously with her gradually coming out). Rubina is often absorbed in thought. She is serious and smiles rarely, even looks a little sad.

The actual Pride starts after seven o'clock in the evening. There is no prior parade, something which usually precedes Prides (with wagons, music and dancing). People gather right next to the stage. Mar and another host enter the stage and open the evening with speeches. This is followed by playback shows, mostly performed by younger actors, who stick to pop music. Only two of the actors (one of them, Ramira) entertain the audience with *coplas* (a folkloric and traditional type of music in Spain, see Introduction). As far as I can judge, Ramira is the only one who sings live. All of them are performing at no charge, which is mentioned several times.

There are a lot of people, yet the site is not overcrowded. The atmosphere is joyful, people are dancing, drinking, laughing or just watching. In between, there is an award ceremony initiated by the ATA. Two kinds of prizes are awarded: a positive one (called *Muestra-T*) and a negative one (called *Retira-T*). The *Muestra-T* acknowledges persons or institutions whose activities benefit the concerns of the trans community. In contrast, the *Retira-T* is given to persons or institutions thought to have stirred up transphobia and hindered social equity. They award three (positive) *Muestra-Ts*. The first is given to a music band that created a song in favour of a trans minor in Malaga, a child who was not allowed by the school authority to express the felt gender. The second goes to an association that draws attention to the difficult situation of minor trans individuals. Finally, the third is given to a well-known elderly trans woman in Andalusia for her pioneering role in making transsexuality visible during a time when it was criminalised. The (negative) *Retira-Ts* go to two individuals and the UTIG. The individuals are both associated with the case of the above-mentioned minor in Malaga; the director of the private college and the president of the diocesan to which this school belongs. The UTIG is blamed for pathologising trans persons and is accused of violating their fundamental personal rights (like intimacy, integrity of the person and self-image).

At midnight, the loud speakers fall silent. There are still a lot of people milling about, in a festive mood, but the Pride is over. I can see Mar on the stage, having pictures taken with others.

6.2 Private and public / Intimacy and citizenship

The Trans Pride in Seville fits well in the growing awareness around trans issues on an international level (see Chapter 1). Furthermore, it reflects an increasing self-esteem within the trans community. The above-described 'episodes' around the first *Orgullo Trans* in Andalusia reveal insights related to questions of inclusion and exclusion. The week offered me, on the one hand, an opportunity to witness individual endeavours, and on the other hand, to learn more about the societal challenges trans people face. Additionally, it gave me the opportunity to witness strategies the ATA (as the representive of the trans collective) chose to address perceived inequities. Furthermore, the struggle for (and finally the legal approval of) the new *Ley Integral de Transexualidad* (especially the request to be allowed to change the legal gender status based on a self-definition and no longer on the basis of a medical assessment) demonstrate how concepts of individuality and citizenship depend on time and space. For example, Nieto (2011) considers the notion of the free and autonomous individual as the product most characteristic of the western humanistic tradition. He regards *transgeneristas* (transgender, which he distinguishes from *transexuales*) as transgressors who refuse the binary gender system due to their

notion of the body, and attributes to them a great potential in fighting for these humanistic goals. Due to their pronounced focus on the body in its integrity, they would emphasise and demonstrate the right for individuality detached from outward impositions:

> […] el transgenerista no admitiría la imposición de ningún otro que no fuera él mismo. Toda otra imposición distinta a la suya propia, que se distancie de su existencia, se considera tiranía. Así, el transgenerista hace de su biografía centro. Como individuo entiende su vida centralmente; hace de ella eje central, por encima de cualquier otra autoridad. (Nieto 2011: 242)[13]

The *Ley Integral de Transexualidad*, with its request for sex/gender self-determination reflects this call for the right of individuality. It accepts the individual biography and does not impose 'any other authority', thus, granting social recognition for trans people without unwanted external gender confirmation treatment. The advent of the *Ley Integral de Transexualidad* and the Trans Pride might be conceptualised within contemporary western ideas about citizenship, that is, within a concept of 'intimate citizenship'. Referring to T.H. Marshall's influential work on citizenship in 1950, Plummer notes that citizenship traditionally has meant "[…] being *recognized as belonging* and *participating* in a group where one is expected to do certain things – *obligations* in return for certain *rights*" (Plummer 2005: 90). T.H. Marshall divided citizenship into three parts, referring to civil, political and social rights. The civil part encompasses the "individual freedom-liberty of the person" (Marshall and Bottomore 1996: 8), e.g., freedom of speech, the right to own property, and to be legally equal to others. The political part encompasses the right to hold political office, thus, the right to form part of a political authority, like a seat in parliament or local government. The 'social' part is connected to the right of economic welfare and security, or in broader terms "[…] to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society" (Marshall and Bottomore 1996: 8).

Historically, these rights have not always been neatly divided and granted to every individual of a society. In feudal societies, for example, there were other criteria, such as status or ancestry, which defined the individual's social position (thus, the social possibilities). Citizenship developed together with the emergence of the nation-state. However, Volpp notes: "As citizenship evolved in tandem with the Western nation-state, it incorporated a presumptively masculine and heteronormative

13 "Transgender persons would not admit impositions of any other than themselves. Any imposition other than their own that distances them from their existence is considered tyranny. Thus, transgender persons make their biography central. As individuals, they understand their life centrally; they make it the central axis, above any other authority [own transl.]" (Nieto 2011: 242).

subject. Women and sexually non-normative subjects were considered unfit candidates for full membership" (Volpp 2017: 154). Thus, whereas the civil, political and welfare domains have been central in the 'traditional' understanding of citizenship, the last decades have seen new theorising about citizenship. Rights concerning the body have become increasingly important. Nowadays, depending on perspective, there exist multiple approaches to the meanings and uses of the term "citizenship". According to Shachar et al., citizenship is reflected upon

> [...] as legal status and political membership; as rights and obligations; *as identity and belonging* [italics, CI]; as civic virtues and practices of engagement; and as a discourse of political and social equality or responsibility for a common good. (2017: 5)

The dimension of 'identity and belonging' is important to understand the advent of the *Ley Integral de Transexualidad* and the Trans Pride. New theories of citizenship have produced terms, such as 'sexual citizenship', 'intimate citizenship', or 'affective citizenship', that refer (depending on the focus) to issues regarding sexual minorities, questions of private practices, of identities, rights claims (in relation to the body), to sexuality, to reproduction, and to belonging, amongst others (Volpp 2017). Sticking to the term 'intimate citizenship', Plummer notes: "Intimate citizenship refers to all those areas of life that appear to be personal but that are in effect connected to, structured by, or regulated through the public sphere" (Plummer 2003: 70). For Oleksy, the concept of intimate citizenship "[...] describes how our private decisions and practices have become intertwined with public institutions and state policies, such as public discourse on sexuality, legal codes, medical system, family policy, and the media, to name just a few" (2009: 4). Especially in the Western World, "[i]deas around intimate citizenship have been increasingly placed on the political agenda" (Plummer 2005: 79). This development, for instance, is reflected in discussions of the search for a 'European identity' and 'European Citizenship', where the inclusion of LGBT+ persons (that is, the recognition of their rights claims) has become a key aspect (Ammaturo 2017). According to Ayoub and Patternote (2014), there is a constitutive relationship between the LGBT+ community and the 'European Project', based on a shared set of values. This is the respect for fundamental human rights, which includes the defense of freedom, rejection of discrimination, or the respect for identity for all citizens (regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity).

Plummer observes: "In much of the Western literature on this, great emphasis has been placed on citizenship *as the right to choose*: to choose your partner, your sexual activities, whether you have a child or not, or what you do to your body" (Plummer 2005: 79). He calls it the "postmodern citizenship of choice" (Plummer 2005: 79). Although this statement reflects the given importance on individuality within this new theorizing about citizenship, emphasising the principle of 'choice'

might not be adequate. Sexual desire or gender identity is hardly a question of choice. For example, about being trans, Luisa notes: "No es una cosa que tu hayas elegido"[14] (Luisa, 2003).

Thus, claiming (or being granted) specific rights based on the individual situation should not be confused with 'choice', which might imply a kind of moodiness.

'Citizenship' usually refers to the public sphere, while the term 'intimate' refers to the private one. Thus, the concept of 'intimate citizenship' has been described as being

> [...] concerned with all those matters linked to our most intimate desires, pleasures and ways of being in the world. Some of this must feed back into the traditional citizenship (of civil, political and social rights); but equally much of it is concerned with new spheres, new debates, and new stories. Its starts to provide a normative frame – and maybe even a legal one – in which people can make decisions around the *control (or not) over* one's body, feelings, relationships; *access (or not) to* representations, relationships, public spaces etc; and *socially grounded choices (or not) about* identities, gender experiences, erotic experiences. (Plummer 2005: 91)

As such, this concept bridges the personal and the political:

> Intimate citizenship recognizes emerging 'intimacy groups and identities,' along with their rights, responsibilities, and need for recognition in emerging zones of conflict, and suggests new kinds of citizens in the making. Among these may be the cybercitizen, the new reproductive citizens [...], new family citizens, [...], as well as transgendered citizen [...]. (Plummer 2003: 66)

The *Semana Trans Cultural* exemplarily reflected these 'zones of conflict' by bridging the personal and the political, and making intimate trans issues public. They are intimate because they concern the queering (or deconstruction) of the biologically (thus, in the common sense naturally) sexed body. Political in the sense of going public, which includes occupying space, exposing themselves, pointing to one's existence and formulating drawbacks concerning one's societal integration. Intimate in creating a sense of togetherness, political by making the public aware of their situation. Oleksy (2009), referring to Plummer, also emphasises the meaning of storytelling inherent in the concept of intimate citizenship, which links the private with the political: "[...] people use their own stories and those of others to 'construct' themselves" (Oleksy 2009: 4). The *Semana Trans Cultural* offered the opportunity to hear and share many stories.

The advent of the *Ley Integral de Transexualidad* and the *Semana Trans Cultural*, reflected through the lens of 'intimate citizenship' also illustrates the political di-

14 "It's not something you have chosen." (Luisa, 2003)

mension of the personal (sex/gender). In her much noted article first published in 1984, Gayle Rubin prompts the reader to think about sex and elaborates the basics for a political theory of sex (Krass 2003: 24). She notes: "Like gender, sexuality is political. It is organized into systems of power, which reward and encourage some individuals and activities, while punishing and suppressing others" (Rubin 1993: 34). Therefore, the above made subdivision in private and public, intimate and citizenship must not be regarded as a strict dichotomization, because "[…] the modern state regulates even the most 'private' realms of the family, the body, and sexuality through forms of surveillance, self-discipline, and social welfare" (Volpp 2017).

6.3 Identity and community

A flyer distributed by the ATA asks the LGBT-community in big letters if they really notice the 'T'. The question scrutinises the weight given to Trans issues in the politics of the LGBT-community. It questions whether trans persons are perceived as equal members, especially compared to the gay community. Trans individuals complaining about not being accepted is not a new topic. Nor is being discriminated against by the gay community an issue which was also addressed by some of my informants. For example, Luisa complains that among gay people, there is *"demasiada fobia hacia las personas transexuales"* ("too much phobia towards transsexual people"). During the *Semana Trans Cultural*, Mar (as president of the ATA) publicly blamed the gay community for behaving transphobically. She declared that trans people experience inequality and discrimination, not only in society in general, but in the LGBT-community as well. Citing the trans manifest, she stated:

> "El barco es el mismo porque el destino es el mismo, la igualdad; pero en la nave no estamos todos en el mismo sitio, el colectivo de transexuales está limpiando las calderas y es hora de que todos viajemos en primera clase." (Asociación de Transexuales de Andalucía 2014a)[15]

The fact that gay and lesbian concerns arise from questions of sexual orientation, whereas trans concerns are about gender identity, already hints to the heterogeneous construct of an LGBT+-community. As a conglomerate of diverse groups, whose common grounds are basically 'private' issues, such as sexuality and gender identity, the LGBT+-community comprises a broad field of interests. Each 'group' experiences different challenges, therefore the goals might differ. For example, in the beginning of the trans movements (going back a few decades), the discourse

15 "The ship is the same because the destination is the same, equality; but inside the vessel we aren't in the same place, the trans collective is cleaning the cauldron and it's time that we all travel first class." (Asociación de Transexuales de Andalucía 2014a)

around medicalisation and pathologisation served to distinguish the trans movements from the gay movement (Tena 2013). Amongst others, this different understanding aimed to prevent transsexuality and homosexuality from being confused. While gay people advocated against their medical categorisation as mentally ill, trans people, on the contrary, affirmed the discourse of illness to explain their existence and claims (especially access to the medical system to alter their physical situation). Homosexuality *per se* as a mental illness was removed from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) by the American Psychiatric Association) in 1974 and from the diagnostic taxonomy of the World Health Organisation (ICD-10) in 1990 (Cochran et al. 2014). In contrast, transsexuality was included in the ICD in 1977 and in the DSM-III in 1980 (Tena 2013).

> Así, mientras gays y lesbianas recorrieron un camino hacia el estatus de sano, la población transexual asumió el discurso de la enfermedad como un instrumento que ayudaba a alejarla en el imaginario social de las ideas de perversión y vicio. (Tena 2013: 41)[16]

This is just one example to illustrate that the LGBT+-community embraces differing prerequisites and interests and that the groups sometimes walk on a different timeline. Nevertheless, from early on, there were also voices inside the trans movements that demanded a depathologisation of their situation. However, this was in competition with the demands of access to the health care system (e.g., to have the medical and financial support for gender transition), which is/was necessarily linked to a medical diagnosis. The voices inside the trans movements, advocating for a depathologisation of their situation are currently getting a stronger hearing. Their struggle is reflected in the ICD-11, which was released in 2018, and will come into effect in 2022. Trans people will no longer be classified in the category "mental and behavioural disorders", but under "Conditions related to sexual health" (World Health Organization 2018). Argentina is said to be the first country to have implemented a law in 2012 that allows trans individuals to change their legal documents (from male to female or vice versa) by a simple administrative process (cf. World Health Organization 2016); or as Mar has it, on the "*libre autodeterminación del género*" ("free gender self-determination"):

> "El país que con sorpresa eh se ha situado a la cabeza mundial en reconocer de forma implícita a los derechos de las personas transexuales es Argentina. Argentina en 2012 aprobó la ley de identidad de género más avanzada de todo el mundo. Porque le devuelva a las personas transexuales eh aquello que se llama

16 "Thus, while gays and lesbians were travelling a path to a status of health, the transsexual people assumed the discourse of illness, like an instrument that helped to remove it from ideas of perversion and vice in the social imagination [own transl.]" (Tena 2013: 41).

> la libre autodeterminación del género. ¿Qué es la libre autodeterminación del género? Esta definición forma parte ya de una nueva figura socio-jurídica a nivel internacional. Y significa que nadie nada más que yo puedo decidir por mí misma. Y que ningún agente externo ni la medicina ni el estado tiene la potestad de decidir quién yo soy." (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)[17]

Diener (2017) observes that "[…] recent efforts to establish a global legal infrastructure constitute an expanded ideal of citizenship" (Diener 2017: 49). Exemplarily, he mentions the Declaration of Human Rights, humanitarian interventions by the United Nations and the International Court of Justice. It could be argued that in emphasising the supra State dimension of trans issues (*"una nueva figura socio-jurídica a nivel internacional"*), which will eventually lessen the power of the nation (*"ni el estado tiene la potestad de decidir quién yo soy"*), the ATA is expanding the concept of citizenship as well.

In Andalusia, the *Ley Integral de Transexualidad* reflects this discourse : "Por eso la ley que estamos pidiendo en Andalucía, se basa en la libre autodeterminación del género." (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)[18]

Additionally, Mar compares their current demands with the claims feminist movements made decades ago and which are closely connected to maturity and body:

> "Es como aquello que las mujeres ¿eh? consiguieron, cuando todavía no tenían derecho al voto, cuando las mujeres no podían tener una cuenta corriente, o cuando las mujeres no podían ni siquiera viajar ni heredar, ¿eh? inclusive ni el derecho al aborto. ¿No? Las mujeres eh empezaron a decir: Nosotras parimos, nosotras decidimos. Y las personas transexuales decimos ahora: Mi cuerpo es mío, yo decido." (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)[19]

This feminist argumentation matches the historical debate about trans citizenship. Monro notes that, although not exclusive,

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17 "The country that, to its surprise, has situated itself at the top of the world in recognising implicitly the rights of transsexual people is Argentina. In 2012, Argentina approved the most advanced gender identity law worldwide. It returns to transsexual people what is called free gender self-determination. What is free gender self-determination? This definition already forms part of a new socio-juridical figure on an international level. And it signifies that nobody else but me can decide for me. And that no external agent, neither medicine nor the state, has the authority to decide who I am." (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)

18 "Thus, the law we are asking for in Andalusia is based on free gender self-determination." (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)

19 "It's like what the women achieved when they didn't yet have the right to vote, when women weren't allowed to have a bank account, or when women couldn't even travel, or inherit, or have the right to abort. No? The women started to say: 'We give birth, we decide'. And we, the transsexual persons now say: 'My body is mine, I decide'." (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)

> [f]eminist models of citizenship are important for trans citizenship, because of the emphasis on gender equality and because many trans people identify as women and as feminists, and because feminists provide an analysis of diversity, an issue of key relevance to trans citizenship. (Monro 2001: 132)

However, these demands for free gender self-determination and depathologisation also provoke uncertainties and discomfort among some of my informants, especially those who feel well attended in the UTIG in Malaga, that is, well cared for by the medical system. For example, one of the male-to-female interlocutors was worried about the impact this law will have. She feared that the UTIG in Malaga would vanish because the struggle for this law and the decentralisation of the health care service for trans people were requested simultaneously. Trusting in the doings of the UTIG, she feared that any doctor, even those without profound knowledge of trans topics, would be allowed to attend to trans people. She did not consider this to be desirable because she attributed to the UTIG high professional competence and an international recognition achieved over years of experience. Furthermore, she wondered what would happen to her planned corrective operation if the Unit in Malaga no longer exists. Nevertheless, she kept her doubts about the new law to herself. She revealed them during our interview only after the recorder was turned off. It seemed that she did not want to stir up a hornet's nest, or get in the way of the trans people who wish the current practice to change.

One of the female-to-male interlocutors, who felt very well attended to in the UTIG in Malaga, expressed his doubts about this new law as well. When we first met, the decentralisation of the health services for trans people had already been implemented, but on a voluntary basis. He had received a letter informing him that he could visit a doctor in Seville when desired. Yet, he intended to keep going to Malaga. However, he also feared that the Unit would disappear. In his view *"la ley de Mar"* ("the law of Mar"), as he calls it, has not been implemented correctly.

In contrast, for others, the structure imposed by the UTIG (in addition to the regular, time-consuming trips to Malaga to keep the appointments) had been burdensome from the beginning. For example, Diego experienced the process in the UTIG as rigid and disliked always having to travel to Malaga. He criticises: "Allí era todo como un protocolo." (Diego, 2015)[20]

First, he had to visit the psychologist. Only after the psychologist's permission could he see the endocrinologist. Yet, he considers himself lucky because he was able to move on to the endocrinologist and start taking hormones after only six months (he saw people waiting for two years, he states). However, the regular trips to Malaga, paying for each trip, were a hassle. He could not understand why he had to get up at five o'clock in the morning, just to go to Malaga for *"tener que*

20 "There, everything had to follow protocol." (Diego, 2015)

sacarte sangre" ("to have your blood taken"), when this could be done in Seville. Additionally, the psychologist put him in group therapy sessions that lasted one hour per time, although Diego did not feel he had any problems with his transsexuality. Nevertheless, he participated, but not actively. To him, it was not worth the trip:

> "Entonces, yo iba allí y yo no hablaba. Era … había un grupo y era una hora y vas hasta Málaga nada más que pa… y yo dije: Mira. Yo no voy y venir a Málaga para, para una hora de sesión en grupo cuando yo no tengo ninguno problema." (Diego, 2015)[21]

The only obstacle to quitting the UTIG was the hormonal treatment. He had to go for an endocrinological check-up. Thus, he went to see his doctor in Seville. At this point in the narration Diego rapidly adds: "Yo fui con naturalidad." (Diego, 2015)[22]

He told his doctor: "Mira yo tengo un tratamiento como cualquier persona, necesito un seguimiento, y nada." (Diego, 2015)[23]

His doctor referred him to an endocrinologist in a public hospital in Seville, where he was able to continue his hormonal treatment. It must be noted that Diego managed to 'decentralise' himself (actually, he speaks of a group of five or six trans persons, himself included, that have already followed treatment in Seville for many years), long before this practice was officially permitted in 2015. In addition, it is notable that Diego presented himself *con naturalidad*, thus, emphasising that he was able to convince his doctor of his natural male being, and, as a logical consequence, of his eligibility to receive hormonal treatment like any other patient who needs hormones (independent of the medical problem).

Ronaldo is also reluctant regarding free gender self-determination. In a tone of scepticism, he speaks of a *tercer sexo* (third gender) that Mar is aiming for. Emilia (Ronaldo's partner) expresses her doubts about the lack of a psychological clarification. She considers the psychological clarification to be beneficial to start gender transition, and regards "*un poco control*" ("a little bit of control") or "*un pequeño filtro*" ("a small filter") as necessary to prevent some individuals from harming themselves due to a momentary irrational mental state. Both Ronaldo and Emilia disagree with the idea of people being allowed to change their documents without treatment at the UTIG.

Thus, the expectations among my informants of the impact of the new law were very diverse, and ranged from rejection, to a feeling of uncertainty, to enthusiasm. In this respect, the new law promises more autonomy and agency, but also triggers

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21 "Thus, I went there, but I didn't speak. There was this group, this lasted one hour, and you just go to Malaga only for … and I said: Look. I will not come to Malaga just for one hour of group therapy when I don't have a problem." (Diego, 2015)

22 "I went naturally." (Diego, 2015)

23 "Look, I have a treatment just like anyone else. I need a follow-up, nothing else." (Diego, 2015)

uncertainty and the fear that proven options will disappear. This double-edgedness might, on a micro-level, reflect what Maihofer points out for transformation processes on the societal level (a thought I will take up again in the last chapter of this paper, the Discussion):

> Das heisst, ein und derselbe historische Prozess hat zwei Seiten, positive und negative Effekte, bedeutet einerseits eine Erweiterung von Handlungsoptionen, von Freiheit, Gleichheit, Individualität, Authentizität und Vielfalt; andererseits hat er, und zwar in *derselben* historischen Bewegung, zugleich eine Verstärkung von Zwängen, Unfreiheit, Ungleichheit, Homogenität, Fremdbestimmung und Alternativlosigkeit zur Folge. (Maihofer 2007: 300)[24]

Leaving the pros and cons of the impact of the *Ley Integral de Transexualidad* aside, and returning to the topic of identity and community, the implementation of a proper Pride Day for trans people emphasises a politics of identity, not least as a precondition for political action. Plummer notes that "[f]or establishing citizen identities in the public sphere, a politics of identity seems crucial" (2003: 82). For the ATA it is no longer sufficient for trans issues to be incorporated alongside other concerns during a common Gay Pride organised by the LGBT-community. The celebration of a Trans Pride hints to the fact that the trans community deems it necessary to occupy their own public sphere, thus, emphasising identity. Furthermore, "[p]ublic spheres are historical constructions that arise to help structure public debates over matters of concern" (Plummer 2003: 80). In the context of the growing awareness around trans issues on a national and international level, with its call for gender identity recognition embedded in the discourse of the free and autonomous individual, and combined with the activism of the ATA and their key person, the initiation of an *Orgullo Trans* in Seville seems to be a further step in this 'historical construction of public spheres'. It reflects a "[…] now well-established civil rights – era teleology: first the folks of color, then the homosexuals, now the trans folk" (Puar 2015: 45).

Yet, history has also depicted that accentuating identity for political motives also bears problems. "Much identity politics actually works to essentialize people and to create labels that suppress differences and create 'others'. Unless care is taken, identity politics can harden boundaries between groups and magnify their differences" (Plummer 2003: 82). The polemic inside the LGBT-community around the Trans Pride during my field research trip already revealed some 'hardened

24 "This means that one and the same historical process has two sides, positive and negative effects, meaning, on the one hand, an extension of options for action, of freedom, equality, individuality, authenticity and diversity; on the other hand, in the same historical movement, it results in an intensification of constraints, lack of freedom, inequality, homogeneity, heteronomy and lack of alternatives" (Maihofer 2007: 300).

boundaries'. Not everybody in the LGBT- community was happy with this solo attempt of the trans people. Some were even upset, not because of the demands in favour of the trans persons, but for the implications this separation meant for the Community. In addition, because the Trans Pride was so closely associated with the ATA, and the ATA, in turn, with their president, political and personal aims and assumptions were conflated. A politically committed gay man explained to me that he agrees with Mar's claims for trans rights, but that he is angry about her splitting up the LGBT movement. Another one feared that the Gay Prides will not be as colourful and cheerful without the trans participants.

6.4 Some further thoughts

Addressing differing interests among LGBT-members is not a new phenomenon. Nor is Seville a special case. Yet, the solo run of the trans people, manifested through the Trans Pride (which in this case, was perceived by some individuals to be competing with the Gay Pride) is problematic insofar as it stresses the differences and no longer the shared objectives of a conglomerate of people based on their sexuality and gender identity. This 'separation' might be a necessary step to equity and might well be a manifestation of the growing number of trans people who do not want to hide anymore. However, it might also have something to do with access to financial resources. Strategically (and detached from any geographical location), financial concerns must not be overlooked.

The distribution of the funds aimed for the HIV&STI-prevention might serve as an example. Epidemiologically, homosexuals (that is, men who have sex with men), and in recent years concurrent with the raising awareness of transgender health, trans people are also considered among the five most vulnerable groups to contract HIV or other sexually transmitted infections (STIs); the others are people who inject drugs, sex workers and prisoners (World Health Organization 2016). At different HIV-conferences I have attended (e.g., the International Aids Conference 2012 in Washington DC, or the Swiss HIV&STI Forum 2013 in Biel, Switzerland) trans individuals accused the funding bodies of investing far too little money to be put at their disposal for prevention efforts targeted for transgender persons. Thus, to separate the trans movement from the LGBT-community might promise more funds for trans issues. Mar (as president of the ATA) is definitely a supporter of this discussion. Two things disturb her with regard to the distribution of subsidies for HIV-prevention in Spain. The first is that transsexual women are put statistically in the same category as men who have sex with men (MSM), which she perceives as discrimination because their being women is not respected. Second is the above-mentioned fact that the subsidies go to the LGBT-collective, and far too little money is dedicated to the trans people. She underlines her arguments concerning juggling

with numbers and mentions that the HIV-incidence rate among transsexual people in Spain is about seven per cent higher than among MSM:

> "Pero fíjate que hasta allí somos discriminadas porque cuando el Ministerio de Sanidad en España da las cifras, no nos segrega de hombres que practican sexo con hombres. Sino que estamos dentro de este grupo. Con lo cual hay una discriminación en negar nuestra condición de mujeres. Nos ponen como hombres que practican sexo con hombres. Niegan (emphasised) nuestra identidad sexual. ¿Eh? Sin embargo los colectivos LGTB beneficiarios de grandes subvenciones para luchar contra el VIH, se han solamente dedicado a recoger estos dineros, pero nunca han denunciado al Ministerio, por favor, segreguen las cifras, porque las mujeres transexuales son mujeres, y los hombres que practican sexo con hombres es otro grupo distinto. Y incluso somos más en España, las últimas cifras eran que en hombres que practican sexo con hombres, el número de incidencia de infectados podía estar entorno al veinte o al veintiuno por ciento, y en mujeres transexuales trabajadoras del sexo está entorno a cerca del veintisiete." (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013) [25]

However, besides these political debates and goals, the *Semana Trans Cultural* also offered opportunities at the personal level to go public. This was true for Rubina and Yolanda. The week paved the way for Rubina to present herself for the first time dressed as a woman in the public space. Two aspects eased this venture. One was the geographical separation from her domicile. The other was the chance to blend into a 'trans' environment which promised a kind of protection. Yolanda, who bears considerable friction in her daily life, experienced fellowship and emotional support. To her, this might be the more important aspect, because she normally lives in a hostel for the homeless, where she is more at the mercy of the other residents, and where her autonomy is restricted by the structures and rules of the institution. Furthermore, her agency is limited by her precarious social and financial capital. She relies heavily on existing structures, e.g. associations, who offer support.

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25 "But look, we are discriminated against up to the figures of the Department of Health in Spain, which does not separate us from men who have sex with men. We are included in this group. So, there is discrimination in denying our status as women. They record us as men who have sex with men. They deny our sexual identity. And although the LGBT-collectives benefit from big subsidies to fight against HIV, they have only dedicated themselves to collecting this money, but they have never reported to the Ministry: 'Please, separate the figures, because transsexual women are women, and men who have sex with men are another distinct group'. Furthermore, there are more of us in Spain. The last figures showed that among men who have sex with men the incidents of infected persons could be about twenty to twenty-one per cent, and among transsexual sex workers it's around twenty-seven." (Mar, president of the ATA, 2013)

Discussion

> "Yo creo que la transexualidad es un poco también un calco de la heterosexualidad." *(Tamara, 2003)*[1]

Over the last decades, Spanish society has experienced fundamental transformations. The end of the *franquismo* era facilitated Spain's integration into the European Community, thus, tightening up the connections between the Peninsula and the rest of Europe. Significant transformations have also occurred in dealing with sexuality and gender. Being part of the European Union with its liberal and neoliberal obligations regarding gender equity and its emphasis on individual rights, self-responsibility and productivity, the notions of sex and gender for 'Mediterranean' Societies as depicted by North American and North Western European social anthropologists in the second half of the 20th century, which rigorously sexualised men and women in different ways, and which took heterosexuality as the natural form of relationship (see Introduction) are definitely antiquated. The 'public' or *la calle* (the street) is no longer a space exclusively for men, whereas the 'private' (e.g. the household) might still be more closely connected to women's duties. However, in conjunction with the sex and gender images depicted by the romantic travellers in the 19th century (see Introduction as well), Mozo and Tena (2003) indicate that earlier descriptions of Andalusian men and women served in many respects as 'natural' markers of Andalusian society that have left traces until today.

Some of these traces may be responsible for the fact that the 'not yet natural' achievements of contemporary society have to be constantly fought for, as the recent International Women's day in Spain showed. According to press releases, many women in Spain mobilised on March 8th, 2019 (International Women's day), especially in Madrid and Barcelona. The participants expressed their fear of a shift towards the right in the upcoming elections. They were worried that achievements regarding sex and gender (e.g. the right for abortion) would be reversed if a right wing and conservative government were in charge, thus, throwing Spain back to where it was in the 1980s. (The intention to restrict abortion and abolish gay marriage was already planned by Mariano Rajoy's conservative government in 2013, but

1 "I think that transsexuality is also a little bit a copy of heterosexuality." (Tamara, 2003)

nationwide protests prevented this). These contemporary discourses point, once more, to vulnerability regarding achieving and protecting sex and gender rights over the last four decades. This is even more so for sex and gender non-conforming people.

Regarding the 'transsexual phenomenon' in Andalusia, the insights into the life worlds of my research partners allow the transformations that have occurred over the last decades to be reconstructed. On the one hand, these insights are based on the memories and told experiences of my interlocutors. On the other hand, they are based on observations and findings during my two periods of field research that spanned over a decade, and turned out to be a timespan in which significant legal changes were witnessed.

Transformation processes include the terminological shift from 'homosexual' to 'transsexual', the legal shift from illegality to legality, the medical shift from self-medication to medical supervision, in sum, the shift from non-recognition to recognition to legal recognition. Recent laws facilitate the change of identity documents. For instance, genital surgery, a hysterectomy (i.e. castration/sterilisation), or the obligation to divorce (if married) are no longer preconditions for document change. The elderly among my research participants remember that in earlier years, society in general (and especially the authorities, e.g., the police) did not distinguish between homosexual and transsexual persons. Thus, it can be argued that the path to visibility in Spain has opened only since the end of the 1970s, when homosexuality was decriminalised. However, for many more years, information about transsexuality was scarce. Thus, the middle aged and even the younger among my informants only learned about the term, transsexuality, by detours. (From then on, the term served to explain their gender non-conforming feelings). Information flow was informal, self-medication with hormones popular, and access to medical assistance costly, which led some of my informants to earn their money in sex work (not least to be able to afford breast implants, for example). The integration of medical support for sex/gender transition in the public health system in Andalusia in 1999 (as the first autonomous community in Spain and for which a group of trans persons had strongly advocated) facilitated, on the one hand, access to sex/gender transition, especially for those with limited economic resources who could not afford to have it done in a private clinic. On the other hand, some of my informants remarked that they were told under no uncertain terms what they had to do. Thus, this shift seemed also to strengthen the control of medicine over the body of the trans person. This control has been challenged by part of the trans community over the last years, by demanding both a decentralisation of the medical attendance of trans persons, and the right for self-determination of their gender identity. On the macro-level, there seems to be a discrepancy between the more structured and available medical support, and the increased call for self-determination, which challenges the former.

In Andalusia, female-to-male trans persons also gained in terms of visibility. Earlier discussions about transsexuality and transgender had focussed mainly on male-to-female trans persons, and trans men had stayed in the background. During my first field research trip in 2003, it was difficult to contact trans men. They existed, but only one was prepared to meet me: Ronaldo, who had experience in talking about his situation and considered it important that FtMs are heard. This was different when I reentered the field ten years later. Suddenly, I encountered young trans men who were interested in sharing their stories. Another sign of their increased visibility could be seen based on the annual calendar that the *Asociación de Transexuales de Andalucía Sylvia Rivera* (ATA) created for the year 2013. The calendar portrays twelve local trans men, one for each month. The FtMs pose in masculine attributed positions, some half-naked, showing off their athletic bodies, their chest hairs, or presenting themselves in casual, relaxed postures. Each picture is accompanied by a saying that addresses self-esteem, the possibilities of transformation and the potential for the fulfillment of dreams.

Transformation processes also occurred on the individual level among my research partners. Four of my research partners had completed their sex/gender transition by having undergone genital surgery. Additionally, those who never aspired for sex/gender affirmation surgery (especially genital surgery) had been able to change their identity documents in the meantime.

When I first entered the field in 2003 to do research among trans people in Andalusia, a local friend recommended that I should not disclose to uninvolved people the real reason for my research. Rather, I should offer a more general explanation, for example, I should tell them I was researching gender roles. His advice made me realise that my research topic might be met with incomprehension or might even provoke rejection by the locals, who had never had anything to do with this subject (which could apply to the majority of the general population). Thus, it seemed to be a kind of taboo. When I resumed my fieldwork in 2013, I no longer felt the need to 'mask' my research or spare uninvolved people my real research purpose when asked about my doings. On the one hand, this had to do with a transformation in my own personal attitude (why would I spare the ignorant?). On the other hand, it was related to the above-mentioned transformation processes, which suggest an increased societal awareness of the topic. Thus, when in Seville during the *Semana Trans Cultural* (see Chapter 6), I was asked by a local why I had come to Seville that week. We had met in a different context, and I knew that he favoured the *Partido Popular* politically, and that he was an advocate of the monarchy. I disclosed my research interest and told him of the ongoing trans week in his city. He did not show any signs of rejection. On the contrary, he demonstrated interest, although he had not heard about the week.

Nevertheless, the question remains: has more information about the needs of and demands from trans persons in Andalusian society really led to more accep-

tance in the general population, or is a 'disciplining' (or hiding, in the sense of political correctness) taking place? People in Andalusia are usually pretty noisy and I experienced some individuals as outspoken when it came to commenting on a person's appearance or non-normative behaviour. One of my research partners indicated that she does not know if it is actually tolerance or if people are "false" (in the sense that they just do not express their opinion openly, which might be related to anti-discrimination obligations).

Research done by anthropologists in the second half of the 20th century and their analyses of men and women depicted Andalusia as traditional and backward, and served to draw a line between a 'traditional' South and a 'modern' North (see Introduction). Although this attribution has been refuted in the meantime, it has, nevertheless, left its traces. Imelda, judging the situation for trans people in Andalusia to be worse than in northern countries, also drew a picture of a more developed North compared to the South (see Chapter 4.5). Additionally, Magdalena, upon my inquiry why it was Andalusia and not, for example, Catalonia to be the first autonomous community to expand public health to the treatment of trans people, insinuated that I considered Catalonia more advanced than Andalusia, thus, indicating that she is well aware of this North-South perception (see Chapter 1.3). Thus, the transformation process of a region formerly depicted as 'closed to sexual plurality, where the heterosexist order and homophobia is always present' (see Introduction) to a region with a progressive *Ley Integral de Transexualidad* that will situate Andalusia 'at the forefront of Spain, Europe and the World', as the ATA claims (see Chapter 6), is really noteworthy.

In sum, during my two field research periods, significant transformations have taken place, both on the societal level in general and on the personal level of my research partners. The change of identity documents has been facilitated, the needs of trans persons have been increasingly articulated (especially due to the foundation and active role of the ATA), FtM trans persons have come out of the closet in greater numbers and the practice of medical attendance (especially the central role of the UTIG with its protocol for diagnosis) has been placed under closer scrutiny by part of the trans community. Furthermore, the role of education has been addressed, familial ties seem to be providing more understanding, and how minor trans persons are dealt with has also become a topic. And last but not least, individual aims concerning surgery have been achieved. All of my research partners who longed for genital surgery have been operated on in the meantime. Yet, why did I have the feeling that despite these positive transformations, not much had changed? Obvious facts (significant improvements) contradicted my sense that everyday life goes on as it always has, a contradiction I had difficulties grasping.

To approach this contradiction, reflecting about the simultaneity of change and persistence might be promising. Maihofer notes that " […] die Neigung, von *einer Gleichzeitigkeit von gesellschaftlichem Wandel und Kontinuität/Persistenz* zu spre-

chen, […] ein allgemeines Phänomen historischer Umbruchphasen ist, in der sich Altes, Neues, und Zukünftiges noch unentschieden und uneindeutig auf komplexe Weise mischen" (2007: 297-298).[2] This entails the simultaneity of opportunities and constraints, as well as of empowerment and uncertainty. Thus, an increasing pluralisation goes hand-in-hand with growing uncertainty, and is no longer merely perceived as an extension of the individual way of living. This, in turn, leads to a paradox of change and persistence (Maihofer 2007). Furthermore, there are some indications emerging from my data that hint at the perseverance of internalised societal structures, despite the above-mentioned transformations and that have to do with diverging temporalities.

Some of my interlocutors addressed the diverging pace between the current legal situation and the consciousness of the general population, that is, that the latter is lagging behind. Anabel states she has reached her goals concerning gender transition, and that she is now waiting for society to catch up:

> "No espero nada nuevo en verdad. Más que avance que la sociedad cambie. Es lo que faltaría. Eso sí es verdad. Que es lo que falta por cambiar la sociedad, no yo. Yo ya he cambiado." (Anabel, 2013)[3]

She does not think that the mentality of the people or, specifically, their attitude towards sex/gender non-normative behaviour have actually changed:

> "Pero en verdad creo que en el fondo la sociedad es igual de … de intransigente con este tipo de tema, igual que hace diez años. Sea a las leyes las puedes cambiar, tú puedes cambiar leyes más permisivas que pueden fomentar un poco la gente eso de que esto hay que respectarlo. ¿Vale? De que la gente entre ella se diga 'es que esto hay que respectarlo esto'. ¿Vale? Pero en el fondo … en el fondo, siguen pensando igual del … de la persona que es homosexual, de su clase o de su calle o de su trabajo. Eso es lo que yo quiero decir. Pienso el cambio va mucho más despacio que las leyes. Mucho (emphasised) más despacio." (Anabel, 2013)[4]

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2 "[…] the tendency to speak of a simultaneity of social change and continuity/persistence is a general phenomenon of historical upheaval, in which the old, the new, and the future still mix undecidedly and ambiguously in a complex way [own transl.]" (Maihofer 2007: 297-298).

3 "I don't expect anything new, really. Rather than advance, let society change. That's what's missing. That's what's true. What is missing is the societal change, not me. I've already changed." (Anabel, 2013)

4 "But really, I think that in the end, society is just as relentless with this kind of subject as ten years ago. The laws, you can change, you can make them more permissive to encourage people a bit to realise that they have to respect this. Right? That people say 'this, one has to respect'. Right? But in the end … in the end they keep thinking the same as always about a homosexual person, about their way of life, their doings. That's what I try to say. I think that the change is much slower than the laws. Much slower." (Anabel, 2013)

For Diego, too, the current legislation is an advance for trans individuals, but is not congruent with the social stance, because *"la ley ha ido antes que la sociedad"* ("the law has gone before society"):

> "Eso la sociedad todavía no lo entiende. Para la mayoría de la sociedad, tú eres un hombre cuando tengas un pene. Si lo tienes … más grande más hombre eres (laughter). Es igual que las mujeres. Cuando más tetas más mujer eres. ¿Sabes? Sí. Entonces eh por eso va un poquito la la ley un poquito más avanzada." (Diego, 2015)[5]

With regard to his hint at the societal significance given to breast size as a marker of femininity, *"Cuando más tetas más mujer eres"* ("The more tits, the more woman you are") he, nevertheless, notes a change of attitude in the younger generation of trans women. This generation no longer celebrates the 'hyper femininity' that could be observed in some individuals of the earlier generation. My data suggest that this change in attitude is related less to the age of the trans individuals, but rather to our contemporary time, where there is more information available, and where the goals and possibilities of how to earn a living are no longer restricted to sex work.

A further component that persists (and which is related to the above-mentioned societal perseverance) is the apparent impossibility to escape the sex/gender binarity in daily life, however open-minded and reflective my research partners are about sex-, gender- and desire-diversity. My interlocutors reflect the heterogeneity of the 'trans community'. Age differences, having started transition during the dictatorship or starting transition today, the direction of sex/gender reassignment (male-to-female, female-to-male), differences in social status, different ways to earn a living, and different demands concerning medical support (from hormonal treatment to genital surgery) have influenced their experiences and interactions within their social environment disparately. However, all of them shared a similar goal: that is to live a 'normal' life in the opposite sex than that assigned to them at birth, and to be respected. "*¡Y que me respeten!*" ("And that they respect me") Yolanda wishes, while reflecting upon negative experiences with people in the street. The promise of respect is closely linked to fitting into one of the two sexes society is accustomed to. It was striking to note either the essentialising of being trans among some of my informants (a condition explained by the gap between fetal development and neurological information) as well as the weight given to appearance (that is, the importance of presenting themselves in as clear a gender role as possible).

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5 "This is what society still does not understand. For the majority, you are a man when you have a penis. If you have it … the bigger, the more man you are. It's the same as with the women. The more tits, the more woman you are. You know? Yes. So, in this regard, the law is a little bit more advanced." (Diego, 2015)

(Among my informants, a sex/gender-ambiguity in appearance was mostly perceived as the main obstacle for unchallenged movement in public). Both aspects (essentialising and appearance) are strongly related to notions of normality and respect. The explanatory model of essentialising 'proves' that being trans is a serious, physical/mental condition (thus, it must be addressed as such), and has nothing to do with moodiness. In addition, a suitable appearance allows trans individuals to move about in public as freely as possible (even sometimes to attract admiration).

Thus, to be accepted and respected without reproach by family, friends and society is of major concern among my research partners. This raises questions of inclusion and exclusion, which concern every aspect of life, be it from public areas, like access to employment, to private areas, like intimacy. Hence, when one of my interlocutors, Ramira, states that the people in her neighbourhood accept her, but adds: *"Y si no lo aceptan me da igual. ¡Oh me da igual!" (Ramira, 2015)* ("And if they don't accept it, I don't care. Oh, I really don't care"), I do not completely believe her. Ramira has gained cultural capital, not least due to her artistic folkloric skills, her upholding of traditions (for example, singing flamenco and coplas, participating in the pilgrimage of *El Rocío*), and her rootedness in her neighbourhood (see Chapter 4.5). She has surely gained on resilience (or serenity) with regard to eventual annoying encounters. However, I consider her expressed 'indifference' to be rather a coping strategy she has learned in the course of her life to endure all the hardships she must have encountered. All the photos she showed me, portraying her as a young and beautiful woman reflected her aspirations and pride in having succeeded to pass as and be respected in the female gender.

Two obvious and often-mentioned issues that are perceived as reflecting the level of acceptance are, on the one hand, the handling of language by the counterpart (the use of the 'correct' personal pronoun or form of address), and, on the other hand, the difficulties stemming from the data on official documents, like identity card (name and sex). Regarding the handling of language, some of my research partners were very sensitive about the way they were addressed. An early anecdote with one of my interlocutors might serve as an example. We were spending time in a restaurant in a park in town and Anabel went to the bar to get two beverages. Coming back with the drinks, she stated that the barman had just cheated himself out of a tip from her, because, when he delivered the beverages, he said: *"¡Toma, caballero!"* ("Here you go, sir"). She just replied *"¿Caballero?"*, which he answered with silence. Seeing the impact this short interaction at the bar had on her, and how sensitively she responded to being addressed this way (by taking the term *caballero* literally), had a self-sensitising effect on me as well.

Regarding the adjustment of identity documents, this was facilitated during my research periods. However, legal and medical barriers which still remained were bothering some of the trans persons I met (especially the obligatory medical certificate). However, without exception, they felt proud, less discriminated against,

and more comfortable once this administrative process had been successfully completed. For some of my informants (even more so for the female-to-male research partners) this allowed them to hide their transsexual career and, thus, protected them from expected discrimination:

> "En el momento que yo cambié mi nombre y mi sexo en el DNI [Documento Nacional de Identidad], nadie lo sabe. Si nadie lo sabe, no me discrimina. En el momen- de hecho yo no lo cuento porque sé que me pueden discriminar." (Diego, 2015)[6]

This statement also reflects the fact that earlier experiences of perceived discrimination (in the case of Diego, see the beginning of Chapter 5) influence one's readiness for disclosure in the future. Diego has no wish to disclose his trans career, because he still expects discrimination, thus, provoking feelings of exclusion, and (in the broadest sense) challenging his 'male citizenship'. Diego keeps his 'intimacy' private. Thus, to be accepted and respected, the overarching precondition (based on experiences) continues to be that the representation and performance of sex and gender are a successful match (cf. Hagemann-White 1988), independent of the extent of surgical interventions. Living a 'gender fluidity', that is, the notion that sex and gender is neither necessarily naturally preconditioned and fixed over the lifespan, nor necessarily binary, as discussed in queer theory and gender studies, seems still to be met with too many societal obstacles. Thus, the progress and achievements trans people in Andalusia have gained over the last two decades, are mainly in facilitating the regulatory obstacles that endangered a successful performance of a 'congruent' sex/gender. These are important achievements. Moreover, the call for self-determination and decentralised medical attendance is helpful for some individuals in their everyday life. Others feel insecure about fewer regulations concerning medical clarifications and fear a decrease in the quality of medical attendance due to a decentralisation. Still others criticise the fact that modifications to identity documents might be done too early (that is, not yet congruent with appearance). However, these entire discussions circle within a sex/gender binary societal order, thus, (although different, and more individualised, more public and more in agreement with human rights) do not disrupt the reproduction of this order.

It can be observed that the major achievements the trans community in Andalusia have gained over the last two decades, were (and still are) achieved thanks to the enormous efforts by single individuals. That is, the trans associations in Andalusia have become highly personalised. This was already the case in the 1990s, when Kim

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6 "The moment I changed my name and my sex on the identity card, nobody knows. If no one knows, they won't discriminate against me. In fact, I don't tell, because I know that they can discriminate against me." (Diego, 2015)

Perez played an outstanding role in succeeding to integrate the medical attendance of trans people into the public health system, which finally led to the foundation of the UTIG. The later achievements were gained mainly through the insistence of the ATA, which, in turn, has been strongly shaped by their president. As I was told, this contrasts with the situation in cities like Madrid or Barcelona, especially because the trans collectives in these metropolises are much larger. Furthermore, as my data reveals, although the ATA is generally much appreciated among my research partners for its commitment and physical presence (that is, for the possibilities to meet in person), the ATA does not represent the entire trans community. There exist personal tensions, which have led some of my informants to feel less committed to the ATA. One may ask if the ATA is sustainable enough to maintain its role for the trans community in the future (which would require it to be able to integrate the divergent opinions of the local trans persons), or if the association will stand or fall with person-relatedness.

Most of my research partners radiated self-confidence, were straightforward, and had agency at their disposal. The fact that I got to know and obtained information from just these research partners, was strongly related to their current life situations, which influenced their readiness to enter into contact with me and tell me their story. That is, most of my interlocutors were either consolidated in the opposite sex/gender (having lived it for decades), or at least consolidated in their aim for sex/gender transition. Thus, reaching those who still might feel much more insecure and maybe unpractised talking about their situation is a further challenge. The case of Lora might serve as an example.

I met Lora during my second field research trip. She told me that if I had asked her ten years ago for a conversation like the one we were having then, she would have said 'no'. She would have been too shy and too insecure to talk to me about her situation. Now, speaking to me was like an exercise for her (one she had never done before), and she was proud of herself that she now had the courage and the self-esteem to do so. Another example is that of Rubina, who came from Madrid to Seville for the *Semana Trans Cultural*, using this event to publicly come out as a woman for the first time. Initially, she turned down my request for an interview, using the excuse that she was not from Andalusia. I did not insist. However, meeting her here and there during the week, engaging in and listening to informal conversations she had with friends or with me, was a way to get to know her situation. This would not have been possible otherwise.

This research is immersed in the lifeworlds of trans individuals in Andalusia, Southern Spain, a part of Europe not primarily associated with trans issues when discussed on a European or global level. Yet, the data obtained from my field research have revealed illustrative insights into pioneering endeavours trans people of this autonomous region in Spain have gained (and hopefully will continue to gain) who are in search of improving their everyday life. By looking at the individ-

ual lifeworlds, different thematic fields emerged, ranging from (self-) perception of the body, to the mode of sex/gender transition, its transfiguring impact on family and kin, as well as transformation processes on the societal, medical and legal levels.

The decade between my two field research periods turned out to be a timespan during which the role of medicine in the attribution and diagnosis of 'transsexuality' as a dysphoria was being increasingly scrutinised, simultaneously with the demand for the right of self-determination. That is, the right of trans persons to decide for themselves about their own sex/gender (without a psychologist's certificate), and the right to decide for themselves about (and obtain) the needed amount of sex/gender reassignment treatment to feel at ease with their body (and within society). This is a topic that has found its way into official global recommendations (e.g. the ICD11 of the World Health Organisation) and approved legislation at the local level (e.g. the *Ley Integral de Transexualidad*).

Additionally, this timespan experienced an increased information flow into society about trans topics, and started to address neglected target groups, such as the situation for trans minors. All these achievements (which promise a benefit for trans people) are confronted with the common sense notion among the general population about the 'nature' or 'divinity' of the binarity between men and women, that is, the 'natural or divine order' of the two sexes. This 'common sense notion' transforms at a slower pace than the legal achievements trans people have gained over the last few years. Furthermore, the transformation of the 'common sense notion' would require a willingness for reflection on the part of those holding this 'common sense notion'. It will be important to keep track of how the *Ley Integral de Transexualidad* will be implemented, of how it will affect the lifeworlds of the people concerned, and of how medicine and society in general will deal with it.

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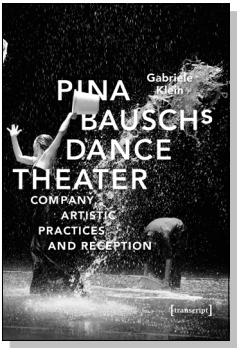

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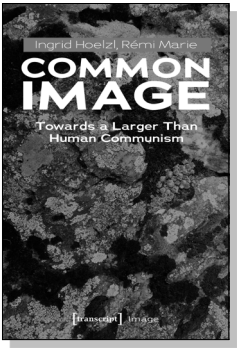

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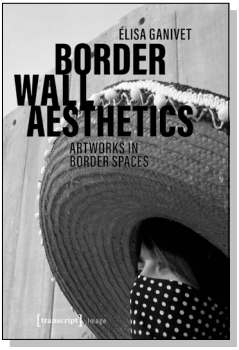

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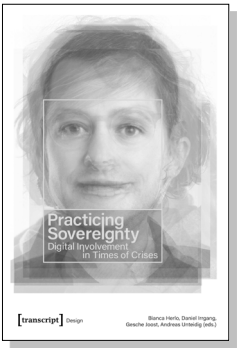

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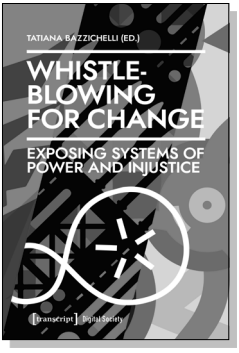

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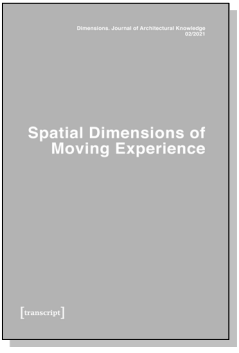

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