



VNIVERSITAT  VALÈNCIA Facultat de Ciències de l'Activitat Física i l'Esport

TRANS PERSONS' BODIES IN CONTEXT:  
EXPERIENCES IN DAILY LIFE, SPORT AND PHYSICAL  
EDUCATION

**TESIS DOCTORAL**

PROGRAMA DE DOCTORADO 3068  
Ciencias de la Actividad Física y el Deporte

**Departamento de Educación Física y Deportiva**

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Valencia, mayo de 2017



Nadie sabe lo que puede un cuerpo  
(Annie Sprinkle)



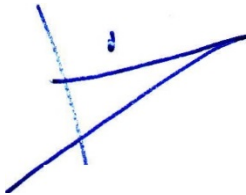
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CERTIFICAN: Que Dña. SOFÍA PEREIRA GARCÍA ha trabajado bajo nuestra dirección en el Departamento de Educación Física y Deportiva de la Universitat de València, habiendo obtenido y estudiado personalmente el material de su tesis doctoral titulada TRANS PERSONS' BODIES IN CONTEXT: EXPERIENCES IN DAILY LIFE, SPORT AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION.

Dicho estudio ha sido terminado en el día de la fecha, con todo aprovechamiento, habiendo revisado los que suscriben la presente tesis doctoral y estando conforme con su presentación para ser juzgada.

Valencia, 30 de mayo de 2017



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## AGRADECIMIENTOS

Muchas personas me han ayudado de una manera u otra durante estos cuatro años de realización de la tesis. En estos agradecimientos nombraré algunas de las más importantes.

En primer lugar, quiero dar las gracias a todas las personas trans que han participado en el proyecto de investigación, quienes confiaron en su potencial para mejorar la situación del colectivo y, en especial, a quienes sin creer en su utilidad también se comprometieron y participaron.

También quiero dar las gracias a todo el equipo de investigación (Pepe, Víctor, Elena y Jorge Fuentes) por enseñarme los valores de trabajar en equipo y apostar por una investigación y una universidad más sensible y humana. En particular, gracias a Jorge Fuentes, por transmitirme sus conocimientos, compromiso y entusiasmo por la temática.

Además, agradezco a mis directorxs sus valiosas correcciones y aportaciones a la tesis, su cercanía y su dedicación. En concreto a Pepe, mi padre académico, por su infinita paciencia y la confianza que ha depositado en mí para este proyecto. También gracias a Víctor por su inestimable ayuda en todo el proceso. Tampoco quiero perder la oportunidad de agradecer a Andrew que supervisara mis estancias en Leeds y a Carmen por su cuidadosa revisión del inglés.

Durante este tiempo me he sentido muy a gusto trabajando codo con codo con mis compañerxs (y ante todo amigxs) de la Unidad de Teoría y Pedagogía de la Actividad Física y el Deporte. A ellxs quisiera agradecerles sus revisiones y comentarios a la tesis, pero sobretodo les doy las gracias por el increíble clima de trabajo creado, las bromas, la complicidad, los paseos, las sesiones de cine, los viernes negros, las tertulias de sobremesa y las cervezas en terraza.

De mis estancias en Leeds también quiero agradecer a Lorena, Susanna, Luis, Bethany y David las experiencias que hemos compartido. Gracias por la lucha constante y el cariño que siempre me habéis transmitido.

Por último, doy las gracias a mi familia y a David, por apoyarme en este proyecto, a pesar de la distancia y la lejanía, porque sé que también ha sido duro para vosotrxs. En especial, agradecer a mi madre y mi padre los valores que me han transmitido y que hayan hecho posible mi formación. Gracias Irene, porque nadie mejor que tú comprende el esfuerzo que supone este proceso.





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## Acronyms

DSM	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders
EF	Educación Física
IAAF	International Associations of Athletics Federations
LGBT	Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transsexuals (used internationally)
LGTB	Lesbians, Gays, Transsexuals and Bisexuals (used in Spain)
NIC	National Identity Card
PE	Physical Education
OIC	Olympic International Committee

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**ABSTRACT**

The main purpose of this doctoral thesis is to explore trans persons' embodied experiences in different socio-relational contexts such as daily life, sport and Physical Education (PE). To that end, the PhD thesis gathers three studies. Study 1 calls upon the metaphor of body frontiers in order to deepen in trans persons' daily experiences in relation to their own and others' bodies. Study 2 focuses on how transition processes influence in and are influenced by physical activity and sport. Finally, Study 3 gathers and analyses memories of a group of adult trans persons on their experiences in heteronormative PE contexts. The three studies are predominately informed by queer theory, and the concepts of heteronormativity, frontiers, habitus and performativity become the basic pillars of their theoretical framework.

Grounded in a larger research project, a group of 20 trans persons self-defined as woman, man, trans boy, trans man, trans and transqueer aged between 15 to 50 years old participated in the three studies. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews and analysed according to the different objectives of each study. In particular, a thematic analysis was developed in the Study 1 and 3 while a thematic analysis followed by a holistic narrative analysis of structure were used in the Study 2.

Study 1 provides evidence on the conceptual and analytical significance of the notion of frontiers for the understanding of trans persons embodied experiences in daily life. Puberty, inside/outside and mind/body are identified as relevant frontiers in the (re)construction of trans persons' identities. Gender frontiers are discerned in particular body features (hair, muscles, breasts, hips, voice tone etc.) that turn into micro-frontiers which enable and, also, threaten social recognition of their gender identities. Living in body frontiers entails sanctions, isolation and low self-esteem for many participants, who prefer not to remain in the realm of ambiguity.

Study 2 focuses on participants' storytelling on sport experiences in relation to their transition processes. Before disclosing their gender identities, trans persons aiming to participate in sports coherent with their gender identity (though socially inappropriate for their assigned gender) experience harassment, isolation and incomprehension. In first moments of transitioning, they adopt strategies to pass as cisgender persons but these technologies of gender sometimes hinder their sport

participation. In later stages of transition, embodied processes become even more acute in sport context, and participants tend to feel more confident and socially recognised insofar as their bodies conform to heteronormative identities.

Calling upon participants' memories of their schooling days, study 3 shows multiple forms of exclusion and rejection toward trans persons generated in heteronormative PE contexts. Teachers and students participate in the (re)production of heteronormative system through the strong regulation of activities, groups and spaces according to gender ideals which negatively affects trans students. The exposure of nude bodies to others in changing rooms is especially problematic.

These studies suggest the necessity of implement gender policies and measures to promote the recognition of embodied gender diversity and the queerization of sport and pedagogical practices.

## **RESUMEN**

El objetivo principal de esta tesis doctoral es explorar las experiencias corporales de las personas trans en diferentes contextos socio-relacionales como son la vida cotidiana, el deporte y la Educación Física (EF). Para ello, la tesis reúne tres estudios. El primer estudio invoca la metáfora de fronteras corporales para profundizar en las experiencias diarias que las personas trans tienen en relación con los propios y otros cuerpos. El segundo estudio se centra en cómo los procesos de transición influyen en y son influenciados por la actividad física y el deporte. Por último, el tercer estudio reúne y analiza los recuerdos de un grupo de personas trans adultas sobre sus experiencias en contextos heteronormativos de EF. Los tres estudios son predominantemente estudiados a través de la teoría queer, y los conceptos de heteronormatividad, habitus y performatividad son los pilares básicos de sus marcos teóricos.

Dentro de un proyecto de investigación más amplio, un grupo de 20 personas trans autodefinidas como mujer, hombre, chico trans, hombre trans, trans y transqueer con edades comprendidas entre los 15 y los 50 años participaron en los tres estudios. Los datos fueron recogidos a través de entrevistas semiestructuradas y analizadas de acuerdo a los objetivos de cada estudio. En particular, un análisis temático fue desarrollado en el estudio 1 y 3 mientras que un análisis temático seguido de un análisis narrativo holístico de la estructura fue utilizado en el estudio 2.

El estudio 1 proporciona evidencias del significado analítico y conceptual de la noción de fronteras para la comprensión de las experiencias corporeizadas de las personas trans en la vida diaria. La pubertad, la frontera interior/externa y mente/cuerpo son relevantes fronteras identificadas en la (re)construcción de las identidades de las personas trans. Las fronteras de género se basan en características particulares del cuerpo (pelo, músculos, senos, caderas, tono de voz, etc.) que se convierten en micro-fronteras que posibilitan y, también, amenazan el reconocimiento social de las identidades de género. Vivir en los bordes de las fronteras del cuerpo implica sanciones, aislamiento y baja autoestima para muchxs participantes, que prefieren no permanecer en el terreno de la 'ambigüedad'.

El estudio 2 se centra en las narraciones sobre experiencias deportivas que lxs participantes tienen en relación con sus procesos de transición. Antes de hacer

públicas sus identidades de género las personas trans que pretenden participar en deportes coherentes con sus identidades de género (aunque socialmente inapropiados para los géneros que se les han asignado) experimentan acoso, soledad e incompreensión. En los primeros momentos de transición, las personas trans adoptan estrategias para pasar como personas cisgénero, pero estas tecnologías de género a veces dificultan su participación deportiva. En etapas posteriores de transición, los procesos corporales incluso se acentúan más en los contextos deportivos, y lxs participantes tienden a sentirse más segurxs y socialmente reconocidxs en tanto que sus cuerpos se adecuan a las identidades heteronormativas.

El estudio 3 muestra múltiples formas de exclusión y rechazo hacia las personas trans tal y como indican las memorias de los participantes durante su etapa de escolarización. Profesorxs y estudiantes participan en la (re)producción de un sistema heteronormativo a través de una fuerte regulación de actividades, grupos y espacios según los ideales de género que afectan negativamente a lxs estudiantes trans. La exposición de los cuerpos desnudos ante otros es especialmente problemática.

Estos estudios sugieren la necesidad de implementar políticas y medidas de género que promuevan el reconocimiento de la diversidad de los cuerpos y la queerización de las prácticas deportivas y pedagógicas.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION: WRITING  
ABOUT TRANS PERSONS





# **CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION: WRITING ABOUT TRANS PERSONS**

## **1.1 Introduction**

This doctoral dissertation is part of a wider research project (DEP2011-28190) developed with other colleagues which belong to the GIUV2016-310 research group of Universitat de València. This project focused in trans persons' experiences in two specific social contexts in Spain: sport and PE. Traditionally these contexts have understood gender and sexuality as binary and studies developed in these fields have tended to forget trans realities, and the few studies on these topics were merely descriptive, usually lacking of a solid theoretical framework. Within this background, the research team aimed to provide understanding to trans persons' experiences gathering and analysing empirical data, and providing insights through appropriate theories lenses. A first theoretical approach was developed by Fuentes (2015), but the involvement of trans persons was still necessary. This dissertation is an answer to that need.

Along this PhD thesis, there is an unavoidable interest on participants' bodies. Bodies gather the complex relation between nature and culture, individuals and society (O'Neill, 1985). If there is not harmony in such complex relationships, bodies become problems for themselves. It is especially so for trans persons because their bodies do not reflect and represent their gender identities. As gender "remains foundational to the articulation and function of community" (Alamilla, 2006, p.429), the capacity of trans persons to articulate themselves intelligibly as one gender or another is essential to their participation in society. Their personal and social recognition can only be gained through the recognition as gendered bodied, and that recognition often defies established common senses on body and gender relations. For this reason, this dissertation aims to contribute in the understanding on how trans identities are lived and (re)constructed in contexts in which gendered bodies are conveyed and generated.

In this doctoral thesis, materiality of bodies and discourses that affect the construction of trans persons' subjectivities are two important issues to be considered. Following Csordas (1990) and Young's (2005) recommendations, we

draw on trans persons' bodies as both, texts that are inserted in discourses and being-in-the-world bodies. Additionally, we connected micro and macro level contexts through the theoretical tools of heteronormativity, habitus, performativity and body frontiers (see chapter 2.4).

In particular, heteronormativity refers to a system that structure societies according to binarisms, being the binary woman/man one of the most spread among the population. Within this heteronormative context, I have always been defined as a woman and I have never felt discomfort with the role I was assigned at birth. Nevertheless, along my life I have also experienced many sanctions by the way I performed my gender and what I decided to do with my body. For this reason, I have always sympathised with trans movement and especially with queer viewpoints. Maybe these two factors formed the background of my decision to engage with the research project.

When I joined the research team, my main concern was to understand how trans persons constructed their gender identities through sport and physical activities, but my interest changed after interviewing trans persons. Participants' interviews revealed that they were involved in ongoing processes of exclusion in sport and PE contexts when participants did not behave according to heteronormative rules. Even so, I refused to fall in the victimization of trans persons as well as the exaltation of their heroism. In this work, participants are shown as active persons that suffer the consequences of an unfair system but they also counteract and look for strategies to deal with heteronormative order.

This dissertation includes three interrelated studies. A first approach to how trans persons live their gender identities on the gender frontiers inscribed on trans bodies, and in which trans person's bodies are inscribed, is addressed in Study 1. The other two studies focus on contextualized experiences of trans persons, deepening in transition processes in sport and memories of PE experiences. None of the reflections, insights and conclusions issued in these studies aim to be unquestionable or prescriptive. I am aware that the results of this doctoral thesis are, as Britzman (1995b, p.237) indicates, "partly truths or particular versions of truth". Although partial and positioned I hope that this PhD thesis contributes to extending the understanding on a social group traditionally forgotten and rejected, as well as challenges taken for granted issues about what gendered persons are or should be.

## **1.1 Introducción**

Esta tesis doctoral es parte de un proyecto de investigación más amplio (DEP2011-28190), desarrollado con otrxs compañerxs que pertenecen al grupo de investigación GIUV2016-310 de la Universitat de València. Este proyecto se centra especialmente en las experiencias de las personas trans en dos contextos sociales: el deporte y la EF. Tradicionalmente, estos contextos han entendido el género y la sexualidad como binarios y los estudios desarrollados en estos campos han olvidado las realidades trans, y los pocos estudios sobre estos temas eran meramente descriptivos, normalmente con la falta de un marco teórico sólido. Dentro de este contexto, el equipo de investigación estaba interesado en comprender las experiencias recogiendo y analizando material empírico y otorgándole sentido a través de lentes teóricas adecuadas. Una primera aproximación fue desarrollada por Fuentes (2015), pero la implicación de personas trans era todavía necesaria. Esta tesis de investigación es una respuesta a esa necesidad.

A lo largo de este trabajo, hay un interés ineludible en los cuerpos de lxs participantes. Los cuerpos recogen la compleja relación entre la naturaleza, las personas y la sociedad (O'Neill, 1985). Si no hay armonía en esa relación tan compleja, los cuerpos se convierten en problemas para sí mismos. Esto especialmente sucede cuando nos referimos a los cuerpos de las personas trans, porque no reflejan y representan las identidades de género que sienten. A medida que el género constituye la base de la cual se ensamblan las relaciones sociales y el género "sigue siendo fundamental para la articulación y función de la comunidad" (Alamilla, 2006, p.429), la capacidad de las personas trans para articularse inteligiblemente como un género u otro parece esencial para su participación en la sociedad. Su reconocimiento social y personal sólo puede ganarse a través de su reconocimiento como cuerpo generizado, y ese reconocimiento a menudo desafía el sentido común establecido sobre los cuerpos y las relaciones de género. Por esta razón, esta tesis busca contribuir en la comprensión en como las identidades de género son vividas y (re)construidas en contextos en los cuales los cuerpos generizados son comunicados y generados.

En esta tesis, dos temas importantes tratados son la materialidad de los cuerpos y los discursos que afectan la construcción de las subjetividades de las

personas trans. Siguiendo las recomendaciones de Csordas (1990) y de Young (2005), nos basamos en los cuerpos de las personas trans como textos que se insertan en los discursos y en los cuerpos del ser-en-el-mundo. Adicionalmente, conectamos contextos micro y macro a través de las herramientas teóricas de heteronormatividad, habitus, performatividad y fronteras corporales (ver capítulo 2.4).

En particular, la heteronormatividad se refiere a un sistema que estructura las sociedades de acuerdo con binarismos, siendo el binomio mujer/hombre uno de los más difundidos entre la población. Dentro de este contexto heteronormativo, siempre he sido definida como mujer y nunca he sentido incomodidad con el papel que me asignaron al nacer. Sin embargo, a lo largo de mi vida también he experimentado muchas sanciones por la forma en que performé mi género y lo que decidí hacer con mi cuerpo. Por esta razón, siempre he simpatizado con el movimiento trans y especialmente con los puntos de vista queer. Tal vez estos dos factores formaron el trasfondo de mi decisión de participar en el proyecto de investigación más amplio DEP2011-28190.

Cuando me uní al equipo de investigación, mi principal preocupación fue entender cómo las personas trans construyen sus identidades de género a través del deporte y las actividades físicas, pero mi interés cambió al entrevistar a las personas trans. Las entrevistas con los participantes revelaron que las personas trans estaban involucradas en procesos de exclusión en el deporte y en los contextos de educación física cuando los participantes no se comportaban de acuerdo con reglas heteronormativas. Aun así, me niego a caer en la victimización de las personas trans, así como en la exaltación de su heroísmo. En los tres estudios, los participantes se muestran como personas activas que sufren las consecuencias de un sistema injusto, pero también contrarrestan y buscan estrategias para lidiar con el orden heteronormativo.

Esta tesis incluye tres estudios interrelacionados. Una primera aproximación a cómo las personas trans viven sus identidades de género en las fronteras de género inscritas en los cuerpos trans se aborda en el Estudio 1. Los otros dos se centran en las experiencias contextualizadas de las personas trans, profundizando en los procesos de transición en el deporte y en las memorias sobre experiencias en EF. Ninguna de estas reflexiones, conocimientos y conclusiones de los temas tratados en estos estudios buscan ser incuestionables o prescriptivos. Soy consciente de que

los resultados de este doctorado son, como señala Britzman (1995b, p.237), "parcialmente verdades o versiones particulares de la verdad" (Britzman, 1995b, p.237). Aunque parcial y posicionada, espero que esta tesis doctoral contribuya a ampliar y extender el conocimiento sobre un grupo social tradicionalmente olvidado y rechazado, así como desafíe el conocimiento que se dan por sentado sobre lo que las personas generizadas son o deben ser.

## 1.2 Writing about trans

*Perhaps the power of the writer and the reader can only reside in an awareness of the play of contradictions and the performances of power that both suture and unravel any ethnographic text.*

(Britzman, 1995b, p.237)

As every formal text, the writing of a doctoral thesis should accomplish with certain formal requisites and standards. The appropriate use of language is one of them. However, the language used should also be coherent with the theoretical framework of the research work and researcher's ethical and moral principles.

Writing is not unconnected with what happens in society but it participates from the social construction of reality. As a social researcher and linguistic being, I cannot obviate the potentiality of words to support, maintain or counteract a particular social order. Butler also alludes to that responsibility when this author affirms that "we do things with language, produce effects with language, and we do things to language, but language is also the thing that we do" (Butler, 1997a, p.8). This chapter of the PhD thesis responds to this concern.

In the opening session of AIBR Anthropology Congress 2016, the anthropologist Arturo Escobar gave a warm welcoming to the audience appealing to the Spanish formula *todas*, *todos* and *todes*. This author explained that the use of *todes* instead of the binary *todas* and *todos* respond to new gender realities that are important to contemplate linguistically. Once Escobar finalized the presentation, in the final comments turn, a complaining voice raised, criticizing his action and proposing an aseptically 'good morning' instead of *todas*, *todos* and *todes*. This

situation shows how the concern about the usage of a proper language spreads to different spheres of the Academy. Some use of language ‘may’ make people feel uncomfortable and stir those persons who resist the usage of its terms. Words have the power to wound (Butler, 1997a) and reveal the vulnerability of the bodies involved in the dialogue. Words, inserted in context of power, construct realities (Haraway, 1991a; Stolcke, 2010) and oppress the bodies and preserve them simultaneously, providing them social existence (Butler, 1997a). Words, then, identify and mark people conferring them socially constructed meanings.

As Gergen (2001) points out, each word we pronounce is marked by the gender of who enunciate it. In particular, the structure of Spanish, as many other Romance languages, systematically forces speakers to mention the sex of the persons they refer to. In this context, only possible sexes, men or women, are recognizable in the way language moulds our material world. Thus language, in their performative ability, becomes a vehicle to heteronormativity, (re)producing a binary system of gender, where man and woman identities are constantly re(fixed) and interpellated (Bengoechea, 2015). In this sense, the same fact of classifying, defining, delimiting and establishing criteria of demarcation among beings and objects constructs frontiers (Ventura, 2010)

Words produce and (re)produce a social order that make possible or deny spaces for the constitution of self. In particular, trans persons find in language one steadfast obstacle in their daily life. When a gender identity differing with their own is attributed to them, the gendered words deny and undo their identities, and limit their experience of the world.

However, neither words nor their meanings remain invariables through time and action. Different institutions and social agents exert pressure for the control, creation, usage and modification of terms. Regarding gender, words are also (re)appropriated, (re)modified and (re)signified in interaction. Thus, they can ‘also’ be a useful tool to challenge and transform gender assumptions. Traditionally, feminist literature has described two possible ways to produce a fairer gender language: the feminization of words or the search and selection of other neutral formulas (Gustafsson, Bäck, & Lindqvist, 2015). However, new initiatives have focused on the linguistic production of new terms. In the context of AIBR congress, the spectators’ reaction behind that unexpected *todes* tried to discredit the

introduction of a new term and questioning of sex binary system. Escobar's voice announcing *todes* broke man/woman dichotomy.

In other countries, new alternative and transformative formulas have been coined to consider other realities and sex-gender trajectories. For instance, some trans persons use *zi*, *hir*, *shi* and *s/he* pronouns in English language to allude to different gender identities in transition (Simmons & White, 2014; Valentine, 2007). In Sweden, there has been from 2012 a progressive application of the neutral pronoun *hen* apart from the usual *hon* (she) and *han* (he). That suggestion began to be utilized to refer to LGBT communities and, in particular, to allude to those persons who do not identify themselves with man or woman category and to reduce the relevance given to gender (Gustafsson et al., 2015).

In Spanish, the usage of 'x' has started to appear in scientific trans literature. Authors, as Alonso and Zurbriggen (2014) and Bengoechea (2015), have reclaimed its usage and some associations (e.g. Chrysallis, the Association of families of transsexual minors) also use it in their statements. On contrary, other authors have opted to utilize the asterisk instead 'x' (Suess, 2010).

Against this backdrop, I have opted for the use of these new formulas as an exercise of representation and activism against the public silence and misrepresentation of trans communities. The formal conventions of the present work do not hinder this strategical use of language, particularly in cases in which gender identity is unknown, or referring to persons that reject male and female identity categories. I also use it to achieve a less binary writing and reduce the relevance of gender in certain words and contexts. Thus, in the small parts of this dissertation written in Spanish I will use the ending 'x', while gender neutrality formulas such as 'zi', 'hir' and 'shi' will be present in the parts written in English. In doing so, I defend people's right to define themselves in their own terms and therefore, I also show respect to those persons that disregard concepts as 'man', 'woman' or 'trans' to define themselves.

Those who read these lines can also question the use I do of 'trans' in this PhD thesis in a similar way as Valentine (2007) does when problematizes the utilization of 'transgender' term. According to this author, the use of transgender produces effects that it does not only describe but (re)creates differences in its confrontation with other terms. The use of 'trans' can be similarly criticized. The term 'trans' was coined as a response to the term 'transsexuality' (this one originated within the

medical field) in order to enhance re-signification and diversity of gender non conformer individuals and communities (see chapter 2.3.1). Then, it becomes an identity, as well as a collective and political category. The term trans, therefore, seeks the understanding of a broad and fluid spectrum of gender variants that proclaims its independence from a given corporeality. Acknowledging that this term somehow (re)creates and reinforces the differences among trans and cissexual persons, it also recognizes gender diversity. Besides, the use of 'trans' responds to an academic and pragmatic interest, derived from the advantages it presents for the scientific analysis. Lately, as post-feminist, I share Haraway's doubt when she asks: "would feminist authority and the power to name give the world a new identity, a new story? Can feminists master science?" (Haraway, 1991a, p. 72).

## **1.2 Escribiendo sobre trans**

*Perhaps the power of the writer and the reader can only reside in an awareness of the play of contradictions and the performances of power that both suture and unravel any ethnographic text.*

(Britzman, 1995b, p.237)

Como todo texto formal, la escritura de una tesis doctoral debe cumplir unos estándares y requisitos formales determinados. La utilización de un lenguaje académico pertinente es uno de ellos. Sin embargo, el lenguaje empleado también debe ser coherente con el marco teórico del trabajo y los principios ético-morales de quien investiga.

El lenguaje no es ajeno a lo que acontece en la sociedad, sino que participa de la construcción social de la realidad. Como investigadora social y ser lingüístico que soy no puedo obviar el potencial de las palabras para apoyar, mantener o contravenir un determinado orden social. Butler también alude a esta responsabilidad, al señalar que "hacemos cosas con palabras, producimos efectos con el lenguaje, y hacemos cosas al lenguaje, pero también el lenguaje es aquello que hacemos" (Butler, 1997b, p.25). La realización de este apartado de mi tesis doctoral surge ante esta preocupación lingüística.



En la sesión de apertura del Congreso de Antropología AIBR 2016, el antropólogo Arturo Escobar dio una calurosa bienvenida a la audiencia apelando a la fórmula española ‘todas, todos y todes’. Explicó, además, que el uso de ese ‘todes’ en lugar del binario ‘todas y todos’ responde a nuevas realidades de género que son precisas contemplar lingüísticamente. Finalizada su presentación, en el turno de comentarios, una voz quejosa se alza entre el público y critica la acción de Escobar, proponiendo un aséptico ‘buenos días’ en lugar de ‘todas, todos y todes’. Esta situación muestra cómo la preocupación por el uso correcto del lenguaje se extiende a diversos ámbitos de la Academia. Algunos usos del lenguaje ‘pueden’ incomodar a las personas y remover a aquellas que se resisten al uso de sus términos. Las palabras tienen el poder de herir (Butler, 1997b) y revelar la vulnerabilidad de los cuerpos involucrados en el diálogo. Las palabras, insertas en contextos de poder, crean realidades (Haraway, 1991b; Stolcke, 2010) y al mismo tiempo que oprimen también preservan los cuerpos y les dotan de existencia social (Butler, 1997b). Las palabras, entonces, identifican y señalan a las personas atribuyéndoles significados socialmente construidos.

Como Gergen (2001) señala, cada palabra que pronunciamos está marcada por el género de quienes la enuncian. En concreto la estructura del castellano, como muchas otras lenguas románicas, sistemáticamente obliga a quienes lo hablan a hacer mención al sexo de las personas a las que se refieren. En este contexto, los sexos posibles, hombre o mujer, son reconocibles en el modo en el que el lenguaje modela nuestro mundo material. Este lenguaje, en su capacidad performativa, se convierte en vehículo de la heteronormatividad, (re)produciendo un sistema binario de género, donde las identidades de hombre y mujer son constantemente (re) fijadas e interpeladas (Bengoechea, 2015). En este sentido, el mismo hecho de “clasificar implica definir, delimitar, establecer criterios de demarcación entre las cosas y los seres que organizamos; en definitiva, construir fronteras” (Ventura, 2010, p. 11).

Las palabras producen y (re)producen un orden social que posibilita o niega espacios para la constitución del ser. En particular, las personas trans encuentran en el lenguaje uno de los mayores obstáculos en sus vidas diarias. Cuando se les atribuye una identidad de género diferente a la que sienten como propia, las palabras generizadas niegan y deshacen sus identidades, y limitan sus experiencias en el mundo.

Sin embargo, ni las palabras ni sus significados permanecen invariables al tiempo y la acción. Diferentes instituciones y agentes sociales ejercen presión por el control, creación, uso y modificación de los términos. Concretamente en relación con el género, las palabras también son (re)apropiadas, (re)modificadas y (re)significadas en interacción. Por ello, ‘también’ pueden ser una herramienta útil para retar y transformar las percepciones de género. Tradicionalmente la literatura feminista ha descrito dos maneras de posibilitar un lenguaje de género justo: la feminización de las palabras o la búsqueda y selección de aquellas con forma neutral (Gustafsson et al., 2015). Sin embargo, nuevas iniciativas se han centrado en la producción lingüística de nuevos términos. En el contexto del congreso AIBR, la reacción de tal espectadorx ante el inesperado ‘todes’ trataba de deslegitimar la introducción del nuevo vocablo y la problematización del sistema binario de género. La voz de Escobar enunciando ese ‘todes’ rompía la dicotomía hombre/mujer.

En otros países se han creado fórmulas alternativas que transforman el lenguaje para tener en cuenta otras realidades y trayectorias sexo-género. En inglés, por ejemplo, algunas personas trans utilizan los pronombres *zi*, *hir*, *shi* y *s/he* para hacer alusión a unas identidades de género diferentes en transición (Simmons y White, 2014; Valentine, 2007). En Suecia, en el año 2012, tuvo lugar la progresiva aplicación del pronombre neutro *hen* a parte de los existentes *hon* (ella) y *han* (él). Dicha propuesta comenzó a utilizarse para referirse a las comunidades LGTB y, en concreto, para hacer alusión a aquellas personas que no se identificaban con las categorías hombre o mujer y para reducir la relevancia otorgada al género (Gustafsson et al., 2015).

En lengua castellana, el uso de la ‘x’ ha comenzado a aparecer en diversos artículos de carácter científico en la literatura trans. Autorxs como Alonso y Zurbriggen (2014) y Bengoechea (2015) han reivindicado su uso. Algunas asociaciones, como Chrysallis (Asociación de familias de menores transexuales), también lo utilizan en sus comunicados. Otrxs autorxs, sin embargo, han optado por la utilización del asterisco en su lugar (Suess, 2010).

Ante este contexto, he optado por usar algunas de estas fórmulas nuevas como un ejercicio de representación y activismo contra el silencio público y la infrarrepresentación del colectivo. La formalidad del presente trabajo no me impide justificar un uso estratégico del lenguaje, particularmente en los casos en los que la

identidad de género se desconoce o para referirme a participantes de nuestro estudio que rechazan las categorías identitarias de hombre y mujer. También lo utilizo para lograr una escritura menos binaria y reducir la importancia del género en determinadas palabras y contextos. Por ello, en esta tesis, en las pocas partes escritas en castellano, utilizaré la terminación ‘x’ mientras que fórmulas de neutralidad del género, como *zi*, *hir*, *shi* estarán presentes en las partes escritas en inglés. Con ello, defiendo el derecho de las personas a definirse con sus propios términos, y con ello también muestro respeto a todas aquellas personas que prescinden de conceptos como el de ‘hombre’, ‘mujer’ o ‘trans’ para definirse a sí mismxs.

Quienes lean estas líneas también pueden cuestionar el uso que realizo del concepto ‘trans’ en esta tesis de forma similar a Valentine (2007) cuando problematiza la utilización del término *transgender*. Para estx autorx, produce efectos que no solo describe sino (re)crea las diferencias en su confrontación con otros términos. El uso de ‘trans’ puede ser igualmente criticado. El término ‘trans’ fue acuñado como respuesta al término ‘transexualidad’ (este originado en el ámbito médico) para permitir la re-significación y la diversidad de personas y comunidades que no se conforman con los géneros asignados (ver capítulo 2.3.1). Así, se convierte en categoría identitaria, a la vez que colectiva y política. El término trans, por tanto, busca la inclusión de un amplio y fluido espectro de variantes de género que proclama su independencia de una corporeidad determinada. Con este término, se (re)crea y refuerza, de alguna manera, las diferencias entre estas personas y las cissexuales, pero también reconoce la diversidad de género.

En cualquier caso, el uso que pueda hacer del término trans en este trabajo responde a un interés de tipo académico, realizando un uso meramente instrumental del mismo y derivado de las ventajas que presenta para su análisis científico. Por último, como post-feminista, comparto la siguiente pregunta de Haraway “la autoridad feminista y el poder de nombrar, ¿darán al mundo una nueva identidad y una nueva historia? ¿Pueden las feministas dominar la ciencia?” (Haraway, 1991b, p. 114).



## CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



## **CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The following section is an attempt to situate trans bodies in current societies according to literature. However, when there is no unique body or unique way to interpret the bodies, the conceptualization of trans bodies is a really complex task. The multiple senses given to the bodies become problematic when our societies try to frame and demarcate them. In those situations, the bodies are actually a source of creative tension for researchers (Lock, 1993).

Within this background, we firstly explore how the bodies are signified and the tensions created around them. For that purpose, we briefly explain the main ideologies and paradigms that configure particular viewpoints of the bodies, from modernist to postmodernist perspectives. An approach to the sex-gender problem is equally necessary to understand how gendered bodies, and trans persons' bodies in particular, are socially constructed. The meanings and uses given to these terms affect the different interpretations managed by and around trans persons.

In a second moment, we proceed to analyse some fundamental concepts developed from post-feminist perspectives. Habitus, performativity, frontiers and heteronormativity are relevant notions and tools that help us to analyse and interpret trans persons' experiences. Especially the concept of heteronormativity provides useful insight into the structure in which trans community (and the present thesis) is included.

Thirdly, we shed some lights on the discourses that involve trans persons' bodies. By and large, medical discourses have tended to manage pathological viewpoints of trans persons that affect trans persons' subjectivities and the way the society perceives 'trans phenomenon'. Other less influential discourses, and particularly those maintained by the trans community, are frequently silenced. In this doctoral thesis, we give voices to these discourses presenting qualitative studies that contemplate them, together with some contributions of trans scholars. The different discourses trans community manages about themselves evidence not only the wealth in diversity of this population, but also the tensions that arise with other social agents.

In the theoretical framework of this dissertation, we also address specific literature on trans persons' experiences in sport, physical activity and physical

education. Despite there are few studies focused on these issues, these valuable works were the starting point that guided the design of this research. Due to its relevance, a bibliometric analysis and thematic areas and content of these studies have been incorporated at the end of this section.

In summary, through the different blocks of this theoretical framework, we tackle four interrelated dimensions of a multidimensional process: The structural dimension, language and discourses, social agents and ‘everyday’ social life (Jackson, 2006). The different concepts and theories presented in the present work serve us as potent analytical tools that illuminate trans persons’ narratives on their own experiences.

## **2.1 The bodies in postmodern societies**

*How slippery speaking, writing, reading,  
and desiring subjectivity really are.*

(Britzman, 1995b, p. 236).

Over the last 30 years, ‘the body’ has become the focus of sociological debates. The proliferation of literature around this particular topic has constructed not singular but plural social conceptions of the body due to the multiplicity of discourses created around it (Esteban, 2013). Social and Natural Sciences have typically managed opposed approaches to the body. The dialectical relationships between nature and culture, and the equally problematic relationships between mind and body have been the focus of attention of many researchers. For instance, Lambek (1998) expresses the relevance of mind and body debate in this way:

“Mind” and “body” speak to fundamental tensions of human experience: connection to and separation from others, the boundary between the subjective and the objective, the relation of concepts to objects, or reason to sensation, experiences of the voluntary and the involuntary, morality and desire, being and becoming, active and passive, male and female, the transient and the enduring, culture and nature, life and death (p. 107).

This quotation seems to suggest the complementary relation of both terms. However, some researchers have questioned the binarism hidden in the



conceptualization of mind and body categories as well as the opposition between Social and Natural Sciences. Despite the old barriers between them are being blurred, both branches of knowledge have traditionally used completely different starting points about the body. In this doctoral thesis, we emphasize how both sciences have embraced the study of the body according to two remarkable perspectives: the modernist and the postmodernist.

The modernist standpoint has considered the body as a knowable object, a unique, universal and material reality intelligible to the researchers. The predominance of positivism has fostered an idea of the body as a living machine, which has its own mechanisms and functions. Under the gaze of this paradigm, the body is considered a natural entity that can be objectively described and explained. An equally remarkable attribute of the modernist perspective is the spirit of fragmentation of the body (Frank, 1991; Haraway, 1991a). Particularly, Health Sciences have tended to part it in multiple research objects and units of analysis. The emergence of different specialities of medical practice, as radiology, cardiology, endocrinology or ophthalmology exemplifies this fragmented approximation to the body. In general, these medical practices separate the body from the person, dehumanizing it (Pizza in Bergero, Asiain & Esteva, 2012). In addition, the reductionism that implies to isolate 'the body' from its different meanings and contexts has created an ahistorical, universal and uniform objectified body (Gambarotta, 2016; Lock, 1993). This dominant way to understand the body has also affected the meaning given to gender, legitimating the medical institution to define sex on biological basis. From the perspective of positivism, everybody is born with a particular sex determined by chromosomes, sexual organs and gonads. This discourse defends that two unique sexes, male and female, are possible. Subsequently, transsexuality and intersexuality are defined as deviation of nature. In relation to this dominant biological conception of sex, Laqueur (1994) argues that these two 'immense' sexes, male and female, are cultural products. Foucault also expresses the fictional character of the biological sex as follows:

The notion of "sex" made it possible to group together, in an artificial unity, anatomical elements, biological functions, conducts, sensations, and pleasures, and it enabled one to make use of this fictitious unity as a causal principle, an omnipresent meaning, a secret to be discovered

everywhere: sex was thus able to function as a unique signifier and as a universal signified (1978, p.154)

This hegemonic definition of the body as a primary natural phenomenon is also rejected by Social Sciences. Anthropology, in particular, that raised the centrality of the body in social disciplines, considers the body as ‘something’ that belongs to the culture (Martínez Barreiro, 2004). Therefore, “the body is a potential which can be elaborated by sociocultural development” (Turner, 1991, p. 4). Nothing is outside the culture and then, there is no universal truth about the body. Under this perspective, sexual differences are socially and culturally created over the basis of sex binarism, constructing meanings throughout the body materiality. The conceptions about sexes and their appreciation rely on the own culture and the different meanings native groups manage on them. Some anthropologists, for instance, make visible cultural differences on sexual roles as well as the existence of a third sex or gender which is revered and regarded as positive (Towle & Morgan, 2006).

Despite the existence of clear differences between the cultural body and the biological body, supported by Social and Natural Sciences, respectively, they both maintain a similar ontological perspective. Thus, anthropologists believe in the power of reason and the existence of an intelligible and transparent ethnography, as biologist and other essentialist researchers do.

This modernist anthropological approach has been criticized for falling in simplistic visions of the body, because it is considered a pre-cultural object, a “biological raw material on which culture operates” (Csordas, 1994, p. 8). Instead of the body itself, the relevance lies on the relationship of the body with other categories, as mind and self (Lambek, 1998). The modernist stance of Anthropology considers the body as a simply source of symbols and rituals (Csordas, 1994). For example, the Anthropology of Woman of the 1970s explained ‘universal’ differences between men and women attending to the particular ways in which natives interpreted the biological functions of sexes. As Thurén (1992) criticizes, this interpretation is very essentialist, the embodiment is negated and the body is excluded from culture.

The ulterior crisis of modernism meant a crisis of knowledge and reasoning. This new scepticism brings a crisis of representation where knowledge is viewed as

constitutive of power (Britzman, 1995b, p. 231). Under this viewpoint, knowledge and power cannot be separated because they work together (Butler, 2004). Some authors recognise that the development of theories and concepts expose the researchers' particular positions, prejudices and ideologies, because "every telling is constrained, partial, and determined by the discourses and histories that prefigure, even as they might promise, representation" (Britzman, 1995b, p. 232). For Foucault (1978), the proliferation of scientific discourses on sex and body, which functioned as a technique of truth production, regulated sex and intensified the power and control over citizens' behaviours. Also, Laqueur (1994) suggests that the Natural Sciences role is not limited to research, but also affects society by generating differences between sexes. Some authors have theoretically dismantled the dual sex premise through an alternative biological perspective. For instance, Fausto-Sterling (1993) evidences the artificiality of the current medical discourse by proposing a more complex model based on five sexes.

Some theorists have criticized that focusing only on the surface of the body, as if it were a raw material on which regimes of truth and power are inscribed, produces the denial of complexity of the body, homogenizing it as if the body were synonym for self or person (Butler, 1989; Coll-Planas & Missé, 2015; Csordas, 1994; McNay, 1999).

The postmodernist theorization of the body has been characterized by more interdisciplinary debates (Barreto, 2011). DiGiacomo defines postmodernism "as an umbrella category under which many different approaches are subsumed" (1992, p. 110). "Postmodern seems that is less a body of theory than a perspective on all theory, and its essence, (...) is a willingness to problematize authority" (DiGiacomo, 1992, p.110). The more intransigent theories and the dichotomies characteristic of the earlier period were relativized (Lock, 1993).

In this era, the binary tension between body/psyche and social/biological body relation becomes problematic (Salamon, 2010). The consideration of multiple dimensions of body is one of the most significant aspects of postmodernism. However, the crisis of modernity did not equally affect both (Social and Natural) sciences and positivism seemed more rigid than the ethnographic paradigm. Social and Cultural disciplines have progressively been admitting the difficulties to get close to the body. Lock (1993, p.134) recognises that "the body has become more

elusive, fluid, and uncontrollable” than expected. Le Breton (2002) supports this idea when he says there is nothing more mysterious than the thickness of the skin itself. Many researchers also drop the idea that the body problem can be solved, and sustain that no universal agreements about the body can be achieved (Lock, 1993). Increasingly, authors and researchers have upheld the ontological status of the body apart from cultural inscriptions, claiming that people both have and are bodies and, consequently, the relation between biology and culture cannot be ignored. Interdisciplinary approaches to the body are requested to do not blur the body (Barad, 2003; Esteban, 2013; Haraway, 1991a; Lock, 1993).

According to postmodernism theories, identities are not homogeneous and fixed. They are social and historical constructions and then, malleable and volatile (Trujillo, 2015). Compared to other cultures, in postmodern western societies, the role of the body has changed and the complex process of individuation gives to the body a prominence never seen before. At present, the body is the place of reflection, resistance, pleasure and social change, among other considerations (Esteban, 2013). For writers as Martin (1992) and Csordas (1994), the existence of this new body cannot longer be considered passive because “our lives are not always lived in objectified bodies, for our bodies are not originally objects to us” (Csordas, 1994, p. 7). The body can be understood as the place of subjectivity, “the subject of culture” (Csordas, 1990, p. 5). The transformation of the body implies the consideration of the existential immediacy of the body, a being-in-the-world perspective and the embodiment that phenomenology evokes. A first existential phenomenology, defended by Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Simone De Beauvoir, seeks to discover pure embodied experiences (Young, 2005). However, a multiple subject, rather than a unitary subject, is recognised by an ulterior postmodernist phenomenology.

Postmodern conceptions acknowledge how subjectivity produces a new body able to make decisions. The new active body has emerged from the concept of ‘agency’. This term refers to a self-capable person that transcends history and the effects of discursive regime (Britzman, 1995b). The body can be a tool of this regime, but also a place for agency. For Butler, the body is “the site where ‘doing’ and ‘being done to’ become equivocal” (2004, p. 21). Planella and Pie (2012) also recognize that people are producers of subjectivities and the place the body

occupies in social spaces should be re-thought in order to consider its transformative potential. Similarly, postmodernism has made possible the appearance of post-identities, new identities characterized by its fluidity and unstable character. Currently, identities are not absolute or fix. For Barreto (2011, p. 19), “that heavy body, disciplined, docile and opaque formed by flesh characteristic of industrial society (...) has become obsolete”. For hir, in this new period, “we realise or become aware that it is impossible to really and truly belong to something” (p.18) and these new malleable identities need new bodies. Precisely queer term refers to those persons who embody different, inappropriate, weird or abnormal bodies<sup>1</sup>.

Despite the postmodern optimistic viewpoint of the subject, the most critique voices advert us from the risk of considering identity ‘excessively’ liquid and, consequently, ignoring deeply embodied aspects (McNay, 1999). With regard to gender identities, they cannot be seen as arbitrary choices or decisions made without conditions. As bodies live among other bodies and are in contact with other bodies, meanings and feelings emerged from bodies should be contextualized. Otherwise, researchers can fall into the mistake of victim blaming, accusing trans persons to produce and maintain their own suffering when they feel bad by not reaching a proper gender performance.

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<sup>1</sup> However, the use of queer term is not limited to the actors. It also refers to political attitude and a set of knowledge (Trujillo, 2015). Britzman (1995a, p. 153) defines queer as “improper subjects and improper theories”. Queer term and queer theory focus on actions and performances that subvert hegemonic rules.

## 2.2 Regarding gendered bodies

*Neither of these [my sexuality and my gender] is precisely a possession, but both are to be understood as modes of being dispossessed, ways of being for another or, indeed, by virtue of another*

(Butler, 2004, p. 19)

Nowadays, the analysis of the significance of sex cannot be contemplated without alluding to the gender term. Both sex and gender are often seen as two sides of a same coin. Haraway (1991a) explains the complex relation between these two words evocating their political history of union and differentiation. Thurén (1992, p. 50) underlines the difficulties to approach to it considering that gender is “a general concept with high levels of abstraction but empty of empirical content”. In fact, sex and gender are words which have frequently been used interchangeably in literature (Habarth, 2008). Their changing meanings cannot be isolated from discourses, practices, speakers and listeners of particular times and places (Britzman, 1995b). Lombardi (2009) warns that the constant resignification and (re)interpretation of both words can produce a problematic use of some associated terms as trans persons, transsexuality, transgenderism or other variant genders. Therefore, falling into imprecision seems inevitable when both words are presented as ambiguous, inconsistent and volatile. In order to avoid confusion, the presentation of some of the multiple voices that act as competing forms of knowledge seems fundamental.

If we look at the roots of both words, the emergence of the gender term and its differentiation to the sex term is situated in the middle of twentieth century. In that period, the progressive technological development and the medicalization of the societies were factors that became central for the role of the body. Especially from the 80's, the body worship and the rise of gyms made possible that those body parts that symbolized sexed identities could be worked (Barreto, 2011). A growing preoccupation with sexual identities, behaviours and attitudes permeated into the population. This awareness affected the medical culture to such an extent that it is increasingly developing sophisticated techniques to feminise and masculinise the

bodies, as mammoplasty, liposuction or penis enlargement practices. The possibility to modify and transform the own body throughout these body technologies made people responsible for presenting a proper sexed body to others. Since then, the only manifestation of male and female identities through clothes, gestures and movements, has been considered insufficient to get a social recognition of the woman or man status. The body gained an important role and became an infallible (and required) way to express and affirm cultural expectations of femininity and masculinity (Blackwood, 2011). The materiality of the body became definitively the place to fix the sexes (Coll-Planas & Missé, 2015). However, the existence of persons whose bodies presented sexual characters of male and female (intersexual persons) and persons who did not identify themselves with the sex assigned at birth (trans persons) caused the essentiality of sex to be problematic. In order to stop that threat, the emergence of the gender term was necessary. The coinage of this new word allowed medical system to control and police the bodies, promoting the immobility of a two-sex model.

In 1955, doctor John Money coined the 'gender' term to refer to the gender role of intersexual patients and to differentiate it from 'sex', which alluded to the biological characteristics that constitute a male or female body (Lombardi, 2009). However, the invention of this category also stressed the 'abnormal' character of intersexual and transsexual persons, reinforcing the mind/body distinction to support the normal/pathological body. From a binary perspective, if people who felt the correspondence between 'mind' and 'body' (or gender and sex) were normalized, those who felt the discordance between both entities would be considered dislocated.

However, this dominant discourse faced firmly oppositions because feminist sectors unexpectedly used the gender term to question biological differences between men and women. Particularly, De Beauvoir denounced in the 1950s that these biological differences were taken for granted. The famous slogan announced by second wave feminism, 'the personal is political', appealed to question hierarchies and inequalities developed by body essentialism paradigm. In feminist groups, the gender term was described as "an organizer of social structures of the relations that exist between sexes" (Tubert, 2008, p. 92) that allowed a person to take refuge in a collective identity. Sex, then, was seen as a 'given' reality instead

of the 'achieved' character of gender (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Despite the constant feminists' critiques to some binary logics, as for instance nature/culture dual, they did not extent this rejection to sex/gender distinction (Haraway, 1991a). Feminist discourses supported gender binarism because it provided them the necessary theoretical frame to proclaim the cultural construction of gender inequalities and, therefore, the possibility to erase them.

After this first approximation to the gender term, some authors soon criticized its use because the sex/gender distinction supported a binary classification. The definition of sex as something natural and gender as cultural did not accomplish to transcend the dialectical relation, which brought undesired and negative consequences to feminist movement. Lauretis (1989) considers that gender was a necessary and combative category in the 1960s and the 1970s, but it later became a constraint for feminism. Patriarchy is reproduced in feminism discourse as long as gender continues focusing on differences between men and women and, therefore, ignoring other important issues as intersexuality, queer identities and the diversity of genders (Lauretis, 1989).

Butler also questions the use of gender concept because, under hir viewpoint, gender is the apparatus by which masculinity and femininity are (re)produced. Shi affirms sex and gender are both a result of the same social process and, in fact, "sex is gender 'all along'" (Prosser, 1998, p. 36). Sex is the discursive effect of gender and its incorporation on the body is a fantasy. For Butler:

if the immutable character of sex is contested, perhaps this construction called 'sex' is as culturally constructed as gender; indeed, perhaps it was always already gender, with the consequence that the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be not distinction at all (1990, p.7)

Similarly, Whitehead and Thomas (2013) affirm that the body role is none other than to support the symbolical weight of the authentic representation of gender. However, this particular way of understanding sex and gender does not mean these two concepts cannot be used. As Butler defends:

The argument that the category 'sex' is the instrument or effect of 'sexism' or its interpellating moment (...) that 'gender' only exists in the service of heterosexism, does 'not' entail that we ought never to make use of such terms, as if such terms could only and always reconsolidate the



oppressive regimes of power by which they spawned. On the contrary, precisely because such terms have been produced and constrained within such regimes, they ought to be repeated in directions that reverse and displace their originating aims (1993, p.123).

Therefore, gender refers to not only an ideal or a model that prescribes our actions and behaviours, as a site of domination, but also where the subversion of hegemonic regulation can take place. In fact, non-normative gender expressions can be an authentic threat to the rigidity of traditional gender system. As McNay (2004) suggests, people have the agency to adopt particular forms of gender. For this author, gender does not allude to a passive incorporation, but to a lived relation that involves some degree of negotiation that makes changes possible in the gender regime. Especially, the defence of the self-determination of gender is a sign of people's agency and resistance. Cross-dressers, genderqueers, male-to-females, female-to-males, transvestites, gender neutral, and gender fluid are some examples of some gender variations and new categories of gender identities that refer to persons who reject feminine and masculine styles, positioning in between (Simmons & White, 2014).

Some feminists, in their efforts to dismantle gender dualism, have proposed the multiplicity of genders, recognizing femininity and masculinity as poles of a gender continuum. Another sector of feminism has also stated that there are as many genders as persons exist in a society (Moure, 2012). However, for Butler (2004), the multiplication of genders is equally problematic and she claims that the fight of undoing gender should be done without falling in that excessive quantification of genders. Alegre (2012) also warns that to execute that opening process does not assure us the rupture of the dominant order.

Despite these debates around the meanings of sex and gender may seem a trivial question, they are relevant because categories have the power to enable action and possibilities of being in the world (Valentine, 2007). The regulation of gender and sex, and therefore the regulation of identities, affects the subjectivities of every person. From feminism, a political fight and a combative act is to broaden the way people can express their gender identities, and express them in multiple ways, because bodies that do not behave in a certain way challenge the efficacy of the actual gender regulation (Butler, 2004).

Against the backdrop of the above, terms are a battlefield where fighting for their meanings entails the fight against some forms of power (Haraway, 1991a). In the present dissertation, we recognize the cultural and social character of sex and gender categories. Following Jackson, we use gender as “a social division and a cultural distinction, given meaning and substance in the everyday actions, interactions and subjective interpretations through which it is lived” (2006, p. 106). We also agree with Young (2005) and other authors who argue that the gender concept is useful to discuss structure concerns, but it is problematic to deal with particular subjectivities. Therefore, the use we make of this term in this dissertation is limited in its meaning and by no means explains body realities. Although we think a single use of sex and gender are perverse and reinforce a particular order, by distinguishing them we bring ourselves closer to different social discourses about trans identities, which are managed by trans community, medicals, and society in general. To know these discourses will help us to understand trans persons’ experiences and the effects of this gender regime on participants.

### **2.3 Discourses on (Trans) bodies**

*How does the body manifest a sex? How can we account, in a non-pathologizing way, for bodies that manifest sex in ways that exceed or confound evident binaries?*

(Salamon, 2010, p. 13).

In academia, trans persons have received less attention than other gendered social groups. In this section, we expose a plurality of voices to make the diversity within this community visible and we point out how this plurality eventually affects the position trans persons occupy in relation to hegemonic discourses. Following Magrini (2010), we are presenting some narrative and other qualitative research on trans persons, to finally shift, theoretically, from narratives to discourses.

For this purpose, pathology and abjection become key issues as they stand as the two main discourses or forms of knowledge that influence the construction of trans realities in Western Societies. Both discourses are connected to institutions,

political interests and social regulations, and are reproduced through body, spoken and written languages (Foucault, 1984; see Shaw & Hoerber, 2003). Even if they currently coexist with other minor discourses, their impact on trans population is obvious. We do not conceive pathologizing and abjecting discourses as being uniform and immutable, but as changeable in intensity and power. Additionally, we stress their interconnection and co-construction.

### 2.3.1 Pathologizing bodies

Salamon (2010) affirms that the material body is not presented to us unproblematically and cannot be a “faithful reflection of psychic self” (p. 14). In western societies, binary contrasts between body and mind have been traditionally shown as unquestionable, and those manifestations that counteract this presumption are frequently judged as deviated. Despite sex and gender correspondence has also shared the same fate, terminology, interpretations and knowledge created on persons who do not accomplish with binary order have historically varied.

For instance, some documents of the 16th and 17th centuries testify several cases of ‘sex changes’ and ‘hermaphroditism’<sup>2</sup> in Spain. Helena de Céspedes and Catalina de Erauso were renowned examples of women who took benefit of male privileges by performing a different sex role. In that period, ‘sex changes’ were considered as changes of status and not as anatomical or physical changes (Vázquez, 2007). Additionally, sex term alluded to a sociological more than ontological condition of the human being (Aresti, 2006). At that time, the usurpation of male role by women was not viewed offensive<sup>3</sup>. In fact, some women acting like men were even socially and civilly recognized by their contribution to the society. The real concern of that time was not to elucidate the authentic biological identities of these persons but to guarantee that ambiguous characteristics were not adopted. However, in the cases of sex change, in which women were judged, medical criteria were not influential and doctors were not

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<sup>2</sup> At that time, the term hermafroditism was used to describe what is currently called interssexuality.

<sup>3</sup> On the condition that women should be virgin. The seriousness of this action was to violate the sacred state of marriage and sexual relations with no reproductive finality.

valued as experts (Enguix, 2011). Though yet marginalized, the undeveloped medical knowledge made impossible to pathologize these persons.

The emergence of trans subjects, as they are currently known, was possible thanks to the development of scientific knowledge and technological advances in the medical area. This new situation provoked that people who felt a strong displeasure or rejection toward certain body areas were liable to being considered mentally ill. According to this medical gaze, every person whose gender identity did not match with the sex assigned at birth needed of medical control and treatment (Gregori, 2012; Mas Grau, 2013). Within this context, the modern term of transsexuality was coined by Magnus Hirschfeld in 1923 and was popularized as an extreme form of transvestism by Doctor Benjamin in 1960<sup>4</sup>. To this author, a transsexual person wanted to belong to the opposite sex and correct the anatomical errors (Ekins, 2005). This doctor identified different types of transsexualism according to the intensity ‘their patients’ felt the identification with the ‘other’ sex and the kind of treatment they needed (Gregori, 2012). In that classification, only the persons who wished to undergo sexual reassignment were considered truly transsexuals (Billings & Urban, 1998). This determination was judged by the scientific community as a reliable proof of their authenticity.

In the 1980s, the main diagnostic manuals for mental disorders incorporated transsexuality as a disease. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), in the version published in 1994 (DSM-IV), defined transsexuality as a sexual identity disorder, “characterized by strong and persistent cross-gender identification accompanied by persistent discomfort with one's assigned sex” (American Psychiatric Association, 1994, p. 493). A year later, the version DSM-V (published in 2013) defined it as a gender dysphoria, “a general descriptive term refers to an individual's affective/cognitive discontent with the assigned gender” (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 451).

Despite this new version admits (and criticizes) that the DSM-IV focused on the identity *per se* and not on the clinical problem, the DSM-V still situates trans

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<sup>4</sup> Christine Jorgensen was the first person who had a sexual reassignment surgery in 1952, after the unsuccessful attempt of Lilly Elbe's operation.

persons as a problem, neglecting exclusive social causes for trans persons' discomfort.

According to the trajectory exposed before, the creation and use of new terms in the psychological and medical contexts respond to a new power technology that consolidates and increases the control of these public institutions over sex and gender (Foucault, 2000). The multiplicity of discourses concerning sex and gender identities does not mean the absence of repression. Its inclusion as a topic of study and the production of knowledge has provoked the regulation of certain behaviours and identities. Defining and drawing limits between what is considered abject, abnormal and perverse and what is defined as normality, enhances a need of contouring and controlling non-hegemonic identities.

Within this regulatory framework, the transformation of trans persons' bodies was the solution adopted to treat 'their mental pathology'. Due to the difficulty in changing people's minds, medical experts gave to this population the opportunity to hormonally, aesthetically and surgically modify their bodies. However, the institutionalization of transsexual identities gave psychologists the last word to decide who could access to these procedures and who could not. To fit into gender stereotypes was the basic condition to get that permission and those who did not accomplish with them were excluded from medical services.

Some authors are sceptical about the role of medical experts. According to Bergero et al. (2012), the necessity to receive sanitary treatment and access to surgery is not inherent to transsexuality. For these authors, these necessities are produced by current societies and the actual intensity with which trans persons feel suffering and discomfort toward their own bodies hide a social dimension that cannot be overlooked. The cultural constructions of femininity and masculinity mediate in the desire and need to modify some body parts and not others. In addition, not everybody can access to these services. The high cost of several body technologies produces the exclusion of a wide sector of trans population from social and personal benefits, what creates hierarchies among trans persons. In

certain sectors, women who fulfil the transition process are considered more women than others by their physical appearance (Mejía, 2006)<sup>5</sup>.

Medical discourses have also been criticized for not considering the existence of people who do not self-identify with one of the two sexes or situate themselves in half positions. Their experiences on being neglected, especially when they aim to undergo partial sanitary or aesthetic treatments, make these persons most vulnerable (Mas Grau, 2013; Valentine, 2007). Due to their misrecognition, trans persons who did not respond to standardized forms of transsexuality introduced a new term, transgenderism, to widen the understanding of the relationships between gender and body (Coll-Planas & Missé, 2015)

Recently, the existence of multiple kinds of 'intersexuality' has caused medical professionals to reconsider its binary position toward sex and maintain divisive debates about the complexity of human body. In addition, there has been a progressive despathologization of transsexuality in the last decades due to the arisen of other social discourses (Ekins, 2005). However, the traditional vision of the medical paradigm, which has strongly permeated people's life, is still alive in the society and the crossing of sex/gender frontiers is still seen more as a pathology sign than an exercise of self-determination of identity.

### 2.3.2 Abjecting bodies

Trans persons' bodies are often recognizable. According to Le Breton (2002), this is a problem when bodies occupy the place of the silence in western societies. For zhi, silence is the metaphor used to show how people normally ignore their bodies. This author points out that bodies only come to awareness to the subjects when they are sick or they differ from others in positive or negative ways. Particularly, bodies become more obvious when they encounter resistance in other bodies (Frank 1991; Le Breton, 2002). In fact, the visibility of the bodies is what draws the limits or frontiers of what a body can or cannot be. Frequently, crossing

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<sup>5</sup> At the same time, this situation requires the distinction between transsexuality and transvestism. If a transsexual person wishes to adopt the full-time gender identity, transvestites do not. Additionally, transvestism is associated to erotic pleasure of dressing as and performing the opposite gender role.

a frontier means to expose oneself to live abject situations and lose social privileges. The wider the distance from idealized bodies, the more abjected the actual body-self is considered (Pérez-Samaniego, Fuentes-Miguel, Pereira-García, & Devís-Devís, 2016).

Accordingly, heteronormative discourses act regulating the way of looking at and over the bodies, categorizing some bodies as normal and others as queer or abject (Alonso & Zurbriggen, 2014). In the present doctoral thesis, the notion of abjection is crucial to understand how queer bodies are socially created. Kristeva (1982) uses abjection to refer to something people are perverted and disgusted by. For Butler (1990), abjected body-selves ‘fall outside the human, indeed, constitute the domain of the dehumanized and the abject against which the human itself is constituted’ (p. 111). Abjection also functions as a performative mechanism to fix the limits of the bodies and behaviours that can be socially acceptable (Tyler, 2009).

Especially, trans persons and non-conforming gender people, who do not identify themselves with the sex assigned at birth, may violently feel this oppression. At some point of their lives, most of them decide to undergo body modifications to make congruence their ‘sex’ and gender. Related to gender, the identification as woman or man is essential to gain and retain the citizenship privilege and the social recognition (Alamilla, 2006; Balza, 2009). It is possible because, according to Westbrook and Schilt (2014, p. 4), “people sort each other into the category of ‘male’ or ‘female’ in social situations on the basis of visual information cues (...) and implicit rules for assigning characteristics to particular genders”. Adam’s apple, facial hair, skirt, make up, are some of the visual features used to identify a person as woman or man. Beyond physical appearance, people also assess gender through personal attitudes since they perceive aggressiveness and recklessness as suitable for males but not for females.

Social pressure and oppression to fit into dominant categories are also lived by certain people through and on the bodies. In current societies “the body appears as the threatened vehicle of human being and dignity” (Csordas, 1994, p.4) and people usually embroil themselves in effacement practices in their daily lives, trying to erase their ‘unnatural’ distinctive features and avoid the negative consequences they provoke (Barreto, 2011; Le Breton, 2002). Especially in these

moments, bodies are both, a means and an outcome of social body techniques (Le Breton, 2002), because only bodies who inhabit or enact normative gender ideals “remain culturally intelligible, socially valuable” (Boyd, 2006, p. 421).

In pre-transition and early beginning stages of transitioning some trans persons are wrongly gendered in interactions (Westbrook & Schilt, 2014), living frightening and stressful times (Hines, 2007). In initial phases their bodies become ‘hyper-embodied’ since they attract more attention than ever and are reduced to an abjected body surface (Planella & Pié, 2012). The bodies of these people who do not fit into gender binarism turn into unliveable and unthinkable entities. Abjection, stigmatization and rejection are common (re)actions towards many trans persons who are not ‘read’ as biological men or women (Caudwell, 2014; Gagne, Tewksbury, & McGaughey, 1997; Pérez-Samaniego et. al, 2016).

### 2.3.3 Living bodies

Against the universal and global body that pathologizing and abjecting discourses proclaim, individual bodies or ‘microbodies’ of trans persons imply body diversity (see Foucault, 1984). By analysing narratives on trans persons, some scholars have approached to minor discourses that provide us with other truths about trans realities.

As gender, trans persons’ narratives are embodied. In Prosser’s (1998) book, *Second skins: The body narratives of transsexuality*, narratives are defined as a second skin because trans persons’ stories “must weave around the body in order that this body may be ‘read’” (p.101). Therefore, embodiment and narratives are entwined in complex ways (Frank, 2013). When trans persons narrate their lives and trajectories, they are also involved in on-going processes of negotiation in which other gendered bodies are engaged (Caudwell, 2014; Elling-Machartzki, 2017). People build their gender identities and live gender in interaction with others since gender is achieved and lost in social interactions, spaces and (re)encounters (Gagne et al., 1997). As bodies are not only something private but relational and communicative (Franco, 2016; Gergen, 2011), what people tell over and through their body materiality is also a product of the gender culture (Smith & Sparkes, 2002).



However, in post-feminist literature, some scholars have emphasized the passive position of transsexual communities in their storytelling. The binary character of transsexuals' gender identities makes their narratives as (re)productive of discursive norms (Kaufman, 2010). In this sense, transsexuals are seen as persons who internalise medical discourses, presenting the sex/gender incongruence as a problem to doctors and other professionals. Transsexuals frequently use the expression 'to be trapped in the wrong body' to explain how they feel about their gender identities in the closet and disclosure time. When they have undergone reassignment surgeries, they also assure 'to born in a new body' in a last effort to eliminate the rest of their previous gendered bodies (Ekins & King, 1999; Prosser, 1998; Travers, 2006). Transsexuals are also characterized by reproducing gender stereotypes in order to evidence they are real women or men (Dewey, 2008) For instance, they usually express desires, hobbies and habits considered to be typical of the gender they identify with. Consequently, they are defined as gender conformers by embodying sex/gender system ideals. On the contrary, transgender communities who adopt more in-between bodily practices are considered as gender transformers (Travers, 2006; Travers & Deri, 2010; Valentine, 2007). Most of them refuse to identify themselves with male or female categories, defending that no wrong body exists, but a wrong society (Missé & Coll-Planas, 2010; Soley-Beltrán & Coll-Planas, 2011). The stigma and transphobia trans persons suffer exemplify the inability of this society to admit everybody in its bosom (Coll-Planas & Missé, 2015).

The division between gender conformers/transformers has recently been criticised for different reasons. Firstly, the distinction of trans persons according to body modifications implies to assume that undergoing any kind of treatment supports and reproduces a pathological and essentialist viewpoint of gender identities. As "the story of a strong, early, and persistent transgendered identification is required by the clinical authorities" (Prosser, 1998, p. 101), many trans persons use medical narratives as a necessary strategy to get some of the services and resources the institutions provide to this population (Dewey, 2008; Lucas, 2009). Therefore, sometimes they do not interiorise pathologizing and abjecting discourses on trans realities but make up their stories to mould them to medical demands.

Secondly, this differentiation seems to put the blame on trans persons irremediably. In such distinction, gender transformer persons are positively considered by transfeminism and postfeminism, but gender conformer persons are viewed as accomplices to the reproduction of a heteronormative order. On contrary, society upholds and supports trans persons whose behaviour (and bodies) adjust to the gender norms (Billings & Urban, 1998; Ekins, 2005), but put the blame on those who do not accomplish with heteronormative ideals. This dialectical does not favour any of them and produce confrontation among trans communities. For this reason, some trans authors appeal to the fraternization of this collective. Particularly, Smith (2010) affirms that what other trans persons actually do is irrelevant to her, accepting that “other challenges do not necessarily pose a threat to my beliefs” (p. 30).

Finally, the model gender conformer/gender transformer or transsexual/transgender also relies on binary opposites and do not collect nuances or all the variations and ways of being a trans person (Caudwell, 2014). Consequently, a more accurate way to distinguish differences among trans persons’ narratives should consider the multiple meanings they give to their identities and transitioning processes (Coll-Planas & Missé, 2015; Simmons & White, 2014). For instance, some trans persons define their identities as transitory. Once they have achieved the desired body, this transitory situation disappears. Thus, their trans identities are not permanent but temporary ones. Afterwards, they become simply men or women in advanced phases of transition processes, just as the society demands. Additionally, some trans persons do not only negate trans identification but also do not want to be associated with their siblings to avoid being identified as freak. Smith (2010), a trans woman and American columnist<sup>6</sup>, recognises that at the beginning she was afraid of social reactions and preferred to remain hidden. After considering this limiting way of living, she chose to embrace other trans persons.

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<sup>6</sup> She is well known for being the founder of the Transgender Day of Remembrance, a project that was set aside to memorialize those persons who were killed due to anti-transgender hatred or prejudice.

Following that trend of minimizing trans visualization, some discourses maintain that trans persons should stop constantly being to stand out as trans persons in order to get their normalization into the society. The constant overemphasis on their physicality implies a strong reductionism of their identities to their flesh. The recent statement of Antía Fernández<sup>7</sup> supports this idea. She expresses her desire to disappear and not being appointed as transsexual sportswoman in social media (15th of March, 2017). On the contrary, many trans activists defend that trans visualization is a fundamental ingredient to achieve social recognition and rights. Self-determination of their identities is one of their most important vindications. They also claim to know their body realities better than medical experts and, consequently, their discourses should be more influential into the society. These discourses also get rid of physicality, and particularly of gonads, to determine a person's gender. In particular, Connelly explains that "I'm not a boy because I have a penis, and just because I don't have a vagina doesn't mean I'm not a girl" (2010, p.82). Other trans persons manage different discourses about gender identities and ways of being women or men. Mejía, for example, denies trans persons can strip from transsexual category and rejects trans woman can be fully a woman:

No one transsexual has been woman (except in the imagination), which does not mean that this person continues being a man. She has stayed a halfway. Whether or not to accept, transsexuals have to be part of the idea of third sexes/genders (2006, p. 75)

At any rate, these discourses demand the re-definition of normalcy. (Re)think what is normal and what is a woman or man seems urgent to allow their lives become liveable. For instance, in Spain, some trans persons are demanding an official resignification of transsexual term. Especially, from 2007, Annual October Trans organises campaigns to despathologize it. The national movement Stop Trans Pathologization, which had its heyday in 2012, also promoted initiatives to remove transsexuality or 'sex/gender incongruence' identities from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders and other psychiatric manuals. This sort

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<sup>7</sup> She is a volleyball player who has become the first transsexual person to have officially debuted in an Olympic sport in Spain (Martínez, 25<sup>th</sup> of January, 2016).

of initiatives reveal that discourses managed by trans persons are also created and constructed in interaction with dominant discourses about gender identities. Concretely, they exert a strong opposition to pathologizing discourses medical institutions maintain.

Trans persons' discourses are progressively being taken into account since trans persons reached to Academy and started to occupy leadership roles. Kate Borstein, Jay Prosser or Judith Halberstam are some of the most important trans writers that collect or make visible the diversity that exists within trans population. In Spain, trans scholars as Paul Preciado, Miquel Missé, Kim Pérez, Alec Casanova, (S.) García Dauder and Lucas Platero, among others, have contributed to opening up trans issues. However, trans persons' discourses are underrepresented in many social domains and pathologizing and abjecting discourses are still hegemonic.

## 2.4 Understanding (trans) bodies

*The question of whether someone else is present can raise the question of whether I am present, as if absence or presence were transitive spaces, intermediary zones between differentiated individuals.*

(Butler, 2016, p.26)

The four main concepts that constitute the frame of reference of this PhD thesis are heteronormativity, frontiers, habitus and performativity. Heteronormative system refers to the presumption of congruence between sex (male/female), gender (masculinity/femininity) and sexuality (heterosexual). The normalization of this system reinforces dual categories. The polarities that most deeply affect trans persons are sex/gender, heterosexual/homosexual, transsexual/non-transsexual and body/mind opposition. Polarities reinforce some power structures, such as patriarchy (Ekins, 2005; Sharma, 2009), contouring boundaries which sanction and marginalize those people who fall outside the definition of normality (Jackson, 2006). The notion of frontiers allows us to analyse the symbolical and material effects of heteronormative discourses.

Despite the relevance of heteronormative and its relation with the notion of frontier, we coincide with Jackson when suggests that “the social ordering of gender, sexuality and heterosexuality cannot be reduced to heteronormative alone” (2006, p. 109). In doing so, we risk forgetting the materiality of the body. This danger has been highlighted by many theorists, especially trans ones. However, addressing the materiality of embodiment is probably one of the most difficult tasks for social researchers (Woodward, 2009). Feminist literature has called upon some concepts that help us not to fall into that reductionism. Through the concept of habitus, Bourdieu collapses the fundamental dualities of mind/body and sign/significance (Csordas, 1990). Habitus also puts the emphasis on processes, instead of structures, what allows us to explain how heteronormativity is produced in people’s everyday lives. Similarly, the Butlerian notion of performativity tries to overcome gender/sex, nature/culture and material/discursive polarities focusing on processes of heteronormativity constitution (Lennon, 2014).

In this section, we present heteronormativity, frontiers, habitus and performativity as complementary and essential terms for the ulterior analysis of trans persons’ experiences.

#### 2.4.1 Heteronormativity

Warner (1993) initially coined the term ‘heteronormativity’ to conceptualize the ways in which mainstream society is organized according to a binary of heterosexual normality/homosexual marginality. Since then, many authors extended the use of this concept to refer to a wider range of dual categories related to sex, gender and sexuality that structure lived realities in a binary logic. From the 1990s onwards, queer and post-feminist theorists have analysed gender binarism, and its implications in the (re)construction of gender identities, by deconstructing the ideology of ‘heteronormativity’. This new understanding of the term recognises not only the power of dualities but the creation of hierarchies among both polarities (Schneider, 2013).

Nowadays, the concept of ‘heteronormativity’ is used to characterize inequalities and hierarchies derived from this dualistic logic that intersect with other social categories and ideologies (Sharma, 2009). In such context, people who

act as real heterosexual, men, white and Christian are privileged over others. Heteronormativity also refers to all kind of institutions, power structures and practices that legitimize this binary order (Calley Jones, 2010). In dual classifications, such as man/woman, homosexual/heterosexual and black/white, each category is defined in opposition to the other, and they are constantly fixed and maintained by providing them a naturalistic and essentialist character. For instance, women are defined as essentially emotional and vulnerable human beings while men are socially considered as rational and aggressive. However, according to Butler (1990), these natural based differences do not exist because they cannot be separated from the norms that regulate them, especially gender norms.

Heteronormativity does not passively exist as a form of determinist dominance; it also enables non-heteronormative performances (Schneider, 2013). Thus, trans persons become an authentic challenge for heteronormativity discourses (Schilt & Westbrook, 2009; Pérez-Samaniego et al., 2016). In fact, trans persons and non-gender conforming persons are constantly opening possibilities to (re)think and (re)signify gendered practices, (re)negotiating their presence in a gendered world and making possible new gender discourses in those social contexts by them inhabited. However, as trans persons ‘do not appear properly gendered’ (Butler, 1990, p. 8), they are occupying unliveable and unthinkable bodies according to the ideology of heteronormativity. They are positioned in the category of deviation for those who imagine them and exert violence over their bodies (Pérez-Samaniego et al., 2016). Even so, trans men and trans women must not be considered as homogeneous groups because men and women do not have the same privileges within heteronormative system. In fact, more trans women suffer harassment situations than trans men (Factor & Rothblum, 2007; Devís-Devís et al., 2017). Hegemonic masculinity, the most influential model through which men confirm their dominance over women and other subordinated forms of masculinity (Connell, 2000), also affect trans persons. Moreover, heteronormative culture establishes hegemonic and subordinate forms of femininity. For instance, among trans women, those more feminized bodies are better accepted than androgynous ones (Elling-Machartzki, 2017).

### 2.4.2 Body frontiers

The notion of frontiers has been used in many different contexts and by many different disciplines. In the field of geography, the term ‘frontier’ refers to a physical barrier or borderline to demarcate territories and regulate people’s access or exclusion to physical spaces (Johnson et al., 2011). Traditionally, geographers and historians drew attention to changes in geographical morphology and frontiers caused by wars, border disputes and conflicts between countries. However, a social dimension of borders emerged during the 1980s decade under the influence of postmodernist social theories, constituting the ‘border studies’, an interdisciplinary field of study focused not only on physical frontiers but on cultural and symbolical frontiers as well (Kolossoff, 2005).

Boundaries, surfaces and frontiers are some of the concepts used in the border studies field to explain, with different purposes, the relevance of the persons’ bodies and embodiments. In this PhD thesis, we particularly use the term frontier because, according to several authors (Maffía, *n.d.*; Verhage, 2014), it emphasizes the rigidity and violence that appears when someone tries to cross it.

For instance, frontiers separate and link simultaneously different individuals from a society because they produce a sense of bond and membership among people that stay at one side of the border, as well as the rejection towards people that stay at the other side. Similarly, gender frontiers create a sense of brotherhood and sisterhood when some people are rejected from who are located at the other side of the frontier.

Sometimes, body surfaces constitute frontiers themselves, endowing them with social characteristics and operating as fundamental standouts that regulate interpersonal relationships. Therefore, the body works as a borderland that delimitates the presence of the subject to others (Le Breton, 2002). In fact, people segregate and divide themselves according to body materiality or certain visual elements that are important components of frontiers. Particularly, body frontiers are visually recognizable and interpretable by the members of the same community and others. The material base and structure of body frontiers, what Maffía (*n.d.*, p.

2) names ‘cleavage areas’, are important factors in recognizing different types of bodies. For instance, certain biologic and visual elements are used in everyday life to classify human beings at birth as women or men.

Additionally, frontiers reflect relations of power and domination that exist beyond the borders of the bodies. As Bordo suggests, body boundaries refer to social mobility more than affirm a social position (see Csordas, 1994). Regarding to sex, Butler (1993, p.11) suggests that “what will and will not be included within the boundaries of ‘sex’ will be set by a more or less tacit operation of exclusion”. The tacit operation is especially sensitive to social relations of power and connected to the material base and structure of body frontiers. Here emerges the key role of cleavage areas not only because they allow people to know which the recognizing material factors that constitute frontiers are, but because they allow us to analyse their effects on the subjects during the (re)creation processes of body frontiers. Generally, those effects or repercussions spread out beyond the segregation or parcelling people. Moral distinctions between what is good or bad are made upon these divisions. They even operate to socially construct the notions of foreigner or stranger. The distance, or how remote or near people feel toward other bodies, creates differences, hierarchies and marks the otherness of the individuals (Briones & Del Cairo, 2015; Woodward, 2009).

The frontiers of gender are presented as fix, natural and immutable realities. Butler (1993, p. 2) points that “what constitute the fixity of the body (...) will be fully material”. It is the materialization of the bodies what solidifies the borders of sex and gender (Verhage, 2014). People generally act (re)producing the boundaries (Fuller, 2003), materializing over the bodies the images of ideal models of woman or man in the process of becoming-subject.

However, people who present themselves with alternative genders, or different models of being women or men, exemplify the unnatural constitution of gender borders and their limits. Particularly, trans persons question the rigidity of gender frontiers, constructing the body as something dynamic. For this reason, post-feminism has tended to focus on trans persons as icons that represent and reveal the cultural character of sex and gender. They usually initiate practices to cross gender frontiers or position themselves in the borderland. People who occupy the margins



of sex and gender system are characterised by both, lack of definition and ambiguity (Ventura, 2010).

Gender frontiers are (re)produced in performative ways. The constant repetition of gender ideal models creates the illusion of stability. However, gender frontiers change just as gender does across time and space. Multiple forces participate in the transformation of borders, where “margins and centre shift and destabilize each other in parallel” (Braidotti, 2011, p. 9). The important role trans persons and other gender variants have in the (re)construction of gender frontiers cannot be disengaged from how they live and understand their genders. A deeply knowledge of the very process of constructing gender frontiers allows us to reflect and think about manners to transform, modify or even blur the frontiers and the inequalities they produce.

### 2.4.3 Habitus

The bourdieurian notion of habitus centres the gaze into the social practice of body. Bourdieu (1990) coined this term influenced by Mauss’s (1973) development of habit and his idea of a multidimensional body. In his book *Body techniques*, Mauss affirms that all societies have habits. Through socialization, each person learns distinctive behaviours, manners and postures. Everybody knows what has to do in certain situations, which actions are properly or improperly considered within a social context. “These ‘habits’ do not just vary with individuals and their limitations, they vary especially between societies, education, properties and fashion, prestige” (p.73). Habits are bodily reproduced through what he called body techniques. The techniques of body are assemblages of sociological, physical and psychological series of actions. The author enounces different body techniques as swimming, climbing, jumping and descent to exemplify its meaning.

For Bourdieu, habitus are “systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures” (1990, p. 53). The habitus is an “embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history” (p.56). It refers to the socialized subjectivity or how a self is socially produced in relation to each other (Lawler, 2004). People learn, adapt, embody and update the codex of norms (Klein, 2003). The habitus term explains

the way people incorporate social practices into the body and keep them alive through imitative actions. The “habitus links the objective social structure with the unique subjective experiences of the individual” (Holland-Smith, 2016, p. 1177). For Bourdieu, individuals give sense to their worlds according to their social class conditions and capital. Despite Bourdieu’s work does not include gender as a structuring principle, some authors, following this backdrop, have proposed to include it into habitus conception, recognising gender as one of the most important and influential disposition of our social environment (Laberge, 1995). Especially to this PhD thesis, the bourdieurian notion of habitus helps us in understanding how heteronormativity becomes part of common-sense knowledge and how heteronormative values and expectations are imprinted within bodies (Thorpe, 2009). Habitus entails styles of moving, wearing clothes and speaking among other practices that may reflect heteronormativity. The hegemony of heteronormative habitus turns binary gendered bodies into embodied self-defined truths. In such context, male and female binarism becomes an ideal and idealized model and, consequently, non-mannish men and non-womanish women tend to be abjected and rejected. Additionally, how bodies are perceived by themselves and others restrict or make possible some forms of aesthetic body expression (Krais, 2006).

Recently, sport studies have also incorporated gender habitus to analyse both, women constraint and freedom conditions within sport contexts (Thorpe, 2009). Laberge (1995), for example, analyses experiences of men and women playing in ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ sports respectively. The existence of multiple gender habitus allows the tolerance of certain degree of mannish or womanish behaviours within sport spaces that are not possible in others social contexts. Nieri and Hughes (2016) explore women’s experiences in Zumba classes, a field where specific habitus is performed by women who practice this activity. The results show how participants do not only reproduce gender stereotypes and structure while exercising their bodies, but they also have positive and enjoyable experiences. However, a different study that contemplates sport coaching male and female students’ experiences reveal uncomfortable situations for women in predominant male activities (Graham, McKenna, & Fleming, 2013). As a multi-layered term, and the co-existence of different habitus in the society, sometimes habitus come to make into inequalities (Lawler, 2004). These unfairness situations are presented as

almost inevitable. Compared to structuralism, the definition of habitus searches to limit the power of structures into citizens' lives, considering people not as a product of external social structures. However, in practice, this author does not explain how culture changes and consequently how transgression can take place. This theory has been criticized by being too determinist, and do not contemplate people's agency, letting hardly any space to resistance (Klein, 2003; Laberge, 1995; Shilling, 1991). In this sense, the idea of performativity allows us to see how heteronormativity system is reproduced, but also evidences the fissures through which the resistance is possible.

#### 2.4.4 Performativity

Performative term was firstly used by Austin (1962) within a context of language philosophy. In his book *How to do things with words*, this author utilizes 'performative sentence' or 'performative utterance' to stress how words do not describe but produce realities. The words "you are married", for instance, would be a performative use of language, insofar as they produce a new reality. The appropriateness of their usage relies on the context and effects and consequences produced. Following the former example, heteronormativity predisposes the appropriateness of the act of marriage (and its pragmatic consequences) between a man and a woman. Therefore, the mere act of speaking suggests the acceptance of situated norms shared within a community or social group. The performativity of language reflects a relationship between the listener and speaker that cannot be ignored.

Some scholars from different fields of knowledge have included the notion of performativity into their works, especially from linguistic anthropology. Following an anthropologist perspective, the performativity cannot be analysed without considering cultural conventions where utterances are inscribed. Afterwards, some authors have incorporated it into the study of social structures and their emergence through actions (Hall, 2000).

In the last decades, performativity has had a relevant impact in gender studies. Butler (1990) introduces the gender performativity in his book *Gender Trouble*. For this author, a performance "suggests a dramatic and contingent construction of

meaning” (p.139). According to the theory of performativity, gender is not something people are but something people constantly (re)create (Butler, 1990). Post-feminist theories maintain that gender is a kind of performance that people do or undo through the repetition of ritual rules. Everybody, independently of its will, do gender in their interactions with others (Westbrook & Schilt, 2013). Women and men perform binary gender practices that consolidate their subjectivities because their bodies are symbolically identified as their selves (Boyd, 2006; Butler, 1990; Sparkes, 2000). Due to the linkages between people subjectivities and their corporealities, gender practices contribute to constructing identities (Butler, 1993; Hall, 1996).

Bodily practices are presented as crucial to the construction of a particular gender order (Beltrán-Carrillo, Devís-Devís, Peiró-Velert & Brown, 2012). Generally, people do gender ‘properly’, that is, they adhere to some extent to heteronormative ideals by using more or less conscious strategies, such as controlling how feminine or masculine they present to others (Myers & Raymond, 2010). As Schilt and Westbrook (2009) suggest, these “processes of doing gender are difficult to separate from the maintenance of heteronormativity” (p.442). In social interactions, gender is (re)created performatively by the power relations that exist between sexes. The apparent naturalness of this system causes non-normative gender and sexuality acts to be widely stigmatized while “‘straight’ gender occults its own performativity” (Prosser, 1998, p. 30). Through rituals, people move toward an idealized model of women and men, participating actively in their bodies’ materialization. Notwithstanding, these ideals are presented to the people as an oasis impossible to reach. No matter how much effort they put and how disciplined they are while performing those rituals, these aspirations are never fully achieved. However, as gender performances are never identical and never perfectly executed, transformative practices can emerge. In that constant repetition, there are fissures, fractures and cracks that make possible the appearance of counter-hegemonic practices. Gender performances may reproduce the heteronormative order but simultaneously enable gender frontiers to be overcome.

Despite ritualized processes contribute to the formation of the subject (Barad, 2003), regarding subjectivities, it is worth not to misinterpret or reduce gender (and the subject’s identity) only to what is visible (Schilt & Westbrook, 2009). For

Prosser (1998), gender cannot be reduced to a drag act. Preciado (2011) also advises us of the negative consequences of getting rid of the body too soon and forgetting the effects that material inscription has onto and into the body. To be a gendered human being simultaneously comprises diverse and complex ways to behave, express, feel and construct the body-self in interactions with others. Especially referring to trans persons, this author recommends not to ignore their embodied transformations and processes, considering sexual, physical, social and political transformations carried out into and onto their bodies as fundamental elements to understand trans persons' experiences.

## 2.5 Experiences of trans persons in context

*The body needs to move to relate to others. It needs to move to express, feel, discover and make mistakes. You need to move to know what body it is. It has to be tested in all areas to know what identity moves in it*

(Robledo, 2013, p. 271)

Social institutions participate, support and perpetuate heteronormativity (Habarth, 2008). Everyday life limitations to freely express and extend people's bodies in different spaces are linked to official regulations, protocols and other institutional rules. However, heteronormativity cannot be reduced to a violence only institutionally exerted, as if it was an external force that is irremediably imposed to us. According to Foucault (1978), this is only one mechanism with which heteronormativity exerts power, for instance through the right of institutions to seizure things, time or privileges over minority forms of live. As ideology, heteronormativity influences people's behaviours, because "power is not an institution, and not a structure, (...) it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society" (Foucault, 1978, p. 93).

As heteronormativity only exists relationally, it should be thought considering the agents that support it. Professionals with an ostensibly influential post can participate (re)producing this ideological system, but they are not rulers who

unilaterally impose their ideas to persons. Power does not (only) come from above. Power is ubiquitous and persons with different roles and levels of implication also contribute to executing heteronormative regulatory practices. In a softer version of power, people do not exert direct repression over abjected bodies. Heteronormativity, as a disciplinary power, is invisibly exerted over people. As a panopticism, however, it has the ability to “bring the effects of power to the most minute and distant elements” (Foucault, 2009, p. 199). Its anonymity and omnipresence makes it a permanent lookout over gendered bodies. People’s self-control tames their bodies. The final internalization of what becomes normative is the product of an increasingly individualized society and the growing exposure of the subject to others in different social domains.

Heteronormative ideas permeate and operate in many social contexts. However, its influence is not equally distributed among them. Femininity and masculinity are not equally constructed in each space, since they require specific gendered practices that can vary from one space to another. The present section focuses on education and sport as contexts and institutions where this normative system is detrimental to women, LGBT people and, especially, to trans persons and other non-conforming gender people. In doing so, we give especial relevance to bodies in a twofold dimension: the anatomical-biological and the social-symbolic dimensions.

### 2.5.1 Relational body experiences

As we share our life with others in social interactions, people endow meanings and significance of their daily realities in relation with others (Berger & Luckhman, 1967; Denzin & Keller, 1981). Social contexts provide us with information about how the bodies should or should not behave. For instance, wearing a suit is perfectly coherent in spaces as offices, restaurants and weddings but is inappropriate in others, as gyms and swimming pools. Social establishments create policies to control the individuals’ actions and their execution. As indicated in the previous example, clothing is potentially submitted to regulation. Therefore, contexts provide an important frame to perceive and interpret the others in (inter)action. For Denzin and Keller (1981), each person brings to any interaction a

set of knowledge through which a particular contextualized action can be identified and interpreted.

Particularly, actions, attitudes and behaviours are interpreted according to certain visual embodied information. What we call habitus operates as embodied maps that help to situate persons in relation to others. In current societies, the bodies are considered the mirror of the self and, consequently, the body has to reflect predictable social behaviours (Blackwood, 2011; Goffman, 2012). Persons' reputation and legitimization are at stake in any social behaviour (Goffman, 2012). When manners, performances and bodies are considered disruptive, the socially created situations are undefined and the reference frame to interact with others is broken.

However, reference frames and interpretations are not static, and "interpretations move as interaction flows, and the interpretations persons construct derive from their stocks of knowledge about persons, selves, and social situation" (Denzin & Keller, 1981, pp. 58-59). Multiple interpretations are possible and can create confusion and misunderstandings between participants, as frequently happens in encounters with trans persons. Gender is not something people have, but instead people achieve it in social interactions, spaces and (re)encounters (Gagne et al., 1997). People are constantly dismantling, modifying and (re)fixing the limits of what is a woman, man or trans in daily body practices (Butler, 1990). Similarly, as self cannot be separated from context and bodies, changes in bodies produce changes in selves and interactions with others.

Consequently, transitioning processes provide trans persons with multiple and new ways of relationships with others and themselves. Trans persons' gendered bodies are involved in on-going processes of negotiation with other bodies equally gendered (Caudwell, 2014; Elling-Machartzki, 2017). As trans persons' bodies are constantly exposed to others, they are often sanctioned when they do not accomplish with normative gendered rules (Butler, 2004). According to Goffman (2012), these situations reflect the existence of hierarchies and particular relationships within specific social institutions and contexts. Following the status-power model of Kemper (2014), we can argue that trans persons confront social situations of low personal status when they cannot enjoy the complicity of others, and low personal power when they do not have influence on other persons. Under

these circumstances, it is not surprising that many trans persons experience rejection and stigmatization in most contexts of their daily lives. Therefore, some contexts become authentic risky places for trans populations, especially those in which people who are socialized under heteronormative rules reject and abjectify other body-selves.

Some of the most severe and extreme consequences of these processes of abjection are the experience of bullying and harassment. In fact, certain studies show that trans persons experience higher percentage of discrimination and harassment than non-trans or cisgender persons (Factor & Rothblum, 2007). Some scholars agree that the harassment suffered by trans persons reveals a structural violence or oppression that severely punishes whoever performing non-hegemonic genders (Kidd & Witten, 2010; Lombardi, Wilchins, Priesing, & Malouf, 2002; Puche, Moreno, & Pichardo, 2013). Living social rejection and harassment situations ultimately affect trans persons' self-image and self-esteem, influencing negatively their health condition. Depressions, anxieties, suicides or drug consumption are potential symptoms of that sort of situations. Additional concerns, such as school dropout or restrictive leisure activities, also affect their personal development (Doan, 2010; Grant et al., 2011; Haas et al., 2010; Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen, & Palmer, 2012).

Despite this alarming situation, the variety of trans persons' degrees of status and power may influence the experiences they have in different social contexts. Having and gaining status and power in relationships is something desirable but not equally achievable by all of them.

### 2.5.2 Experiencing sport

People engage in sports in which their bodies are regulated and controlled but also transformed. Woodward's (2009) book *Embodied Sporting Practices. Regulating & Regulatory Bodies* refers to sport as a social practice "where the boundaries of the human body can be interrogated and challenged as well as possibly reinstated" (p. 16). Sport and exercise give opportunities to gain control of the own body and, consequently, to gain control of oneself. Additionally, sport can provide a profoundly way to inhabit and experience our bodies (Whitson, 1994).



As bodies are “always in the process of becoming” (Cole, 1994, p. 16), everybody can actively participate in the transition of their bodies from one body condition to another. People shape their bodies through sport, moulding them toward the maintenance or the dismantling of a particular configuration of gender. Sports are not neutral and can contribute to the (re)production of the status quo. For example, some authors suggest that exercise and aerobics can be technologies which tend to normalize ‘female’ and ‘male’ bodies. According to this viewpoint, many women and men can gain, throughout sport and exercises, the new body shape that current times demand. Sport, as a technology of bodily production, (re)makes people’s gendered bodies, through re-feminization and re-masculinisation practices.

However, the idiosyncrasy of some sports and physical activities can contradict the heteronormative order. Martínez-Pascual et al.’s (2015) qualitative study shows that sportswomen perceive the dual pressure of getting a beautiful body for society and accomplishing the aesthetical ideals that the sport culture of their disciplines demand. For instance, muscular women may be considered an aberration in some social spheres while in certain sports, as weightlifting, this sort of body is demanded (George, 2005). Therefore, many women are involved in the difficult mission of balancing a social desired body and a physical functionality needed to practice sport. In addition, certain activities can subvert the stereotypes associated to each sex, especially in exercises where strength is required for women or fineness for men. For instance, bodybuilding can subvert passivity associated with female bodies to a greater degree (Cole, 1994).

Regarding the link of certain sports and body performances with women and others with men, Young (2005) studies how men and women use their bodies in sport settings, focusing in depth into gendered bodily dispositions to sport. Although there is no a natural and ahistorical female (and male) essence, this author considers that there are actually differences on men and women’s gendered styles of performance. For Young (2005, p. 31), “this style consists of particular ‘modalities’ of the structures and conditions of the body’s existence in the world”. The trend to find boys more active in sport than girls and girls’ difficulties to bring their bodies into the motion are examples of those different styles. In fact, the expansion of women’s teams has been limited to less ‘physical’ sports (Whitson,

1994). Young suggests that the existence of masculine and feminine movement patterns is not exclusive of sport contexts but of many other contexts of social life. Under this viewpoint, sportspeople's gender identities are affected by body changes and practices performed in sport spaces but, at the same time, the own sport practices are bodily constructed according to gendered movements and behaviours (Martínez-Pascual et al., 2015). Inevitably, sports and physical activities, as sociocultural constructions, reflect principles and values on which the society relies.

The accomplishment of certain models of masculinity and femininity are particularly demanding in certain sport settings. The assignment of gender roles to men (speed, strength, riskiness or power) and women (empathy, solidarity, elasticity or aesthetics) in sport reinforces and (re)creates differences and hierarchies among sexes (Beltrán-Carrillo et al., 2012; Buzuvis, 2011; Singh, Singh, & Sharma, 2010). Actually, despite the many social changes produced in the sport domain during the last decades, sex-segregated teams and sports are still prevalent at a worldwide level. Therefore, with a few exceptions, women only have the possibility to officially play and compete against women. Men do the same but their sport achievements receive greater social and economic recognition than their women counterparts. The culture of performativity, "understood as productivity and efficiency to get objective results" (Beltrán-Carrillo et al., 2012, p. 7), also privileges men who present certain kind of skills over other persons whose gender identities or gender expression have no room (Beltrán-Carrillo et al., 2012). Especially trans and intersex persons have historically faced more barriers to participate in sports than cisgender people.

In this section, we focus on the (dis)engagement of trans persons in sport and exercise. Firstly, we emphasize the role sport and physical activity play in the (re)construction of their gender identities and how their transiting bodies influence their (dis)engagement in certain sports and activities. Secondly, the regulation of trans persons' participation in elite sports is developed. In so doing, some trans and intersex Spanish sportspersons' cases are considered to elucidate how some sports organizations deal with these participants. Finally, as a relevant part of this process we also indicate the prevalence of harassment experienced by trans persons in the realm of sport.

### 2.5.2.1 *Transitioning in recreational sport*

In the literature of physical activity and sports field, recent contributions deal with different issues relating how trans persons construct their gender identities through sport and exercise. This concern has particularly been addressed by narrative researches that emphasise trans persons' stories in recreational sports (Caudwell, 2014; Elling-Machartzki, 2017; Sykes, 2011; Travers & Deri, 2010). Gleaves and Lehrbach (2016) point out the importance of illustrating gendered stories in this academic field and how sport and exercise allow trans persons to narratively develop their sense of masculinity, femininity or other non-conforming gender identities. For instance, Lucas (2009) indicates how trans queer participants explain the supportive role played by their sport teams in their disclosing processes. However, complex and dynamic outness processes are quite different from one case to another and different trans persons' experiences can be completely antagonistic. In Caudwell's (2014) study, the stories of two young trans men reveal how their participation in LGBT teams were helpless to their embodied masculine subjectivities.

Following a narrative approach, some scholars have highlighted the constant negotiation processes trans persons are involved in within sport and exercise field (Caudwell, 2014; Elling-Machartzki, 2017). They constantly have to deal with gender expression and taken-for-granted gender binary discourses (Caudwell, 2014). In gendered spaces, the access to some activities becomes problematic when gender code is not accomplished. Transphobia and gender discrimination frequently appear in places with high gender regulation, such as locker rooms or swimming pools.

When referring to transition processes, literature usually focuses on the narratives of those trans persons who disclosed their gender identities. In the few studies in which previous experiences were also considered, authors have tended to mix the narratives without distinguishing between before and transitioning experiences in sport and exercise, and underestimating the importance of the embodiment dimension for this population. Elling-Machartzki's (2017) work provides a unique contribution that explores narratively sport experiences of a

group of six trans men and six trans women along three stages of transition process (pre-transition, liminal and post-transition phase). Most participants present coherent gendered stories along transitioning stages. The author suggests that maybe participants could have modified their narratives in a constant reconstruction process to fit them to their gender identities. During the pre-transition stage, trans participants find some sport spaces as avoidable before coming out as, for instance, changing rooms. These spaces, in particular, have been described by other authors as potentially dangerous for trans persons, who feel anxiety and insecurity using them before and during transitioning (Caudwell, 2014). In a disclosing or liminal stage, when participants start to adopt bodily changes, trans persons adopt diverse strategies to feel safer in sport spaces, such as joining LGBT teams. However, many of them withdraw from previous sport participation due to their 'liminal' position in the sex categorization in which sport is organized. Lower levels of fitness and the psychological stress trans participants face when having to cope with gender transition, force many of them to withdraw from these activities. In the liminal stage, some new activities and exercises aid trans persons in their transition processes. This is the case of trans men and the fitness activities they engage with when they start the hormone treatment because, as gathered by Elling-Machartzki (2017), these activities help them in masculinising their bodies. In a post-transition stage, the participants feel less pressure and more acceptance in their acquired gender identities. Other participants also feel more liberated to enjoy sport in different ways than before. As they do not have the necessity to perform a strong masculinity or femininity within sport, they feel more comfortable to freely do both feminine and masculine considered activities.

Previous studies show how rigid the gender categorization is in sport and physical activities, and the failure in recognising body multiplicity, especially transitioning bodies (Caudwell, 2014; Elling-Machartzki, 2017). From a post-feminist point of view, these studies represent key efforts in going beyond sex essentialism and gender dichotomies in sport and locate trans issues at the core of discussions in challenging the dominant gender order. In fact, these studies use postfeminist notions as hegemonic masculinity, (Elling-Machartzki, 2017; Tagg, 2012), sex/gender system (Elling-Machartzki, 2017); and queer and

heteronormativity (Caudwell, 2014) theoretical frameworks to interpret and contextualize sport and physical activities experiences in trans persons.

#### 2.5.2.2 Regulation in elite sport

Elite sport is a special social practice with different rules, regulations and cultural meanings to recreational sport. These characteristics particularly affect trans and intersex persons. Their participation is conditioned by the assumption that a fair sport is related to the equality of participants' opportunities to win and, therefore, no advantages at stake are permitted. This is an idea deeply rooted in the history of sport that tries to avoid cheating in the competition. In fact, current participation of trans and intersex people in sport at a high level are affected by inherited debates on sports doping and sex tests that come from the Cold War period. These two issues are intertwined in such a way that shape actual international cultural and normative milieu about the participation of transsexual and intersex people in sports (Reeser, 2005; Ritchie, 2003).

Regarding sports doping, androgenic hormones such as testosterone are considered substances that produce significant athletic advantage as they increase the participants' strength and endurance (Karkazis, Jordan-Young, Davis, & Camporesi, 2012). However, it is controversial that some athlete's sporting bodies naturally generate levels of testosterone higher than normal. In the case of trans or intersexual people, external administration of these substances might be necessary for obtaining or maintaining athletes' gender identities. Additionally, sex tests have strongly damaged trans and intersex women persons' sport careers. Since the beginning of women participation in sports, their gendered bodies have been particularly scrutinized and constantly put under scientific gaze in order to prove that they were 'true' women. There was a great concern about cheating sportsmen playing in women categories because it was supposed that men won easily within female contexts, due to sportswomen natural lower performance (Hargreaves, 1994). Therefore, detecting cheating males became an important concern for international sport organizations by the 1940s and the 1950s. In fact, the International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF) implemented sex-testing policy in 1946 and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) did the same two years later. The new regulations required a compulsory examination to all female competitors by medical staff who checked their biological sex in order to detect

men undercover (Heggie, 2010; Karkazis et al., 2012). The examination required that every single female stood naked in front of medical experts who tested their genitals. This measure discouraged some sportswomen who retired or simulated injuries to avoid the embarrassing and humiliating process of examination. The sex-testing policy had the power not only to determine whether women could compete or not, but also whether women were ‘real’ women or not. Women ‘failing’ in such tests were expelled from competition and even considered abnormal. Therefore, beyond detecting dishonest athletes, the test was meant to determine what a proper woman was.

International sport organizations were far more worried with cheating by ‘false women’ than by doping practices. According to Hoberman (2005), during the 1950s, sport organizations and public at large were permissive with those who used drugs to enhance their performances, mainly men at that time, while very strict with women, who were frequently policed. During the second half of the 20th Century, sex tests adopted more sophisticated medical techniques. At an international level, chromosomal sex testing started to replace anatomical assessment in 1968, becoming mandatory till the late 1990s. Oral smear and polymerase chain reaction tests replaced it later. In the 1980s the medical community started to question the use of these tests and, a decade later, IAAF recognized their limitations and several frauds were detected. Curiously, since sex-testing began, no cheating among sportsmen has been found (Sullivan, 2011). On the contrary, these tests were successful in detecting intersex or non-normative women (well-known in medical context as women with ‘disorders of sexual development’).

Precisely, María José Martínez Patiño was the first athlete who failed the chromosomal test in 1985, at Kobe Universiade<sup>8</sup>. Martínez Patiño, who highlighted in 60m and 100m hurdles, was bound to participate in the following Olympic Games in Seoul (1988) when the doctors reported she had XY chromosomes

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<sup>8</sup> A decade before, the femininity of Marisol Paño, a basketball player, was questioned by media during the 1976/77 season due to her exceptional performances. The accusations did a great harm to both her and her club. Despite social pressure, she rejected many times to do the checkups, which were not compulsory at that time. Until her retirement in 1983, she was surrounded by a great controversy about her sex (Robinson, 2015; Sánchez, 2015).

(Buzuvis, 2013). The Royal Spanish Athletics Federation sent her back to Spain where she was submitted to new tests. The results corroborated the lack of uterus and ovaries and the presence of hidden testicles that were producing high testosterone levels. Team officials advised her to feign an injury and withdraw from competition with ‘discretion’. She refused it but as soon as she won the national championship in 60m hurdles, her medical report was leaked to the media and, within this uproar, the Royal Spanish Athletics Federation expelled her from the elite athletes’ centre, removed any financial support and all the records she held were struck down (Martínez, 7 of November, 2014; Parks, 2014).

By then, pressure on women who naturally generated higher levels of testosterone increased, because they were considered as doped athletes and also socially accused of sacrificing their femininity to get the victory in elite sports (Dimeo, 2007; Gleaves, 2015). Within such a context, María José sued the Royal Spanish Athletics Federation and fought against public opinion to get back to track and field competitions. Due to her tenacious protest, the IOC Medical Commission in Seoul 1988 determined that her biological condition did not give her any unlawful advantage and she had free rein to compete again. Unfortunately, her peak performance was lost in the uproar and the harmful consequences for her career were inevitable. She was, like many other women athletes, not only a victim of a restrictive regulation and public opinion, but also of the inflexible binary sex-gender system affecting their personal life and athletic career.

Since then, the evolution of international and national sport contexts has been characterized by more flexible sport policies toward sex tests and intersexual athletes’ participation. The case of Martínez Patiño contributed to changing sex tests, based on a chromosomic analysis issued only for women, towards a medical regulatory discourse based on the testosterone normalization ranges, both for women and men, though in the latter case for doping reasons (García Dauder, 2011). IOC adopted a case-by-case criterion in 2003, and IAAF adopted it three years later (Hercher, 2010). Under this criterion, only athletes deemed suspicious were tested with a multidimensional medical evaluation. As Cooky and Dworkin (2013, p. 108) indicate, in practice, “women are sex tested when they carry out an explosive athletic performance, have a high degree of musculature, or are perceived to be ‘too male’”. Caster Semenya was probably the most famous case.

In 2009, she won the 800 metres event in the World Athletics Championship but her femininity was questioned due to her remarkable performance, musculature and deep voice. Such a speculation was quickly widespread and a medical commission requested her to submit a sex verification procedure (Buzuvis, 2010).

As a result, women athletes with Turner syndrome, polycystic ovary syndrome and androgen-producing tumours were allowed to compete if they proved to be insensitive to testosterone or adopt strategies to counterbalance the hormonal advantage. However, there is not a regulation about what to do when one of these intersex cases is discovered. Before competing as ‘women’, intersexual athletes are called to consume artificial substances to reduce any advantage produced by testosterone. This practice, labelled ‘reverse doping’ by D’Angelo and Tamburrini (2013), has been criticized because of being disrespectful with, and also potentially dangerous for, the athletes. Dutee Chand, an 18 years old sprinter, has recently rejected to take pills or carry out surgical operations in order to compete. IAAF has provisionally retired the rule which impeded women with excessive production of testosterone to participate in competitions as ‘women’ (Arribas, 2015).

In the case of trans persons’ participation in sport, they have been traditionally rejected, especially transwomen who are perceived as athletes with an unfair advantage. Though every trans sportsperson is treated as a suspicion, sport organizations do not apply the case-by-case criterion used with intersexual participants. Thus, most of them either early abandon their sport careers or delay their transition process to compete for some years before public disclosure of their gender-sex identities.

The only case of trans Spanish sportsperson, that is known so far, is the chess player Natalia Parés. She got great national success with the name of Josep from the middle of the 1970s to the late 1990s., being awarded with the Chess Master title by the International Federation, but she retired when she publicly disclosed her gender identity in 1998. Since then, she has been involved in transsexual activism to sensitize society on trans people rights and inclusion difficulties (Boyero, 2006; La Vanguardia, 2008).

Six years after Natalia’s retirement, the IOC became the first institution regulating the access of trans people to competition. Three conditions for male-to-female transsexuals to compete in female events were established: 1) sex



reassignment surgery; 2) a legal recognition of the new gender identity; and 3) at least two years of hormonal treatment after surgery if it happened in a post-pubertal period (IOC, 2003). Due to transsexual athletes' claims, international sports organizations are increasingly recognizing their right to participate in sports competitions. The most famous one was Renée Richards, a transwoman tennis player who in 1977 participated within the female category, being legally accused of cheating. Other transsexual athletes and activists, such as the golfers Mianne Bagger and Lana Lawless, as well as the cyclists Michelle Dumaresq and Krister Worley, also made relevant efforts for inclusion in their respective sports (Buzuvis, 2013, Cavanagh & Sykes, 2006, Travers, 2014).

Within such a context, Natalia Parés was pressed by her close environment to return competition. Under IOC conditions, Natalia got the title of Master as female, was a member of Spanish women's team and won the second place in the Spanish Women's Chess Championship in 2008. Despite her successful return she was negatively affected by those 10 years of forced retirement, losing many opportunities and finally setting aside her sport career.

In recent years, the growth and strength of trans activism and the increasing visibility of trans persons in different social domains have also leaked to sports. Thanks to the social pressure exerted on sport organizations, IOC recently ruled that trans persons' athletes could take part in Olympic competition without undergoing sexual reconstruction surgery. In the meeting that took place in November 2015, IOC wanted to ensure trans persons were not excluded from competing in sport and decided to remove that condition because:

To require surgical anatomical changes as a pre-condition to participation is not necessary to preserve fair competition and may be inconsistent with developing legislation and notions of human rights. (IOC, 2015, p. 2)

The importance of this agreement is even greater since there are jurisdictions where persons' autonomy to decide gender identity is not recognised and the public institutions do not facilitate transition processes. Despite the advances in the recognition of trans and intersex participants by certain sport organizations, as IOC and IAAF, the public acceptance of this population is not widespread, and many of them find social barriers and pressure that hinder their participation in sport (Larson, 2011).

### *2.5.2.3 Harassment in sport*

In the realm of sport, people are valued depending on particular sport results and gendered attitudes, behaviours and bodies. In relational acts, such as sport, people initiate processes of recognition and misrecognition with other bodies (Salamon, 2010). Incoherent bodies that do not reflect specific abilities and attributes of a particular morphology, frequently result in social sanctions, rejection and harassment. Trans persons, in particular, can experience this sort of situations when their behaviour escape from what heteronormative discourses define as 'normalcy'. Until now, few studies had addressed the negative effects heteronormativity has on trans population in sport contexts and the harassment suffered by this vulnerable group is still an issue which has received scarce international attention.

Most of these few studies draw upon the prevalence of harassment suffered by trans persons inside the umbrella term of LGBT population. For instance, the study developed by Symons, Sbaraglia, Hillier and Mitchell (2010) with LGBT population in Victoria (Australia) revealed that 3 out of 12 trans participants suffered verbal harassment in sport settings. Additionally, a European study developed by The European Union Agency for the Fundamental Rights (FRA, 2013) shows a harassment prevalence of 15% in a sample of 6,579 trans participants from 28 European Union countries. These data show different results in comparison with LGB people. If the findings of the first study indicate trans persons experienced lower percentage of harassment than their peers, the data obtained by FRA suggest that trans population has a higher prevalence of harassment in sport contexts compared to gays, lesbians and bisexuals.

Other research also considers the percentage of trans persons who have witnessed harassment situations. This is the case of a report elaborated by Smith Cuthbertson and Gale (2012) in Scotland, which shows that 80% of 115 trans persons experienced or were witnesses to aggressions toward this group. This knowledge is very important because harassment can become one of the main obstacles for this population to engage in sport activities. According to the previous study, 79% of them avoided taking part in sport practices because they feared to

receive transphobic aggressions (Smith et al., 2012). Similarly, Ellis, McNeil and Bailey (2014), based on a sample of 889 trans persons from the UK, indicated that they avoided sport spaces to reduce the risk of harassment. In particular, the 38.4% of participants assured to avoid gyms because they feared being read as trans and, therefore, be harassed for that. The study also revealed that trans women seemed to be less likely to avoid gyms than other gender identity groups.

A recent Spanish study has also considered important sociodemographic variables as age, age of gender disclosure and self-defined gender, to provide further contribution to this issue (Devís-Devís et al., 2017). This research, developed with 212 trans participants, showed that the 18.9% of participants had suffered harassment in sport contexts. A chi-square analysis shed some lights over differences of harassment according to the age trans persons disclosed their gender identities. Results indicated that those participants who disclosed their identities at an early age ( $\leq 16$  years old) suffered more harassment (30.6%) in sport contexts than those participants who disclosed their gender identities at a later age. However, no significant differences were found according to age and self-defined gender. Devís-Devís et al.'s (2017) study also comprised other contexts of social life. In comparison, data showed that sport contexts were not one of the most transphobic environments for the participants. However, the results previously presented should not be underestimated. The authors warn us about the risk of underrepresentation of this sort of situations because trans persons are more likely to perceive them as normal (Browne, Bakshi, & Lim, 2011).

National and international research presented in this section is a first approach to the harassment experienced by trans persons within sport contexts. However, qualitative research is needed in order to deepen in the personal and social circumstances of harassment towards trans persons. It would be interesting to know them in different sociocultural contexts and sports as well as to understand in which moments of transition processes trans persons are more vulnerable. Evidence-based knowledge is essential to promote and improve trans persons' wellbeing in this field.

### 2.5.3 Education and physical education experiences

Schools have been object of many studies, but few have focused on the non-evident influences exerted on students, which mark their identities and fix hierarchies and inequalities (Subirats, 1999). Students with different gender and sexual identities are of special interest since they usually experience great difficulties due to the dominant heterosexual and male values and cultures. In fact, recent studies show the predominant heteronormative character of schools and how LGTB and gender non-conforming students are affected by this regime (Kjaraan & Kristinsdóttir, 2015; Toomey, McGuire, & Russell, 2012). Several researchers have analysed the way heteronormative ideals have been foisted on girls (Duncan & Owens, 2011; Myers & Raymond, 2010) and boys (Martino, 2000) in daily social practices. Others have indicated that these ideals “explain how and why the violence toward gender nonconforming students is perpetuated” (Toomey et al., 2012, p. 188).

The increasingly early disclosure of self-identified gender identities makes school settings more aware of trans issues (Block, 2014) and it, obviously, affects physical education (PE) as a subject which is also permeated by heteronormativity.

### *2.5.3.1 Violence and harassment towards trans students*

School is one of the primary settings where social interactions occur and gender non-conforming students emerge as vulnerable groups at a high risk of suffering violence and harassment. In fact, the Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey indicates that 78% of North American students who disclose their gender identities during primary and secondary education suffer some kind of harassment, and 35% of them suffer physical harassment (Grant et al., 2011). The fifth National School Climate Survey of North America points out that 87% of trans students (aged 14 to 20) experienced verbal harassment due to their gender identity and 53% of them were physically attacked for the same reason (Greytak, Kosciw, & Diaz 2009). A recent survey shows that 46.2% suffered harassment at educational contexts in Spain, which is much more than the 25% reported for primary, secondary and higher education (Devís-Devís et al., 2017).

Some qualitative studies specify a wide range of negative experiences suffered by trans students at school such as ignoring, marginalizing, discrimination, harassment and violence (Puche et al., 2013; Sausa, 2005). Other studies do not

only report the negative experiences trans students suffer but also strategies they use to overcome transphobic environments and situations. For instance, Wyss (2004) showed how trans students experienced physical violence in high school, and how some of them lived after been raped or sexually assaulted. Moreover, the author detailed strategies of avoidance, retaliation and survival as ways of doing (trans)gender against such violence. A recent phenomenological study focused on the resilience strategies trans youth participants used to react against trans-prejudices in their daily life, including school experiences (Singh, 2013). Among them, self-advocacy, finding one's place in youth community, managing multiple identities and use social media to affirm self-identities were highlighted. A participatory action research focused on trans persons' school memories showed the difficulties in managing their gender in everyday school situations, which were permeated by sexism and heterosexism (Johnson, Singh, & Gonzalez, 2014). It also detailed fear and hostility experienced by trans youngsters in a dangerous and unsafe school climate, as well as their demands for teachers to become aware of the gender-power relations. They also wanted teachers to integrate discussions of this power system into the curriculum and to design a variety of activities in which gender was not the main criteria for involvement or grouping within lessons.

### *2.5.3.2 Teachers, teaching and spaces*

As literature suggests, education is a public institution with a great potential in legitimating and rejecting different ways of being-in-the-world. In fact, schools and PE have recently emerged as sites enabling destabilization of heteronormativity and normality discourses (Larsson, Fagrell, & Redelius, 2009; Planella & Pié, 2015). As heteronormativity "is embodied in the institutional regulatory practices" (Lumhra 2004, p. 50), schools and PE provide unique contexts to analyse it.

However, there is still little knowledge on the ways in which school and, in particular, PE may reinforce or challenge heteronormative discourses. It has been explored how PE teachers perform heteronormativity and the different ways they motivate gender differentiation among students. For instance, when teachers favour sport activities that give more opportunities of participation to boys, they reinforce forms of hegemonic masculinity. Teachers' benevolence toward girls' low performances additionally supports the ideology of heteronormativity (Britzman,

1995a; Larsson et al., 2009). In the case of trans students, the use of inappropriate or binary language is another cultural practice that (re)produces heteronormativity. In the situations described above, schools and PE lessons become authentic mechanisms of heteronormativity (re)production (Trujillo, 2015). Students internalize heteronormative practices transmitted by their teachers and (re)produced by other students, favouring the appearance of transphobic and homophobic situations toward trans and non-gender conforming students.

Despite these studies on general schooling experiences, there is little research focusing on trans students' experiences in PE. For instance, Marin's (1987) autobiography described her fears to the locker room, the basketball, climbing rope and vaulting among other activities during her PE classes in the early 1960s. Another interview-based study about educational experiences of trans students in USA indicated that PE was the most negative subject for 24 trans participants out of a sample of 25, both in primary and secondary education (Fryrear, 1989). Undressing and showering were especially harrowing situations for several participants. Only one of the two female-to-male transsexual participants in the study pointed out that PE was not negative for him. From a narrative perspective, Mason-Schrock (1996) noted that transsexuals construct their new gendered 'true self' by telling stories about interactive processes in different PE situations. Particularly, male-to-female participants' lack of accomplishments in sports and are often involved in traumatic experiences when choosing teams.

More recently, Sykes (2011) focused on the narratives of six Canadian students self-identified as trans, queer or intersex. The author described several discrimination, marginalization and exclusion moments experienced by the participants during classes and in locker rooms, which provoked a reduction of their levels of participation in PE. Dominant binary gender discourses about body movement, curricular organization and environment were backing these negative experiences. Another narrative study, developed by Caudwell (2014), focused on social, physical and embodied experiences of two North American trans students during school sport participation in educational and recreational settings. The study showed how the two youngsters were often marginalized and how school sport participation became difficult for them. Caudwell concludes that school sport policies fail in recognizing gender multiplicity due to a strong gender binary

system and heteronormativity embedded within sport cultures. This is also observed in a Brazilian qualitative study developed by Franco (2016) based on the memories of twelve primary trans women teachers in PE.

#### 2.5.4 Toward trans persons' inclusion

Public authorities are responsible to improve and guarantee trans persons' quality of life (Platero, 2014). In recent years, new policies toward trans persons' inclusion in Spain are being developed. These interventions have been promoted in many different contexts. However, there is no consensus about which is the best way to do it.

Particularly, Planella and Pié (2015) consider three different ways to deal with the inclusion of vulnerable groups<sup>9</sup>. According to these authors, authorities have tended to develop policies focused on the normalization of certain abnormal bodies. From this perspective, trans persons have the last responsibility of their maladjustment. They should change and adapt to the heteronormative system in order to be integrated. For instance, health system has usually adopted this perspective. As its actions and policies are addressed to those trans persons more upset to fit into sex/gender binarism, some sectors of trans population are ignored, especially those persons who do not need or want to go through the stages suggested by medical institutions (Suess, 2010). Even if trans' movements had traditionally vindicated the achievement of basic health rights (especially the access to hormonal treatment and other aesthetical surgical operations) to the whole trans community, these public institutions have tended to accommodate the more conservative demands, but not to integrate the necessities of other trans persons into the new policies. These actions, from a postfeminist viewpoint, constitute bad professional praxis (Platero, 2014) and reinforce heteronormativity (Hargie, Mitchell, & Somerville, 2017).

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<sup>9</sup> Despite these authors centre their attention in educative contexts, the different discourses they contemplate are equally comparable with inclusive measures promoted in other public spheres.

A second model of intervention opts to foment compassion and tolerance toward vulnerable groups. However, tolerance is problematic because presupposes someone exerts the power to decide what (and who) can be tolerated and what (and who) cannot (Pérez-Samaniego et al., 2016). For instance, informative talks about sexual minorities and gender identities may participate reproducing otherness discourses and creating the precise difference they want to erase. For Planella and Pié (2015), a queer alternative should be considered. This model proposes to think identities and sexualities as migratory. Therefore, institutions should implement des-identification practices that contemplate the multiplicity of gender identities. Other authors have appointed the necessity of addressing the complexity of identities considering their intersectional characters instead of ignoring economic, gender, ethnical, cultural or age differences (Hargie et al., 2017).

From a queer perspective, the merely comparisons among gendered and sexual bodies produce the legitimation of certain bodies and the exclusion of others. According to this perspective, a real effort to include trans population in diverse social domains is necessary besides dismantling heteronormativity, questioning and reinterpreting traditional gender roles and categories (Schneider, 2013).

#### *2.5.4.1 Sport policies*

In recent years, the increasing visibility and activism of trans persons in different social domains, have also affected to elite and ordinary sports. Claims and defences for athletes' rights affected by sex testing in competitive sport (for example Caster Semenya, Heidi Krueger or Tamara and Irina Press) have caused changes in sport regulations, increasing trans athletes' participation. For instance, transsexual people can recently participate without undergoing sex reassignment surgery (IOC, 2015).

Despite this regulation allows participation without undergoing sex reassignment surgery, legal recognition and hormonal treatment are still required to compete (IOC, 2015). This excludes many non-gender conforming persons and persons in the early beginning of transition from sport. In this situation, there is an increase of social and scientific debates around trans and intersex persons' participation in elite competition. Many authors claim that ethical consequences of



sex tests are still unresolved and question the myth of fairness for female athletes (Buzuvis, 2010; Karkazis et al., 2012). Other scholars defend that no proofs about the physical superiority of trans women have been found (Jones, Acerlus, Bouman, & Haycraft, 2016) and, therefore, the strict regulation IOC and IAAF impose should be modified.

Hercher (2010) indicates that sport authorities should refrain from determining who is and is not a woman or a man because it is more a philosophical than a medical question. Buzuvis (2013) remarks that “what makes this categorization difficult is that while the realm of sport divides the universe neatly into male and female categories, nature does not” (p.55). In this sense, transsexual and intersex people bodies subvert biological limits of sex, problematizing the myth of binary sex and the ‘neat’ sex-based organization of sports (Sullivan, 2011).

In competition arena, the debates maintained between the scientific community, sport organizations and trans athletes have not come to terms. A deep reflection on how institutions can remove discriminatory and unethical practices to trans persons remains to be done. In non-elite sports, these concerns have just started. Some authors have begun to claim about the necessity to create sport policies addressing inclusion of trans persons (Buzuvis, 2011; Buzuvis, 2012). Proposals toward trans persons’ engagement in ordinary sports have received less interest by sport authorities and scholars. An exception is the Canadian guidance developed to create safety and respectful environments for trans persons (Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport, 2016). According to this document, respecting individual’s rights to determine their names, protecting athletes’ privacy, using inclusive language in documents and ensuring respectful dress codes are some of best practices sport organizations should adopt to get positive emotional, verbal and physical environment for trans population. Notwithstanding, LGTB sport associations and entities have showed higher commitments in the creation of protocols and reports. For instance, the European Gay & Lesbian Sport Federation (Worthing-Davies, 2013) created a guidance to make swimming an activity for all. The formation of young people on LGBT inclusion and the creation of education campaigns can improve trans participation in teams. Additionally, this guidance indicates various steps that sport clubs should follow to avoid transphobic

situations. For instance, clear code of conduct for coaches and participants and punishments for those who break the code.

In London, Birmingham and Leicester, TAGS project provides safe spaces for those trans persons who want to join to swimming sessions. Other activities like badminton, boxercise, cardio workouts, weight lifting and yoga are implemented in Sheffield and Brighton (Englefield, Cunningham, Mahoney, Stone, & Torrance, 2016). These new measures reflect an important concern with the security of trans persons in sport. However, many of them tend to privilege the segregation of trans persons from cisgender persons in sport teams in order to avoid conflicts.

The inclusion of trans persons in LGTB or trans clubs and teams, is not only desirable but sometimes, in some countries, the only option they have to play in a team. This separation does not seem the best way to promote the inclusion of this population in society and in sport contexts. The protector character of these initiatives shows that these policies are insufficient to address trans marginalization and discrimination in sports. Similarly, regarding LGBT clubs, some theorists suggest that some gay and lesbian spaces are shown as trans-inclusive communities (Elling-Machartzki, 2017) but others follow trans-exclusion practices (Caudwell, 2014; Travers & Deri, 2010). Additionally, even if LGBT clubs are more trans-inclusive communities (Elling-Machartzki, 2017) some of them also create other oppressive discourses that exclude trans persons (Caudwell, 2014; Lucas, 2009; Travers & Deri, 2010).

Accordingly, in order to develop an efficient and appropriate public intervention more evidence based information is needed. Despite different public programmes have been developed with vulnerable population, trans persons' barriers have not been considered yet in Spain. The relevance of these policies relies on their transformative potential. The creation of inclusive policies and programmes should aim to mitigate, if not suppress, the risk of harassment that trans persons experience as well as to encourage them to practice more sport and physical activity.

#### *2.5.4.2 Educational policies and pedagogic approaches*

Trans persons' inclusion in schools is currently an issue of general interest in Spain. The latest approvals of regional laws (for example, Ley 3/2016 in Madrid

and Ley 12/2015 in Extremadura) and guidance (for example, Instrucció 2016/10425 in Valencian Autonomy) in LGTB issues contemplate educative attention to gender diversity. These regulations reflect an increasing institutional commitment to confront discrimination and guarantee LGTB people's rights. Many of the measures proposed in these documents call for the respect for gender identities, for instance, changing the names in official documents, allowing the use of uniform according to their genders, and using their names to refer to them.

Additionally, scholars, LGTB associations and trans activists have actively participated in the elaboration of documents and proposals to make the educative contexts more sensible toward trans students. In particular, Moreno and Puche edited in 2013 a suggestive book in which important figures of trans movement in Spain and other reference personalities participate. Some of them suggest the necessity to prepare new curricular material to make LGTB persons visible (Casanova, 2013; Puche et al., 2013). Puche et al. (2013) recommend teachers' training and sensitisation in order to promote a respectful teaching with zero tolerance to LGTB discrimination. Similarly, projects in other countries contemplate the designation of anti-bullying coordinators to train staff members to prevent riskiness situations for LGBT students (Teaching Tolerance, 2013). In a more transformative sense, Puche et al. (2013) also propose to avoid the division and differentiation of spaces and roles based on students' sex. Along this transformative purpose, Platero's (2014) book *Trans\*exualidades. Acompañamiento, factores de salud y recursos educativos* collect, for the first time in Spain, a set of group dynamics, educative materials and activities. This activist scholar proposes three phases of intervention (exploratory, knowledge and consolidation phase) through which false ideas and stereotypes on trans persons are dismantled to give way to awareness and change. In the last stage, the gender analysis of some lyric songs and the reflection on real trans persons' stories are activities proposed.

Related to the participation of students in sport activities, other countries have developed preventing guides, which give recommendations to schools to be supportive with trans students. Particularly, Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition Policy Committee (2012) recommends that participants should play in sports and teams in coherence with their gender identities. In order to give trans

persons more intimacy and privacy in dressing rooms, this guide suggests these students can use a different private area. Another alternative proposed is allowing them to change clothes before or after physical activities.

An additional report presented by Griffin (2010) provides guidance to educative institutions and College Athletics of United States. Among the guiding principles recommended in this report, the consideration of the enormous variability of bodies regarding ability, musculature, size and strength is one of the main points that policy statement should include to be fair with trans students in sport. Besides the recognition of their gender identities in language and dress codes, reprisal of disrespectful and violent behaviours against trans students is necessary to guarantee their right to freely participate in sport. Additionally, this report advises schools against awaiting trans students' claims of participation in sport to develop inclusive measures to this population, as the adoption of proactive policies that foster training of staff, students and parents.

In the Spanish context, Fuentes-Miguel, Pereira-García, López-Cañada, Pérez-Samaniego and Devís-Devís (2016) also mention recommendations regarding changing rooms and language. More specifically, these authors have published a group of orientations toward trans inclusion in physical education. They suggest some examples of good practices organized in three levels (basic, intermediate and advanced) depending on the commitment of education professionals. Along these three phases, cisgender students are more and more bodily involved into the social construction of gender. The goal of the first stage is to promote understanding of some fundamental concepts (e.g. gender, transsexuality, transition or queer) through debates around trans or intersex athletes' cases. In order to gain a deeper sense of trans persons' experiences, the authors propose, in a second stage, the creation and use of fictional stories that evoke feelings to students. The organization of talks led by trans persons and activists can also serve to this purpose. The last stage consists of an embodied approach. The dramatization and reflection on oppressed situations through the forum theatre, such the Augusto Boal forum, or the organization of Drag Queen or Drag King workshops allow students to stand in trans persons' shoes by modifying their appearance and bodily presentation to others. An equally transformative initiative developed in educative contexts is the organization of 'Salsa Queer' sessions (Schneider, 2013) where

students can participate in non-heteronormative practices and question the naturalization of women and men categories.

Despite the increasing creation of educative resources to tackle heteronormativity, few of these initiatives are applied and assessed. Some scholars support the idea that, at a great extent, the inclusion of trans persons in educative contexts depends on the good will of teachers and persons who occupy positions of influence (Casanova, 2013; Puche et al., 2013).

## **2.6 A literature review on trans persons' experiences in PE, physical activity and sport**

The theoretical framework exposed in the previous section provides a useful background to analyse trans persons' experiences in sport and physical education contexts. However, we also consider necessary to summarise and present a specific and updated review of literature linked to the topic of this thesis.

We proceeded with doing a systematic search in the main international databases (Web of Science, Sport Discus and Scopus) in March 2017 using a combination of the following terms: sport, physical education, physical activity, transgend\* and transsex\*. The search was not limited to a particular period of time. A total of 475 documents were found using these criteria (140 in Web of Science, 154 in Sport Discus and 181 in Scopus). 227 were duplicated documents. Similarly, we removed works focused on biomedical, juridical, and elite performance.

Three relevant criteria were defined to select the most important studies related to the topic of this thesis. These works must be:

- a) Empirical studies
- b) Research with a sample composed by trans participants. The number and gender identities of participants should be explicitly specified.
- c) Works focused on trans persons' experiences in leisure sport, elite sport, physical activity and/or physical education.

The application of these criteria reduced the number to 7 works. However, the research team identified four more potential studies (three of them we collected in

Fuentes, 2015). In this section, a bibliometric analysis is first conducted with the results of this search, to later describe the content of these studies. The Table 1 shows the result of these 11 papers. The methodology used in these studies is also discussed in detail.

### 2.6.1 Bibliometric issues

The scientific literature on trans persons' experiences in sport and PE is very recent. Research on trans persons' experiences in sport and physical education has been mostly addressed with qualitative methodology, using participant observation, focus groups, interviews (6) or a mix of them (4). However, there are also two studies that use questionnaires to approach to it. Among the works compiled in the literature review, the oldest work published was in 2005 while the newest two are from 2017. As nearby 36% of these studies have been published in the last four years, it seems there is an increasing scientific interest on this topic.

These research publications come from developed countries. In particular, the eleven studies selected were conducted in United States (5), United Kingdom (2), Canada (2), New Zealand (1) and the Netherlands (1). Most of these countries have recently issued policies, bills and reforms for the protection of trans persons' rights. These measures normally regulate non-discrimination toward trans population or/and offer legal recognition of the gender identities<sup>10</sup>. With the exception of United States, where many states do not facilitate that trans citizens could amend their gender from legal documents, the rest of the countries give trans population the possibility to get the legal recognition of their gender identities without undergoing sterilization processes (MAP & NCTE, 2017; TGEU, 2016). Especially, New Zealand and Canada present high inclusive policies that also recognise a third gender in passports or travel documents (Beeby, 2016; Internal Affairs. Te Tari Taiwhenua, 2016).

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<sup>10</sup> For instance, the Bill C-16 amends the Canadian Human Rights Act to extend its protection to violence or discrimination committed by gender identity or expressions reasons (House of Commons of Canada, 2016). By contrast, the Gender Recognition Act (2004) approved in the UK focuses on regulating the requirements trans citizens need to get official recognition of their gender identities.

Table 1. Substantial studies identified

Authors and year of publication	Country	Theoretical framework	Methodology	Participants	Background
Caudwell (2014)	UK	Queer and critical approach to school sport and PE	Semi-structured interviews	Two participants (Finn and Ed)	School sport
Elling-Machartzki (2017)	Netherlands	Socio-phenomenological approach	Biographical narrative interviews	Twelve transgender people (6 trans women and 6 trans men)	Leisure sport and physical education
Grossman, O'Connell, & D'Augelli (2005)	United States	Feminist tradition	Focus structured interviews and questionnaires	Twenty-two female transgendered young people	Leisure sport
Hargie et al. (2017)	UK	Social exclusion and minority stress theory	In-depth interviews	Ten transgender persons (six females and four males)	Physical education and leisure sport
Lucas-Carr & Krane (2012)	United States	Queer-feminist approach	Life story methodology (unstructured and semi-structured)	Three transgender athletes (an ambiguous, an fluidly transgender person and a trans man)	School sport
Muchicko, Lepp, & Barkley (2014)	United States	Health studies	Questionnaires	Thirty three transgender	Physical activity

Authors and year of publication	Country	Theoretical framework	Methodology	Participants	Background
Semerjian & Cohen (2006)	United States	Queer theory and Foucauldian notions	Semi-structured interviews to approach to trans athletes narratives of their participation in sport	Four trans athletes	Leisure and elite sport
Sykes (2011)	Canada	Postmodern theories	Interviews	Six trans persons	Physical education and sport
Tagg (2012)	New Zealand	Critical feminist tradition	Participant observation and semi-structured interviews	Two trans women netballers	Elite competition
Travers & Deri (2010)	United States	Queer/feminist/trans field	Participant observation and interviews	Twelve trans persons (8 transmen, 3 transsexual women and 1 genderqueer/trans/lesbian)	Elite sport
van Ingen (2011)	Canada	Feminist tradition	Focus group, observation and interviews	Mouse, a transwoman boxer	Leisure sport



These seemingly contexts toward trans population are favourable to the production of scientific studies. However, many countries whose policies are similarly inclusive with trans population, for example Spain, have no room in the study list. As Felis-Anaya, Martos-García and Devís-Devís (2017) critically intuit in a similar situation, maybe scholars from these countries are equally interested on this issue but they have more difficulties to publish in international renowned journals, or they may publish in journals with no presence in international databases. The fact that the majority of studies compiled in Table 1 come from English-speaking countries reinforces this idea.

Regarding the gender of the authors, most of them do not make explicit their gender identities or take them into consideration to speak about trans issues. Only Elling-Machartzki (2017) explains how her androgynous appearance affects the research process. It is worth noting that, with the exception of Semerjian, who actively participates in transgender communities, many authors may have an exclusive academic connection with trans population. The lack of trans authors in the academy also reflects the difficulties this community has to access to spaces of cultural influence.

## 2.6.2 Thematic areas and content

The studies compiled in table 1 address a diversity of topics in relation to trans persons and sport. In this doctoral thesis we identify four major themes for further analysis: a) trans persons' gender identities, b) strategies and negotiation to sport participation, c) trans persons' exclusion in sport and d) institutional exclusion and (re)production of gender binarism. The first major theme especially emphasises how their sense of self affects their engagement in sport and the way they construct their gender identities through this practice. The rest of themes emphasize the experiences participants have in the realm of sport and the way their bodies interact with gender rules and structure.

### 2.6.2.1 *Trans persons' gender identities*

Diversity characterizes the gender identities of trans persons participating in the compiled studies. Some of them allude to the awareness of trans identity and its connection with sport. Especially, Hargie et al. (2017) state that gender stereotypes

in school sport invoke feelings of gender discrepancy in trans students when they do not identify themselves with these stereotypes. Twenty-two trans women participating in the study by Grossman, O'Connell and D'Augelli (2005) became aware of their gender identities in their puberty period. The majority of these women, who participated in games and recreational sports in school, did not identify themselves with male activities, games and sports during those years.

However, trans persons not always present coherent and fix gender identities. For example, the participants interviewed by Lucas-Carr and Krane (2012) shifted among genderqueer's, queer's, butch's and trans men's identities. Semerjian and Cohen's (2006) study also presented participants with malleable identities that affected their sport experiences. Some trans persons' quotations revealed that when gender identities and expressions were flexible and non-constant, different needs and uses of sport were possible. For instance, Chris experienced changes in the relation shi had with sport and the role sport had in hir live. If Chris firstly self-identified as a boy in hir childhood and looked for shape hir body through sport, some years after shi preferred to be defined as a trans and alien person and searched to queering the sport spaces shi occupied.

Other studies focused on the impact trans persons' gender identities had in their sport participation. Through the voices of four trans persons, Semerjian and Cohen (2006) showed the negative experiences participants had in sport. For instance, Bambi felt her femininity and feminine expression had no room in a male team. However, some participants also remembered positive experiences. Conor, for example, experience his masculinity was not called into question doing kung fu with other men because his hairy body allowed him successfully embodied masculinity. Additionally, he recognised diffidently that he liked to adopt certain machismo and behaviours that responded to the model of hegemonic masculinity, as expressing aggressiveness in sport.

Concerning gender identities, Elling-Machartzki's (2017) research had a special consideration to embodied processes of transitioning and how they interrelated with sport experiences and narratives. The findings of this study revealed that these activities could be disempowering and empowering for trans persons in different moments of their gender transition. Especially the creation of gender identification and body awareness stood out after transition stage, while mainstream sports were considered especially unsafe for them during the liminal

phase (see 2.5.2. subsection to further information of this study). Another work developed by Caudwell (2014) also highlighted the complexity of transgender subjectivities and transiting bodies that influenced participants' identification with both, identity categories and others in interactions.

#### *2.6.2.2 Strategies and negotiation to sport participation*

Many studies refer to school and PE as a compulsory and negative period for many trans students that had not disclosed their gender identities (Elling-Machartzki, 2017). In order to mitigate these feelings, some trans persons used different strategies to be accepted in sport and to confront stressful situations. For example, many of them copied a gender style in coherence with the sex assigned at birth and adopted controlling and ignoring attitudes toward their own bodies (Elling-Machartzki, 2017; Grossman et al., 2005). On the contrary, other participants adopted more isolated practices in order to avoid the negatives feelings they experienced doing sport with others. Most trans persons, as Mary, avoided group sports, while individual sport activities gave them the chance to be themselves in PE (Hargie et al., 2017).

Trans persons used to negotiate their participation in sport and PE with teachers, family and other players (Caudwell, 2014; Semerjian & Cohen, 2006). In educational context, Lucas-Carr and Krane (2012) showed the difficulties three trans men experienced in female school teams. These three persons, Harvey, Ryan and Jake, were not well-valued because they were perceived sometimes as too aggressive and competitive. As Jake commented, frustrating feelings for trans persons may be even greater when they are very good athletes. For these participants, a better ability did not mean better acceptance in female sport teams. Instead, they were socially vetoed.

After gender disclosure, some participants confronted complex situations that took them to search safe contexts and inclusive teams to practice sport. For instance, a queer sport team was very supportive for Harvey. Other participant, Jake, who played different girls' and boy's teams along his life, found very supportive mates in a collegiate women's ice hockey team, a space where he could freely express his sport style (Lucas-Carr & Krane, 2012). Additionally, Mouse, a trans woman who engaged in a boxing program for survivors of violence,

experienced belonging and safety feelings participating in this program, while in other social domains she usually felt isolated and out of place (van Ingen, 2011).

However, other participants did not feel free to show their gendered bodies in certain sport spaces and were concerned about not being enough covert (Semerjian & Cohen, 2006; Tagg, 2012). Changing rooms were especially risky for them as long as their bodies could evidence a non-appropriate body for their masculinity or femininity.

### *2.6.2.3 Trans persons' exclusion in sport*

All the studies compiled in this literature review present trans persons' testimonies in which different grades and sort of exclusion situations in sport were lived. A questionnaire-based study designed by Muchicko et al. (2014) compared transgender and cisgender experiences in physical activity and its relationships with social support and self-esteem. Data analysis indicated that there were significant differences among trans and cisgender participants. In particular, findings suggested that transgender persons had less social support, lower self-efficacy, greater rates of peer victimisation and more negative perception of their physical self than cisgender persons.

Focusing on school sport, Caudwell (2014) significantly contributed to clarify aspects of the multi-layered 'outness' processes in sport through the testimonies of two young trans boys, Finn and Ed, who played football, hockey and tennis in LGBT teams. Caudwell suggested this process was not fixed to a social location. Family and friends could also contribute to 'out' trans persons and discouraging them to engage in sport.

Many of the trans persons who participated in Sykes's (2009) study also revealed that their gender identities intersected negatively with others identities traits in PE, such as social class and able-bodiedness, in a way that excluded them from encouraging experiences. For Teiresias, living with chronic pain was inseparable from the marginalization situations she experienced. Hargie et al. (2017) showed the negative sport experiences that ten transgender persons had at school. Similarly, at Sykes's study participants, some of them felt PE was an exclusionary environment because they were constantly assaulted and erased by presenting non-normative identities. An interview-based study by Travers and Deri (2010) with eight trans men and three trans women indicated that passing as

cissexual women or men was necessary for them to avoid unwelcoming climates and disrespectful language in the softball leagues they played.

In general, these studies showed that in order to avoid marginalization, trans persons expressed the gender identity that fitted with the assumed segregation of sexes which characterized sport competitions.

#### *2.6.2.4 Institutional exclusion and (re)production of gender binarism*

The studies selected provide us with information about different discriminatory situations that certain transphobic institutions caused to trans persons in sport.

When some sport organizations rule the sort of participants that can be part of the teams in competition arena, those who do not accomplish with requisites are excluded from the possibility to compete. Especially men's only organizations and women's only organizations are restrictive for trans persons. In fact, Tagg's (2012) paper reveals that certain New Zealand sport organizations, defined themselves as only for male, rejected trans players for many years. Two trans women, Amy and Brenda, recognised that despite the increasing sexual liberation of New Zealand's society, transgender felt excluded from official sport competitions (Tagg, 2012). Even if nowadays mixed-organizations allow the participation of women in those sport clubs, very few trans persons actually compete at a national level.

Other scholars focused on institutional transphobia at schools. Specifically, and attending to trans persons' experiences in PE at school, Sykes (2009) manifested that some discourses about gender (as co-educational and gender equity ones) normalized oppressive gender binarism. The creation and maintenance of binary spaces and materials in PE that produced unwelcoming and exclusionary situations for trans or gender variant students also contributed to reproducing this ideology. Some negative consequences that exclusionary sports had for trans persons were feelings of discomfort in changing rooms, participants' fear to public spaces and difficulties to engage in sport activities (Hargie et al., 2017). In Lucas-Carr and Krane's study (2012), traditional sex-segregated sports also caused Harvey, Ryan and Krane to feel limited their access to sport contexts and to find difficult to fully participate in school sport.



## CHAPTER 3. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

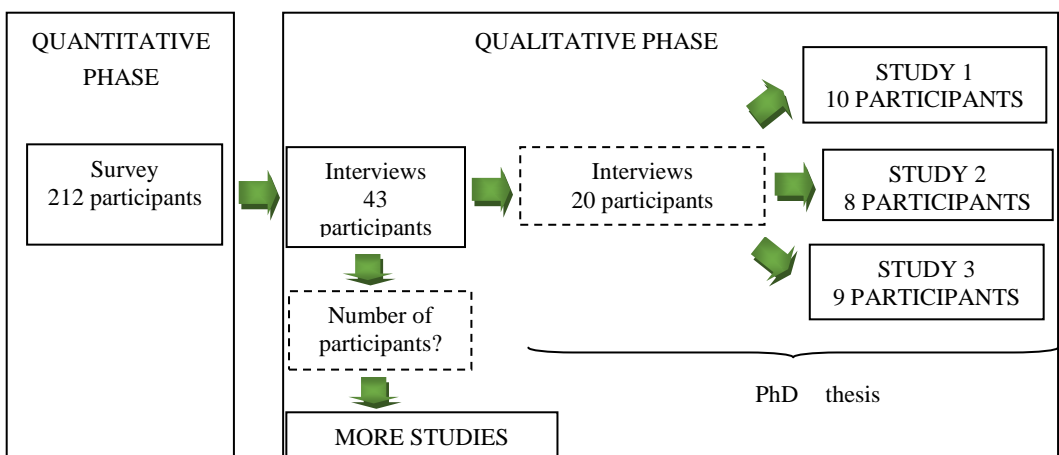




## CHAPTER 3. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Background

The studies included in this PhD thesis are framed in a wider project entitled “*Educación física, deporte y transgénero: el ejercicio físico en la (re)construcción y transición de las identidades transexuales y transgeneristas*” (DEP2011-28190). This research project was approved by the *Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad* in 2012. The main purpose of this research was to know the role PE and sport play in the process of construction, reconstruction and transition of the transsexual and transgender identities. It was a descriptive project designed in two different and complementary phases in order to link quantitative and qualitative methods. In doing so, we would provide a comprehensive approach to trans persons’ lives and fill the absence of Spanish studies in the field of sports, physical activity and PE. The first phase corresponded to a survey study that, among other purposes, aimed to identify participants’ characteristics to subsequently be selected as informants in the second phase. Three qualitative studies, which emerged from this second phase, comprise the present doctoral thesis. Figure 1 shows the general design that links the two phases with the three particular qualitative studies.



**Figure 1.** Project design connected with this PhD thesis

### 3.1.1. First phase

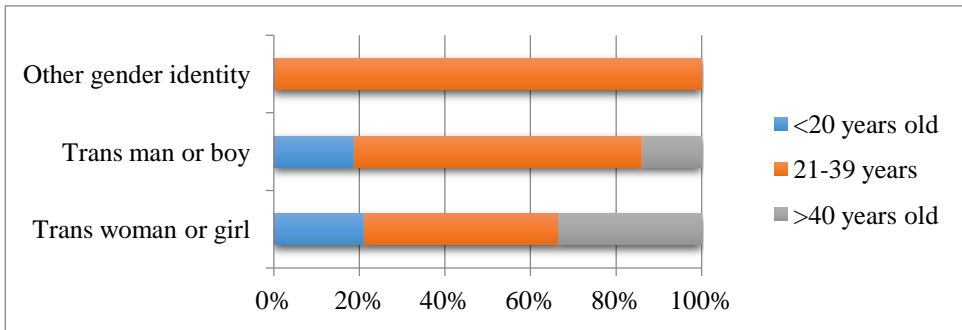
The first phase sought to understand the participation in and attitudes of transsexual and transgendered people towards social life, sports and PE through a survey at different moments of their gender identities transition (before and during) and according to different sociodemographic variables. A purposeful sample procedure was used for recruiting participants through LGTB associations, Gender Units of hospitals and conferences during more than two years. Afterwards, a snow-ball strategy to increase the recruitment was followed. This strategy is a sampling technique employed with hidden populations or collectives with scarce visibility who are difficult to identify and contact as, for instance, sex workers or drug addicts (Girchenko & King, 2017; Todd et al., 2007). Asking participants about their connection with persons with specific profiles may help researchers to saturate traits when other ways of access to them are not possible (Faugier & Sargeant, 1997; Grossman & D'Augelli, 2007; Stotzer, 2009; Xavier, 2000).

All participants who voluntarily engaged in both the survey study and the qualitative studies signed an informed consent form (see Appendix 1).

A total of 212 trans persons were recruited from different parts of Spain, such as Madrid (n=27), Canarias (n=72), Cataluña (n=42), Andalucía (n=21), Comunitat Valenciana (n=21), País Vasco (n=9) and Extremadura (n=5). Most of them (90.6%) had Spanish nationality and the rest of participants came from Latin American countries (6.60%).

Regarding gender identities, 44.1% (n=90) defined themselves as woman or girl and 51.1% (n=107) self-identified as man or boy. A small percentage of the sample (4.7%) rejected self-identifying with any of the two binary terms of man/woman. The sample distribution by gender identity and age is shown in figure 2.

Approximately half of participants (53%) started to be conscious of their gender identities at an early age ( $\leq 7$  years old) but they disclosed their gender identities at an average of 22 years old. The majority of them had the secondary school certificate, professional training or high school diploma (72.3%) but few of them had a university degree (25.8%) at the moment of the study.



**Figure 2. First phase sample distributed by gender identity and age**

### 3.1.2. Second phase

The second phase explored the transsexual and transgendered people's experiences in and meanings of PE and sport, as well as the role that they played in the transition of their gender identities. Semi-structured interviews and interview field notes were used for sociocultural data gathering of trans persons' lives. Particularly, a group of 43 volunteer trans persons, from the total sample of 212, were interviewed in order to get further insights of their personal, schooling and social aspects of physical activity.

These 43 participants were chosen following a criterion of diversity of participants' characteristics obtained from the survey, such as different moment of the transition process, different gender identities, different age and different sport experiences. Each of the qualitative studies, derived from this group of interviews, chose a number of participants depending on their particular objectives. In the case of this PhD thesis, the objectives of the three studies are presented in the following chapter.

## 3.2 Objectives

In current western societies people do not usually have the possibility to decide about their sex. The factual truth of our bodies lies in the hands of experts who define criteria of what women or men truly are. As a consequence, the hegemony of sex and gender dichotomous categories situates trans persons and other gender variants in the domain of *problems*. As relational bodies, however,

trans persons struggle to find a place in the world and make liveable their own bodies. Against the common sense of a dichotomous gendered body, there is a claim for a social and relational approach which acknowledges multiple body selves. Particularly, trans persons' experiences evidence a non-hegemonic discourse that recognises the plurality of ways to live and be a gendered body.

Against this backdrop, the main purpose of this doctoral thesis is to explore trans persons' experiences in different socio-relational contexts, such as daily life, sport and educational contexts. To that end, the thesis gathers three studies. The first study shows, through the metaphor of frontiers, how different trans persons feel during their daily life in relation to other gendered bodies. The second study focuses on how their embodied transition processes influence and is influenced by physical activity and sport practices. Finally, the third study gathers and analyses memories and impressions of a group of Spanish adult trans persons on their experiences in heteronormative PE contexts. Each study specifies particular objectives in the following way.

### 3.2.1 Study 1: Body frontiers

1. To explore trans persons' body realities through the 'frontier' metaphor.
2. To know what sort of gender frontiers affect trans persons' lives.
3. To understand how the process of frontierization is produced and which elements take part in their constitution.
4. To analyse the consequences of living in liminal position or border zones.
5. To know the different ways trans persons have to deal with body frontiers.

### 3.2.2 Study 2: Sport in transition

6. To know how trans persons narratively construct their own sport experiences.
7. To distinguish the sort of sport experiences trans persons have in different phases of transitioning process.

8. To analyse the way trans persons construct their gender identities through sport and physical activity.

### 3.2.3 Study 3: Physical education

9. To understand how trans persons deal with gendered spaces and activities in heteronormative PE contexts.
10. To know how trans persons feel in their relationships with PE classmates and teachers.
11. To analyse the possibilities and restrictions that PE offers to trans students to develop their gender identities.

## **3.3 Methods and materials**

### 3.3.1. Design and research perspective

The interview-based design of the present PhD thesis comprises three qualitative studies that belong to the second phase of the wider project mentioned above. In general, qualitative research “consists of a set of interpretative, material practices that make the world visible” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). It is constantly shifting and expanding its limits with new methods, subject matters, fields and disciplines. Beyond these changes, there are different paradigms that respond to three different questions posed by Guba and Lincoln (1994, p.108): ‘What is the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it?’ (the ontological question), ‘what is the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known?’ (the epistemological question) and ‘how can the inquirer (would-be knower) proceed to find out whatever he or she believes can be known?’ (the methodological question). The answers to these questions have given rise to different paradigm traditions (for example positivism, postpositivism, interpretivism, constructivism, feminism, cultural studies, queer theory and critical theory) which cannot be applied with universal rules. As these interpretative frameworks influence each other, the limits of their boundaries are being extended, becoming pliable. Actually, researchers have begun to interbreed some of them (Denzin & Lincoln,

2005; Guba & Lincoln, 2005). For instance, a particular study may interrelate participatory with postmodernist paradigms or another one may adopt an ethnographic approach and draw upon neo-Marxist concepts to analyse and interpret the data. It is also possible that poststructuralist textual theory may be applied for generating politically transformative action as proposed by critical theory.

In the present PhD thesis, we also interrelate different theoretical paradigms to interpret the data. In particular, queer theory has provided us with essential notions but we have simultaneously followed interpretative and critical research paradigms to approach to trans persons' experiences. In doing so, we avoid some weaknesses the queer paradigm presents as, for example, not considering structures of power and power relations historically constituted.

### 3.3.2 Participants

A purposeful sample procedure was used for selecting participants to satisfy the objectives of the three studies specified in previous sections. A smaller number of informants were required to understand in depth the different ways participants gave meanings to their subjective experiences (Smith & Caddick, 2012).

A group of 20 participants constituted the final sample of this PhD thesis. Ten trans persons participated in the Study 1, eight in the Study 2 and nine trans persons participated in the Study 3. Most of them took part only in one study. However, Alex, Carlos, Daniel, Gloria and Llurena (pseudonyms) participated in two of them and Carolina was involved in all of them (see Table 2) Additional information about these participants is detailed within the results section of each study. This will facilitate the readers' understanding of the present manuscript.

Participants have followed different sport trajectories concerning transition processes. Among participants, Ana, Lucas, Rosa and Verónica did not play any sort of activity neither before nor after they came out. Rebeca only practiced sport before disclosing her gender identity and Antonio started to practice sport and/or physical activity after revealing his gender identity to others. The rest of them practiced physical activity and sport before and after their gender disclosure.

**Table 2. Participants in the three studies of this PhD thesis**

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Gender identity assigned at birth</b>	<b>Self- defined gender identity</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Study of participation</b>
Alex	Female	Trans	32	Study 1 Study 2
Ana	Male	Woman	15	Study 2
Anabel	Male	Woman	18	Study 1
Antonio	Female	Man	32	Study 3
Beltrán	Female	Transsexual man	22	Study 1
Carlos	Female	Man	35	Study 2 Study 3
Carolina	Male	Woman	40	Study 1 Study 2 Study 3
Daniel	Female	Trans Boy	33	Study 2 Study 3
Darío	Female	Man	18	Study 1
Gloria	Male	Woman	26	Study 1 Study 3
Iker	Female	Transqueer o transgender	28	Study 2
Jorge	Female	Man	42	Study 3
Llurena	Male	Woman	32	Study 2 Study 3
Lucas	Female	Man	23	Study 1 Study 3
Marcos	Female	Man	49	Study 1
Marta	Male	Woman	22	Study 1
Raúl	Female	Man	24	Study 2
Rebeca	Male	Woman	40	Study 1
Rosa	Male	Woman	35	Study 3
Verónica	Male	Woman	50	Study 3

### 3.3.3 Instruments

Two instruments were selected to comply with the objectives set for each study: a) interviews and b) an interview field diary.

#### 3.3.3.1 Interviews

Interviews, as a method of collecting qualitative data, have been widely used by social researchers. They are defined as appropriate tools to know the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of a social phenomenon (Gratton & Jones, 2004). An interview is a social activity in which the knower and the known construct collaboratively the meanings of the world while engaging in an embodied talk about experiences and

in contexts (Smith & Caddick, 2012; Smith & Sparkes, 2016). Semi-structured interview is one of the interviews most frequently used in qualitative research. Researchers normally use a semi-structured interview script when preparing this sort of interview in qualitative research. In comparison with other sort of approaching, it requires a pre-planned schedule that is never fully structured. The script incorporates open-ended questions that are not briefly answered with a simple yes or no and requires wider explanations.

In particular, we used semi-structured interviews stemming from the assumption that data obtained are never neutral or objective, but considering its potential to get insights into participants' feelings, experiences, opinions and behaviours. We developed an interview script that guided the interaction process. Questions were developed grouping them into themes. This script, which can be seen in Appendix 2, is composed by the next five main blocks:

1. Questions prior to interviews recording. To inform the trans person about the confidentiality and anonymity of hir participation and to request hir authorization to use a digital recorder for recording the interview.
2. The current practice of sport and physical activity. We developed questions aimed to know the motivations of the participant towards exercise, the difficulties associated to these practices and the kind of relationships maintained in sport settings.
3. Transition process, sport and physical exercise. Questions were addressed to know how zhe lived hir gender transition and how it affected hir relationships and influenced hir sport practices.
4. Childhood, adolescence, school sport and PE. Through this set of questions, we looked for information about how the participant experienced hir gender identity in the schooling period, hir relationships with classmates and teachers and, particularly, how zhe constructed hir gender (or not) within sport practices.



5. Sports role. Questions focused on knowing the role sport has had along participants' lives, and the future possibilities or benefits sports could bring to their lives. In this final block, we also invited participants to add any extra information they considered necessary or adequate to the research.

We also selected these blocks in order to think about how participants could react to interviewer's questions. In order to facilitate the memories of interviewees, we organized questions from present to past. We also designed the interview script from more general questions to more particular, personal or sensitive ones. In a certain way, we looked for the creation of a progressive atmosphere of trust that did not endanger the interview and the comfort of the participant. However, we adopted a flexible approach to the data collection and sometimes the order of questions was altered to adjust to the course of the interviews. Furthermore, new interesting questions that emerged from interviews were added to the scheduled ones.

#### *3.3.3.2 Interviews field diary*

Along with the interview process, an interview field diary was used to collect extra information that trans participants could offer to us. It was also used to write down descriptions, behaviours and reflections that emerged as a result of the interaction interview process with participants. Another important role I gave to the interview field diary was to collect unsatisfied research practices and nuances in order to improve ulterior interviews and strength the data gathering process.

#### 3.3.4 Procedure

All semi-structured interviews of the project, and also those which are part of this doctoral dissertation were developed by the same interviewer: myself. I emailed or telephoned participants for an initial contact to agree the data of the encounter. I travelled to their place of residence to interview them. Interviews took place where interviewees chose in order to get their confidence and maximise their comfort. Most of the interviews were made in cafeterias and bars.

Other persons were interviewed at offices in associations, public parks and participants' homes. First encounters were always thrilling, especially when I had not spoken with them previously. In those situations, fears and excitement were highly present in those meetings as I deeply explain in the epilogue of this PhD thesis.

Finally, when we verbatim transcribed all the interviews, we sent them to the participants for their modification or approval. Subsequently, interviews were analysed with the support of Nvivo programme in its version 10.

### **3.4 Analytical and ethical considerations**

Since qualitative analysis is more than a technical matter, researchers have to also attend ethical issues in everything they do. As analysis and ethics have interwoven features, in this chapter we present both of them as related.

#### 3.4.1 Analysis

In this chapter we explain the main features of the different analytical approaches used in the three studies. It is important to outline that analytical approaches and procedures were not aprioristic decisions taken beforehand in the design of the wider research project. On the contrary, we used different analytical procedures depending on the objectives of each particular study in dialogue with the specific characteristics of our data and ethical considerations.

Particularly, in this PhD thesis we used different analytical approaches for interpreting the data. A thematic analysis was developed in study 1 and study 3 while a pluralistic data analysis was used in study 2. In this study 2, we did a first thematic analysis followed by a holistic narrative analysis of structure.

##### *3.4.1.1 Thematic analysis*

Thematic analysis is recognizable in the three studies presented. The research team opted to use thematic analysis for the following reasons. First, a thematic analysis allows us to flexibly and directly identify interpretative patterns of meaning within data. This form of analysis is particularly suitable for the access and interpretation of data reflecting heterogeneous experiences on similar

realities, as well as for opening them to various interpretative frameworks. As thematic analysis is not tied to particular ontological and epistemological traditions, a great flexibility in how to use thematic analysis is given to researchers. Therefore, this analytical approach gives scholars an active role to choose their level of engagement with data. Second, it allows inductive approaches. By following a thematic analysis, we let trans persons' stories speak and approach to data showing its nuances and complexities. We define categories from interviews, considering direct information from participants instead of using preconceived categories. Third, this sort of analysis suits well with different sort of research designs and allows its combination with other analytical approaches. Fourth, it is appropriate for describing phenomena and is especially recommended for unknown realities or under-researched topics (Braun & Clarke 2006; Braun, Clarke, & Weate, 2016; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013).

#### *3.4.1.2 Narrative analysis and holistic analysis of structure*

Narrative analysis is an umbrella term that agglutinates different approaches to the knowledge of how human beings give sense to their worlds through words. The diversity that characterizes this essential form of scientific inquiry varies from the use of particular epistemological, ontological and theoretical underpinnings, and the analysis of different texts (such as visual, oral or written) to the use of specific analytical techniques to approach to stories (Smith, 2016; Stanley & Temple, 2008). However, this way of giving sense to data has largely been informed by “interpretivist paradigm characterized by ontological relativism and epistemological social constructionism” (Papathomas, 2016, p. 37) Within postmodern inquiry, narrative analysis also counterweights the hegemony of positivist paradigm in the study of natural bodies that emblem, emphasizing the importance of culture in embodied interactions (Georgakopoulou, 2006).

Moreover, the narrative analysis emphasizes “human beings as meaning-makers” (Smith, 2016, p. 261). The ways in which people perceive and interpret realities is configured by other narratives that live in social and cultural contexts. From this perspective, narratives are actresses that do things with people, affecting them emotionally (Smith, 2016). However, when people tell stories they

also shape, construct and perform the selves, experiences and realities in interaction (Chase, 2005).

Over the last years, stories have become more and more attractive to social sciences and narrative analysis has gained robust legitimacy. Specifically, some authors have highlighted its utility in the ground of sports and exercise studies. For example, Smith and Sparkes (2009a) recognise great potentialities of narratives for sport psychology:

May reveal a great deal about what physical activity, health, and well-being mean to people, how these meanings are contextualised and created over time, and the ways these meanings shape people's experiences, feelings, desire, and ability to take on board physical activity and transform it into an embodied habit of thought, behaviour, and taste" (p. 280).

However, as narrative inquiry is still in the process of consolidation and multiple definitions of narratives co-exist in the literature, there is a risk of becoming vague when referring to it (Papathomas, 2016, Smith & Sparkes, 2009b). Actually, for some authors everything that involves interview data implies any form of narratives. From a more precise perspective, narratives refer to "general dimensions or properties, such as tellability, consequences, sequences of speech act, structures, thematic/categorical content, rhetorical tropes, and/or temporality, which comprise particular stories" (Smith & Sparkes, 1992b).

Against this backdrop, we opt to do a narrative analysis in order to approach to the meanings trans persons give to their experiences and how they construct and reconstruct body-self relationships. In the second study, narrative analysis is presented as a way of providing understanding to the living sport experiences of trans persons along their transitioning process (see section 6.2). In doing so, we carried out a holistic narrative analysis of structure. This decision was motivated by the topic of this second research and the advantages it presents to analyse interviews in comparison with other sort of analysis. In particular, structural analysis allows identifying idealized narrative types through fixing the attention on the structure of stories. Phoenix, Smith and Sparkes (2010) show different studies where this structure expresses in some way the perceptions, values and identities of a group of participants. In interviews, storytellers may link their own particular stories with an idealized narrative type shared by the group (Phoenix &

Sparkes, 2007). Similarly, we searched to deeply understand how trans persons' stories on sport experiences could be affected by a common gender transition situation. As a social group, trans persons may construct their narratives according to similar patterns. Structural analysis allows us to analyse their stories and locate them within wider socio-cultural narratives regarding transition processes.

#### 3.4.2 Ethical considerations

If we go back to the origin of qualitative research, its main concern was to understand the distant 'other' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In particular, in the realm of sociology and anthropology, when this 'other' was considered inferior or less civilized by coming from other cultures, societies and traditions, qualitative research irremediably emerged as an unethical practice. From these beginnings, current qualitative research has positioned in a non-neutral stance that recognises the transformative role of its practice and the responsibility of its actions in the social world researchers are immersed in. From then, a set of ethical considerations have been contemplated by researchers. In this PhD thesis, we do not do a systematic approach to ethical issues but we follow Tracy's (2010) classification to attend to ethical issues that emerged in different stages of research. This author describes a variety of ethical practices in qualitative research that include procedural ethics, situational, relational and exiting ethics.

*Procedural ethics* refers to general ethical considerations institutionally or officially ruled to research. For example, in this project all procedures were submitted and approved by the Ethical Committee of the Universitat de València (see Appendix 3). The approval of this institution guarantees the research project design is respectful with fundamental human rights and informants who participate within the project and also studies derived from it.

Another procedural ethic we considered is to give participants information about the project and the risk and advantages derive from their participation in this study. The researcher team developed two specific consent forms: one for adults and another for underage participants. All participants read the script which contained basic information about the aim of the project and the research-based usage of collected data (see again Appendix 1). Furthermore, this document

offered contact data to the participants about the research team and other institutional information as, for instance, the address of the University of Valencia and the name of our research unit. They also were informed about the anonymity and voluntarily character of their participation. We clarified them that they were not obliged to respond all the questions in the interviews and we encourage them to ask us doubts about the process and aims of the research project. Once we recorded the interviews, we safeguarded transcriptions in a computer in a locked office at the University. Additionally, names of participants were modified in audio tracks in order to increase the security of their anonymity.

Regarding institutional recommendations, Sparkes and Smith (2013, p. 206) state that

Gaining ethical clearance from a Research Ethics Committee (REC) or an Institutional Review Board (IRB) is a necessary first step in the qualitative research journey. It is not, however, the only step. It is not sufficient to assume that simply because ethical approval has been sought and granted by an organisation with clear code of ethics, that research project will satisfied all the requirements of ethical research.

For these authors, beyond principles and codes, ethics is a continual process and an attitude that prone researchers to feel and act according to dilemmas that may emerge along the research processes. Most of these dilemmas are unpredictable and situated in the field. Research process and, specially, fieldwork “can throw up an array of unexpected, subtle and nuanced ethical dilemmas that RECs and IRBs cannot control and predict” (Sparkes & Smith, 2013, p. 212). These dilemmas correspond to *situational ethics* that revolve around the harm research practices could provoke and specific ethical conducts regarding participants. Therefore, beyond ethical considerations derived from guidelines or indications provided by Ethical Committees in order to provide an idea of how ethics enacted in the field, we would like to outline certain dilemmas arisen from that situational, relational and exiting ethics that emerged unexpectedly.

Along the research process some of our ethical concerns referred to the characteristics of the population. We agree with Braidotti (2011) when states that telling the difference with a non-unitary voice or a uniform experience is a key ethical issue. Consequently, we do not contemplate two only possible gender identities (man or woman -or trans woman and trans men-) and two transition

trajectories (from male to female or female to male). We do not define the transition as a lineal process with an unequivocal ending because there is not only one way to be a woman, a man or a trans person (Simmons & White, 2014). Moreover, there are also transqueer or people who do not identify themselves as women or men. There are even persons who refuse the ideas of *wrong* body or *sex change* that occupy a great space in the transsexualism imaginary and occupy a relevant space in our project as well. Actually, participants' self-referred gender identities strongly determined the way we wrote the results and discussion chapters using terms such as 'transition', 'trans man' or 'trans woman', which sometimes may display a binary way of understanding gender. The pronouns of 'shi', 'zhe' and 'hir' in the use of English tries to avoid underrepresented groups of trans people and be more inclusive with diversity of trans community. Additionally, as I am not a trans person I had to negotiate some ethics concern, for instance, how I presented myself to them and how to manage my own femininity in front of them (see Epilogue chapter for more information about dilemmas that emerged from the encounter with participants).

*Relational ethics*, which allude to the limits of researchers' actions, also emerged in the field. During the interviews, I had several times the dilemma of choosing to follow the interview script or to omit some questions in order to do not disturb participants. In fact, when I appreciated that certain delicate questions could harm them during the interview, I opted to do not formulate them. This happened especially when I saw trans persons were still in the process of accepting themselves or their relationship with their bodies was problematic. In those situations, I was appealed by my own humanity, leaving my researcher's role aside and prioritizing participants' respect and wellbeing before the interest of the research.

In the interview context, researchers sometimes become psychologists in unexpected ways. I frequently felt participants' desire to tell me things really important for them but nothing to do with the questions formulated in the interview. In those situations, I listened to them even if that meant the interview would last more than I expected and that it could affect the depth which participants mentioned issues I was interested in. Similarly, I decided to keep in secret those confidences that participants told me once the recorder was off when participants expressed they did not want I used that information for research

purposes. In fact, trans participants interviewed had the opportunity to read their interviews once transcribed verbatim and censure those parts they did not want to bring to light.

Finally, *exiting ethics* were taken into account sharing findings of research. Once we had published a relevant paper or study related to the research project we sent them to the main LGTB collectives, feminist scholars and influential activists as a sign of our commitment to this population (two examples of research team's publications are: Devís-Devís et al., 2017; Pérez-Samaniego et al., 2016).

### 3.4.3 Quality in qualitative inquiry

Some researchers have considered inappropriate to judge quantitative and qualitative research under the same criteria (Burke, 2016; Tracy, 2010). The ontological, epistemological and methodological differences that underpin quantitative and qualitative research produce contradictions and incoherence when these criteria are universally applied.

Within this background, Guba's (1981) criteria (transferability, credibility, dependability and confirmability) that paralleled quantitative strategies have been useful but insufficient and sometimes problematic. Although they are quite popular in the field of sport and PE, its general application to all forms and genres of qualitative inquiry also obviate the different paradigms that support them. For Tracy (2010), the conceptualization of quality in qualitative research might establish a set of common markers flexibly apply to different paradigms. According to this author, the eight criteria a good research should accomplish refer to: worthy topic, rich rigour, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethical and meaningful coherence. For Burke (2016, p. 333), however, "applying universal criteria is also inherently problematic because it calls on a researcher to judge any piece of qualitative research in pre-ordained and set ways".

An alternative perspective to the one indicated by Guba maintains that non-objective criteria are possible and the legitimacy of criteria are socially determined in time and space (Smith & Hodkinson, 2010). This relativist approach embeds ontological relativism and epistemological constructionism and



claims that social research is more a moral and practical activity instead of epistemological one. From this point of view, I considered both perspectives in this PhD thesis: formal and standard issues but also particular criteria regarding the contribution of this research work to the society and trans community.

Despite many researchers criticize criteria, they are useful guidelines to novel researchers, as me, because help to frame the research work within the qualitative literature and encourage scientific debates and reflections (Tracy, 2010). According to Smith and Hodkinson (2010, p. 916),

If the proper procedures are applied, the subjectivities (e.g., opinions, ideologies) of the knowing subject would be constrained and the knower could thereby gain an accurate and objective depiction of reality

Therefore, with the purpose of getting this accuracy in this PhD thesis, in this methodology chapter, I have detailed the procedures followed along the research process, from the collection of data to its analysis and representation.

In particular, I and the rest of the research team chose participants purposely according to the objectives of each study and detailed the interview process. I also audio recorded all interviews to better capture their experiences and give them a more accurate interpretation. Certain precautions were also considered: I asked participants to select a silent place to be interviewed and I also assured the voice recorder was well placed and the gadget had enough battery and space to record the interviews (Farias & Montero, 2005). The research team transcribed verbatim all the interviews and did it as soon as possible in order to note down some visual nuances, as gestures, that interviewers remembered and could facilitate the interpretations of data. We also collected initial ideas that were emerging from the transcriptions and, according to Vaismoradi et al. (2013), allowed us to familiarize with the data. Moreover, the interviewer wrote down observations in the field diary after finishing each interview. The purpose was to add to the interview script new questions of interest emerged from the encounter with the interviewee and reformulate invalid ones. In order to achieve confirmability, transcriptions were sent to participants to give them the opportunity to add, erase or nuance their contributions.

In the process of data analysis, we confronted findings with a rich theoretical framework that could show the complexity of trans realities. The data were not forced to fit into these analytical tools. On contrary, a dialogue among theory and

findings were maintained in a bidirectional way in order to better understand this social phenomenon in an ongoing and circular interpretative process.

These research practices are considered valid requisites but not enough to really value the quality of this PhD thesis. The transparency and sincerity with which we have tried to clarify the process of designing, dating, coding, analysis and writing recommended by scholars is another relevant criterion (Constantinou, Georgiou, & Perdikogianni, 2017; Tracy, 2010).

Additionally, as relativist assumptions are connected to the skill of researchers to control and make visible their involution into the research process, I want to explain my personal participation on the research process. In particular, I emphasize my implications in the representation of data.

According to Sparkes (2002), in some way or another all qualitative researchers tell stories to others through writing practices. Regarding research as a social act, texts are the place where the encounter between writer and reader takes place. This means that writing have both a relevant and active role in the process of communication. As researchers, we have the responsibility to write well and to make our text understandable to a specific audience. Through the stories scholars tell, they produce different ways of knowing and approaching to certain realities. Consequently, writing practices are not indifferent to the research processes. Furthermore, we need to use the appropriate rhetorical procedures to persuade our audience about the pertinence, trustworthiness and relevance of our research. How researchers represent the findings of their studies have implications on the way the reader receive the text and the level of engagement in the co-construction of meanings.

Several scholars are inclined to distinguish among a realist and constructivist approach to realities that affect how we analyse data and how we represent our findings (Perez-Samaniego, Fuentes, & Devís-Devís, 2011; Sparkes, 2002; Sparkes & Devís-Devís, 2007). Realist approaches are characterized by the absence of the authors in the text they produce, interpretative omnipresence and the visibility of participants' voices. A constructivist analysis otherwise maintains that reality is not unique but diverse and object of multiple and constant reinterpretations. In this PhD thesis, realist story was the way chosen to represent the results of the three studies for several reasons. First, because we, as research team, made visible participants' voices through multiple quotations. Far from

presenting single-cause explanations and a unique voice, we attempted to show a myriad of voices and the nuances of their experiences and gender identities. We assumed Sparkes' (2002, p. 55) suggestion about realist tales, "when well-constructed, data-rich realist tales can provide compelling, detailed and complex depictions of a social world". Second, this data representation allows us to explicitly contextualize the trans persons' micro discourses into a higher structural level or macro context. It enables to link particular situations to theoretical concepts. as habitus and performativity, in a coherent text. Third, as realist tale is the most common way of representing data in social sciences, it better facilitates comparisons among other qualitative studies. And fourth, it facilitates the comprehension of data to the readers. Especially when the topic is quite unknown, this way to represent the findings can provide an extensive outlook of the sort of situations participants live.

In order to balance the limitations of realist representation (to show an apparent neutrality, distance and objectivity), I consider necessary to present myself and situate my own positioning as a researcher so the readers can contextualize the interpretations exposed in this doctoral thesis (Sparkes & Devis, 2007). For this, in the epilogue of this work I add a confessional tale, a text that "foregrounds the voice and concerns of the researcher in a way that takes us behind the scenes of the "cleaned up" methodological discussions so often provided in realistic tales" (Sparkes, 2002, p. 57). With this, I sought to situate me and my personal approach to trans persons' realities, how they affect me and how my own feminist position affects and is affected by the interpretation of data. Making explicit how I come to learn about the worlds of trans population contributes to creating a more modest research. At the end, as interpreters of stories (Cunliffe, Luhman, & Boje, 2004), I present in these three studies only some of the multiple (and possible) interpretations across time and space of trans persons' embodied experiences.



## CHAPTER 4. BODY FRONTIERS



## CHAPTER 4. BODY FRONTIERS

Gender frontiers are presented as fix, natural and immutable realities. In society, people (re)produce them in social interactions. The unnatural constitution of gender borders and their limits are exemplified by those persons who present themselves with alternative genders or different models of being women or men. Within this background, the main purpose of this study is to explore trans persons' body realities through the metaphor of frontier and understand the consequences gender frontiers have for them. For that, the interviews of 10 trans participants were analysed. In this chapter, after presenting general characteristics of participants, the process of analysis and the main results of this study are detailed.

### 4.1 Participants

Participants were purposefully selected according to the specific goals of each study (see Table 3). For this study ten participants were selected attending to the following criteria: a) a gender balance among participants, taking into account a wide spectrum of participants' gender identities, b) a wide range of age (between 18 and 49 years old) and c) the richness of the information provided in the interviews.

**Table 3. Overview of interviewee's gender, age and information about their transition process**

Name (pseudonym)	Gender identity assigned at birth	Self- defined gender identity	Age	Years of transitioning	Gender identity is live...
Alex	Female	Trans	32	5	Full-time
Anabel	Male	Woman	18	5	Full-time
Beltrán	Female	Transsexual man	22	2	Full-time
Carolina	Male	Woman	40	17	Full-time
Darío	Female	Man	18	2	Part-time
Gloria	Male	Woman	26	4	Part-time
Lucas	Female	Man	23	0	Full-time
Marcos	Female	Man	49	40	Full-time
Marta	Male	Woman	22	5	Full-time
Rebeca	Male	Woman	40	2	Full-time

At the moment of the interviews many of them were fully living their gender identities. Only Gloria and Darío were not expressing their gender identities in all contexts of their lives. Darío had not told to all his relatives his male identity. Gloria had not revealed her gender identity to her grandparents either. She also kept it hidden in work contexts. Gloria was afraid that disclosing her gender could get her into trouble, and the fear of losing her job hampered her transit.

## **4.2 Analysis**

Before choosing the issue of this study and design its objectives, a preliminary analysis of the forty-three interviews to participants in the wider project was made. Each interview was meticulously read to identify key topics. Thematic categories were identified in order to classify and interpret the data. These categories helped to reduce and organize data (Braun et al., 2016, Flick, 2007). Preliminary categories were (re)elaborated, (re)shaped and (re)defined along the analytical process (Abela, 2000). Meanings of events, relationships, participants' emotions and common structural elements were taken as units of analysis, and crosscutting themes, repeated or problematic experiences and negative cases were identified (Herz, Peters, & Truschkat, 2015; Riessman, 2008).

The notion of frontier explicitly or implicitly emerged along that process as a useful metaphor to recognise and understand the (dis)identification trans participants felt towards themselves and others' bodies. In order to deeply understand their gendered experiences, a new content analysis was done focusing on that concept. Following Attride-Stirling's (2001) recommendations, we started creating basic or lowest-order themes derived from data. After comparing cases and consulting specific literature, the basic themes were grouped into ten organizing categories and five global themes according the existent literature and our own understanding of the topic (see Table 4).



**Table 4. Study 1. From basic to global themes**

Themes as basic themes	Organizing themes	Global themes
1. The body or the self is wrong	Relationship with oneself	Inside/outside frontiers
2. Body disassociated with itself: This body is not mine or this is not what I am		
3. Gender identity comes from inside, not from outside	Masking gender identities	
4. Having double life. Dramatizing gender to survive		
5. Hiding gender identity. Living with a secret entails Hyper vigilance and self- control		
6. Gender behaviours must be coherent with body materiality	Social interactions	Individual/Society frontiers
7. The relevance of being recognised by others as women or men	Social conflicts	
8. The stigmatization of being trans.		
9. Rejection and abjection by performing non-heteronormative identities		
10. Stopping to be androgynous. My fears became true.	Feminization and masculinisation in puberty period	Puberty as a frontier
11. Menstruation remarks an undesired femininity.	The imposition of body materiality	
12. Flexible gender expressions.		
13. Body changes in undesired ways. The inevitable destiny of my body	Power relations	Living in a frontier
14. Gender resignation. Adopting gender binarism	Agency	
15. Living between genders. Trans persons are rejected and sanctioned by expressing an ambiguous gender identity.		
17. Trans persons threat heteronormativity		
18. Developing counter-hegemonic practices and resistance toward rigid heteronormativity system	Gender transition requires a body transition	Practice of gender frontierization
19. Self-determination gender identity		
20. Body modelling. Technologies of gender to cross to a desired gendered body.	Passing entails social recognition	
21. Certain body parts threat to uncover their non-cissexuality.		
22. Accomplishing with gendered requirements. A strong gender regulation		
23. Becoming invisible. Adopting binary image		
24. This body is mine. Feeling well with oneself		
25. Defining what femininity and masculinity is. Subjective dimension of gender		

## **4.3 Results and discussion**

Trans persons frequently use metaphors of frontiers to construct their narratives and reflect how they feel their (dis)identification with themselves and others (further information of the significance of frontier metaphor is exposed in section 2.4.2). Frontiers connect and, also, separate features that are problematically lived by trans persons. The most relevant frontiers the participants mention are: outside/inside, society/individual and the frontier of puberty. Additionally, data analysis provides us information about the process of frontiers consolidation and the consequences of crossing and living in these bordering zones

### 4.3.1 Inside/Outside frontier

In current societies, only masculine men and feminine women are valid expressions of sex/gender relation. However, trans persons do not accomplish with that requisite because that sex/gender relation is altered. They usually express that alteration through the distinction of an external shell hiding an internal self. For instance, during her adolescence Carolina felt she “was a girl like the others, but inside a boy’s body”. Similarly, Gloria was not like the people she “supposedly looked like in a physical sense”, and Rebeca felt “different things” than she should feel according to her gender. That internal self was also linked to the origin of their feelings and gender identities. The masculinity of Alex came “from deeply inside” and Marta explained that “a woman born from within”.

However, that inside/outside or internal/external frontiers was also linked with the concealment and exteriorization of trans persons’ gender identities. Lucas, Gloria and Carolina used to hide and keep them in secret during their puberty, even if that meant a double life. This was the case of Gloria:

What I used to do in my childhood and adolescence period was to have a name for myself and the other one. I interpreted a role in front of the others and a different one in front of myself.

Participants, as Gloria, used to keep their gender identities “inside” despite their strong necessity to exteriorize them:

I needed to express myself the way I wanted to so (...) that I expressed some parts of myself internally many times. For example, I remember to

be writing and then realise that I wanted to write about myself in feminine or sometimes, when I was alone, I...expressed many things for myself.

Puberty and childhood were particularly stressful periods for many trans persons who felt they had not enough social support to externalise their gender identities. In fact, at the moment of the interview, Anabel was still resentful with her parents because they limited her instead of let her “unburden” and express herself as she really was.

As before transitioning these persons projected a wrong image about themselves, they could not identify themselves with the surface of their bodies and enjoy their bodies. Following Frank (1991), this disassociated body relatedness produced certain sense of embodied absence and expatriation.

I always had an attitude and function as if I had no image (...) I cannot and I will never be able to feel identified with a body that has not to do with me (Gloria)

I did not mind about my appearance because I said ‘in short, it is not even my body’. For me, it was not something of mine (Lucas)

Darío also felt a “total rejection” against his body because it was something external to him, something “it is not yours”, and Carolina tried to ignore and not to look at her own body, “you never ever you look at your body, even when you have wound”.

This outside/inside distinction was experienced as a barrier for participants. It negatively affected trans persons in their personal and social spheres. Marcos and Lucas experienced moments of depression and sorrow. This situation negatively affected Lucas’ social life, who did “not look forward to going out from home”. Neither Rebeca nor Alex felt identify or integrate in any group either, as the last one recalled “I did not feel masculine nor feminine either (...), at the end you are in the middle and stay fucking alone”

#### 4.3.2 Individual/society frontier

Gender identities were presumed, valued and judged according to bodily appearance. As gender exerted influence and regulated the sort of relationships people maintained with others in social environments, being socially recognised

and treated as women or men became crucial for trans persons (Gagne et al., 1997). Even Beltrán, who self-defined as a person with an ambiguous gender at the moment of the interview, stated: “it is not the same to be perceived as woman or man” and there was a relevant difference “between being a little ambiguous with a feminine appearance and being ambiguous with a male appearance”.

These processes of gender identification and recognition are modelled by wide social forces that influence the sort of symbols, signs and feelings people interpret as feminine and masculine (Sparkes, 2015). Many participants were conscious of the social conflict produced between what their bodies showed and what they really were. Lucas, for example, affirmed that “if my body is not a male one, then people are not going to consider me as a boy”. Also Gloria, who had not disclosed her gender identity when she was interviewed, argued:

People tend to think about the rest of people in relation with their physical appearance and not the identity they express. It works based on ‘you look like this, you are this’, (...) ...not matter how girl you feel, they won’t see you like that.

Occasionally, that concern still persisted once they initiated the transition process. Anabel, Lucas, Darío and Rebeca felt still threatened by any possible incongruence in their appearances which might reveal their ‘trans’ origin and could cause furtive and judging gazes:

That is what you note, ‘fuck, they are looking at me so much or someone is looking at me in the street, I am sure they are noticing it’ and people in fact notice it (Lucas).

Even if I am operated or I had the sweetest voice or I had more girlish face but, I do not know...maybe there is always someone who notices it (Rebeca).

It is going to be noticed, the people is going to look at me weird... (Darío).

Inquisitive gestures participated in the creation and contouring of the borders beyond which trans persons were considered unacceptable subjects. The participants’ quotations reflect how others made them feel abject in social interactions and how these gestures produced and marked the distinction between trans persons and those who gathered them, between being inside or outside of a social group. In these situations, the distinction and distance among them and

society created by those frontiers was experienced more vividly. However, a successful gender performativity allowed trans persons to mitigate and erase the risk of suffering the “psychosis, abjection and the physical impossibility to live” that may experience those persons who did not accomplish with sex/gender system (Butler, 1993, p.37).

#### 4.3.3 Puberty as a frontier.

Puberty, the period of a person life in which the transition from childhood to adulthood begins, results a key time in the construction of personal identities (Erikson, 1992). For trans persons, this period was a temporal frontier that unpleasantly marked their lives. As androgynous bodies started to physically develop as ‘men’ or ‘women’, they felt their bodies developed in undesired ways, strengthening their body dissatisfaction, as stated by Carolina in the following quotation:

A moment that was determinant for me was when the body changed, the beginning of puberty, and I started to notice these changes, that is to say, what the hell is going on? (...) It was the moment that I most clearly felt and perceived that my body went somewhere different than what I wanted.

Other woman, Anabel, also was really upset in that period by gaining an excessive muscular development, a deeper voice and bigger hands and feet. For trans men, the time of the first menstruation was really traumatic because it was the symbol that they were irremediably becoming ‘women’. For instance, Marcos admitted that “to accept that was very, very hard, and furthermore I had it [menstruation] each month. It was very hard”. Additionally, for many of them these changes had negative consequences, as Darío explained:

Very bad, it was very bad because you change and you have to change your role, have not you? I lived as a boy in the primary school but when I arrived to secondary school I had to behave [as a girl], and the feminine secondary sex characteristics...I had no choice and I had to pretend to be a girl (...) and I saw my own body and I said ‘this is all, I will have to be a girl because society imposes it to me and because I have no choice because it is what life has given to me’.

In this stage, Gloria also pretended to be someone she was not and “give to other people the version of herself they wanted to see”. The participants tried to fit into gender binary structure adopting a proper style and particular gendered gestures and behaviours. In these situations, they had to reproduce a constraining gender habitus that they did not feel it as their own. For instance, Darío did not talk about certain topics with his family because he was afraid of being uncovered, “I could not talk about boy things, such as motorbikes, because that was suspicious”.

However, not all the participants opted to dramatize a particular gender. Despite their bodies were undesirably developing, some of them took advantage of a less rigid gender structure to perform boyish or girlish gender behaviours. For instance, Beltrán lived in a respectful family, as she recalled, “my parents gave me a lot of freedom that made me feel I could be a woman with short hair, without earrings, wearing boyish clothes...”. Other boys, like Alex, Marcos and Lucas, also adopted a body image more in consonance with their gender identities, wearing short hair and clothes socially defined as masculine. On the contrary, having a long hair or the absence of body hair were strategies adopted by some girls, as Carolina and Rebeca.

#### 4.3.4 Practices of gender frontierization: Transitioning processes

The transition process is another key moment of trans persons' lives that body frontiers become more visible. In this context, transition refers to body changes and the adoption of gender roles and behaviours that make possible to cross from one gender to a different one. Two trans scholars, Simmons and White (2014), affirm they express their gender through clothes, hair style and other behaviours which help them to present to others as they want others to perceive them. Literature has frequently used the notion of migration to refer to this process, describing it as a travel from one place to another where the body is the new home or country where trans persons are going to live (Fuentes & Devís, 2009). As in all customs, a group of inclusion-exclusion or admission-expulsion policies control this crossing over. In particular, Briones and Del Cairo (2015) use ‘practices of frontierization’ to refer to those devices that operate and mediate in the selection of who should stay in one side or the other side of the frontier, inside or outside a social group.

The elements that made possible to cross that gender frontier differ according to participants' gender. For some women breast implants constituted an essential element of their femininity. Marta also referred to feminine facial features, the widening of hips and changes of the skin as desired changes she wanted to get through hormonal treatment. In addition, Carolina created her femininity controlling her body hair because "erasing the hair of the body (...) meant to erase the masculinity", while Rebeca emphasised that to soft her voice was the most important in her transition process.

Otherwise trans men generally wanted to masculinise their bodies appearance through the elimination of feminine features as, for example, making their breast invisible through its elimination or concealment with compressive t-shirts or bandage. For Darío, mastectomy was of most importance for him because "the masculinisation of thorax is the most visible, what everybody sees easily is if you have breast or not. Then, the more visible it [breast] is, the more annoying for me". Also Lucas focused on breasts as the main hindrance for his masculinity because "you can have more or less hair in your head, have a beard or not, or to shave...it does not matter. But the breast is there, even if you do not want it and it bugs you".

Both trans men and trans women coincided to initiate their body projects working on the most visible body features that separated or brought them closer to other women or men. For this reason, the genitality was less important. Some participants, for instance Beltrán, even rejected genital reconstruction: "I do not want at all to get male genitals". Also Anabel said that "many people hate them [genitals] and cover them when they are having a shower but that is not my case, I perfectly live with them".

Certain body parts especially provide rich information about gender. As muscles, hips, breast, hair, and other body parts operate as micro-frontiers that affected the social recognition of their new status, many trans persons were upset by their appearance. Marcos commented that many trans men "are concern because they have child face, child voice or by not being physically strong". However, some of the participants did not feel their gender identities were threatened by these micro-frontiers. Marta commented, relieved that "I can pass unnoticed in front of people and I can do sport and pass as a girl".

However, there is also a subjective and particular component that mediate about which elements are considered as masculine or feminine. For instance,

Beltrán has never considered short hair as a sign of masculinity, whilst Carolina does. Similarly, some trans boys, as Marcos and Alex, wore neutral clothes before and after gender disclosure, whilst Darío completely changed his dressing style.

Despite these physical transformations help them to be recognised as men or women they also produce differences among trans community that separate them from other trans persons and constitute internal frontiers. Within trans collective, the level of body adequacy may regulate who is a 'true' trans. Beltrán explains that his identity has never been questioned "but in other trans worlds, if you are an ambiguous trans person then you are not a true trans".

#### 4.3.5 Living in a frontier zone

Multiple social conventions divide men and women creating frontiers among them. However, there are people who present especial characteristics that made them live between both sides of gender frontiers.

In general, trans persons live in these zones when their bodies are in the first moments of transition processes and their bodies are more ambiguous. Trans persons living in bordering zones, instead of enjoying the benefits that a double gender adscription may bring, are systematically considered outsiders as they are never recognised in and by any of two socially established gender categories. Rebeca explains with anguish the situation she lived, "the problem is that I am transitioning, I am neither one thing nor the other, that is my problem, because of that I have felt so sad". Additionally, not fitting into sex dualism relegates them to the unliveable field and a queerness position. In fact, Marta believed trans women would be always considered as fetish beings unless they underwent sexual reconstruction surgery. Being labelled as 'the queer person' hindered Anabel's ability to express her femininity as she would like to, "if I smarten up I am going to be more drag queen for the people. If now I am defined as the travesty one, then I am going to be a total drag queen".

Marta, Rebeca and Anabel's quotes reflect the power relationships that are produced between those who live in frontier zones with the rest of society. According to some scholars, what become frontier zones so interesting are precisely the dynamics of power and other aspects of social lives that happen there (Solís Domínguez & Martínez Lozano, 2012). However, not only domination and



subordination processes, but also resistance and counter-hegemony forces are invoked in frontier zones. Frontiers are movable, unstable and their limits are in constant (re)definition. Following Delgado Ruiz (1998), we can say that trans persons are colonised by others when they have to adopt an image, rules and behaviours that belongs to a social majority, but they also colonize others in social interactions when they happen to modify these practices.

In this sense, participants created images about femininity and masculinity that were subversive while they got to reduce and soften the thickness of gender frontiers. Some trans persons' voices questioned the current politics of identity designation that establish the genitivity as a defining element for gender identity. For Beltrán, the physicality of a person was not the most important feature to determine gender identity and Marta defended that "a person is not more a woman because has changed her sex than another one who decides not to do it". Similarly, Anabel claimed that "transsexual women are 100% women like cissexual women because what is important is the gender, not the genitals [of a person]" and Rebeca said that "human beings should be valued not by what they have among their legs, but on how they feel [regarding their gender identities]". Furthermore, some participants asked for the creation of new models of femininity and masculinity, rejecting to follow heteronormative models

I saw those men and I thought 'I do not want that'. And I started to know other trans men, a different world...and there are ways of being a man that differs from the model you see every day in the streets (...) I needed other male references (Beltrán)

I am myself and I have to create my own femininity, my own identity for myself (Anabel)

These statements claim not to erase, but to widen micro-frontiers. This is obvious, for instance, in the case of queer bodies, such as persons who self-identify as men who have remarkable breasts. In these cases, what is important is to enhance alternative regards towards trans bodies. Following this idea Alex stated that

Maybe people should stop trying to detect the [gender] identity of the other. I think that this is one of the basic problems we have to solve, to break with all that categorization (...) and to understand that we can jump from one category to another and nothing wrong happens.

Frontier zones are spaces of encounter and dialogue but also spaces of violence and tension (Solís Domínguez & Martínez Lozano, 2012). Trans persons, who live in these places, consciously or not, wanting or not, sometimes threat to destabilize the walls that separate one and other gender, what may bring about violence and other negative consequences for them. Anabel, for instance, felt her femininity was neglected and punished when she was at school, “when I started to transit, the more stupid girls used to say ‘do not think that now, because you have artificial hair and breast, you are like us, like a woman’”. These social critiques reduced her self-confidence and self-esteem:

I used to be very insecure and I saw myself in the mirror and I hated myself. I said ‘I am a dreadful, because I thought ‘oh, I am very ugly’, maybe due to the people that made me think that and I thought ‘I look ugly, I look hideous.

Anabel was not the unique who suffered social sanctions by subverting gender, Rebeca received taunts when she had less gender definition and her body image was less feminine. Alex also found beaches and swimming pools socially banned for him. In relation to these situations he explained:

Trans men generally do not go to beaches and swimming pools because is prohibited. Certain social rules are established and there is a gender code that you can’t transgress unless you want the third world to break out!

However, transitioning also provide benefits. Participants showed how they got social acceptance as their bodies responded to the gender binarism the society demands. At the time Rebeca was interviewed, she could walk safer through the streets and felt “more confident” and “relieved” than before. Furthermore, that new situation motivated her to get healthier feeding habits and do more exercise. Anabel’s self-esteem also improved as her body became more feminine and others started to notice it. She proudly claimed: “now people said to me: ‘I see you more beautiful, I look you so much beautiful, a better hair. You are so pretty...’”.

Despite these successful processes of gender transition, trans persons’ interviews were generally full of anguish experiences, isolation and suffering. Frontiers are presented in data as barriers that mostly have negative effects on participants’ lives. These insights make us wonder if a proliferation of new gender identities could erase barriers and negative effects associated to them. From 1990, postmodernist scholars have defended a world free of frontiers (Johnson et al.,

2011). Especially related to (trans)gender issues, this new world necessary implies the social acceptance of a sex and gender continuum which consider any gender expression as valid and right. This new model would make possible people could perform freely different gender styles with no fears and concerns, enhancing their physical development in unsuspected and multiple ways.



## CHAPTER 5. SPORT IN TRANSITION



## **CHAPTER 5. SPORT IN TRANSITION**

The body has a special relevance in sport. As changes in bodies produce changes in selves and interactions with others, transitioning processes can provide trans persons new ways of relationships with others and themselves. In particular, this research aims to know the sort of experiences they have in different transition stages and how they construct their gender identities in sport contexts. Additionally, we focus on how trans persons narratively construct their sport experiences. After analysing 43 interviews, we finally selected eight participants to achieve these objectives. In this chapter, we present some general characteristics of participants and detail the process of analysis. Then we expose the main results of this study.

### **5.1 Participants**

We selected eight participants by consensus of the research team attending four different criteria: a) gender diversity; b) age diversity; c) participation in sport and PE before and during their gender disclosure; and d) rich interview information. Firstly, we selected participants self-identified as female (3), male (2) and others self-defined differently to normative gender identities (3) (see Table 5). Particularly, Alex defined himself as a free person but with masculine tendencies. Daniel used the ‘trans boy’ label to remark the relevance of trans activism for him and for Iker, his transgender identity means to be in-between. Secondly, it was equally important to select people with heterogeneous range of age. By the time the participants were interviewed, they were from 15 to 42 years old. Thirdly, all participants should be involved in sport and PE before and during their gender disclosure at different levels (professional, hobby and or educational link). Finally, we selected those participants with a rich story from their interviews that allowed a narrative analysis.

**Table 5. Overview of interviewees' genders, age and information about their transition process**

<b>Name (pseudonym)</b>	<b>Gender identity assigned at birth</b>	<b>Self- defined gender identity</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Years of transitioning</b>	<b>Transition process</b>
Alex	Female	Trans or Free person	32	7 years	Hormonal treatment
Ana	Male	Woman	15	3 years	Hormonal treatment
Carlos	Female	Man	35	5 years	Hormonal treatment and mastectomy
Carolina	Male	Woman	42	19 years	Hormonal treatment, genital reconstruction surgery and mammoplasty
Daniel	Female	Trans Boy	33	7 years	Hormonal treatment
Iker	Female	Transqueer or transgender	28	6 years	Hormonal treatment
Llurena	Male	Woman	32	7 years	Hormonal treatment and genital reconstruction surgery
Raúl	Female	Man	24	3 years	Hormonal treatment

## 5.2 Analysis

A thematic analysis was carried out, identifying emergent themes and subthemes inductively. Reviewing this analysis, we realised that gender transition processes deeply marked how they lived sport and the sort of experiences they had within this context. In view of this first analysis, we decided to adopt a narrative approach to generate insights into embodied experiences of participants. According to Sparkes (1999), this sort of analysis is especially useful to understand how



participants impose order into their lives considering the stories people told to them and the stories they have learnt to tell about themselves.

Our use of narrative analysis aimed to provide access and insights on the ‘whats’ and ‘hows’ of the stories. The ‘whats’ refers to the content of a story. People make sense of their experiences through time and plot (Cunliffe et al., 2004). Narratives are composed by events that are organized, structured and made coherent (Smith & Sparkes, 2002). To access to the ‘whats’ and attending to our purpose, we take into consideration several levels of interpretation. In operational terms, Gubrium and Holstein (1998) call ‘analytical bracketing’ to the on-going and dialogical process that allows capturing and providing insights to the ‘whats’ and ‘hows’ of stories. These authors suggest that researchers need to take steps back and forward stories, while ‘bracketing’ the personal and social meanings that emerge and evolve along this process. The overlapping and contrasts produced throughout this process provides form and meaning to the intricate connections between personal stories and the construction of social life. Besides contemplating the ‘whats’ of their narrations, we considered necessary to analysis the ‘hows’ to a deeper understanding of their narratives. These ‘hows’ refer to the way the story is told or how participants structure their narratives.

Some scholars suggest there are various ways a structural analysis can be done (Phoenix et al., 2010). For us, structural analysis means to consider how trans persons sequence their experiences around gender transition phases. Because changes in bodies produce variations in selves and relationships, different grades of femininity and masculinity can entail different sort of experiences in sport facilities (Sparkes, 1999). In table 6 basic and organizing themes that emerge in this analytical process are presented.

The analysis detected three important moments of the gender transition process that structure the results collected in chapter 5.3. In order to corroborate the relevance of gender transition stages, the research team elaborated an additional table (see Table 7) where difficulties lived by trans persons in sport contexts are summarised.

Structural analysis was done classifying the sort of experiences they had according to these three transitioning phases (closet, beginning and consolidation) but, following Gergen (1996), we also lineally analysed the type of stories trans persons tell in order to achieve a high level of data interpretation. This analysis of

their storylines also allowed us to appreciate differences within trans persons' narratives.

**Table 6. From basic themes to organizing themes according to transition stages**

Basic themes	Organizing themes	Transition stages
1. Trans men and trans women seek gender congruence in sport	Sport preferences	In the closet
2. Transgender are flexible in relation to sport preferences		
3. Family support their preferences	Dissuading trans persons from playing 'inappropriate' sports	
4. Harassment and marginalization		
5. Discomfort and insecurity		
6. Lack of family support to play certain sport and obligation to do undesired ones	Body consciousness	
7. Body exposure	Passing	
8. Confrontations.		
9. Menstruation	No passing	Early beginning
10. Hyper-vigilance of their bodies		
11. Self-control and self-exclusion of certain sport spaces		
12. The necessity of being socially recognised.		
13. The use of certain gender technologies impede to do sport properly	The body as a passport	Body adequacy
14. National Identity Card. The last mechanism of control		
15. The constant threat	Last barriers	
16. The resistance of visible bodies.		
17. The last step. Sexual reconstruction surgery.		
18. The promise of a better life		
19. Competition or gender transition process. Leaving a dream		
20. Not enough male. Biological barriers		

**Table 7. Trans persons' difficulties according to transition stages**

		WOMEN			MEN			TRANSGENDER	
		Ana	Carolina	Llurena	Carlos	Raúl	Daniel	Alex	Iker
CLOSET	Sexual segregation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
	Discomfort and insecurity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Rejection and marginalization	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
BEGINNING	Identity Card	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Passing	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
	Body incongruence	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓
CONSOLIDATION	Competition					✓			
	Biological barriers				✓	✓			✓

### 5.3 Results and discussion

The experiences of trans persons are understood considering the body and the self in whom they are inscribed (Alexander, 2005). Therefore, results are organized in time according to transitioning process. The moment of transition marks the 'before' and 'during' gender disclosure. Before gender transition, we use the metaphor of the closet to illustrate how, to a different extent, trans people hide their gender identities either to themselves, to others, or both. In order to structure and provide sense to the implications of the moment of gender transition in sport (and *vice versa*), we have distinguished two stages along transitioning: the early beginning and the body adequacy. The first one refers to a gender disclosure period when first changes in their bodily appearance are undertaken. Generally, these bodies are characterised by being more androgynous than ever. The second one is characterised by a more sex/gender congruence. In order to be coherent with post-feminist theories we do not conceive the advanced stage of transition process as a post-transition phase. Actually, trans persons usually carry on with hormonal treatment and aesthetic practices along their whole lives. The continuous

performance of (their) gender helps us define this stage as a body adequacy phase (Butler, 1993; Soley-Beltrán, 2009).

### 5.3.1 In the closet

The stories trans persons told about their time in the closet were full of embodied experiences embedded by gender that showed the personal and social conflicts between the assigned and the lived gender identity. Similarly, or even more, those experiences referred to sport and PE.

In this stage, trans women and trans men stories showed more affinity towards sports and physical activities socially and culturally associated to their gender identities. Trans men told stories in which they were willing to practice 'male' sports from which they were excluded and refused to play other team sports considered too girlish. Trans women, coherently with their gender identities, rejected 'male' activities and desired 'girly' exercises in PE. In current western societies, where sport (and therefore sport-based PE) is the stronghold of masculinity and male identities, the indifference toward male sport activities seems a typical strategy from women (Messner, 2001; Soler, 2009; Travers, 2008). On the contrary, transqueer and activist interviewees were more flexible than trans men and trans women toward 'female' and 'male' manifestations. For instance, PE allowed Daniel both, exhibit aggressiveness but also engagement in dance, a remarkable activity he enjoyed.

In peer relationships, trans persons were involved in otherness processes (Britzman, 2005; Perez-Samaniego et al., 2016). They usually were perceived as outsiders by their mates. Ana, Carolina and Llurena suffered marginalization, bullying and rejection at school because they were the "queer ones". Taunts and insults, such as "tomboy", "hairy mary", were used to dissuade trans men and non-binary trans persons to embodied male features. As Daniel explained, "the more masculine I was, the more critiques I had". In a sport context, the very desire of playing 'inappropriate' sports, was cause for rejection. Paradoxically, Carlos also was embroiled in dynamics of exclusion even with girls who shared his love for football.

Trans persons constantly had to negotiate their access and participation in sport and PE, but frequently it was not possible in the closet, especially in

disadvantaged power relations. The obligation imposed by their parents to participate in undesired activities was oppressive for Alex, Raúl, Carlos and Llurena. In Alex's case, the reinforcement of female role by his mother caused him strong irritation:

I do not know, for me, all my exams, including judo and taekwondo and my competitions, my parents have never come to see me. Yet, when they forced me to do all that gymnastics shit and wear that leotard... my mum used to come saying 'I am so proud', as if they were supporting what you [I] hated, and you [I] felt humiliated by their support.

The resistance trans persons found in this sort of situations made them be more conscious of their bodies (Frank, 1991). They were also more sensitive about them in spaces where they were more exposed to others, such as locker rooms, swimming pools and beaches. Regarding beaches, Carolina expressed:

For many years I have had that gradual discomfort with my own body, then, everything that means to expose the body is uncomfortable and it comes a point that it was unbearable. Then, there have been years and years that I have denied or I tried as much as possible not to go to the beach, for example, because of the swimsuit. (...) I have to wear this swimsuit, and I have to go with naked torso and I do not have breast. It is a little shameful to be a woman and do not have breasts.

In these situations, they presented narratives of body-self disassociation from their corporealities (Frank, 1991; Smith & Sparkes, 2002) to the point these spaces and practices became inaccessible and problematic (Elling-Machartzki, 2017; Smith et al., 2012; Sykes, 2011). The relationship between self and body turned more dialectical when they felt their gender identities negated by their own bodies. For instance, his menstruating (and therefore, 'female') body discouraged Raúl from playing football in this stage:

I stayed at bed, crying. It hurts your soul [when he menstruates], it hurts your soul because defines you and remembers you every month you are a woman, even if your body thinks of a different way and your mind thinks of a different way

### 5.3.2 The early beginning

The coming out from the closet marks the start of the transition, the moment in which trans persons start a process of body (re)construction ‘coherent’ with their gender identities.

In this stage, hampering any possible detection as a trans person within sport contexts became the foremost concern for many participants. In many aspects, being recognised as a cisgender man or woman turned into a necessity. But trans persons, as embodied self, “cannot be disentangled from its corporeality” (Woodward, 2009, p. 1). Therefore, in order to reach this purpose and the consequent social acceptance, trans persons adopted ‘passing’ strategies (Soley-Beltrán, 2005). Passing refers to a body-self presentation that responds to gender normative ideals and become their trans gender invisible (Aizura, 2012; Guzmán & Platero, 2012; Hines, 2013). One of these strategies was the adoption of hyper surveillance attitudes over their bodies, focusing on certain undesired parts which might reveal former gender identities. For instance, Llurena was worried about the visibility of any part of her body that could stand out as masculine, during the beginning stage:

If you experience it [transition process], you are more sensitive because you control yourself a lot to avoid others can’t appreciate some things (...), Adam’s apple, foot size, height, constitution...

Similarly, Alex and Daniel were paranoiacs with the visibility of their breasts in gyms. The undesired mobility of this body threatened their new acquired masculine identity:

I have to do it [sportive exercise] with sportive bra, and my boobs come and go and then it is an uncomfortable issue, so the more invisible and hidden I am, the better.

To avoid this, Daniel wore breast binder in sport context. But it turned to be more an inconvenient than an advantage. It impeded Daniel to breathe properly when he exercised. Within the women side, Ana used stuffing in her bra and girdle to look more feminine, but these accessories did not allow her run easily in PE. In addition, she did not enjoy herself in this subject because wearing tracksuits made her too masculine and tights marked her ‘freak’, as she called her penis. Their narratives reflected how they initiated body changes and adopted body strategies to

maintain a narrative or a self as 'normal'. They maintained inclusive practices to get their own normalization (Planella & Pie, 2015), because to practise sport as women or men required equally feminine or masculine bodies.

Most of the narratives of these women and men referred to their own bodies as objects and maintained a narrative of them as deviant, with no possibility to find a space for themselves in a straight gendered society. Frequently, trans persons felt passing strategies were insufficient and some gendered spaces were banned for them. For instance, Carlos was fear by the possibility of being raped in changing rooms and Raúl removed himself from these spaces due to the unthinkable nature of his gendered bodies:

Imaging a body with hair (...) how are you going to go covered above and with a male body? That is, it will be noted right here, it's not conceived

Following Ekins and King's terminology (1999, 2006), some interviewees felt as outsiders in gendered spaces. Iker and Alex, as migrants in a new place, did not recognise the male behaviour code in male changing rooms. For this reason, they sometimes oscillated between male and female dressing rooms and sometimes rejected to use them.

Even if trans persons got the bodily passing and they recognised the gender codes, the national identity card (NIC) could uncover their trans identities. The updated document let trans persons to pass successfully in their daily lives (Soley-Beltrán, 2005), because it has the power to legally probe who is a man and who is a woman (Westbrook & Schilt, 2014). For trans persons, unfortunately, modifying the gender in the civil register is a long process that can take many years and not everybody can apply for. As a result, a huge amount of trans persons' NIC do not reflect their gender identities. In our study, all respondents defined NIC as one of the most important barriers in early beginning transition. For instance, Raúl could not sign up for a male football team due to the gender incongruence in his NIC, while Llurena was forced to falsify it to remove this obstacle.

However, trans participants did not adopt passing strategies in every time and contexts. Some of them lived openly as no cisgender persons, such as Daniel, who felt safe to freely show his naked torso in LGBT beaches alongside other trans friends. Transqueers and non-normative trans persons sometimes, with their

visibility, transformed their bodies into territories of subjective resistance (Guzmán & Platero, 2012; Planella & Pie, 2012), questioning the limits of gendered spaces.

### 5.3.3 Body adequacy

Multiple procedures to change and gendering the body are available to trans persons. Few of them include surgery. Particularly, trans men are frequently involved in hysterectomy and mastectomy operations meanwhile trans women usually go through breast augmentation and vaginoplasty surgeries. For many trans persons, sex reconstruction surgery (also called sex reassignment surgery) is considered the last stop to a long journey after the conquest of a real sexual body as woman or man. Prosser (1998) defines it as a rite of social incorporation that offers them the promise of an ultimate passing that take place in the surface of the body.

Hines (2007) affirms that bodily modifications may also go with higher levels of safety and emotional ease that revert in feeling more comfortable in sport contexts. For instance, Carolina, Llurena and Carlos undertook surgery to consolidate their identities. In their stories, these procedures appeared as having a crucial role in the ‘normalization’ of their social life and, specifically, their acceptance in sport contexts. Carolina restarted her sport activities after body transformation. Her “new body” and “the new use” of her body provided her with confidence to occupy formerly forbidden or feared spaces, as locker rooms.

At first I covered scantily, that was my passport, my body was my passport to be legitimized anyway, if someone could have any doubt so...

Similarly, Llurena felt really well sharing locker rooms with other women. In gyms, Carlos also recognised feeling better and more self-confident because he did not have to hide his female breasts any more. Those who did not undergo these procedures, as Daniel and Raúl, also believed in the benefits mastectomy could generate them in the future, especially the access to locker rooms and gyms. Even if transitioning began long time ago, trans persons situated the transition as a crucial point in this stage (Prosser, 1998). Narratives suggested that only those who adapted to the society could get the advantages the gender binarism system promises in sport and PE.

Despite appreciable benefits of transitioning, trans persons still find barriers in sport and PE, especially in competition arena. The prerequisites they have to



accomplish to participate in elite sport produces they have to choose among their sport career and their gender transition. As trans men cannot compete in sport women teams if they are consuming testosterone, many of them choose to withdraw from competition. As Lucas-Carr and Krane (2011, p. 539) state “there is no space for athletes who are transitioning to continue participating in competitive sport”. Sometimes they never reintroduced again in an elite sport and in so many cases, as time goes, they have lost their chances. Among the participants, Raúl was the only person affected by this regulation. He rejected to play in premier league in a female team because he wanted to start transition process. When I interviewed him, he wanted to compete in a male football team but he believed it could be difficult for him to return to the top of football.

The final factor that disengaged trans men to compete was the belief on male superiority in sport and PE. Raúl, Carlos and Iker, who professionally played in female football teams, interiorised these ideas. Iker assumed he had no possibility of success playing in a male team and Carlos had fear of not being good enough to play with men. This assumption turned impossible their complete integration on male teams, revealing the exclusive facet of competition in sports.

#### 5.3.4 Storylines

Making comparisons among participants’ sport trajectories and the events and experiences they narrate in the interviews, we detected a common target in their stories. What guides their actions is to get wellbeing and social inclusion in sport and PE. However, their narratives are full of obstacles and barriers they have to solve. Rejection, marginalization, isolation, and incomprehension are some of them. They are mostly tainted by anxiety, fear and discomfort about their bodies. The lack of a desire body results in a low self-esteem and bad self-perception. Actually, all trans persons’ stories revolve around the relationship they maintain between their own bodies and the glance of the others over their bodies, because their gendered bodies are constructed in relationship to them.

Following Gergen (1996) and their assumption that all stories are lineal, some type of stories are found in trans persons’ narratives. Moving from a two-dimensional and evaluative space, positive, negative and stability lines are drawn. When a person moves towards a successful end, the story line becomes, over time,

more positive. However, when a person moves towards the failure or disillusion, the story line turns to a negative direction. A stability line is produced in stories in which there are not positive or negative lines. While transitioning stages are happening in their narratives, most of the participants show experiences that are more positive. Especially women who are in a body adequacy stage reveal the triumph of being and occupying gendered sport and facilities.

Men, otherwise, present stability lines. Despite their achievements, they still find unsolved and latent problems in sport. Among them are the lower performance level of their biological bodies compared to cisgender men and the loss of sport opportunities due to the time invested in their coming out processes.

Participants who do not identify as men or women, however, show a combination of progressive and regressive stories, with passing and non-passing behaviours that conform and challenge gender dichotomies simultaneously. Otherwise, participants' attitude toward events that take place in sport and PA spaces changes according to transitioning stages. Before transitioning, they narrate their experiences as victim position, but after gender disclosure they adopt a more active role ruling their lives. For instance, when they develop different strategies to pass successfully or they measure the situations in order to avoid dangerous situations.

## CHAPTER 6. PHYSICAL EDUCATION



## **CHAPTER 6. PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

In PE, heteronormative culture establishes hegemonic and subordinate forms of masculinity and femininity that negatively affect non-normative body-selves, who may suffer abjection, rejection and violence. With the purpose of understanding how trans persons deal with heteronormativity and how they felt in their relationships with classmates, teachers and curricula, we analysed the experiences of 9 trans persons (5 self-defined as woman and 4 self-defined as man) in PE. In this chapter, we detail the process of analysis and present the main findings of this research.

### **6.1 Participants**

In study 3, the sample comprises 9 participants (5 trans women and 4 trans men) aged from 23 to 50 who were selected according to the following criteria: a) a balanced number of persons according to their self-defined gender; b) a wide range of age; c) persons educated in the Spanish educational system; and d) persons who presented rich information about PE in the quantitative first-phase. All informants were living in their desired gender when they participated in this research. To provide more comprehensive information on participants, some features of the sample are presented in table 8. All participants (in pseudonyms) were already self-conscious of their gender identity at secondary school, although none of them had socially disclosed their gender at that time. It is worth noting that they all refer to themselves either as ‘man’ or ‘woman’.

In order to contextualize participants’ experiences without exceeding the purposes of this study, we highlight some issues about the evolution of PE within the Spanish educational system. In the last five decades Spain has witnessed an important transition from a dictatorial regime to a democracy that had been in force for more than thirty-five years. During this period, six educational reforms affecting secondary education have been implemented.

**Table 8. Overview of interviewees' genders, age and information about their transition process**

<b>Name (pseudonym)</b>	<b>Gender identity assigned at birth</b>	<b>Self- defined gender identity</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Age of gender identity consciousness (self- expressed)</b>
Antonio	Female	Man	32	Since I remember
Carlos	Female	Man	35	3
Carolina	Male	Woman	40	6
Gloria	Male	Woman	26	8
Jorge	Female	Man	42	13
Llurena	Male	Woman	32	9
Lucas	Female	Man	23	Since ever
Rosa	Male	Woman	35	15
Verónica	Male	Woman	50	8

Changes, contradictions, progressions and regressions characterized this period in which education was, and still is, a cornerstone of political struggle (see Devís-Devís, 1997; Molina, Valenciano, & Úbeda-Colomer, 2016). In the frame of these reforms, from 1970 onwards Spanish authorities ruled mixed-sex for the entire educational system by the General Law of Education (Ley 14/1970), involving all curriculum subjects. This mandatory change entailed a common PE curriculum for every student that, in practice, resulted in the predominance of a hegemonic masculine curriculum, with PE teachers that tended to segregate students by gender in activities and assessments (Pérez-Samaniego & Santamaría-García, 2013; Vázquez, Fernández, Ferro, Learreta, & Viejo, 2000).

## **6.2 Analysis**

At a preliminary stage, researchers repeatedly read data towards immersion, followed by a systematic reading that aimed for searching similarities and differences within the transcribed interviews.

**Table 9. Study 3. From basic themes to global themes**

<b>Themes as basic themes</b>	<b>Organizing themes</b>	<b>Global themes</b>
1. Dilemmas. Living in a gender binary PE	In the middle of activities, spaces and groups	Hindering desired gender
2. Playing with undesired gender groups.		
3. Trans students' demands are ignored in PE	Heteronormativity and hegemonic masculinity in PE	
3. Feeling gender pressure from family and school.		
5. Sport-based PE.		
7. Teachers' condescension toward girls		
8. Rejection and teasing by performing non-heteronormative behaviours		
9. Trans girls' apathy, frustration and lack of motivation	Attitude towards PE	Preferences, aversions and opportunities
10. PE shape bodies. Avoiding certain activities	Male identity and sport performance	
11. PE is trans boys' favourite subject	Counter-hegemonic practices	
12. Sport performance and social acceptance		
13. Constructing masculinity in PE		
14. Activities of corporal expression favour flexible gender expression	Relation with classmates	Confronting transgression
15. Longed activities. Towards the feminization of PE		
16. Isolation	Relation with PE teachers	
17. Harassment and social sanctions		
18. Schoolmates do not choose trans students to form sport teams	Body exposition	Intimacy struggles
19. Teachers' lack of control over harassment situations		
20. Teachers also sanction trans students	Changing rooms	
21. Naked bodies produces discomfort		
22. Undressing in front of others		
23. Displeasure towards one's own body		
24. A problematic gendered spaces		
25. Coping strategies to avoid dressing and undressing with witness		

Considering the volume of data, this process was assisted by the use of Nudist Vivo v.10, which helped to store, organize, categorize, retrieve and export data more efficiently. The analysis then focused on identifying thematic categories through patterns emerging from the data, thereafter making tentative connections with literature.

Along this process, heteronormative contexts, practices and beliefs progressively became recognizable as a core background of most participants' experiences in PE. Thus, heteronormativity functioned as a context or backdrop against which trans persons articulated their experiences. Having this idea located in data, literature on heteronormativity was then retrieved and used as a theoretical frame for the analysis and the insights provided to the emerging categories and themes. Thematic categories were then refined and linked to the specialized literature, emphasising relations between trans persons' experiences and heteronormative contexts and practices, finally grouping them into themes (see Table 9 in prior page).

The use of heteronormativity as a theoretical frame for thematic categorization and interpretation of results was grounded in the specific characteristics of the collected data. In doing so, we pretend to locate participants' voices at the centre of our analysis and interpretation in order to specifically highlight trans persons' experiences in heteronormative PE contexts.

## **6.3 Results and discussion**

Results are presented and discussed according to the final themes derived from the analysis: a) hindering desired gender; b) preferences, aversions and opportunities; c) confronting transgression; and d) intimacy struggles.

### **6.3.1 Hindering desired gender**

As stated earlier, during their school days all participants in our study were certain about their gender identities, although none of them had initiated their transition process yet. Consequently, any gender segregated practice put them on the spot to identify their assigned or their desired gender. In PE, this became evident when they felt in "the middle" of activities, spaces and, especially, "in the



middle” between girl and boy groups. In daily practices, this position affected relationships with their classmates. Sometimes they remained with the gender group they did not identify with, while others made attempts to melt with the gender group they identified with.

Although all participants had mixed-sex PE, gender segregation was a common practice in their classes. Moreover, through their gaze, PE was the ultimate realm of gender segregation at school, as Jorge recalled:

At school, we always were segregated... [...] it was a mixed school but we always were separated, and in PE... boys were sent to play football and girls were sent to play catch or skipping rope

Whilst participants assumed gender segregation as a natural practice in PE, they complained about the fact that they could not perform gender segregated activities with their desired gender group. For instance, Lucas found it absurd being forced to practise *girlish* activities, such as dance, he felt not bound to do:

There was a [female] teacher, that [...] taught dancing, *batukas* [...] And I [was] in a foul mood ... I thought, 'what the hell...? I mean, why are you separating me from boys who are going to do football, basketball, badminton, tennis... whatever they want, while girls have to be here doing a fucking dance that doesn't matter to anyone?

Male and female PE teachers, indistinctively, persistently segregated students according to activities. Most times, teachers ignored girls' groups or assigned them activities or sports considered minor within Spanish physical culture, implicitly suggesting that PE was a realm of boys, while girls were an 'added' group. Carlos remembered one of his teachers' sentences: "Girls, go to basketball and you may be happy with it!". Jorge also evoked how some teachers justified the segregation in their lessons on behalf of boys' superiority: "You girls cannot go with boys because you are in another [lower] level of performance". Lucas, for instance, expressed how negatively his teacher reacted when he expressed his desire to participate in the men's team and not in females' one: "It is irrelevant. You have to be here because I tell you so, and that's all". In these cases, teachers acted as a pedagogical dispositive of normalization and a political control of students' bodies and their socially accepted gender roles, as Alegre (2015) indicates in another school context.

Nevertheless, not only did teachers build gender segregation in PE lessons, but classmates did too. For instance, when teachers established some resting time from the main curricular content and students were free to choose activities, they also followed similar criteria, as Antonio and Carlos recalled:

There were times when the teacher said, ‘free time’, and free time always meant girls jumping rope or playing volleyball, and boys playing football. (Antonio).

When I played a free choice activity, girls played basketball and boys played football (Carlos).

Within this frame of assumed gender segregation in mixed-sex PE lessons, the most privileged sport-based activities were considered male activities. This model favours the development of supposedly male-related qualities (strength, speed or stamina) compared to female-related ones (flexibility, smoothness or aesthetic sensibility), supporting certain forms of hegemonic masculinity that ignore girls and bolsters exclusion and rejection of boys performing alternative masculinities (Tischler & McCaughy, 2011). This is the situation most trans girls of this study experienced when they were read as boys by others at school. For instance, Gloria experienced teasing and felt ignored by her classmates: “I remember some people came to tease me for not doing what everybody did”. Particularly some classmates picked on her at skipping exercises as they consider ‘girlish’ the way she performed them.

However, masculinities are not only built in PE by focusing on men and the relationships between them. The position that girls adopt in relation to boys also affect the way boys construct their own masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). This is the case of trans boys, seen or read as girls at school, whose high performances threatened the ‘natural’ gender order and the hegemonic masculinity in PE. For instance, classmates came down on Carlos:

I felt rejected by my classmates because I beat everybody at that time [... and] there was a tremendous sense of rejection toward me.

Carlos also felt the pressure from his family to conform to hegemonic gender roles in PE. His mother went to great efforts to withdraw her daughter from football. As he stated, “all my mother wanted was to prevent me from becoming a tomboy”, because masculinity was something reserved only for boys.

### 6.3.2 Preferences, aversions and opportunities

PE constituted a gendered scenario to perform preferences, dislikes and embodied attitudes toward certain practices. With this regard, heteronormative PE contexts often carried negative and demotivating experiences especially for trans girls, insofar as a mixed-sex environment did not facilitate trans girls' participation within a male orientated PE curriculum. For instance, Gloria, Llurena and Carolina found most exercises restrictive according to their low physical condition and skills. In the following quotations, Verónica and Rosa express the fear and frustration they experienced for similar reasons:

I didn't know how to vault. It really scared me [...]. The teacher once told me: 'Come on, come on, you have to try it', but I couldn't do it and I felt frustrated [...] (Verónica)

I didn't do them [activities] due to the fear I felt...I don't know...it was something...I didn't feel capable to do them. (...) They tried to oblige me [to play football] but I've always refused to do it... (Rosa)

Sometimes preferences were not linked to activities but to trans persons' corporealities since their desired gender was also inscribed in postures, gestures and motions. Those embodied preferences were purposely performed, as stated by Verónica in the following quotation:

I did not want to do those tough things... just to avoid being seen as a rough guy ...and I tried to do more feminine things (...) I did it because I didn't want to get strong muscles.

However, for trans boys, activities and sport performances were at the core of their preferences, to the extent of considering PE as their favourite subject. Jorge and Carlos explain it in this way:

I've always felt comfortable doing sport [in PE] because I was in my element and I liked what I was doing, I was at ease [...]. I participated in everything, races, relaxation sessions... (Jorge)

It was my favourite [subject], it was my favourite one (...) I've always beat everybody. I don't mean to brag about myself, but there was only one other guy who ran faster than me (Carlos)

Antonio particularly enjoyed PE when he played football because his classmates accepted him as one of them: "I played football fucking well, that's why

they [classmates] respected me and wanted me on their team”. Somehow, playing and being skilled in this socially considered a male sport gave trans boys opportunities to demonstrate they were, as indicated by Califia (2015), not girls, (re)creating and marking the difference between them and the girls.

Although this does not apply to all participants, the contrast between trans girls’ negative experiences and trans boys’ positive experiences reflect how the triad built by sports, hegemonic masculinity and high performance in PE place trans persons within a heteronormative PE, favouring trans boys’ enjoyment of the subject while trans girls, by contrast, construct their femininity in unsatisfactory terms. When girls and boys are considered as homogeneous groups, heteronormative provide a neat and clear framework. Nevertheless, PE, especially mixed-sex classes, represents a much more complex context since inequalities are observed within each one of the gender groups. For instance, some less skilled or less fit boys who are unable to perform heteronormative masculinities may also be discriminated against, while skilled and athletic girls could be well accepted (see Fagrell, Larsson, & Redelius, 2012; Wellard, 2002). In such contexts, trans students, compared with their cisgender counterparts, often occupy a crossed linked or intermediate position that either allows or hinders their opportunities to take advantage of a heteronormative PE.

Although dominant sport-based PE perpetuated heteronormativity, some curricular activities, particularly non-sportive ones, brought some opportunities for trans people to perform counterhegemonic practices in PE. In fact, some participants recalled some aesthetic and dance activities to fulfil their gender preferences and challenge binary and heterosexual practices meanwhile. Lucas, for instance, explained how dance lessons allowed him to live the gender role he identified with:

When we practised dance... [and] there were not enough boys... (laugh)  
[...] I always said: ‘me! me!’. I got dressed as a boy, it didn’t matter. I had no problem dressing as a boy.

Additionally, more ‘girly’ exercises can be transgressive if they allow active participation of students considered passive in PE (Soler, 2009). Especially trans women, like Verónica and Carolina, requested these sorts of activities. Carolina, in particular, preferred to practice ballet because of its symbolic meaning of idealized femininity:

In my head there are many idealizations, for example when you see girls dancing ballet in films (...) In my head they [ballet lessons] represent something but if I'm realistic maybe I would not have liked them (...). For me, dancing ballet is a symbol, not a reality.

In some way, dance allowed trans women to perform their desired gender through the activities such as ballet in the case of Carolina. This shows the potential that certain activities, such as dance, offer to counteract heteronormative order, making it possible the identification with diverse gender identities (Larsson, Quennerstedt, & Öhman, 2014).

### 6.3.3 Confronting transgression

Most of the trans persons interviewed recalled different situations in which they eventually transgressed gender norms at school. For instance, Gloria tricked students to hide her desire to become a girl: "I have always got to pass apparently like a normal boy". Although sometimes trans participants pretended to be 'normal' many others they transgressed the gender norms they were assigned at birth. Following Butler (1990), in such situations they became unintelligible genders by others, thus becoming likely targets for violence. In fact, all trans participants in this study explained that their acts of transgression in PE brought them negative consequences. Most of them were marginalized for not fitting the socially accepted gender rules and, therefore, they experienced aloofness, isolation and loneliness, as demonstrated in the following quotes:

I felt I did not belong to the group and the group did not see me as part of them. (Carolina)

I felt alone ... in subjects like PE or activities where groups needed to be formed... [and I thought] 'Shit, and now what do I do?' I was off. (Lucas)

At the end you are in the middle and you are completely alone. And you think you are isolated in the universe. (Antonio)

Some other participants were also insulted, stigmatized and bullied when they tried to place themselves on 'the opposite side' (Toomey et al., 2012). When Carlos played football, his classmates told him, "look at the butch lesbian". And when Antonio attended PE swimming lessons shirtless they yelled at him: "where do you

go topless if you are a girl...”. According to Symons et al. (2010), these situations are more common in informal environments and open spaces, like PE and sport fields. In fact, participants also referred to discrimination and harassment situations when “the teacher was not in full control”:

In my case, I haven’t got such good memories of PE classes. It wasn’t because of sport, since I did practise it, but rather because of situations in which certain kids were teasing me, and finally I didn’t want to do it. (Gloria)

Girls discriminated against me more than boys because my behaviour was strongly masculine. They told me things like ‘girls do not spit’ or that I was rather aggressive [...] I felt alone. (Antonio)

They would hit me at the break time [...] I was apparently guilty of everything because it was me who wanted to play football, and of course, [...] I was ‘the only girl’ that wanted to play football. (Carlos)

Teachers also reinforced these experiences of isolation and aloofness by unquestionably supporting binary sex/gender system in their classes, especially in some potentially transgressive circumstances. For instance, this was the case when Jorge expressed his desire to be assessed with the boys in the fitness lessons and his teacher refused his request:

They examine and value you like a woman and I, at least, did not consider myself a woman, I was a man...Then, I said ‘I want to be assessed like that [like the boys] but he replied, ‘here are the men and there are the women and the exams are different’.

As Ferfolja (2007) states, “heteronormative and heterosexist discourses are pervasive, reinforced through both overt and covert practices of invisibility and silencing” (p. 147). In heteronormative PE contexts, teachers’ systematic denial of trans persons’ demands reinforced their feelings of isolation. Moreover, teachers’ indifference and apathy somehow supported the violence exerted towards trans students, as in the case of Carlos when he had been harshly beaten by his schoolmates and “teachers kept staring at us and did nothing [to stop them] and they washed their hands of it”.

#### 6.3.4 Intimacy struggles

The analysis revealed how crucial body intimacy was for participants. As Antonio emphasizes, “anything involving nudity for trans people, anything involving nudity... is a problem”. Intimacy was constructed in the relations they maintained with their naked bodies, but also with others’ bodies equally naked. As Shilling (1991) argues, “bodies are not just constructed by social relationships, they also enter into the construction of these relationships” (p.664). In fact, disturbing feelings and situations often sprang up from the gaze of their bodies and other classmates’ bodies in changing rooms. For example, Carolina expressed how embarrassed she felt watching boys’ naked bodies, and undressing in front of them: “Undressing in front of lots of boys was annoying and to watch them naked made me feel uncomfortable”. As Fagrell et al. (2012) state, the public exposure of one’s body and the social reaction towards it are key issues in understanding how social processes of body regulation are produced. Therefore, it is important to consider that body exposure and corporal control at schools may affect trans students’ self-esteem and their concept of body (Vidiella, Herraiz, Hernández, & Sancho, 2010). In the case of trans students body exposure and control was even mediated by sexual insinuations in the changing rooms. Verónica described how some of her male classmates insinuated to her and she avoided getting naked when changing her clothes:

Some of them approached me; they sat down by my side. I never fully undressed myself, I didn’t take off the short pants, and I was ashamed. I used to change my t-shirt or whatever else and quickly leave the changing-room.

Indeed, regarding intimacy at schools, changing rooms are by far the most problematic space. The way trans students perceived and valued themselves and their bodies affected their feelings and reactions towards changing rooms: the worse trans participants felt about their bodies, the more uneasy they felt in those facilities. Particularly, they often perceived their bodies as wrong entities mismatched with their gender feelings, as Lucas claimed:

Locker rooms... were horrible (...) because everything happened when your body started to change more, and one thinks, ‘God, how awful!’... If

you already feel terrible because you deeply hate your body, it gets worse with people around you. It was a huge drama!

Most participants concurred to having lived embarrassing and stressful moments in changing rooms, showing the discomfort and conflict caused by the use of these segregated spaces to people whose gender identities do not correspond with the sex assigned at birth (Puche et al., 2013). Not surprisingly, participants tried to avoid making use of them. Jorge never entered a changing room. He always left without showering, making up excuses such as lack of toilet bag. Llurena also tried to avoid showering although it meant skipping the PE class, or tried to avoid sweating altogether:

Another reason to not try very hard! If I did not sweat, I did not have to shower, so why should I sweat?

Talking about strategies to deal with intimacy struggles, none of the participants made use of changing rooms reserved for the gender identity they identified with. For instance, when asked about his eventual preference of using a male changing room at school, Antonio mentioned: “I couldn’t use the boys’ one, can you imagine...What was I supposed to do there?” Most participants developed strategies to dress and undress. Lucas explained that his main goal was to change his clothes without witnesses:

‘No matter if I had to stay until the everybody was gone and be the last one... and miss the [PE] lesson. I didn’t mind!’

Llurena said she only used these facilities when nobody else was using them and Carolina delayed going in to get the intimacy she needed. Other participants opted to use toilets instead of changing rooms because these were more private spaces, as Lucas indicated in the following quote:

At least there was a toilet there, typical. You could lock up and get changed there. I had no choice. (Lucas)

Participants were extremely concerned with intimacy, built around the naked body and the gaze of their own bodies and classmates’ bodies. In fact, changing rooms were considered the most problematic gender segregated space by the participants, as stated by others (Sykes, 2011).



## CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSIONS



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At the beginning of this document we outlined the main purpose of this doctoral thesis which is to explore trans persons' experiences in different socio-relational contexts such as daily life, sport and educational contexts. Once the research has been developed we indicate the conclusions achieved, but organized by the objectives established in each of the three studies which comprise this dissertation.

### 7.1 Study 1: Body frontiers

Five objectives were set in relation to the notion of body frontiers:

**Objective 1.** To explore trans persons' body realities through the 'frontiers' metaphor.

Body frontiers are useful to recognise and understand the (dis)identification trans participants feel towards themselves and others' bodies. Many embodied gender frontiers hamper social recognition of trans persons' identities. As gender frontiers are settled on the materiality of bodies, transition process is required to erase, smooth or cross those frontiers.

**Objective 2.** To know what sort of gender frontiers affect trans persons' lives.

Puberty, inside/outside and individual/society emerged as relevant frontiers in the (re)construction of trans persons' identities. Puberty marks a before and after in the relationships participants have with their own bodies. Trans persons feel a physical discomfort that substantially grows with puberty due to the body changes that characterise this period. Internal/external frontier helps to understand the way they feel sex/gender contradiction. Trans persons also perceive a strong difference between the gender identity they identify with and the gender identity people judge in their interactions. This individual/society frontier is observed before starting

1 transition process, when their bodies are perceived as ambiguous or do not respond  
2 to femininity and masculinity stereotypes.

3  
4 **Objective 3.** To understand how the process of frontierization is produced and  
5 which elements take part in their constitution

6  
7 Gender frontiers are based on particular body features (hair, muscles, breasts,  
8 hips, voice tone etc.) that turn into micro-frontiers. These micro-frontiers have to  
9 reach a minimum heteronormative threshold for people to be socially recognised as  
10 women or men. Many trans persons modify their bodies in order to match their  
11 bodies with the specific social threshold set by and in micro-frontiers. Despite the  
12 existence of a general social consensus about which body elements or micro-  
13 frontiers define a woman or a man's body, there are subjective and particular ways  
14 of interpreting gender norms and, therefore, trans persons differ in their ways of  
15 constructing their femininity and masculinity. These micro-frontiers are constantly  
16 redefined and redrawn in interactions. Many participants (re)produce them but  
17 others introduce challenging gender practices that blur frontiers or make them more  
18 flexible.

19  
20 **Objective 4.** To analyse the consequences of living in liminal position or border  
21 zones.

22  
23 Living in liminal positions entails sanctions, isolation and low self-esteem for  
24 many participants who do not prefer to remain in 'ambiguity'. On the contrary,  
25 some participants consider border zones as suitable space to live, creating their  
26 gender identities according to non-heteronormative ideals and giving them a  
27 transformative sense.

28  
29 **Objective 5.** To know the different ways trans persons have to deal with body  
30 frontiers.

31  
32 Body frontiers experiences are particularly problematic during gender  
33 transition processes. Before transitioning, most participants adapted to gender rules  
34 adopting undesired roles and behaviours in order to get social acceptance. Once

1 trans persons disclose their gender identities they generally look for accomplishing  
2 with gender binarism. In doing so, they mitigate negative effects of being out of  
3 heteronormativity and benefit of belonging to one of the dominant binary genders.  
4 Participants manage to counteract biomedical discourses and make possible the  
5 resistance to gender binarism, as well as the promotion of non-normative bodies  
6 and the des-materialization of male and female bodies.

## 7.2 Study 2: Sport in transition

7  
8  
9  
10 Three objectives were set in relation to sport in transition:

11  
12 **Objective 6.** To know how trans persons narratively construct their own sport  
13 experiences.

14  
15 Trans persons seek gender coherence in their stories by structuring their  
16 experiences around transitioning. They tell stories about sport before transitioning  
17 which are coherent with their gender and silence stories which are congruent with  
18 their gender assigned at birth. Pre-transitioning sport stories which are congruent  
19 with their desired gender contribute to creating a sense of identity stability.  
20 Negative sport experiences are more often told in pre-transitioning stories, while  
21 positive experiences are predominant in later transitioning moments.

22  
23 **Objective 7.** To distinguish the sort of sport experiences trans persons have in  
24 different phases of transitioning process.

25  
26 Trans persons' narratives in sport mention many obstacles and barriers (such  
27 as rejection, marginalization, isolation and incomprehension) they have to  
28 overcome in order to participate in sport. Before disclosing their gender identities,  
29 some trans persons are obliged by their parents to participate in undesired sport  
30 activities. They are also embroiled in dynamics of exclusion because their sports  
31 participation is considered inappropriate for them. During transitioning, trans  
32 persons make efforts to occupy gendered sport spaces and are recognised as  
33 women or men in all the spheres of their lives. They adopt several strategies to

1 make (in)visible certain body parts or their trans identities, although this affected  
2 their sport participation. Trans persons' narratives show how they gain full access  
3 to sport when they are in advanced stages of transitioning or they are perceived as  
4 cisgender women or men. In these stages, they are more self-confident and feel  
5 their gender identities are better recognised by other women and men in sport  
6 spaces and activities they share with.

7

8 **Objective 8.** To analyse the way trans persons construct their gender identities  
9 through sport and physical activity.

10

11 People often negate trans persons' gender identities when they are in previous  
12 or initial phases of gender transition. When their bodies are exposed to others, they  
13 become more conscious of their 'gender incongruence'. They also feel their gender  
14 identities negated when they cannot access to certain gendered sport and physical  
15 activities or when other people confront them by their non-normative behaviour. In  
16 more advanced stages of gender transition, their gender identities are reinforced  
17 when they get their bodies not to stand out in certain gendered spaces and  
18 practices.

19

### 20 **7.3 Study 3: Physical education**

21

22 Three objectives were set in relation to trans persons' experiences in PE:

23

24 **Objective 9.** To understand how trans persons deal with gendered spaces and  
25 activities in heteronormative PE contexts.

26

27 Many trans persons feel in the middle of activities and girl and boy groups in  
28 PE. When they try to participate in PE lessons, their actions are stifled and their  
29 desires to perform different activities are ignored. Hegemonic masculinity enacts as  
30 a complex cultural control mechanism mediating trans persons' experiences. Trans  
31 girls, read as boys in their schooling period, are considered not to be male 'enough'  
32 while trans boys are accused of being 'too' male to be girls. Despite some trans  
33 boys find opportunities to perform certain masculinities in a male orientated PE

1 curriculum, trans girls do not have opportunities to construct their femininity.  
2 Those trans persons who do not perform gender conforming practices are  
3 abjectified in PE lessons. Changing rooms are the most problematic sex segregated  
4 spaces for participants in this period.

5  
6 **Objective 10.** To know how trans persons feel in their relationships with PE  
7 classmates and teachers.

8  
9 Trans persons feel excluded and rejected in PE in part because of teachers and  
10 classmates' reproduction of the heteronormative system. Isolation, loneliness and  
11 harassment are the price most trans students have to pay for not fitting into  
12 heteronormative gender norms. Informal environments and open spaces favoured  
13 episodes of harassment. Due to the strong displeasure they feel towards their  
14 bodies, nudity is a particularly annoying problem for them.

15  
16 **Objective 11.** To analyse the possibilities and restrictions that PE offers to trans  
17 students to develop their gender identities.

18  
19 Trans students are constantly denied and contested by others throughout  
20 gendered practices and spaces. In particular, teachers repeatedly (re)create a  
21 heteronormative PE, grouping students by sex and developing different activities  
22 for boys and girls. In such context, the possibilities to perform gender is reduced to  
23 the ability or inability to reproduce hegemonic gendered performances. Therefore,  
24 trans persons are located as extraneous human beings in relation to their cisgender  
25 schoolmates. However, some sports and activities (such as dance and other  
26 aesthetic activities) give opportunities to destabilize heteronormativity through  
27 non-heterosexual or non-binary practices.





## CAPÍTULO 7. CONCLUSIONES



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En este capítulo son presentadas las conclusiones en relación con los objetivos planteados para cada estudio

### 7.1 Estudio 1: Fronteras corporales

Se establecieron cinco objetivos en relación con la noción de fronteras corporales:

**Objetivo 1.** Explorar las realidades corporales de las personas trans a través de la metáfora de fronteras.

Las fronteras corporales son útiles para reconocer y entender la (des)identificación que lxs participantes sienten hacia sí mismos y otros cuerpos. Muchas fronteras de género corporeizadas impiden lograr el reconocimiento social de las identidades de las personas trans. En tanto que las fronteras de género se asientan sobre la materialidad de los cuerpos, se requiere un proceso de transición para borrar, difuminar o cruzar esas fronteras.

**Objetivo 2.** Saber qué tipo de fronteras de género afectan a la vida de las personas trans.

Fronteras relevantes en la (re)construcción de las identidades de personas trans son la pubertad, la frontera dentro/fuera e individuo/sociedad. La pubertad marca un antes y un después en las relaciones que lxs participantes tienen con sus propios cuerpos. Las personas trans sienten una molestia física que crece sustancialmente con la pubertad debido a los cambios corporales que caracterizan este período. La frontera interna/externa ayuda a entender como lxs participantes sienten la contradicción sexo/género. Las personas trans también perciben una fuerte diferencia entre la identidad de género con la que se identifican y la identidad de género que las personas juzgan en interacción. Esta frontera individuo/sociedad se

observa antes de iniciar el proceso de transición, cuando sus cuerpos son percibidos como 'ambiguos' o no responden a los estereotipos de feminidad y masculinidad.

**Objetivo 3.** Comprender cómo se produce el proceso de frontera y qué elementos participan en su constitución.

Las fronteras de género se basan en características particulares del cuerpo (pelo, músculos, senos, caderas, tono de voz, etc.) que se convierten en micro-fronteras. Estas micro-fronteras tienen que alcanzar un umbral heteronormativo mínimo para que las personas sean socialmente reconocidas como mujeres u hombres. Muchas personas trans modifican sus cuerpos para adaptarse al específico umbral social que está marcado por y en las micro-fronteras. A pesar de la existencia de un consenso social general sobre qué elementos corporales o micro-fronteras definen el cuerpo de una mujer o un hombre, hay formas subjetivas y particulares de interpretar las normas de género y, por lo tanto, las personas trans difieren en su forma real de construir su feminidad y masculinidad. Estas micro-fronteras son constantemente redefinidas y rediseñadas en interacciones. Muchxs participantes las (re)producen, pero otros introducen prácticas de género desafiantes que difuminan las fronteras o las hacen más flexibles.

**Objetivo 4.** Analizar las consecuencias de vivir en situación limítrofe o zonas fronterizas.

Vivir en zonas fronterizas implica sanciones, aislamiento y baja autoestima para muchxs participantes, quienes prefieren no permanecer en la 'ambigüedad'. Por el contrario, algunxs participantes consideran las zonas fronterizas como un espacio adecuado para vivir, creando sus identidades de género de acuerdo con los ideales no heteronormativos y dándoles un sentido transformador.

**Objetivo 5.** Conocer las diferentes formas en que las personas trans lidian con las fronteras corporales.

La experiencia de las fronteras corporales es particularmente problemática en los procesos de transición de género. Antes de la transición, la mayoría de lxs

participantes se adaptaron a las normas de género adoptando roles y comportamientos no deseados para lograr la aceptación social. Una vez que las personas trans revelan sus identidades de género, por lo general, buscan cumplir con el binarismo de género. Con ello, las personas trans mitigan los efectos negativos de estar fuera de la heteronormatividad y se benefician de pertenecer a uno de los dos géneros dominantes. Lxs participantes logran contrarrestar los discursos biomédicos y hacen posible la resistencia al binarismo de género, así como la promoción de cuerpos no normativos y la desmaterialización de los cuerpos masculino y femenino.

## **7.2 Estudio 2: Deporte en transición**

Se establecieron tres objetivos en relación con el deporte en transición:

**Objetivo 6.** Saber cómo las personas trans construyen narrativamente sus propias experiencias deportivas.

Las personas trans persiguen la coherencia de género en sus historias estructurando sus experiencias en torno a la transición. Ellxs cuentan historias sobre el deporte antes de transitar que son coherentes con el género con el que se identifican y silencian aquellas historias que son congruentes con sus géneros asignados al nacer. Estas historias deportivas sobre el periodo previo a la transición que son coherentes con sus identidades de género contribuyen a crear un sentido de estabilidad identitaria. Las experiencias deportivas negativas a menudo son contadas en las historias sobre su periodo previo a la transición mientras que las positivas predominan en etapas más avanzadas del proceso de transición.

**Objetivo 7.** Distinguir el tipo de experiencias deportivas que las personas trans tienen en diferentes fases del proceso de transición.

Las narrativas de las personas trans en el deporte mencionan muchos obstáculos y barreras (como el rechazo, la marginación, el aislamiento y la incompreensión) que tienen que resolver para participar en el deporte. Cuando aún

no han revelado sus identidades de género, algunas personas trans son obligadas por sus familias a participar en actividades deportivas no deseadas. También están envueltas en dinámicas de exclusión debido a su deseo de practicar deportes considerados inapropiados para ellxs. Durante la transición, las personas trans hacen esfuerzos por ocupar espacios deportivos generizados y ser reconocidas como mujeres o hombres en todas las esferas de sus vidas. Ellxs adoptan estrategias para hacer invisible ciertas partes corporales de sus identidades ‘trans’, aunque esto afecta su participación deportiva

Las narrativas de las personas trans muestran como ellxs ganan pleno acceso al deporte cuando están en etapas avanzadas de la transición o son percibidas como mujeres u hombres cisgénero. En estas etapas, las personas trans tienen más confianza en sí mismas y sienten que sus identidades de género son reconocidas mejor por otras mujeres y hombres con lxs que comparten espacios deportivos y actividades.

**Objetivo 8.** Analizar la forma en que las personas trans construyen sus identidades de género a través del deporte y la actividad física y cómo son construidas por éstas.

Las personas a menudo niegan las identidades de género de las personas trans en fases anteriores o iniciales de la transición de género. Cuando sus cuerpos están expuestos a otrxs, se vuelven más conscientes de su ‘incongruencia de género’. También sienten negadas sus identidades de género cuando no pueden acceder a ciertas actividades deportivas y físicas generizadas o cuando otras personas se enfrentan a ellas por su comportamiento no normativo. En una etapa más avanzada de la transición de género, sus identidades de género son reforzadas cuando consiguen que sus cuerpos no destaquen en determinados espacios y prácticas de género.

### 7.3 Estudio 3: Educación física

Se establecieron tres objetivos en relación con las experiencias de las personas trans en EF:

**Objetivo 9.** Entender cómo las personas trans afrontan espacios y actividades generizadas en contextos heteronormativos de EF.

Muchas personas trans se sienten en medio de actividades y grupos de niñas y niños en EF. Cuando intentan participar en las clases de educación física, sus acciones son reprimidas y sus deseos de realizar diferentes actividades son ignorados.

La masculinidad hegemónica es un mecanismo complejo de control cultural que media en las experiencias de las personas trans. Las chicas transexuales, leídas como chicos durante su periodo escolar, son consideradas no ‘suficientemente’ masculinas mientras que los chicos transexuales son acusados de ser ‘demasiado’ masculinos para ser niñas. A pesar de que algunos chicos trans encontraron oportunidades para performar ciertas masculinidades en una EF con un currículum masculinizado, las chicas no tienen oportunidades de construir su feminidad.

Aquellas personas trans cuyas prácticas de género no se realizaban en conformidad que el género asignado al nacer, son abjectas en las clases de EF. Los vestuarios son uno de los espacios segregados por sexo más problemáticos para lxs participantes en este periodo.

**Objetivo 10.** Conocer como las personas trans se sienten en sus relaciones con compañerxs de clase, maestrxs y currículum de educación física.

Las personas trans se sienten excluidas y rechazadas en EF como consecuencia de la reproducción heteronormativa que profesorado y alumnado realizan.

El aislamiento, la soledad y el acoso son el precio que la mayoría de lxs estudiantes trans tienen que pagar por no ajustarse a las normas de género heteronormativas. Los entornos informales y los espacios abiertos favorecieron

episodios de acoso. Debido al fuerte disgusto que sienten hacia sus cuerpos, la desnudez es un problema molesto para ellxs.

**Objetivo 11.** Analizar las posibilidades y restricciones que la PE ofrece a lxs estudiantes trans para desarrollar libremente sus identidades de género.

Lxs estudiantes trans son constantemente negadxs y confrontadxs por otrxs a través de prácticas y espacios generizados. En particular, lxs maestrxs repetidamente (re)crean una EF heteronormativa agrupando a lxs estudiantes en base al sexo y desarrollando diferentes actividades para niños y niñas. En este contexto, las posibilidades de performar el género se reducen a la capacidad o incapacidad de reproducir prácticas de género hegemónicas. Por eso, las personas trans son posicionadas como seres humanos extraños en relación con sus compañerxs cisgénero de clase.

Sin embargo, algunos deportes y actividades (como la danza y otras actividades estéticas) dan oportunidades para desestabilizar la heteronormatividad a través de prácticas no heterosexuales o no binarias.



**CHAPTER 8. LIMITATIONS, IMPLICATIONS  
AND FUTURE STUDIES**



## **CHAPTER 8. LIMITATIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE STUDIES**

In this chapter the main limitations of this doctoral thesis are presented. Some of them are general and others are particular of each study. Later, we indicate some relevant implications that should be considered in different contextual levels (general, education and sport fields). Finally, we remark our commitment with trans issues and the directions of future studies we are developing.

### **8.1 Limitations**

There are some limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results from this doctoral dissertation. One is related to the difficulties in recruiting participants with a non-binary gender profile, such as transgender, queer and others. The ways of access trans persons maybe left aside gender non-conforming trans groups. Additionally, the distrust of the trans community due to previous experiences of rejection, may have also negatively affected their desire to participate in this study. Finally, the use of LGTBI associations as the main way of participants' recruitment has resulted in a sample with a majority of adults and few children or adolescences.

We are conscious that the researchers' cisgender identities may have also influenced data collection and analysis. Since gender is achieved in social exchange (Caudwell, 2012; Gergen, 1996), such as interview contexts, participants may select the memoirs who better fit into specific narratives of transsexuality (Elling-Machartzki, 2015). However, on order to mitigate this feature, additional caution was taken concerning the negotiation processes in interviews. In particular, we were extremely care in formulating questions and presenting the same issues in a variety of ways that ensure nuances and details in participants' answers. We also were open to non-heteronormative practices and avoided exaggerated gender expressions of femininity or masculinity.

An additional limitation related to the reliability of data consists in the use of memories as a source of retrospective data. According to Rivers (2001), memories are not simply reproductions but reconstructions based on people's understandings

and expectations of their stored information. Therefore, autobiographical memories for past experiences may be subject to adulteration, thus affecting accuracy and credibility. However, there is enough support for retrospective studies in applied research for childhood experiences and gender issues, especially when there is a lack of information on the issue under study and longitudinal data are involved (see Hardt & Rutter 2004; Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004; Rivers 2001), as is the case of some studies presented in this PhD thesis.

In relation to the methodology followed to explore qualitative data, a limitation of these studies consists in analysing trans persons' interviews considering just gender as the main variable to interpret their experiences in sport and physical education. As heteronormativity expands beyond a gender realm, a more complex approaching to this ideology should consider other social categories that intersect with gender identities and may mould or (re)signify gender (Jackson, 2012; Valentine, 2007; Ward & Schneider, 2009). However, an accurate study of intersection of gender identities with other categories, though appealing, needed of additional reference frameworks that exceed the possibilities of this dissertation.

A limitation presented in Study 1 and Study 2 refers to the misrecognition of particularities of individual experiences. In the first case, the use of the frontier metaphor to deeply explain how heteronormativity is (re)produced in daily life may hinder nuances and disrupting and challenging ways of experiencing gender identities. In the second study, the narrative analysis entails the risk of create a general unifying view (see Phoenix et al., 2010). However, there is not a unique and right way to present trans persons' subjectivities and experiences in PE and sport. In a future, the development of more studies concerning trans persons' experiences and sport may enrich the findings presented in this doctoral thesis.

## **8.2 Implications and future studies**

The findings presented in this doctoral dissertation contribute to understanding trans persons' experiences in ordinary life, sport and PE contexts, an issue that has received scarce attention in Social Sciences. Therefore, the new knowledge suggests useful implications for policy and practice in these contexts, such as:

1. Making visible the multiplicity of gender identities and transition processes in order to eliminate the violence that rigid gender frontiers

produce over trans persons and, especially, over those who live in border zones. New measures and policies should promote the recognition of bodies' diversity but also the deconstruction and queerization of practices and contexts (Planella & Pié, 2015; Trujillo, 2015).

2. Using a proper language that respects trans persons' gender identities, rethinking linguistic formulas that overcome binarism.

3. Fomenting the creation of cultural projects that take into account the subjective positions of those who situate on the margins in order to (re)construct and widen the spectrum of possible genders in society.

4. Promoting inclusive policies towards trans community to erase difficulties and barriers trans persons find in everyday life, sport and PE. It is especially important to remove the barrier of the national identity card to get access to sport facilities and teams. This is especially relevant when trans persons are in early moments of transitioning and their names and sex have not been modified in their official documents yet.

5. (Re)thinking new ways of organizing sport and teams instead of the traditional sex-based models. The promotion of LGTB sport leagues and mix teams may facilitate the incorporation of gender non-conforming persons to sport.

6. Creating safer spaces for trans persons. The experiences of participants collected in the second and third study indicate that gendered spaces and practices cause them insecurity and discomfort. In particular, changing rooms should be remodelled in sport and educative contexts to provide people the intimacy and comfort they need in these spaces.

7. Modifying sport and performance based PE teaching models which overtly or superstitiously favour the exclusion of non-gender conforming students in order to make them more inclusive. Teacher education towards feminist and queer issues is necessary to get more empathetic and sensitive PE interventions on gender diversity. In particular, queer pedagogy can help teachers to destabilize identity categories and open up the possibility for new relations and embodiment development in school.

8. Reviewing school curriculum materials to modify those aspects that reproduce heteronormative violence and the creation of non-restrictive new ones.

9. Enhancing pedagogical practices that stimulate trans students to engage in PE lessons and preventing their exclusion. For that, PE teaching models should include a wider range of activities into the PE curriculum to give each student the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from this subject (Peiró-Velert & Devís-Devís, 1995; Sulz, Humbert, Gyurcsik, Chad, & Gibbons, 2010). In particular, some practices, such as tango queer and other aesthetic activities, represent an alternative to predominant male and heteronormative sports in the context of Spanish PE culture.

As citizens, we have the responsibility to contribute to the society in the best possible way. As researchers, we are in a privilege position to make visible unfair situations. As Roseneil (2011, p.219) rephrases from a doctoral student, it is our responsibility as researchers to provide “readings that mediate between what’s wrong with the world and what can be and already is counter normative and just plain ok”. Specifically, we are committed to keep visible trans persons and trans persons’ voices in order to uphold a fairer society, where all gender identities and expressions are worth to be considered. Particularly, in view of the findings presented in this PhD thesis, what seems important is to pursue changes in ways of understanding and feeling the gendered bodies. In order to create a society where the ethics of alterity enhances encounter, we are developing or we have in mind the next studies and actions:

1. Developing new pedagogical practices towards gender diversity sensitizing. In particular, we are exploring the possibilities that tango queer may offers to destabilize gender and evidence the construction character of femininity and masculinity in secondary and tertiary education (Pereira-García, Devís-Devís, Lopez-Cañada, Perez-Samaniego, & Fuentes-Miguel, 2017). As “queer embodiments open up the possibility for new kinds of queer relations to oneself, to others, and to the creation of queer spaces themselves” (Rodríguez, 2016, p. 411), tango queer may challenge heteronormativity.

2. Studying the sort of sport and physical activities trans persons participate before and after transitioning. This study may contribute to better knowing which sport and exercise facilitates or hinders the participation of trans persons.

3. Analysing which sports and physical activities better enable the (re)construction of participants' gender identities.

4. Drawing insights on the personal and sociocultural factors that influence trans persons' decision to participate in sport or not. The findings of this research can provide useful knowledge to develop proper policies to engage trans persons in sport.

5. Comparing experiences between trans persons and other persons with non-heteronormative bodies (for instance obese, disabled or non-white people). The analysis of different body realities that do not respond to 'normality' is useful to think pedagogical practices that do not only benefit trans persons but also other students.

Beyond these future works, we are developing additional actions to transfer and disseminate the knowledge on this topic through conferences, talks and courses. Due to the special relevance of the schooling period in the life of trans persons and the high percentage of harassment they suffer in this context (Devís-Devís et al. 2017), we are especially committed to do courses to teachers in schools and teaching future teachers to develop more critical pedagogical practices





**CHAPTER 9. EPILOGUE: MY ENCOUNTERS  
WITH TRANS PERSONS. A CONFSSIONAL TALE**



## **CHAPTER 9. EPILOGUE: MY ENCOUNTERS WITH TRANS PERSONS. A CONFESSIONAL TALE**

Researchers actively participate in every stage of the research process, from the selection of the research topic and the formulation of its objectives to the collection and analysis of data, and the final writing-up or informs. However, the kind and level of participation may differ depending on the sort of the studies developed. In qualitative studies, researchers become the main tool in the field work and the analysis of data. As Smith and Caddick (2012) suggest, the ontological (the nature of reality) and epistemological (relationship between the knower and the known) assumptions of qualitative research cannot be ignored “because they underpin and inform the entire practice of research” (p. 61). Some researchers are not completely aware of the impact they have on the way their findings have been made (Frost et al., 2010) while others, conscious of it, opt to include information about them and gain presence in their writings. The relevance of making researchers explicit is even more important within a constructionist perspective. From this point of view, there is not a unique and objective reality because there is not a unique way of interpreting a social phenomenon. Multiple interpretations are possible because plural and different are the theories and researchers who explore it. Following this perspective, I consider necessary to offer an epilogue in this dissertation to facilitate the comprehension of the research process. In this epilogue I am to clarify and assert my own interests, beliefs and experiences along the research process. Additionally, through this section I also want to evidence the complexities that researchers find dealing certain topics that affect researcher’ subjectivity. In a work like this, the gender identities of participants constitute a fundamental element that permeates the research process, including researcher’s own gender identity. Therefore, my own gender identity is inevitably imbricated in that process too. My previous experiences, knowledge, feelings and hesitations about gender have accompanied me and, also, have influenced my insights on data. Even when other members of the research team offer me a wider gaze that helps me to contrast impressions and interpretations, the findings of research are equally influenced by my own trajectory and identity.

Additionally, to the extent that my research mates and I are relational beings, we are connected with others and are interdependent of others (Pérez-Samaniego, Fuentes-Miguel, & Devís-Devís, 2011). In my case, before being engaged in this research project, I studied Social and Cultural Anthropology Degree and a Master degree on gender issues where I connected very well with Preciado, Butler, Haraway, Foucault and other postfeminist and postmodernist authors. I also had some professors as Balza and Trujillo, who got on well with these theories and helped me in my approaching to them. Moreover, I was lucky enough to meet in this Master two good friends, Antonio and Carolina, that sympathise with this viewpoint and with whom I had informal and always instructive chattings about postfeminist and feminist topics.

With this background I moved to Valencia to do this PhD thesis within the research project titled *Educación física, deporte y transgénero: el ejercicio físico en la (re)construcción y transición de identidades transexuales y transgeneristas* (DEP2011-28190) directed by Dr. José Devís Devís. Before joining that project, I had never met a trans person face to face. Since then, I have met many of them. The relationships I have maintained with them in formal and informal contexts helped me to create first impressions about this population. However, if my postfeminist background has been of any help to analyse and understand their stories, I have also been moved by these participants. In fact, the new knowledge I have acquired is partially incompatible with some of my postfeminist ideas. As postfeminist theories emphasize the desvinculation of gender identity from corporeality, defending non binary bodies, they neglect trans persons' experiences and the relevance of the material body in their lives. For this reason, in this doctoral thesis I try to give sense to data with the only appropriation of those elements of analysis of postfeminist theories that were helpful to the realities explored and the objectives formulated.

My experiences with trans persons were also embodied practices. As Del Busso (2007) and Gillies et al. (2004) suggest, the scientific knowledge is also produced through the embodied experiences of the researchers:

This meant that the data moved away from more general and distanced observation on embodiment and moved towards more contextualized discussions of our personalized embodied practices and our reactions

(embarrassment, pride etc.) towards the observations made by other group members (Gillies et al., 2004, p. 102).

Different strategies to include embodied researchers' experiences on research have been used. Some authors, as Esteban (2004), have presented an autobiography of the body with the aim of make conscious and explicit the interwoven connections among his own body' experiences and the research process on body topics. Other scholars, as Gillies et al. (2004), recommend the production of memories in order to explore embodied subjectivities. According to these authors, memory works reduce the distance between researchers and researched participants from more general observations to a contextualised embodied discussions and practices. In these situations, the separation between the knower and the known may not exist because they are "interdependent and fused together in such a way that the 'findings' are the creation of a process of interaction between the two" (Smith & Carddick, 2012, p. 61). Furthermore, Del Busso (2007) proposes to keep a diary of embodied experiences where previous experiences and also embodied aspects that could emerge in the interaction with participants are collected.

Especially, interviews are social events and embodied practices that are affected by negotiation processes. As I was in touch with trans persons, my own identity could affect the data collected, the level of confidence acquired with the participants and the things they could tell me and could keep in secret. Other authors have had similar concerns. Del Busso (2007), for instance, feels her 'attractiveness' was a barrier to interview other women. Her feminist commitment was questioned by some participants due to her appearance. In those interviews researcher and researched bodies participate in dynamics of power that may empower or disempower both of them.

Precisely, reflectiveness on the research process becomes necessary to counterbalance the unavoidable dynamics of power performed along the whole inquiry and, particularly, in the actual encounter with trans participants at interviews. In the present research, I cannot understand those dynamics without considering the heteronormative system in which our encounters were framed. My condition of cisgender woman but also the high status provided by my researcher position may have affected how participants talk about their experiences and the events they live (Sermij, Devlieger, & Loots, 2008). Additionally, interviews, as

relational acts, also build trans persons and myself in an ongoing interactive process.

Against this backdrop, I have crafted a confessional tale based on my experiences and thoughts during my encounters with trans persons. In particular, I firstly focus on the first contacts with participants in interview stages through my meeting with Sonia. Secondly, I present, in other writing format, some feelings and thoughts that emerged during the fieldwork stage and reflect its complexity. My relationship with Sonia agglutinates situations I lived with different participants along the second phase of research. This relationship shows how my own femininity is implicated and jeopardized in interaction with her gender identity. This confessional tale is compounded by my own memories and field notes I took along that process.

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I utterly remember that February's morning when I took a train to Catalonia. Everytime I remember that day the same feelings and doubts that disturbed me then stir me up again. Although I had been several times in Catalonia and I had met some trans persons before, I had never interviewed any of them yet. Therefore, that was the first time 'I' was going to meet a trans person to know about 'hir'.

I arrived rather early to the train station. I had the interview guide in my hands and I was obsessively reading the tens of annotated questions to calm my fear of forgetting any important question. Once I was inside the train and got comfortable on my seat I started to think about her. I was wondering if she would be as nervous as I was and what image would she had of me. She knew that I was a PhD student from Valencia. This is the way I used to present myself to the survey participants at the first phase of the research. When they asked me about my personal link with trans issues, I used to say always the same: 'I am feminist and I am interested in anything related to gender issues'. However, I did not remember to interchange words with Sonia the day we met. I was sure that she would know about my academic career but also, obviously, that I was a cisgender woman. Despite my casual and grungy style, I have a feminine outlook, and I have been always recognised as a woman. Nothing on me questioned my femininity. I hoped that being a cisgender woman was not negative for the research but, just in case, I decided not to remark any feminine feature of my outfit. I wore jeans and flat shoes

and I did not makeup. I also would avoid crossing my legs or any other short of feminine considered behaviours.

Once I arrived to Barcelona I decided to walk from *Sants* Station to her home. Our meeting would take place there, in the Barcelona neighbourhood of *Vila de Gràcia*, one of the most populated of *Gràcia* district. I was revising the interview questions in my mind while I was walking. I felt quite confident but my stomach twisted and groaned. I softly passed the hand through it and quickly turned to my thoughts.

My worrying made me stumble in my journey and I got lost in the maze of streets. I inevitably arrived later than I expected to Sonia's address. That urgency left me out of breath. I was still in a hurry, regretting the delay, when I finally arrived to the entrance gate of Sonia's building. I called through the entryphone and she immediately answered inviting me to get in with a firm and nice voice. She advised me that there was no lift and she lived on the fourth floor. The few words she pronounced echoed over and over in my head. I felt my mouth drying and my body in shock. I could perceive my strong pulse accelerating and beating in my chest. In that moment, I stopped to be worried about the questions memorized. I was not worried about being in an unknown place either. What impacted me was the tone of her voice. It was unclassifiable for me. Only few words, rough and soft, high-pitched and deep, warm but also penetrating like cold. Just listening to her voice, one could not know if a woman or man was speaking. I pushed the gate and went in feeling more and more disturbed with each step.

Inside the building, the light was scarce but I could appreciate brick tiles on the floor and a metal stair rail in front of me. I cautiously advanced and started to climb the stairs till the third floor. I was getting closer to her house and I had not thought yet on how I would deal with her identity. Her trans identity. Wasn't it Sonia a woman's name? That meant that Sonia was woman, wasn't she? Then, why I should to be worried? What did I fear and why? I only had to behave and treat her as a woman. Easy! But I could not stop ruminating: 'what if I get confused? What if she is offended by my way of looking at her? What if my ears, unaccustomed to her voice, betray me? What if my eyes, unable to appreciate beyond blue and pink colours, betray me?'

One more step. A cold sweat outpoured from all my body. Suddenly I felt I wore too much clothes. I took my pullover and coat off and I climbed more rungs.

A squeal came from above. It was Sonia's house door opening, the person I was looking forward to meet with but I was afraid to meet her. I mentally reviewed what I knew about Sonia from the survey she completed in the first research phase. I thought, 'she is engineer, she is few years older than me (32 years old), Sonia lives alone and she likes running and competing in local events. She does not accomplish with obsoletes stereotypes that only speak about old trans women linked with prostitution and unfortunate lives'.

I was almost there. I stuck to the idea that if I was respectful with her gender identity everything would be OK: 'She is a woman and she will probably be woman tomorrow', I told to myself.

I left the corridor behind, crossed the doorstep and went to meet her. Sonia welcomed me with a smile and kissed my cheeks twice. She brought me afterwards a pair of slippers. I noticed she wore similar slippers than the ones she borrowed me. While I was taking off my trainers and wearing the slippers I apologised for my holdup and gave her thanks for that unusual and generous offering of meeting her at her home. She started the conversation and spoke with me as we were old friends. I did not know why but I was surprised about how easy everything was going on. Sonia proudly showed me her sport medals and some pictures of her in the mountains. Whilst she explained me the story behind those pictures, I looked at her. I saw a beautiful waterfall brown hair covering her shoulders and her eyes with the colour of the purest honey. She wore a t-shirt with dark tracksuit pants and nothing of a flashy make-up. Her outline revealed me an uncommon lack of breasts. Immediately, even without noticing, I hid my own breast and covered myself with the pullover. In that situation, a shiver ran through my body. I tried to keep calm. I got the digital recorder and, after verifying the rec was on, I began the verbal presentation.

There was a mix of melodies, tonalities and sound intensities flowing from our bodies. At first glance it seemed that this was just a simple interview of another research project where a woman was interrogating another woman. However, I realised that the most interesting conversation we had did not provide from our mouths but from our bodies. Actually, I felt that my body was interrogated as well by hers. Her body, her hormones, my own imagination about the sort of genitals she had, her way of living and expressing her gender and all her being were questioning me. I was not concerned about treating her in a feminine way anymore.



Now I was invaded by a deeper fear. My body became rigid and I wondered: ‘Why am I uncomfortable when I know I am occupying a privileged gender position in this encounter?’ I hesitated. I had doubts about myself. I was not too sure about who I was anymore. I tried to keep that feeling away. I felt I needed to separate from her, but it was not possible.

Sonia continued smiling and talking to me. Little by little, the familiarity she expressed everything made me feel gently, thou relentlessly, wrapped by her story and by her embodied storytelling. Her body spoke about a heroic process to reach freedom. Whilst my admiration for her grew, I felt dwarfed. My muscles and my bone structure shrunk and I felt embarrassed. She freely walked in new lands against all odds. On the contrary, I was still living behind bars, intimidated by invisible forces. I was thinking that despite my feminist trajectory and activism, I could only use words which I was not able to subvert with my own body.

In that very moment I started to feel more vividly the physicality of my own body. I felt those annoying hairs in the surface of my legs that grew a few days ago. I felt my breast trapped by oppressive bra underwire and felt irritated my face skin by depilatory wax. But, what about Sonia’s femininity? I wondered how much effort and willpower she had invested to mould her tone of voice and her gestures, how much pain was produced by the facial laser sessions she had borne and how much discomfort she had felt by aesthetical surgeries.

The interview melody decreased. The gig ended. Following with formalities, I rigorously thanked Sonia for her participation. I stopped the recorder and looked at it as if I had a treasure in my hands. I collected every single word she pronounced but non-verbal communication was not registered.

While I walked through the exit door I wondered if she had realised the dance our bodies had kept. I crossed Sonia’s house door and looked at the treads I stepped. I crossed the entrance hall, raised the zip of my coat. As I walked out the busy street, I realised I could not see Sonia with the same eyes anymore. Sonia was not a ‘participant’, a ‘research subject’ anymore. We maintained certain camaraderie. However, the friendly conversation we had kept clashed with the structural violence that our bodies had shared. On one hand, female bodies, like mine, took part in her gender struggles. On the other, her body had been transformed in a big mirror that reflected my own femininity, created day by day, within every gesture and every act.

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‘Are finally all researchers constructed by their own object of study? It happens in all sciences?’ It is more than four years ago that I first interviewed a trans person. Since then, I shared with trans people many experiences that impacted me significantly and approached me to them in a more intimate way. I feel grateful and privileged because they allowed me access to their privacy and witness their intimacy. Some of them even let me a closer approach to them and shared with me very special and unexpected moments. For example, I remembered that time in which Iker buttered ‘testogel’<sup>11</sup> in his arms, or when a trans woman of the research project showed me her vagina after a sexual reconstruction surgery. As I mention in the encounter with Sonia, to experience this sort of situations also moved me unexpectedly. Even if I had always thought the body as fastened to the culture, I never could imagine how malleable it could be. My face to face encounters with trans persons let me see the bodies as a production in itself, as a kind of artwork we create.

This consciousness took me to analyse and judge the cissexuality of those face I crossed in the streets and to play imagining them with other genders. But this malleable point of view about gender identities continued affecting the way I appreciated my own body. Since my first interviews with trans persons, I was becoming more and more conscious about my own role to reproduce heteronormativity. I started to judge my own gendered behaviours as part of the heteronormative system. This made me feel uncomfortable by involuntarily participating and reinforcing gender binarism. I felt uncomfortable, guilty and illegitimated to fight for body diversity and deconstruction but conserving privileges that a normative body brought to me.

As a postfeminist, my own contradictions accompanied me, and they still do. However, the only fact of thinking about changing radically my body image and stopping ‘being myself’ causes me anxiety. In those situations, I slightly started to discern how to be a non-cisgender person could be, a disgusting feeling that affect your identity. To be honest, I did not want to.

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<sup>11</sup> A testosterone based gel that many trans men and transgender persons used to masculinise their bodies.

Only knowing more trans persons' experiences and perspectives about gender and performances gave me some kind of relief. Sometimes people think that when a trans person transits their contradictions disappear and they fully enjoy their bodies and genders. Nevertheless, trans persons also have contradictions they daily have to deal with. Especially I met some transgender and trans queer who were in the edge to decide whether performing typical gender behaviours to be socially recognised or, on contrary, remaining in intermediate gender positions, as they desire, although assuming their gender could be misunderstood. Assuming contradictions as part of life gave me more freedom to be more flexible about my own gender performances. As the interviews went on, I also became more flexible toward the imagining, feeling and living my own and other bodies.

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Besides expressing my reflections about how trans persons affect my own gender identity, in this section I also want to share fears, conflicts and dilemmas that emerged along this research process. Since my first encounters, I also was aware of the fragility of my relations with trans persons and how it was conditioned by my respect and support of their gender identities. And I truly wanted it because I really felt sensitized with trans community. The problem was when I found many persons who did not respond to the expectations I had for a trans persons. Probably one of the tensest moments for me was interviewing Gloria, a woman who had to hide her gender identity to others in order to maintain her work. For this, she presented to me with beard and short hair, something unexpected for a woman. As she was living a bad period, I felt she needed a womanship relationship during the interview. However, it was not an easy task because her appearance made me feel confused and I had to do strong efforts to care my language and not negate her femininity with my gendered words. I needed to watch myself and be really concentrated to do not make a mistake, what made me pay not enough attention to the interview and not attend it properly. I have also experienced similar confusing situations in conference contexts when I approached to cisgender persons thinking they were trans ones. Fortunately, I have met empathetic people who did not get angry easily! These experiences, however, show the particularities of researching with trans persons and how they disturb my own gender assumptions and obliged me to (re)educate my gaze toward gendered bodies.

Even if my encounters with each trans persons who participated in this PhD thesis were brief and I have only seen them once, twice, three or four times at the most, I feel really affection for them. I finished my fieldwork more than two years ago but I read their interviews and I have listened to them so many times that I keep very vivid memories of all them. Actually, if I would have to choose the research stage I enjoyed most, probably it would be the fieldwork. For me, to penetrate into trans persons' worlds was motivating and fascinating. I do not even know why they captivated my attention so much and why I love researching on trans issues but since I have started the fieldwork, this research absorbed me, even more when I knew probably nobody would have inquired on the same issues as me. However, it does not mean I had no difficulties in this stage.

From the beginning, I have always felt welcomed by trans persons. In any case I felt my presence could threat or confront their gender identities. However, I felt my researcher role was an obstacle and caused rejection in some of them. I found myself defending my legitimacy to do this dissertation and the appropriateness of this project. Some participants questioned I was researching them when they were not the problem but transphobic people. In those situations, I explained to them that I did not want to damage trans community and I did not want to take advantage of that situation to hurt them. On contrary, I was really convinced that spreading their experiences and perspectives about gender identities could help them to get the visibility trans community needed to achieve rights and a fairer society. If I said that was because I really thought that research could be a sort of activism when there is an honest and true compromise with the cause. Research, even institutionalized, can serve to denounce situations that affect vulnerable groups and, also, provide visibility and spread experiences and practices that could mean a breakthrough in gaining self-esteem and social recognition. Additionally, I did not pretend to speak for trans community in this doctoral thesis, even if I interpreted their experiences and gave them meanings. But it would be hypocrisy affirm that I have been under trans community orders. As a researcher, I felt I managed enough autonomy to position in a situation of independency in relation to Academia and trans community or, at least, not fully dependent. In each word written in this PhD thesis I have tried to be open to participants, even if their realities contradicted my own point of view about gender, as I explained before. However, I recognise that my cissexual and postfeminist point of view about trans

realities can never reflect richness, nuances, and complexities on these issues as if I were a trans person. However, *which* trans person would that be? Any trans person would do it better or in a more fully way than me? Is there an authentic trans viewpoint? Why then my cissexuality is a handicap in researching trans issues?

Many participants were suspicious about academic approaches to trans issues. Some of them told me they had participated (or knew cases of trans persons who had participated) in former researches the results of which they never were aware of. Or, what it is worst, studies that pathologized trans communities. I promised myself that I would never forget my commitment with them. For this reason, we have sent papers and brief summaries in Spanish to the main LGBT associations in order to inform them about our work. When they have invited us, we have participated in conference organised by them and we have also tried to diffuse the research project in different contexts than academic ones. My commitment with trans community is an essential extra that motivate me to continue researching and publishing about trans issues.

For me, it seems a dream that we can earn a living by investigating vulnerable groups or other issues regarding social justice. I know that the transformative potential scholar and teachers have is limited, but I want to believe that we can contribute to social changes through the promotion of equity and diversity. Now that I have finished my doctoral thesis and I do not know exactly what will happen once I done the viva, I just can be grateful by having the opportunity of doing this research and participating in a very sensitive and critic research team.



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## APPENDICES



## Appendix 1. Informed consent form

### CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

Título del estudio de investigación:

Educación física, deporte e identidades trans (DEP 2011-28190)

#### **Investigador**

José Devís Devís, Catedrático de Universidad. Departamento de Educación Física y Deportiva, Universitat de València. Telf. 96383309

#### **Objeto y antecedentes**

Este es un estudio, en dos fases, para comprender el papel que la educación física y el deporte juegan en su identidad trans antes y después del tránsito de sexo-género.

La primera fase tiene como objetivo conocer los problemas sociales experimentados por las personas trans y, especialmente, los relacionados con la educación física y el deporte.

La segunda fase busca profundizar en los significados de dichas experiencias tienen en la (re)construcción de sus identidades.

En su conjunto, el estudio busca obtener conocimiento acerca de cómo la educación física y el deporte contribuye a la formación de las identidades trans, así como plantear estrategias para transformar los posibles aspectos que contribuyen a la marginación social de este colectivo.

#### **Procedimientos**

La primera fase de la investigación se realizará contestando un cuestionario elaborado al efecto por el equipo investigador.

En la segunda fase se realizarán entrevistas en profundidad a personas voluntarias que hayan participado en la fase anterior.

#### **Beneficios y riesgos**

Los beneficios generales del proyecto se derivan de la comprensión de una realidad poco conocida y de los temas que preocupan a las personas trans.

Se enviará copia de los informes derivados del estudio a los Colectivos participantes y a las personas individuales que lo deseen.

Para evitar los posibles riesgos que se deriven del mal uso que el equipo investigador pueda realizar de la información obtenida se adoptan las medidas que se detallan en el apartado “Anonimato y confidencialidad”.

### **Anonimato y confidencialidad**

Los resultados obtenidos sólo podrán utilizarse en el ámbito científico y académico. Las encuestas realizadas en la primera fase tienen un carácter anónimo. En la segunda fase, las transcripciones de las entrevistas serán realizadas y consultadas únicamente por el equipo investigador. En los informes finales, las menciones a las personas, en caso de realizarse, se harán recurriendo a pseudónimos y, si fuera necesario, cambiando algunas características personales o alterando fechas o lugares para evitar su identificación. Hecha esta salvedad, toda la información se considerará confidencial.

### **Derecho a rehusar o abandonar**

La participación en el estudio es libre y voluntaria, y se podrá abandonar en cualquier momento sin dar mayor explicación.

### **Autorización**

Autorizo al equipo investigador a utilizar y publicar total o parcialmente los resultados del proyecto, siempre y cuando lo haga con propósitos científicos, educativos o culturales.

### **Consentimiento para la primera fase**

Consiento en participar en la primera fase de este proyecto que consiste en contestar un cuestionario.

He recibido copia de este impreso y he tenido la oportunidad de leerlo.

Firma:

Fecha:

**Consentimiento para la segunda fase**

Consiento en participar en una segunda fase de investigación que consiste en entrevistas individuales en profundidad.

He recibido copia de este impreso y he tenido la oportunidad de leerlo.

Firma:

Fecha:

Contacto (teléfono, etc.): .....





## Appendix 2. Interview script

### GUIÓN DE ENTREVISTA

#### PREVIAMENTE A LA ENTREVISTA

Entablar conversación acerca de temas banales para crear un clima de confianza

Momentos previos a la entrevista

Presentación del entrevistador

Pedir permiso para tutear

Se recuerda el objetivo del estudio en el que se enmarca la entrevista

Se pide permiso para grabar en audio la entrevista

Se recuerdan los principales aspectos éticos del consentimiento informado que se firmó durante la primera fase de la investigación

Se le pide que tome el tiempo que considere necesario para responder a las preguntas.

#### ENTREVISTA

Deportes y actividad física practicada en la actualidad

Me gustaría que me hablaras acerca de los tipos de deportes y actividades físicas que practicas en la actualidad.

Frecuencia y franja horaria

-Espacio o lugar donde son practicados, por qué en ese lugar

¿Cómo es el entrenamiento? Cuéntame un poco cómo suelen ser las sesiones...

¿Por qué escogiste esos deportes?

¿Cómo te sientes cuando estás practicando actividad física?

En general qué beneficios crees que te reporta practicar actividad física o deportiva, ¿es importante para ti como hombre o mujer?

¿Qué zonas o partes del cuerpo trabajas más con esos ejercicios? ¿Qué resultados físicos has podido apreciar y cuáles te gustaría alcanzar?

Como marcar, reducir, aumentar algún músculo o zona corporal, aumentar o reducir peso...

¿Has tenido alguna vez o en la actualidad tienes algún problema de salud que te afectase o afecte a tu práctica deportiva?

¿Crees que ha mejorado tu estado de salud desde que practicas esas actividades físicas? ¿En qué aspectos?

¿Recuerdas alguna sesión, entrenamiento o experiencia deportiva que haya sido importante o significativa para ti? Cuéntame alguna experiencia positiva y negativa que hayas tenido realizando estas actividades

¿Te has encontrado con obstáculos como deportista o todo lo contrario? ¿Cómo los solventastes?

¿Practicas sólo o con alguien? ¿qué tipo de personas realizan ese deporte o actividad física? Son sesiones sólo para chicas/chicos, son mixtas...

¿Cómo es el ambiente en las clases? ¿Qué tipo de relación tienes con esas personas? ¿Y con el/ monitor/a o entrenador/a? Durante las sesiones ¿Cómo soléis ponerlos? por equipos, por parejas...

En los espacios donde practicas actividad física o deporte ¿crees que se refuerza a aquellas personas que tienen cuerpos muy masculinos o femeninos? ¿Qué tipo de beneficios o recompensas obtienen?

¿Conocen tu identidad trans? ¿Cuándo se lo contaste? ¿Por qué?

¿Con qué tipo de prendas deportivas te gusta hacer ejercicio físico, chándal, mallas deportivas, pantalones cortos...?

Uso de camisetas compresoras, prótesis.

¿Tomas o has tomado algún complemento proteínico?

¿Sueles cambiarte y asearte en casa o en el gimnasio?

¿Te aconsejó alguien que realizaras esas actividades o fue por voluntad propia?

¿Cuánto tiempo llevas haciendo deporte o actividad física? ¿Cuándo empezaste? ¿Por qué?

¿Siempre has hecho deporte o este deporte?

¿Alguna vez has hecho actividad física en casa?

¿Qué significa el deporte para ti? Significa ocio, diversión, trabajo, esfuerzo...

No practican deporte o actividad física en la actualidad

¿Cuándo fue la última vez que practicaste actividad física o deporte de forma regular? ¿qué hiciste? ¿Durante cuánto tiempo lo practicaste?

¿Dónde lo hacías? ¿Qué tipo de experiencia fue para ti?

¿Por qué no practicas deporte o actividad física en la actualidad?

¿Te has planteado alguna vez realizar actividades físicas o deportivas? Si pudieras escoger un deporte o actividad física ¿qué te gustaría hacer? ¿Por qué?

¿Conoces a otras personas que practiquen deporte o actividad física?

¿Crees que hacer deporte o actividad física te reportaría beneficios como mujer/hombre?

¿Has tenido alguna vez o tienes en la actualidad algún problema de salud? ¿Te ha impedido o te impide realizar actividad física o deporte? Cuéntame qué hobbies tienes o qué tipo de actividades te gusta realizar en tu tiempo libre, por qué , frecuencia, regularidad

Identidad trans, deporte y ejercicio

¿Tu identidad es pública en la actualidad? ¿Cuándo hiciste pública tu identidad de género? ¿Por qué en ese momento?

¿A quién se lo contaste primero? ¿Qué acogida tuvo entre tu familia y tus amigos/as?

Antes de hacer pública tu identidad ¿cómo fuiste acercándote a tu identidad real? ¿Qué cambios has llevado a cabo? ¿Qué es lo que más te costó cambiar? ¿Y lo que menos?

¿Por entonces ya habías conocido a alguna persona trans o te habías puesto en contacto con alguna asociación?

Me gustaría conocer un poco cómo fue todo el proceso médico que has seguido, las consultas con el psicólogo, el endocrino... ¿Qué opinas de este proceso? ¿Crees que es importante que se despatologice la transexualidad? ¿Por qué?

El discurso médico habla de una “terapia” tripartita de experiencia de vida, hormonación y cirugía ¿crees que es importante para tí como mujer/hombre cumplir con esa terapia tripartita?

En relación al proceso de hormonación

Cuando comenzaste y tiempo que llevas hormonándote

A partir de cuándo comenzaste a ver los primeros cambios, ¿qué cambios eran?

¿Qué efectos secundarios tienen?

Actualmente podrías afirmar que estás a gusto/disgusto con tu cuerpo... ¿qué partes te gustan más? ¿cuáles te gustaría cambiar?

¿Participas en algún colectivo LGTB o asociación trans? ¿Qué pedirías o reivindicarías como miembro de este colectivo a la sociedad? ¿Qué tipo de actividades realizáis? ¿También actividades físicas o deportivas?

¿Por aquél entonces practicabas algún tipo de deporte? ¿Qué o quién te motivó a practicar ejercicio físico? ¿Cómo influyó hacer pública tu identidad de género en tu práctica deportiva?

Cambio de actividad o de instalaciones deportivas

Uso de las instalaciones deportivas, vestuarios...

Me gustaría que me hablaras un poco acerca de cuando empezaste a ser consciente de que tu sexo físico no se ajustaba con tu sexo psicológico

#### Niñez, adolescencia, etapa escolar y educación física

Me gustaría que me contaras situaciones concretas que viviste durante tu infancia y que te ayudaron a ser consciente de que tu cuerpo físico no se ajustaba a tu género.

¿Cómo te recuerdas cuando eras niño/a?

Háblame un poco acerca de los tipos de juegos a los que solías jugar durante tu infancia, cuáles te gustaban más, menos, con quién solías jugar, dónde...

¿Te ayudaban estos juegos a conocer otros niños/as? ¿Te llevabas mejor con niños o con niñas? ¿A qué se debía esa diferencia?

En casa ¿qué tipo de juguetes te regalaban? ¿Con cuáles te sentías más identificada/o? ¿con quién jugabas y a qué?

En el colegio ¿a qué te gustaba jugar durante el recreo? ¿Con quién jugabas?

¿Conocían tus compañeras/os tu identidad de género? ¿Y el profesorado? ¿Encontraste apoyo o comprensión por parte de ellos o todo lo contrario?

Supongamos que pudieses cambiar algunas cosas que no te gustaban, ¿qué cosas serían?

En relación a la asignatura de educación física, ¿te gustaba? ¿qué hacíais en esa clase? ¿qué juegos preferías? ¿cuáles te gustaban menos? ¿qué tipo de excursiones hacíais en la asignatura de Educación Física? ¿Cómo era tu profesor o profesora, le recuerdas? ¿cómo se comportaba? ¿Cómo era la relación con tus compañeros/as en esta clase?

¿Crees que era similar o diferente la asignatura de educación física de las otras asignaturas? ¿En qué cosas?

Me gustaría que me contases qué hacías fuera del horario escolar, si realizabas algún tipo de deporte o actividad física... ¿Cuál? ¿Por qué? ¿Lo elegiste tú o lo eligieron tus padres? ¿Qué otro deporte o actividad física te hubiera gustado practicar?

Durante las vacaciones o durante vuestro tiempo libre, tú y tu familia ¿hacíais cosas en común? ¿qué tipo de cosas os gustaba hacer?

¿Cómo viviste el cambio del colegio al instituto?

¿Seguías manteniendo las mismas amistades?

Cuéntame qué tal estudiante eras en el instituto

¿Cómo recuerdas tu adolescencia?

¿Qué veías cuando te mirabas al espejo?

¿Con qué edad comenzaste a percibir los cambios físicos típicos de la adolescencia? ¿Cómo los viviste? ¿Cómo te adaptaste a esos cambios?

¿Cuál era tu ideal de mujer/hombre en aquella época?

¿Cómo te imaginabas cuando fueras adulto?

En el instituto el profesorado y las/os compañeras/os no conocían de tu identidad ¿o sí? ¿Cómo se comportaban respecto a ella? ¿Te has sentido comprendido con tu identidad de género o todo lo contrario?

¿En qué aspectos fue diferente tu experiencia de las clases de educación física en el colegio y en el instituto?

¿Qué tipo de actividades hacíais en la asignatura durante el instituto? Te resultaban fáciles, difíciles...

Me gustaría que me contaras alguna experiencia que tuviste que fuera importante o significativa para ti durante las clases de Educación Física

¿Cómo era y se comportaba tu profesor/a? ¿Cómo te llevabas con tus compañeros/as? ¿Era distinta la relación con ellos/as en las clases de EF que fuera de estas clases?

¿Qué significaba para ti el uso de los vestuarios durante la Educación Física? ¿Cómo gestionarías ese espacio? Vestuarios mixtos....

Durante la asignatura de E.F, ¿te apuntabas a las excursiones o viajes con la escuela o instituto?

¿Qué hobbies tenías? Cuéntame qué actividades hacías fuera del horario escolar, actividades artísticas, deportivas... de qué tipo, con quién las hacías,

Me gustaría saber si tu familia y tú hacíais actividades físicas o deportivas juntos

Tipo, frecuencia, duración y tiempo realizado

Últimas preguntas para terminar, ¿qué crees que ha aportado a tu vida el deporte, la actividad física o la educación física? ¿Qué crees que te puede aportar en el futuro cercano y más a largo plazo?

## FINAL ENTREVISTA

Agradecer el tiempo dedicado a la entrevista

Preguntar si hay algo más que quiera añadir

Proponer la participación en la investigación de otras personas trans que conozca el interesado/a.

## Appendix 3. Ethical Commite Aproved by University of Valencia

VNIVERSITAT  
ID VALÈNCIA  
Vicerectorat d'Investigació i Política Científica

**D. Fernando A. Verdú Pascual**, Profesor Titular de Medicina Legal y Forense, y Secretario del Comité Ético de Investigación en Humanos de la Comisión de Ética en Investigación Experimental de la Universitat de València,

**CERTIFICA:**

Que el Comité Ético de Investigación en Humanos, en la reunión celebrada el día 5 de marzo de 2012, una vez estudiado el proyecto de investigación titulado:  
*"Educación física, deporte y transgénero: el ejercicio físico en la (re)construcción y transición de las identidades transexuales y transgeneristas"*,  
cuyo investigador responsable es D. José Devís Devís, ha acordado informar favorablemente el mismo dado que se respetan los principios fundamentales establecidos en la Declaración de Helsinki, en el Convenio del Consejo de Europa relativo a los derechos humanos y cumple los requisitos establecidos en la legislación española en el ámbito de la investigación biomédica, la protección de datos de carácter personal y la bioética.

Y para que conste, se firma el presente certificado en Valencia, a dos de mayo de dos mil doce.

FERNANDO ALEJO|VERDU|  
PASCUAL  
2012.05.02 12:36:56 +02'00'





## Appendix 4. Example of interview

### ENTREVISTA 2. CHICO TRANS MADRID. LUGAR: CAFETERÍA

P: Bueno, te recuerdo también que ésta entrevista es completamente anónima, al igual que la primera parte con la encuesta no se van a publicar ni nombres ni nada, esto es simplemente es para poder transcribirlo y que sea más fácil anotarlo. Bueno para empezar, me gustaría...bueno, tómate todo el tiempo que quieras, no tengo prisa, piensa las preguntas con calma, no te preocupes. Para empezar me gustaría que me hablaras acerca de las actividades físicas y deportes que haces actualmente

R: Actualmente...actualmente tengo poco tiempo porque estoy trabajando pero bueno, tengo la suerte de que...¿se me oye?

P: Sí, imagino que sí.

R: Imaginamos...tengo la suerte de dedicarme a lo que me gusta que es el deporte, entre otras cosas, así que bueno pues tengo opción, me gusta mucho el fútbol pero no lo puedo practicar porque no tengo tiempo, natación pues ahora en verano, que estoy de vacaciones sí que me gusta mucho la piscina, He sido socorrista y el pilates que es a lo que me dedico principalmente, pilates, mantenimiento...clases colectivas, lo que son clases colectivas. Pues eso, eso es prácticamente lo que practico. Correr no corro porque no...y no sé que más practico por ahí.

P. Esas actividades por lo que estás contando son las que trabajas y luego hay otras que realizas fuera del ámbito laboral, me gustaría distinguirlas

R. Me dedico a dar clases colectivas, también practico pilates y luego por mi cuenta me dan clase de pilates, clases de taichí, de artes marciales, kung fú, el fútbol ya te digo que no tengo tiempo, pero sí que me gustaría, pues algún sábado sí que nos reunimos a jugar los compañeros y no se, tenis hace mucho que no lo pillo y natación, eso por mi cuenta. Hago musculación, tengo un gimnasio montado en casa y hago bastante musculación y luego me entreno también por mi cuenta en pilates.

P. Te iba a preguntar ¿con qué frecuencia haces esas actividades?

R. Pues de lunes a sábado. Entre trabajo y ocio pues de lunes a sábado

P. ¿Dónde las realizas? En algún club, gimnasio como has dicho antes...

R. En gimnasios, centros culturales, locales que tenemos por ahí privados para...que nos los ceden para poder realizar estos...polideportivos también en el caso del fútbol

P. ¿A quién os los ceden? ¿A la casa cultural, a la asociación? Como dices que nos los ceden...

R. Nos los ceden a los profesores digamos. Vamos te tienes que buscar la vida y por ejemplo en una asociación de vecinos que tenían un localcito (sic) pequeño pues allí aprovecho y me entreno un poquito.

P. Vale. Y ¿cómo suelen ser las sesiones a grandes rasgos o qué partes de las sesiones o de los entrenamientos te pueden gustar más?

R. Hombre los estiramientos no molan nada. Yo disfruto con el dolor. La gente se ríe de mí pero sí que es cierto que disfruto con el dolorcito ese del músculo que sabes que lo estás trabajando y pues que disfruto más cuando estoy yo a mi aire, levantando peso, ya estás sintiendo que estás ahí quemando músculo. ¿Actividades en grupo? Tipo fútbol, pues claro, si estás en compañía lo disfrutas mucho más, pero vamos, una cosa es disfrutarlo a nivel físico porque te gusta hacer deporte y te gusta sentir tu cuerpo y otra cosa diferente es hacerlo digamos, ocio, que son dos cosas ¿no? Hacerlo por ocio y que lo disfrutes en compañía de, pues el fútbol que se realiza en equipo también se disfruta aunque a veces surgen por allí cosillas, de “me has dado una patada, me has hecho una falta” y esas cosas pero bueno, sí, se disfruta. Creo que todo es importante, la vida social al mismo tiempo que estás haciendo un deporte, no es lo mismo...mira yo estuve apuntado a un gimnasio año y medio pagando año y medio y he ido un par de veces y porque fui con un amigo. Yo sólo no me motivo para ir al gimnasio, sin embargo, en mi casa sí que lo hago. Será porque me da corte, o no sé.

P. Te da corte.

R. Hombre siempre... yo creo que a todo el mundo siempre le da un poquito de corte ir solo al gimnasio. Está todo el mundo mirándome, me siento observado, luego te persiguen por ahí los monitores “¿te ayudo en algo?” “no, no déjame a mi bola (sic) que ya yo solo me valgo”

P. En general, acerca de los beneficios esos de los que hablabas ¿has podido apreciar otros beneficios aparte de eso, de sentir el cuerpo, qué tipos de beneficios a nivel general has podido percibir?

R. ¿A nivel psicológico?

P. A nivel general

R. A nivel general. Pues es que yo pienso que todo va en conjunto. Si tú te sientes mejor contigo mismo, te sientes sano, estás...te sientes fuerte tanto física como mentalmente. Si estás disfrutando de una actividad en grupo pues también estás haciendo vida social, te sientes bien. Te echas unas risas también. Psicológicamente si tienes mucho estrés como es mi caso que yo vivo estresao (sic) de la mañana a la noche pues el hecho de levantar peso por ejemplo, o de jugar un partidito (sic) de fútbol y meter un patadón (sic) al balón pues te descarga adrenalina y te sientes mejor, relajado, luego sales de la ducha y sales super (sic) relajado “ que bien ya me he quitado toda...”, en lugar de darle un puñetazo a la chica de la ventaniña del banco, por ejemplo, que no se debe, pues coges y le das una patada al balón y te quedas tan a gusto. Entonces yo creo que a nivel general a todo el mundo le pasa.

P. Y ¿dirías que es importante para ti como hombre practicar estos deportes y actividades físicas?

R. ¿Importantes? Pues...a ver, yo de pequeño siempre he querido tener otro físico. Ya entramos dentro del tema transexualidad ¿no? Cuando uno se va desarrollando desde pequeñito y va desarrollando un cuerpo que no te gusta y ves fotografías de tíos super cachas, que son los que normalmente son más atractivos dices “joe (sic) quiero estar como éste ¿no?”. Es un poco de todo porque a mí siempre me ha gustado el deporte y supongo que habrá compañeros trans que no les gusta el deporte. Son un poco más vaguetes (sic), no me voy a meter con ellos pero cada uno tiene sus gustos, sus preferencias. Pero no sé, si te vas mirando en el espejo y no me gusta....(ruido de fondo, cafetería)... ¿se oye?

P. Espero que luego en la grabadora no

R. No me gusta lo que estoy viendo y quiero estar así ¿se puede asemejar a un complejo? Yo creo que no, porque va mucho más allá, es un sentir. A mí ha habido muchas veces que me han dicho “no pero es que esto es como un complejo que tú, yo que sé, tú tienes el culo gordo y te haces una liposucción y ya está. No, porque yo puedo vivir con un culo gordo por ejemplo, o con poco pecho o con mucho pecho...cualquier persona puede vivir así pero, desde mi punto de vista, ya depende de cada uno de cómo le afecte psicológicamente ese aspecto físico que no te gusta. Pero lo nuestro va más allá, es un sentir. Me siento así y quiero que me trate la sociedad de esta forma. Entonces voy a intentar hacer todo lo posible para

parecerme a ese que tengo ahí en la foto, que está todo cachas y es un machote ¿no? Para que me entiendas pero vamos, luego es una tontería. Como ves físicamente no soy tampoco gran cosa, soy bajito, soy delgadito entre comillas y tampoco tengo mucho (mira a los músculos de los brazos)...porque no tengo tiempo para muscularme. Desde pequeño siempre uno quiere empezar a hacer pesas, para muscularse, y ¿la pregunta cuál era porque me he enrollado y me he perdido?

P. Era un poco eso, el tema de si creías que era importante para ti como hombre la práctica de estos deportes y actividades.

R. Sí es importante desde el punto de vista de el sentir, nos sentimos hombres pues queremos parecernos físicamente a, todo lo que pueda ser aproximarse a esa meta... cada uno luego tiene sus metas en la vida ¿no? Pues tengo orejas de soplillo (se coge las orejas con las manos) pues me las opero y ya está. Cada uno se pone sus metas pero para nosotros es importante imagino que pues tener un físico que no se nos confunda, que no haya lugar a dudas de quienes somos. Y bueno pues te pasas toda la vida intentando conseguir estas metas.

P. Quisiera preguntarte ¿alguna vez has tenido algún problema o enfermedad que haya afectado a tu práctica deportiva?

R. Sí, muchas.

P. O en la actualidad ¿ha afectado tu estado de salud a tu práctica deportiva?

R. A ver, el asma. Por ejemplo (silencia) Te explico, aparte de profesor de educación física y de deporte me dedico a las terapias naturales. Soy osteópata trabajo mucho el tema de las emociones, me gusta mucho la medicina china, desde mi punto de vista, desde el punto de vista de la medicina china el asma es un problema emocional de tristeza, de pena por ponerte un ejemplo. No voy a tocar mucho el tema familiar pero sí que es verdad que quizás mi fondo familiar ha afectado. Imagino que me preguntarás después (asiento con la cabeza), por eso no lo quiero tocar. Eso conlleva que uno pues vaya cogiendo unas depresiones a parte de luego los problemas que haya tenido en la escuela y demás, que imagino que también me preguntarás, o sea, va todo unido. Todo eso hace que yo, por lo menos en mi casa, he estado toda mi vida desde pequeñito deprimido, deprimido, de bajón, sí me gustaba mucho el deporte y era lo único que me descargaba y donde me desahogaba y siempre lo buscaba, o sea, el balón siempre lo buscaba, en mi caso fútbol. He tenido lesiones de todo tipo, a parte del asma, en primavera no

podía porque me ahogaba y aún así como un bestia yo ahí corriendo, corriendo, después terminaba de correr un maratón y te ahogas, o sea, necesitas el ventolín pero yo ahí...si me muero en el intento me muero pero hago lo que me gusta. Eso en cuanto a enfermedades. Lesiones he tenido muchísimas, he jugado al fútbol mucho, los tobillos los tengo destrozados, rodillas, de hecho ahora no puedo hacer ni aerobio, ni step ni cosas de esas porque las rodillas no me dan. ¿Lesiones? Tengo hernias discales por todos lados, porque me he entrenado y he cogido mucho peso sin ningún tipo de control, también de trabajo, que quema mucho, he estado trabajando cogiendo mucho peso y bueno, pues son impedimentos que luego te van pasando factura. Ahora en mi caso pues por eso me dedico a este trabajo y quiero limitarlo solamente todo lo posible al pilates, porque pilates sabrás que está un poquito más orientado hacia la rehabilitación y la mejora de las lesiones. A ver, luego en el tema de la musculación pues hay muchos compañeros, compañeros y mucha gente, vamos a generalizar, mucha gente que se mete proteínas, que se mete mierdas (sic) ¿vale? Hay cosas naturales que te puedes meter y hay una alimentación que puedes seguir para mantener una línea, para muscularte más, para marcar más músculo, para tonificar.

P. ¿Cómo qué cosas?

R. Para tener más resistencia. Pues no sé, la alimentación desde limitar la ingesta de carbohidratos (sic) para intentar marcar más, para intentar que no te salga la tripita que es super difícil evitar hasta pues eso, meterte proteínas, los botes estos que ves ahí de HCA por ejemplo, hasta gente que conozco que se pincha que se cicla que...

P. ¿Tú únicamente el tema de la alimentación entonces? Entiendo que no te pinchas ni..

R. No ni quiero ni podría tampoco porque he intentado tomar...mira hay una planta que se llama "tribulus", es un arbusto de Bélgica creo que viene, que acelera la producción de testosterona. A más testosterona sabrás que físicamente más fuerza tienes y más desarrollar la musculatura y bueno, si tienes un problema de riñón te va a crear unas piedras en el riñón igual que las proteínas, la creatina, si te metes creatina pues el riñón lo vas a petar. Entonces yo hace tiempo antes de empezar el tratamiento sí intenté muscularme y sí estuve tomando estas cosas, claro se me juntó el comienzo del tratamiento con las pastillas que estuve tomando. También va por ciclos pero es algo natural, no son sintéticos que te metes, he

llegado a tener hasta pastillas de anabolizantes y esas cosas en mi mano, no he llegado a tomarlo porque conlleva un riesgo de no sé, de pérdida de masa muscular hasta que se te necrose el músculo, o sea que es bestial. Yo ahora mismo no me puedo tomar nada, ni quiero tampoco porque soy como soy y ya está, lo que dé de sí mi cuerpo y punto, no quiero meterme nada, aunque sea natural porque al final me va a repercutir en el riñón, yo he tenido infecciones de orina bastante frecuentes por este tema. La semana pasada estuve en el médico en la revisión. Por cierto me dijo que tenía un problema de próstata.

P. ¿sí?

R. Me ha habían hecho una ecografía para verme el sistema urinario, de riñones y demás. Creo que no lo ha mirado. Porque vamos, el sistema urinario del hombre y de la mujer son diferentes. Pues nada, tengo un problema de próstata y se ha quedado tan a gusto. Me ha dicho que tengo que eyacular más frecuentemente, después de la eyaculación tengo que miccionar.

P. ¿Qué le has dicho?

R. Pues primero le dije “mire lo siento, pero yo no eyaculo”, “¿a sí? Pues tienes que hacerlo más”, no lo pilló y segundo le pregunté que me explicara por qué tengo un problema de próstata sin tener próstata y se quedó así un poquito como a cuadros mirando por todos los lados a ver si ponía por algún papel si me habían operado de próstata y me la habían quitado. En fín, y ahí se quedó la cosa, no le expliqué más porque me demostró el tipo de profesional que es. Para qué contarle más. Eso sí fui a hablar con dirección, con atención al paciente y con administración, ¿esto fue ayer? ¿antes de ayer? Fue el martes. Pues estoy redactando un escrito.

P. Ya, normal. Y te iba a preguntar, ¿qué resultados físicos te gustaría alcanzar? Marcar, aumentar....

R. Hombre si pudieran regarme y crecer crecería pero va a ser que no. Dentro de los límites fisiológicos de cada uno pues sí, me gustaría estar más musculado. Tampoco soy muy partidario de algo excesivo, pero...yo es que me miro desde aquí y no veo na (sic).

P. Está musculado

R. Quiero, quiero más. Sí, La gente me dice no si tú estás bien trabajado pero quiero más, un poquito más. Tampoco me conviene porque tengo las rodillas mal y a más masa muscular más peso y a más peso mis rodillas se resienten,

impresionante pero sí que me gustaría mantener mi línea y físicamente estar un poquito más, sobre todo pectoral que me falta bastante. Este año me lo estoy currando un poquito más pero es que no tenía nada de pectoral. Físicametne pues las piernas, glúteos, y sobre todo más que físicamente, estéticamente, mantener mi espalda sana, o sea, eso importantísimo para ya durante el resto de mi vida porque tengo hernias y me tengo que cuidar

P. Claro

R. Pero a mí estéticamente pues eso, lo que te decía, tienes orejas de soplillo y no te gustan pues te las pegas, que hay pegatinas. Vi un programa de una chica que se las pegaba, y oye, si está más a gusto la chica pues oye, que cada uno tiene que aceptar su cuerpo tal y cómo es porque no somos perfectos. Es que los medios de comunicación nos ponen estos modelos que son tan divinos de la muerte y es que claro “joe (sic), como está, yo quiero estar así)

P. ¿Crees que en estos espacios, en gimnasios...y en estos espacios deportivos se refuerza más a aquellos cuerpos que son más masculinos y femeninos?

R. Sí. En los gimnasios y en la sociedad en general. Se refuerzan, sí siempre se tienen más consideración. Vamos a ver, yo ahora mismo ves mi tamaño, ves mi tamaño, ves mi físico, tampoco estoy tremendamente musculado y ahora yo mismo yo me meto de monitor de sala de musculación y no me cogen en ningún gimnasio. A nivel laboral se me cierran las puertas porque no soy alto, por ejemplo. Yo entiendo que para ser monitor de gimnasio tienes que estar to (sic) cachas y sujetar las barras y ayudar a la gente, joe (sic) si se te va a caer encima tendré que tener yo fuerza para sujetarlo ¿no? Pero bueno, no se tienen en cuenta tanto los conocimientos y la titulación sino más el físico. Eso es lo que veo desde mi punto de vista.

P. Te iba a preguntar, las clases a las que vas, las de pilates, las de taichí, ¿cómo es el ambiente en las clases? Con los compañeros, con los monitores o profesores...

R. ¿Cómo es el ambiente? Pues es que hay ambientes para todos los gustos, las clases que yo imparto pues no sé si tengo 17 grupos, cada uno de una edad diferente y cada uno de un barrio diferente. También se notan mucho los barrios y la clase social. Todos somos seres humanos y sí que se nota. A lo mejor luego vas a uno de estos barrios de mucho dinero, una clase social más alta y te esperas que sean más educados y no lo son. Eso va en la persona, pero bueno, luego en general

depende del grupo pero te puedo decir que con que haya sólo una persona en la clase que tenga unas energías así un poco turbias, que lleva mal rollo que está cabreado o cabreada con la vida, eso se contagia, lo contagia al resto de compañeros y bueno, pues más grupos que son más divertidos, de hacer algún chascarrillo y unas risitas y hay otros que son super serios, ahí muy centrados a lo que van y no quieren ni chascarrillos ni conversación ni nada, cada uno viene, hace lo que tiene que hacer y se va para su casa pero bueno, a las clases que asisto sí hay muy buena relación. Al fin y al cabo son compañeros míos los profesores, o sea que nos conocemos desde hace muchos años y si hay buena relación.

P. Y compañeros y monitores-compañeros, ¿conocen de tu identidad trans?

R. Pues la inmensa mayoría sí, vamos, si es que he salido en los periódicos...

P. ¿A sí?

R. En la tele y en todos los laos (sic). Los alumnos también muchos me han visto en la tele y por lo general te puedo decir que hay muchísimo respeto. Te puedes encontrar con alguna que otra persona que es un poco más indiscreta y te hace alguna pregunta o comentario que no la pertenece porque forma parte de mi vida privada, y luego hay gente intransigente, vamos a llamarla, no vamos a insultar a nadie, que se podría perfectamente, que se dedica a hacerte la vida imposible.

P. ¿También en estas zonas deportivas, gimnasios, clases deportivas o...?

R. Sí, en el trabajo. En mi trabajo.

P. ¿En tu trabajo?

R. Entonces claro, yo no tengo un centro deportivo que sea yo el dueño y señor de ello. No puedo coger y elegir a los alumnos y decir "tú, te machaco a ti porque me estás haciendo la vida imposible y eres un transfóbico o transfóbica". Hay que tener mucho cuidado. Pero bueno, son las menos. No me he encontrado con mucha gente así. La mayoría de la gente por desconocimiento, por ignorancia hacen preguntas que no les corresponden, y que te incomodan, porque son preguntas íntimas. Entonces al cabo de los años vas aprendiendo a poner una línea y decir, "mira, yo soy tu profesor, por muy buena relación que yo tenga contigo, por muchas bromitas que nos gastemos, este tema no lo toques, porque forma parte de mi intimidad. Y tienes que saber dar una respuesta ni demasiado borde ni demasiado tajante, encima de que te están incomodando y ni tampoco de demasiada manga ancha de te doy opción a que...es muy difícil plantarte porque a



veces te hacen unas preguntas que te quedas a cuadros, te dejan así paralizado y bueno como...tu estás pensando “cómo te atreves a preguntarme algo así, o sea, si estoy operado o no es asunto mío”

P. ¿Te han llegado a preguntar eso?

R. Sí, claro yo en este caso con esta señora yo siempre lo pongo de ejemplo, porque me pareció mi gracioso, porque mi reacción fue esa, ni lo pensé si quiera, creo que tenemos suficiente confianza con esa señora que me preguntó, señora de sesenta y tantos años, casada y demás, con hijos que no sé que le importaba a ella y me preguntó si estaba operado, entonces la miré así de arriba abajo y la dije “¿tú te depilas el chocho (sic)?”, claro la señora se quedó como...igual que tú me estás dejando a cuadros yo te estoy dejando a cuadros ¿no?, “¿cómo te sientes?” la dije, “a ver ¿cómo te sientes con mi pregunta?”, “ai perdóname que no me he dado cuenta”, “pues antes de hablar hay que pensar, antes de preguntar hay que pensar, es asunto tuyo, yo te he preguntado a ti cómo te acuestas con tu marido, que posturas te gustan hacer con tu marido”, entonces es que hay preguntas que no se hacen. ¿Qué te importa? Me ha preguntado más gente que si estoy operado, pero bueno depende de la persona, pues ya le dices “a ti que te importa, si quieres verlo vamos al baño, pero llegamos hasta el final”, y ya se empiezan a reírse, o sea, es que hay que tener cuidado y saber con quién estás tratando, qué tipo de relación puedes tener y mucha mano izquierda

P. ¿Has tenido alguna otra experiencia que haya sido significativa para ti tanto en el trabajo como en las clases?

R. ¿En este tema?

P. Sí, ya sea positiva...no hace falta que sea negativa, también puede ser positiva.

R. La más negativa ya te digo que fue cuando denuncié a la empresa, porque me dejaron sin horas, me redujeron el horario considerablemente y con eso no podía vivir y fue por culpa de dos señoras, que como digo, eran transfóbicas y que me hicieron la vida imposible ese año. Me insultaron en la cara, se reían, aquellos fue un infierno ese año, yo aguantando, me ponían quejas pero quejas sin fundamento de no sé, “pues no me gusta esto, pues mira lo que ha dicho el profesor, porque yo creo que esto es así y asá”, quejas continuas a diario, entonces claro pues el centro y la empresa decidieron que si yo era una persona conflictiva y esas señoras eran amigas de algún concejal, porque me consta que siguen entrando

en las listas y todo esto va a sorteo, es muy difícil entrar y van entrando un año tras otro pues tienen que tener algún contacto que las meta ahí dentro. El caso es que el resultado fue ese, que después de estar aguantándolas un año que ganas me daban de tirarlas por la ventana, así te lo digo, de contestarlas con una sonrisa encima, porque considero que lo que estaban buscando era picarme que yo saltara para tener un motivo de peso para echarme. No las hizo falta tener un motivo de peso, pusieron quejas y quejas y quejas hasta que consiguieron echarme. Pero me echaron de ese centro, de ese grupo y de los otros que estaban en la misma concejalía, entonces ya cantó un poquito y tuve que denunciar, negativo. Positivo pues la verdad es que en general yo no me esperaba, porque llevo muchos años dedicándome a esto, la gente me conoce de antes, en este barrio sobre todo aunque también hay gente que va por ahí hablando. Me consta que va por ahí hablando pero vamos, me da igual. No me esperaba esta reacción tan positiva, ¿vale? Porque me esperaba una catástrofe aquí todo el mundo se me va a echar encima después de lo que viví con aquellas otras dos, yo he tenido un miedo tremendo y todo lo contrario, la gente yo creo que me ha cogido como más cariño, porque claro antes me conocían y yo era el tipo extraño que se comporta de forma rara y no se sabe muy bien que...no sé si me explico. No estaba a gusto conmigo mismo y entonces yo hacía cosas raras que no me pertenecían dentro del género que ellos estaban viendo. Una vez que igual que yo encajo las piezas de mi puzle, de mi vida, digo “coño (sic) ahora lo entiendo, ahora entiendo todo lo que me ha pasado en mi vida, ahora voy encajando toda mi vida y ya me voy sintiendo yo mismo, vas con mucha más seguridad por la vida, mucho más contento mucho más feliz. Este año me han dicho además, porque este año es el primero que trabajo operado de aquí (mastectomía) y bueno pues me ha dicho mucha gente que qué cambio que he pegado, que estoy mucho más simpático, que estoy muchísimo mejor y lo noto, o sea, estoy muchísimo mejor conmigo mismo, me siento más seguro de mí mismo, no tengo por qué estar escondiéndome, o sea, como escondes esto (pecho) trabajando donde trabajo, me tengo que poner una camiseta ajustada y es que se ve.

P. ¿Utilizabas antes camisetas compresoras?

R. No, no, ya te he dicho, soy terapeuta y no me gusta necrosar tejidos y o sea, si es lo que hay es lo que hay. Sí que por ejemplo me he cortado mucho de ir a spas. Me gusta ir a spas, a balnearios y llevaba cuatro años sin ir hasta mes y medio, hasta hace mes y medio que fui al primero. A la playa pues sí he ido a la

playa y me he mostrado tal y como soy, el que mire y le moleste pues que mire para el otro lado. Es que yo soy así pero hay muchos que van a la playa a tomar el sol y se ponen una camiseta. Por qué me tengo que poner una camiseta y no tener derecho a tomar el sol, o sea, a mí me gusta tomar el sol. Entonces pues, no sé, supongo que también va en la persona y me da exactamente igual lo que pienses porque si no, no vives. Ya me he liado otra vez.

P. No si además es una cosa que te iba a preguntar luego más adelante, si había habido espacios a los que no habías podido acceder, como el tema del balneario que me contabas.

R. A ver, yo antes iba a los nogales, voy mucho, iba mucho, porque es barato, porque tienes hora y media porque está muy bien, porque hay mucha gente.

P. ¿Qué es, un balneario?

R. Es un spa urbano, está al lado del Calderón. Está muy bien de precio y bueno yo antes iba mucho allí, entonces yo me planteé, mira, te surgen muchos problemas en la vida, cuando empiezas un proceso de este tipo porque te cambia todo en la vida, porque te puedes encontrar problemas con el DNI, con las tarjetas de crédito, pero diario, un bombardeo diario y te tienes que poner en tu sitio y tienes que repetir unas doscientas veces al día “ella no, él”, “no me llamo así, me llamo así”, “no me trates así, trátame de la otra forma”, “soy un hombre, te estás confundiendo”, etc. Entonces psicológicamente es muy duro, es un bombardeo continuo, que la gente te ve de otra forma y se confunda, entonces tú les tienes que poner en su sitio. Muchas veces me he callado, me lo he llevado para casa y luego estoy cabreado todo el día. No, no me callo. No me callo porque es lo que tengo que hacer, decirlo y ponerme en mi sitio en el momento porque luego te cabreas, te lo tragas, te cabreas, explotas y explotas desproporcionadamente. Entonces yo dejé de ir al balneario precisamente por esto. Prefiero quedarme sin balneario a ir a un sitio de estos y que me digan “no, no te metas en este vestuario te tienes que meter en el otro”, vas a un balneario y ¿qué haces? ¿vas incoherentemente contra tu propia naturaleza, te pones un bañador femenino para ocultar tu pecho o te pones, como vas a la playa normalmente con tu bañador de hombre, según ellos haciendo topless?. En estos sitios privados según ellos está prohibido hacer topless, ¿cómo les explico yo con un dni sin cambiar, que yo lo tengo cambiado desde el año pasado y sí que es verdad que podría haber ido aún sin operar y haber dicho “no mira perdona, aquí está mi dni, esto es lo que pone en mi dni y yo entro en el

vestuario masculino y yo me baño con un bañador masculino, porque soy un hombre, pero es que no tenía ganas ni fuerzas, porque sabía que me iban a echar y que iba a tener que poner una reclamación y una denuncia y es que estoy hasta las narices. Entonces llega un momento y dices pues mira, me corto y no voy.

P. El tema del uso de vestuarios en estos centros, de trabajo, en el gimnasio y tal, ¿te cambias y te aseas allí o lo haces en tu casa?

R. Pues a ver, en el gimnasio donde estuve apuntado ya te digo que he ido dos veces y lo tengo aquí al lado de mi casa, prefiero venir a casa a ducharme tranquilamente. Si es verdad que te puedes ahorrar mucho en agua si te duchas allí pero a ver, los femeninos no los vi pero los masculinos eran duchas en plan...todo junto, o te duchas con un bañador puesto o va a cantar un poquito. O sea, no hay duchas privadas

P. Hay centros que pueden tenerlo, en este caso no ¿no?

R. En mi opinión deberían tenerlo todos porque hay gente más pudorosa y menos pudorosa, o sea ya no es por el problema que tengamos nosotros. Existimos y nadie tiene por qué saber nada y vernos...en la intimidad. Otro problema que me suele surgir mucho es cuando sales por ahí de noche a algún garito, no sé por qué pero los baños de los hombres no tienen puerta. Y yo digo una cosa, vamos a ver, si un hombre necesita hacer otro tipo de necesidades ¿tiene que hacerlo delante de otros ahí sentado en el váter? Pues que asco ¿no? O sea, es que se te quitan las ganas directamente. No entiendo por qué. El viernes pasado me quedé encerrado en un baño, que no tenía ni picaporte o sea, es que es....pero bueno, en caso de mi trabajo...hay algunos centros que tienen duchas y los que deberían estar obligados todos a tener duchas para actividades tipo aerobio que se suda y demás hay una ley que les obliga a tener duchas. Algunos no las tienen, pero bueno...En uno de los centros sí tengo un problema y es que...

P. Estás en varios centros entonces a la vez

R. Sí, estoy en muchos centros y que no me falte. A ver, cuando yo entro en mi clase a mi trabajo justo en el mismo aula donde yo voy a entrar salen las niñas de bailar flamenco creo que bailan. Son niñas de 8 o 10 años como mucho y claro pues sabes que tienen que llevar su típico traje, sus zapatitos y tal. Se tienen que cambiar, porque claro no se pueden llevar a las niñas a su casa y cambiarse en su casa pues las meten en los vestuarios a las niñas. Yo hablé con la directora porque es que se me metían todas las niñas a cambiarse a los vestuarios masculinos. Está

abierto. Y hablé con la directora y le dije, mira esto no porque a ver, yo no tengo por qué estar cambiándome delante de unas niñas y sus madres y encima la abuela, una vez me la abuela así de arriba a abajo, de “tú qué haces aquí”, menuda ostia (sic) y le dije “perdone señora pero es usted la que se ha confundido, aquí en la puerta pone masculino. Si está ocupado el femenino se espera y si no se aguanta con lo que está viendo. Vamos a ver, o sea, yo estoy en mi derecho, a ver si que es verdad que son los menos los hombres y el vestuario masculino está normalmente vacío.

P. Entonces en tu trabajo siempre utilizas los vestuarios ¿no? En ese caso sí

R. Hombre cuando yo quiero entrar en el vestuario y necesito cambiarme o lavarme o hacer otra cosa, porque también hay baños, o me espero o están las niñas ahí delante, con lo cual ya entro tarde a mi trabajo porque están las niñas ahí delante. Al final acordamos con la directora de que pues bueno, que lógicamente tienen que entrar los padres, otra cosa que no me explico. No sé si tendrás hijos pero vamos yo creo que un niño a los 8 o 10 años ya se puede cambiar solo y se puede vestir solo, pero bueno, los papás tienen que entrar con ellas. Claro, vienen padres y madres, las madres se meten con las niñas, eso es lo que acordamos, las madres se meten con las niñas al femenino pero el padre no tiene por qué meterse al vestuario, porque es un hombre hecho y derecho, al vestuario femenino y ver a mis alumnas, que son también adultas, cambiándose, que ha pasado. Claro ellas se lo han tomado a broma y demás, pero bueno, se puede montar ahí un lío tremendo

P. Está claro

R. Entonces pues el papá se mete con las niñas al vestuario masculino y está con ella cambiándola. ¿Qué vas a hacer? ¿También tengo que ser un poquito flexible y entenderlo no? Pero lo que no quiero es que se metan las niñas solas a mi vestuario a cambiarse, porque imagínate, la gente con lo retorcida que es lo que pueden llegar a pensar. Entonces intento llegar un poquito antes, quitarme diez minutos de mi vida, llegar un poquito antes y entrar al vestuario antes de que salgan las niñas. Esa es la solución que he encontrado

P. Con los otros vestuarios no tienes problemas ¿no?

R. No, porque no coincide...hombre, problemas, si hay otro hombre cambiándose, que no, porque es que en los centros culturales...en los gimnasios sí que hay muchos hombres pero en los centros culturales brillan por su ausencia. O sea, no tengo problemas en ese sentido

P. O sea, que sueles cambiarte cuando no hay nadie ¿no?

R. Exactamente. Si hay alguien pues evidentemente intento no cambiarme, o cambiarme hasta cierto punto, hasta donde se pueda ver

P. Ya

R. Pero bueno, también es verdad que me he cambiado en unos baños ahí en el instituto de salamanca, por ejemplo, sí y hay gente entrando y saliendo y nadie ve nada raro. Tampoco ven nada raro ¿no? Pero ya a la hora de ducharte ahí surgiría un problema. Ducharte en grupo, vamos, pero vamos, en general bien. Sí que es verdad que debería estar todo más adaptado a las necesidades de todo el mundo y tener en cuenta que existimos.

P. ¿Crees que una solución podría ser gestionar estos vestuarios, ya no sólo en estos espacios sino también por ejemplo en las escuelas que fueran mixtos? ¿O la solución sería distinta?

R. La solución debería empezar desde la raíz y la raíz es la educación desde mi punto de vista. Mira ha habido un caso hace poco de una niña en Estados Unidos que ha denunciado y demás.

P. Sí, en colorado

R. ¿A quién ha denunciado? ¿Al centro? ¿o a denunciado a los compañeros y al centro? Porque imagino que son los compañeros, los niños son muy crueles, son los compañeros los que ven lo que no les cuadra y los que se quejan, ¿no? los que se meterán con esta niña y dirán “eh, es que tú no tienes que estar aquí”. Debería cambiar entonces la educación de la gente, dar más visibilidad a esto y que la gente vea que esto es una cosa totalmente normal y que existimos en el mundo. No sé, es una forma más de vida. Igual que hay un montón...esto va a sonar raro y feo además, pero no quiero compararlo, para nada, pero igual que hay un montón de razas de monos, ¿vale? Todos forman parte de la misma especie de monos ¿no? es que encima no tenía otro animal que poner...hay muchos felinos, vamos a poner el ejemplo de los felinos, es que los monos y yo...hay muchas razas ¿no? dentro de los felinos, hombre dentro del ser humano también hay mucha diversidad, tanto a nivel de orientación sexual como a nivel de género, que no sea lo más común que se vea, pero bueno oye, somos elementos exóticos en el sistema de este mundo, digo yo. Yo me siento privilegiado y el que piense lo contrario es problema suyo. Modesto baja, no tengo abuela pero si no piensas de esta manera te come el mundo y te come la mierda. Yo me siento privilegiado en muchos sentidos, en otros

pues...como todo tiene sus pros y sus contras Ahora lo que no se puede admitir es que a un niño pequeño donde se le está desarrollando su personalidad se le machaque de esta manera, entonces la solución sería primero que sus compañeros no le machaquen y le respeten y le vean como una persona normal, que no le vean como un bicho raro y le traten como tal. Y segundo, pues sí, por supuesto respetar siempre aunque soy de la opinión de que los vestuarios deberían ser mixtos porque el tema tabú yo estoy en contra de todos los temas tabús, tanto a nivel sexual como a nivel de un desnudo, o sea, un desnudo es natural, nacemos en pelotas y nos morimos en pelotas y ya está y es así de claro, un desnudo es totalmente natural y el que vea más allá es porque tiene la mirada sucia. Volvemos a lo mismo, cambia esa mirada sucia y cambia la mentalidad dela gente y podrá haber vestuarios mixtos, donde nadie vaya a ver más allá. Tiene su peligro en el caso de los niños y los adolescentes porque menudas las hormonas como van para arriba y para abajo. Entonces desde mi punto de visa pienso así pero creo que también deberían respetar a la persona, o sea, hacer vestuarios mixtos pero poner apartados donde tú puedas, si quieres y si tienes un poquito más de pudor meterte en tu intimidad y cambiarte en tu intimidad. O sea respetar eso porque hay gente que no le gusta mostrar su cuerpo hoy por hoy y que no tiene por qué mostrarlo, entonces se tiene que reprimir de cambiar y de ducharse en el trabajo, en el colegio, en cualquier sitio porque no quiere eso.

P. De todos esos deportes de los que me hablabas antes, bueno deportes, actividad física, pilates, taichí... ¿desde cuándo llevas haciéndolos? o ¿siempre has hecho esos deportes?

R. Pilates empecé con él a los 19 como alumno, empecé con él como alumno como a los 19 cuando estaba haciendo el grado de educación física, lo dejé ahí olvidado, la verdad es que me venía muy bien pero a mí me aburría. Yo era un adolescente que quería más movimiento y el pilates me aburría pero sí me vino muy bien físicamente entonces cuando me diagnosticaron las hernias yo me dedicaba a otra cosa. Yo esto me lo saqué en el extranjero, vine a España, miré el trabajo que te ofrecen y el primero pues “¿lo coges?”, venga pues vale. Ya me olvidé un poquito de la rama del deporte, aunque estaba titulado para ello, me olvidé de ello, me salió un trabajo de reparto, cogiendo peso y demás, yo estaba contento y bueno, hasta que me diagnosticaron las hernias, que me tiré como cuatro o cinco meses de baja, cada vez peor, en mi casa y me acordé del pilates y dije

“mira, los médicos no me dan solución, nada más que me dan pastillas y esto a mí me duele cada vez más”, me puse a hacer pilates otra vez, recordando lo que había aprendido y se me saltaban las lágrimas del dolor pero a las dos semanas estaba prácticamente recuperado, es que llegué a no poder andar siquiera, me fallaba la fuerza de una pierna, me caía por la calle, bueno ya era un cuadro de...súper grave, yo me replanteé toda mi vida laboral y dije “mira yo no puedo seguir trabajando en esto”, y como me vino bien el pilates pues me planteé volver a retomar el tema deportivo pero sin ningún tipo de impacto o sea, el boxeo por ejemplo, pues no. En plan de las rodillas pues el aerobio pues como tampoco y dije “bueno pues voy a estudiar pilates, me saco la titulación de pilates como anexo al...me hago experto en pilates como anexo a la educación física” y pues nada, desde entonces y genial, genial. Más contento que nunca. La verdad es que si me lo hubieras dicho hace unos años, hace diez años me dices que me iba a dedicar a esto...a mí me daba muchísimo corte dar clases colectivas pero bueno, con el rollo de que era en inglés y de que yo era español y de que no entendía muy bien el idioma y no hablaba bien pues bueno me escudaba en eso y decía “bueno, si luego hago alguna tontería o alguna cosa”, me daba mucho corte pero bueno, como la gente me quería y tal y como yo era el españolito pues nada, “le perdonamos todo porque ha dicho una cosa ahí que no tiene mucho sentido pero bueno, como no sabe inglés...” y claro, venir aquí a España y dar una clase colectiva en español, dices “dios...” e impone y me llegas a decir a mí hace diez años que me voy a poner delante de tanta gente a dar clases y te digo “no, tú estás flipando (sic), ni de coña (sic)”, según era yo antes claro. ¿Estoy hablando muy bajo no?

P. No, no la música está baja así que no te preocupes

R. A vale, pues nada, eso.

P. Y te iba a preguntar, ¿tu identidad como hombre es pública en todos los ámbitos?

R. ¿Qué si es...?

P. Qué si es pública, quiero decir que si no es algo que...no hay ningún ámbito en el que todavía tengas que fingir a lo mejor otra cosa

R. Yo fingir nunca. Yo no valgo ni para lameculos ni para hacer la pelota ni para fingir. No, yo soy como soy y el que me quiera acepar que me acepte y el que no que le den por culo (sic) hablando claramente, que se aparte de mi vida lo más lejos posible.



P. ¿Cuándo hiciste pública tu identidad?

R. Pues en cuanto tomé la decisión de...me pasé todo un verano con muchos dolores de cabeza meditando y pensando sobre mi vida y por qué yo no era feliz... Porque siempre tuviera lo que tuviera.

Interrupción teléfono móvil

R. Yo tuviera lo que tuviera no me sentía completo, no me llenaba nada y bueno, pues por una serie de circunstancias de que un día te confunden y te tratan en masculino y dices “coño (sic) si a mí me gusta que me trates así”. Ya dando clases y viendo cómo van las señoras que coquetean contigo, que es muy típico, señoras mayores ¿eh?, coquetean contigo y tienen ahí un jueguecito tu dices “coño, a mí me gusta que me traten así, a mí me mola (sic) esto, yo me siento así” y bueno, pues por una serie de anécdotas que te van pasando y dices joe (sic), ya te planteas, alguno que hace una pregunta “pero tú ¿cómo te sientes? Tú si pudieras volver a nacer ¿cómo serías?” y lo tienes clarísimo, dices “coño” (sik), ahí ya se te enciende la bombillita y dices “coño (sic) si yo quisiera ser hombre, de hecho me siento hombre y soy hombre”, o sea, es que me comporto como tal, de toda la vida, en todos los roles que vas adoptando desde pequeño es que tu cabeza es lo que te está diciendo, que te tienes que comportar así y no te cuadra porque la gente te rechaza porque te estés comportando así. Cuando eres pequeño no entiendes las cosas

P. ¿A quién se lo contaste primero?

R. A quién se lo conté primero...pues a mí pareja, a la que era mi pareja entonces. Sí.

P. ¿Cómo reaccionaron tus amigos, tu familia cuando se lo contaste?

R. Los amigos, en general, los amigos verdaderos bien, los que yo creían que eran amigos míos “y cómo vas a hacer eso, eso es una mutilación, no sé qué”, de hecho he perdido el contacto con toda esa gente porque te pones a intentar explicarles que es que no se trata de un complejo. Sí la mayoría trata de explicarte “sí tú lo que pasa es que te sienes acomplejado”, no estoy acomplejado. A mí lo que me pasa es que me está machacando la sociedad porque no me está tratando como yo me siento, ya está así de claro, como me están machacando constantemente con eso yo no encuentro mi identidad ni encuentro mi ubicación y si no encuentro mi ubicación entonces ya no soy persona, ¿dónde queda mi personalidad? ¿En un teatro que estoy fingiendo ser una persona que no soy, que

no siento ser? Llega un momento en que dices “mira, se acabó, voy a dejar de fingir, voy a dejar de tener contento a todo el mundo e intentar tener contento a todo el mundo y tomo esta decisión porque es mi vida”, tomas las riendas de tu vida y dices “allá que voy, el que me quiera seguir que me siga y el que no que le den por culo” y en caso de mi familia, pues mira....bueno como es anónimo no me importa contarlo. Mi madre es testigo de jehová. Mi hermano también y mi padre es policía, de familia de miliars. Sí. Mi abuelo era un facha tremendo y toda la familia que le rodea también, toda la familia. Pues bueno, por parte de mi padre como tampoco puff (sic), le da igual todo, pues la verdad es que me vino “ a pues hijo si tú no estás contento y eres feliz así pues mira, de puta madre (sic), yo te apoyo”, relativamente te apoyo porque luego hay cosas que en la mente suya no les cabe ¿vale? Eh se lo dije a mi madre cuando empecé el tratamiento. Yo a la familia no les dije nada hasta que empecé el tratamiento y se lo dije principalmente “mira mamá, a partir de ahora cuando me vayas a llamar me vas a notar que me está cambiando la voz y cuando me veas,- porque no nos vemos muchas veces al año-cuando me veas me vas a notar un cambio físico, que sepas que es por esto, por esto y por esto, mínimo de una explicación, no es cuestión de pedir permiso, depende de la edad que tengas ¿no? pero yo a ver, con treinta añazos (sic), fuera de casa desde los dieciocho no tengo que pedir permiso a nadie ni tengo por qué pedir consentimiento ni a ver qué opinas y qué no opinas. No esto es lo que hay y si quieres lo respetas y si no (chasquido dedos) fuera de mi vida. Entonces bueno pues ella en principio reaccionó muy bien, me dijo que bueno que si era lo que yo quería en mi vida que ella lo respetaba aunque no lo admitiera por su religión, digo bueno, mientras respetes mi vida es suficiente. Ahora bueno, el respeto nace desde un tratamiento hacia mí que no sea en femenino. Más adelante tuve que ponerle las pilas de nuevo a ella y a mi hermano, fue a verles, iba para quedarme un fin de semana y constantemente me llamaban por mi nombre anterior y me trataban en femenino, entonces yo me sentía súper incómodo. Cogí mis maletas, me levanté por la mañana, las puse ahí, desayuné y mientras estaba desayunando les dije “mira, he hecho las maletas y me voy a marchar, os voy a dejar que penséis y que meditéis. A mí este trato me está haciendo daño. O sea, ya no es ni cuestión de respeto ni no respeto, a mí es que este tratamiento me está haciendo daño, si me estáis tratando constantemente en femenino y me estáis llamando de esta manera yo aquí sobro porque ya no soy esta persona. O sea olvidaros de la persona que

habéis conocido durante toda la vida”, “es que hijo entiende que es muy difícil”, sí si yo entiendo que sea muy difícil pero si yo os estoy corrigiendo constantemente que es muy cansado “hija no, hijo”, “bueno sí lo que sea”, lo que sea no, es hijo, no es lo que sea, ¿qué es, una cosa? O sea, vamos a ver, a mí esto me hace daño igual que vuestra respuesta, lo que sea, no, lo que sea no, lo dices y te acostumbras a decir hijo y hoy por hoy todavía mi madre se confunde. Hoy por hoy mi madre a sus amistades no les ha contado nada y cuando habla conmigo por teléfono intenta hacerlo cuando está a solas para que no la oiga nadie o intenta a veces si pasa alguien por ahí delante entonces me llama hija. Vamos a ver, “¿te avergüenzas de mí?” Esa es otra conversación que tengo pendiente con ella. Pero bueno en general sí, van cambiando un poquito. Entendieron. Lo que yo quería que entendieran es que a mí ese trato me hace daño y como les dije “si a mí algo me está haciendo daño, yo necesito ahora mismo en este proceso estar fuerte me voy a alejar de todo lo que me hace daño, incluida mi familia por mucho que me pese. Incluida mi familia o sea, “ahí os quedáis os dejo que lo meditéis y me coge y me voy pa (sic) mi casa y os dejo que lo meditéis y cuando hayáis tomado una decisión entonces me llamáis”.

P. ¿Qué cambios físicos llevaste a cambio primero? ¿Qué cambios te han resultado más fáciles llevar a cabo y cuáles te han costado más?

R. La voz lo primero.

P. ¿La voz lo primero?

R. La voz y aún me sigue cambiando ¿eh? Yo es que he empezado con un tratamiento muy flojo por el tema del riñón, por el tema de que quiero cuidar mi salud lo más posible, porque me parece una burrada, desde mi punto de vista ¿eh? Hay mucha gente que tiene prisa por que le salga todo el vello, porque ya, cambios ya, al mes siguiente ya quieren estar cambiados totalmente y no es así. El cuerpo tiene que adaptarse, acostumbrarse a una serie de procesos hormonales que conllevan un tiempo. Pues como todo. ¿Qué pasa cuando llega el calor de golpe? Puff (sic) estás así y hasta que se te adapta el cuerpo a ese calor ¿no? eh, desde mi punto de vista tengo que empezar despacio e ir adaptando el cuerpo según le pida a cada uno su cuerpo esa adaptación, porque luego cada cuerpo reacciona de una manera diferente. Y encima yo con las infecciones urinarias y demás pues he querido ir despacio. Lo primero la voz. Lo primero incluso antes del tratamiento psicológicamente es que estoy segurísimo de que también aquí (señala cabeza)

hacemos mucho, psicológicamente uno cambia. Es que me cambió hasta la voz, me cambió la mirada, me cambió la forma de ser antes de empezar, o sea antes de un tratamiento hormonal..

P. ¿Cuánto tiempo pasó desde que empezaste el tratamiento hormonal hasta que..?

R. Pues mira me pasé todo el verano pensando y cuando tomé la decisión fue la primera visita que hice al endocrino. La decisión la tomé en agosto. La visita al endocrino fue a finales de agosto y el tratamiento pues el 21 de enero después de ese año o sea, unos meses, agosto, septiembre, octubre, noviembre, diciembre y enero, cinco meses, que es poco para lo que suele tardar.

P. ¿Qué cambios físicos llevaste tú a cabo también primero, pelo corto...

R. A no, yo siempre he ido así.

P....La vestimenta también la modificaste?

R. No, no he modificado nada. Bueno sí, me dio por comprarme camisas ¿vale? Porque tienes que hacer un test de vida real. A mí me han gustado mucho las camisas y no me las he comprado (sic) pues no se, pero me dio por comprarme camisas. Yo siempre he vestido en plan masculino pero con camisetas, camisetas anchas y esas cosas, o camisetas ajustadas, también tuve una temporada que me dio por ponerme camisetas ajustadas a pesar de no estar operado, pero bueno oye...quería no se...rachas que tienes en la vida. Me dio por comprarme camisas pero por disimular un poquito el pecho ¿vale?. Si estás intentando llevar a cabo un test de vida real y dices que eres un hombre y que te llamas así y que bueno, tu físicamente no tienes un físico que se adapte a lo que dices que eres pues tendrás que disimularlo de alguna forma ¿no? y bueno pues me dio por comprarme camisas sí, que me las sigo poniendo, o sea es que me encantan las camisas. Tendré ciento y pico camisas, por hay..

P. Y ¿afectó tu cambio, el tema de la hormonación y tal a tu práctica deportiva? Quiero decir en algún momento supuso por ejemplo un cambio de centro o algo así.

R. Sí ya te digo que fue justo cuando empecé el tratamiento cuando tuve los problemas con estas señoras, yo evidentemente trabajo por temporadas. Aunque no había empezado el tratamiento yo imagínate la voz que tenía, no había empezado el tratamiento y me presenté, el primer día en clase, me presenté como Christian. ¿Qué voy a hacer? ¿esperar hasta enero cuando ya empiece el tratamiento para

decir “no ya no me llamo tal ahora me llamo Christian?” Las vuelves locas, a la gente las vuelves locas. A ver, soy Christian y soy Christian desde el principio y ya está y bueno, me presenté como tal desde el primer día, en el trabajo pues me afectó en ese sentido.

P. Me gustaría que...bueno cambiamos un poco de tema, me gustaría que hablásemos un poco de tu infancia y me gustaría que me comentaras un poco, en qué situaciones, de cuándo te diste cuenta de tu identidad de género

R. Pues mira, yo había oído hablar de la transexualidad en Inglaterra. He vivido en un ambiente muy...como en una burbuja con el tema de la religión, con lo cual no tenía mucho acceso a. Recuerdo una profesora que tuve que yo era el único que daba ética y recuerdo a una profesora que tuve que tenía ochenta y dos años, que no estaba jubilada porque le encantaba su trabajo y me enseñó una fotografía. Ahora lo recuerdo y sé por dónde iba ella pero en su día no lo pillé. En el libro de ética hablando de la transexualidad y en el libro había una foto de una mujer encerrada entre rejas en una cárcel y así, como deprimida, es que me acuerdo de la imagen, y claro, ella como que intentó explicarme. Yo en su día no lo pillé porque no me veía reflejado. Siempre ponen el ejemplo de la mujer transexual pero no del hombre transexual. Entonces yo conocía que las mujeres transexuales existían, pero no conocía de los hombres transexuales, que me pudiera pasar a mí ¿no? ¿Cuándo te das cuenta? Es que ahora recordando cuando yo era pequeño yo desde que era pequeño adopté roles masculinos, no entendía por qué la gente me rechazaba, no entendía por qué yo me comportaba de esa forma y la gente me rechazaba y si me comportaba de otra forma era mejor visto pero aún así era un poco raro. O sea, te comportas como una mujer pero eres una mujer masculina, que anda así despatarra (sic) y claro, la gente te mira como, ¿de qué vas? Te tachan de lesbiana y punto, y se quedan tan a gusto la gente. Eh...

P. ¿Cómo ..? no perdona, perdona, sigue

R. Pues te vas dando cuenta a lo largo de tu vida, ¿en qué punto exactamente? Pues no sé, a veces a los veinte años, a los dieciocho años, depende de la educación que te den, de la educación de tus padres si lo saben detectar, depende de los profesores. Por favor, los profesores, es que en todas las universidades donde estudian magisterio deberían enseñarles cómo detectar, un poquito más de psicología, cómo detectar estos casos y cómo impedir que estos niños estén sufriendo un acoso por parte de sus compañeros porque son diferentes, porque les

ven diferentes y es que, mira, yo en mi caso los profesores veían que me estaban pegando en el recreo, me estaban pegando delante de ellos y no hicieron nada. No hacían absolutamente nada y se lavaban las manos, yo era el culpable de todo por lo visto, porque era el que quería jugar al fútbol y claro, allí en ese colegio sólo era yo, la única chica (comillas con las manos) que quería jugar al fútbol. Te puedes imaginar y claro, pues ellos no hacían ni puto (sic) caso. ¿Quiénes eran los adultos? Mis padres por otro lado, como siempre se andaban peleando y estaban en su mundo, en sus problemas pues tampoco, tampoco vieron. Vieron cosas, me llevaron a un psicólogo pero no supieron tratar este tema, los psicólogos no están preparados, por lo menos por entonces no lo estaban. A mí cuando me llevaron la primera vez a un psicólogo a los doce años me hicieron sentir cómo si yo fuera el culpable de los problemas del matrimonio de mis padres. Así es cómo me sentí. “Me estáis llevando al psicólogo porque vosotros discutís y yo soy el culpable”. Vamos a ver si me está llevando al psicólogo por un tema de orientación sexual o de género, dímelo, ¿no? incluso tengo mis dudas de si mi madre en alguna ocasión me puso un tratamiento para hormonarme hormonas femeninas, para parar un poquito el crecimiento del vello porque yo siempre he tenido mucho más vello en los brazos y eso se me cortó totalmente. Tengo mis dudas, pero bueno

P. ¿A qué cosas te gustaba jugar cuando eras un niño? Juegos en la calle, ¿a qué cosas te gustaba jugar?

R. He tenido pocos amigos, ¿vale? Por esto que te comento, pero bueno, siempre juegos de pelota, juegos de correr, de hacer el burro, de saltar, a ver quién salta más. Vamos, yo era feliz corriendo, correr, correr y la pelota.

P. ¿Te llevabas mejor con niñas o con niños?

R. Pues al principio me llevaba mejor con niños hasta que me echaron de su grupo porque yo no pertenecía a su grupo y claro, encima corría más que ellos, y les jodía (sic) más. Eh...y luego pues con las chicas sí. A día de hoy me sigo llevando mejor con las chicas y a día de hoy me sigo llevando mejor con ellas. Con los hombres como no me he relacionado prácticamente porque siempre ha habido un rechazo...luego cuando entras en la adolescencia y claro, los chavales pues quieren relacionarse con chavalas que sean monas, que sean guapas, que les interesen, las hormonas ¿no? y yo no era, yo no entraba dentro de su...vamos ningún tío (sic) se enamoraría de mí cuando era adolescente porque no, yo no era nada femenino y era el típico bestia, si era más burro que ellos, entonces ¿cómo se

iban a fijar en mí? Entonces no me he relacionado nada más que cuando era pequeñito con los chavales, alguno que otro pues sí oye, pero no hay unión, ha habido un rechazo siempre, ostia (sic), sí ha habido un intento de “vamos a intentar hablar con éste” pero claro, en cuanto yo me ponía a hablar con ellos y veían que “ostia (sic), no me cuadra si es que es más burro que yo”, lo rechazaban ¿no? Pues sí, me he llevado siempre mejor con las tías (sic), me he relacionado más con ellas y hoy por hoy me sigo llevando mejor con las tías (sic). Con los hombres me queda todavía coger esa confianza en mí mismo de me estoy relacionando con un tío y coger los roles, pequeños detalles que no cuadran, por ejemplo estoy hablando contigo y estoy haciendo así (entrecruzar los dedos de ambas manos), gestos un poco...yo siempre lo he dicho no me quiero convertir en el típico orangután de...estos tíos (sic) de “que pasa macho (sic), no sé qué”. El otro día me encontré con un alumno que me dio una pedazo de ostia (sic) aquí (hombro izquierdo) “venga macho, cuídate”, “pum”(sic) “joe (sic) tío (sic), me vas a romper, ¿hay necesidad de darme estas ostias (sic) o qué?” yo tampoco soy así, hay ciertos comportamientos del macho que quizás debería de pulir un poquito más pero claro, como no he tenido ese aprendizaje...ahora es cuando me estoy fijando más en el comportamiento masculino e intentando variarlo. Que sí por un lado coger roles pero no sabes bien cómo comportarte, no sé si me explico. Te salen innatos los roles pero luego por otro lado hay otras cosas que no, porque ya no sabes muy bien cuál es la realidad, has pasado tanto tiempo viviendo en un teatro que ya no sabes muy bien cómo te tienes que comportar.

P. En tu caso tus padres ¿qué tipo de juguetes te regalaban o con quién solías jugar?

R. Las barriguitas y me dedicaba a quitarles la ropa y desnudarlas. Les quitaba las bragitas (sic) y las ponía en la noria. Me hacía gracia la rajita que tenían (risa). En fin nada, yo le quitaba, le quitaba los juguetes a mi hermano, los coches. La verdad es que se ha portado muy bien conmigo, ha sido de estos típicos que les gustaba o compartía las cosas conmigo y no le importaba, como niños que éramos pues siempre alguna vez sí que tal pero vamos, yo le quitaba los juguetes y me quedaba tan a gusto. Y él jugaba conmigo.

P. ¿Qué juguetes le quitabas?

R. Pues los coches por ejemplo, los cochecitos estos chiquitines, los pitufos, no sé cosas así en plan....juguetes mixtos. Un juego de estos que le regalaron de construcción.

P. Y en la asignatura de educación física, en el colegio, luego más tarde hablaremos de la del instituto, en la asignatura de educación física del colegio ¿cómo la recuerdas? ¿qué tipo de actividades hacíais?

R. Era mi favorita, era mi favorita pero al mismo tiempo...a ver, yo me sentía rechazado por los compañeros porque siempre les ganaba a todos, o sea, no por echarme flores pero sólo había un chaval que corría más que yo, que era más rápido. Yo era el más rápido, salvo él, yo era el más rápido con lo cual había un rechazo tremendo. Normalmente hacíamos salto, potro, las tonterías estas de abdominales, nos hacían pruebas físicas y yo siempre ahí pues de los mejores. Cuando tocaba una actividad libre, las niñas a jugar al baloncesto y los niños a jugar al fútbol. Tuve un profesor que nos daba a elegir, “¿qué queréis?¿qué queréis hacer?” La verdad es que eso estaba muy bien por un lado, porque “¿qué queréis hacer? A cada uno lo que le apetezca ¿fútbol o baloncesto?” las niñas seguían eligiendo baloncesto y los niños seguían eligiendo el fútbol, ¿yo qué hacía? ¿Me quedaba entre medias? El baloncesto no me ha gustado nunca. A veces por no quedarme fuera decía “pues venga voy a jugar al baloncesto” y otra veces que me apetecía, porque decía “por qué me tengo que quedar yo sin jugar al fútbol si lo que me gusta es jugar al fútbol. Pues me metía a jugar al fútbol ¿qué pasaba? Pues que un día por ejemplo pues este chaval que corría más que yo estaba muy picado (sic) conmigo, la verdad es que yo con él también, me metió una patada impresionante, porque según él yo le había pisado o yo que sé, a ver son cosas que pasan. Yo le pisé por lo visto, le hice mucho daño y me metió una patada así sin ton ni son y entonces pues, no sé, yo reaccioné, le metí una ostia (sic) que lo tumbé. Para qué queremos más. Una tía (sic) tumbando a un tío (sic). Madre de Dios, se quedó el tío (sic)...que se rieron todos, porque es que encima hubo una carcajada general por parte de todo el mundo como diciendo “vamos a ver, ¿le metes una patada y ella te da un puñetazo y te tumba?” pues ahí ya sí que me enfilé, ya a partir de ahí no quise jugar más al fútbol con ellos, porque para qué, o sea, yo, no te voy a decir que haya sido pacífico toda la vida pero no me gustaba tampoco crear conflictos, aunque me los creara la gente. A mí si me atacan me voy a defender, lo tengo muy claro, pues bastante tiempo estuve sin defenderme, porque me daban de ostias (sic)



hasta en el carnet de identidad y yo me quedaba ahí parado. Porque a mí siempre me han enseñado que no tengo que pegar a nadie, entonces...pero si te están pegando tendrás que defenderte ¿no? un buen día ya te tocan los cojones y explotas y metes un puñetazo y dices “coño (sic), si me puedo defender, ahora a ver quién cojones viene a meterse conmigo” y pasas de un extremo al otro, en mi caso al menos.

P. Y ese profesor que os daba la opción de elegir, ¿también era en el colegio?

R. Sí, lo que pasa es que ese profesor se marchó y vino, no soy racista ¿vale?, no soy racista pero sí es verdad que una persona que viene del extranjero de un país africano es más machista, viene de una cultura más machista y nos vino un profesor negro.

P. Entonces ¿tu relación con el profesor...

R. Malísima

P. malísima?

R. No, porque es que no nos dejaba, ya no nos permitía tomar esa elección de fútbol o baloncesto, no, era directamente “las chicas al baloncesto y daros por contestas”

P. ¿Hacías actividades de expresión corporal o algo?

R. No. Fue hace muchos años yo creo que aquello no se llevaba entonces. De todas formas recuerdo algo así parecido, hicimos obras de teatro y yo siempre intentaba cogerme el papel menos importante, no quería llamar la atención. Yo es que he sido muy tímido.

P. El tema de los vestuarios en la asignatura de Educación física, ¿os cambiabais en el colegio?

R. No, yo no. Ellos yo creo que tampoco. No, no se cambiaban.

P. ¿Era diferente la relación que tenías con los compañeros o con el profesorado en la asignatura de educación física que en el resto de asignaturas?

R. Sí. Sí claro, porque yo lo disfrutaba. Yo estaba deseando que llegara la educación física aunque luego me jodieran (sic) y no me dejaran jugar al fútbol. Después de ciertas situaciones lo que me terminó pasando es que, como soy asmático, mi madre me hizo un papel médico diciéndome que estaba exento de hacer educación física, o sea, que me sentí como más apartado incluso. Todo el afán de mi madre era que yo no hiciera nada que fuera de “marimacho” como ella decía. Mi madre como sabía que yo en educación física me desahogaba y me

desfogaba y hacía lo que me daba la gana pues me quiso cortar eso, hasta el punto que, bueno, a mí me perjudicó muchísimo porque la poca relación que podía tener con mis compañeros, que era ahí en educación física, yo ya no la tenía.

P. ¿Con tus compañeros masculinos dices o tus compañeros en general?

R. En general. O sea, yo me quedaba en un sitio apartado sentadito leyendo un libro mientras mis compañeros estaban jugando al fútbol o estaban haciendo lo que fuera. Yo no hacía educación física, porque tenía un problema de espalda...

P. ¿Eso a partir de cuándo fue?

No sé, a los diez. Entonces también eso me perjudicó bastante hasta que ya la dije “mira yo quiero hacer gimnasia, es que me gusta, quiero hacerlo” “bueno, pues nada”, me levantaron la veda y ya lo pudo hacer pero fue cuando entró el potro profesor

P. ¿Cómo fue el cambio del colegio al instituto?

R. Me volví agresivo, si si si, me volví agresivo porque a mí el colegio, a ver, yo hasta 7º de EGB, conoces el sistema antiguo, imagino, hasta 7º de EGB estuve en un colegio que me hicieron la vida imposible, me pegaban, se reían de mí, mi vida se convirtió en algo insoportable. Cuando mi madre se enteró me cambió de colegio para terminar el 8º. Pasé de ser la lesbiana del colegio a ser la puta del colegio porque se me ocurrió decir que yo también me hacía pajas, madre de dios, yo es que soy así de abierto y de directo y como no le veo nada malo, porque creo que es algo normal y natural de toda la vida. Claro el chico sí que puede decir que se hace pajas pero una chica no puede decir que se hace pajas, no por dios, ella es pura y virginal hasta la muerte, aún con hijos, pero pura y virginal, entonces pues pasé de una cosa a otra. Tampoco fue nada importante porque como eso no fue un año nada más, me llevaba mejor con los compañeros, eso sí, me dejaban jugar al fútbol y hacer lo que me diera la gana.

P. ¿Cómo era la educación física ahí? ¿Cambió?

R. Pues no mucho

P. Las actividades que realizabais.

R. Las actividades más o menos el mismo sistema, gimnasio, colchoneta, potro, lanzamiento de peso, pues eso, para hacer pruebas y estadísticas nada más.

P. ¿Crees que es adecuada la forma de evaluar la asignatura de Educación Física?

R. No, por lo menos lo que yo he vivido, no sé cómo lo harán ahora pero deberían de motivar un poquito más al personal a...yo lo hubiera vivido fatal ¿eh? Pero pienso que deberían motivar más a la gente en vez de dejarles vía libre para elegir los equipos hacer ellos los equipos, utilizando un poquito de psicología, viendo los que se quedan un poquito más fuera, intentar integrarlos dentro, integrar hablar con el líder, que el líder los acepte. Siempre hay un líder, en todas las clases hay uno o dos, intentar que se relacionen para que vean que no son diferentes o si estar muy al tanto de si les pueden insultar o si se pueden meter con ellos, motivar en el sentido de que “vamos a hacer salto de potro” pues vamos a poner un poquito de motivación ahí, a ver quién llega hasta ahí. Fomentar un poquito en ese sentido la competitividad pero no hasta el punto de vejar de alguna forma al compañero que no llega hasta ahí. Si eres bueno, o sea, si no eres bueno en una cosa pues de eso se trata la vida al fin y al cabo. Si tú no eres bueno en un saltamiento (sic) de potro pero puedes ser bueno en velocidad. Si tú no eres bueno en las finanzas puedes ser buenísimo en la cocina.

P. ¿Recuerdas alguna experiencia significativa que hayas tenido en esa asignatura de educación física?

R. ¿significativa en qué sentido?

P. Que recuerdes que haya sido importante para ti.

R. Pues esto que te contao (sic) de la patada y el puñetazo y luego casualmente muy juntito pilló las dos cosas, que el amigo de éste al que le di el puñetazo, a ver, todo el mundo se ha reído de él, porque le llamaban el cagón (sic), debía tener un problema de glucosa, o algo así, pues se cagaba en clase, y bueno, pues haciendo un esfuerzo pues el chaval se tiró un pedo, y todos nos reímos, y yo también me reí y como le había dado un puñetazo a su amigo pues la tomaron conmigo. Se escaparon del colegio porque yo si que me iba a casa a comer y ellos no. No podían salir. Se escaparon los dos y bueno pues, corriendo detrás de mí, no me pillaron pero el otro como corría más que yo pues sí me pilló. Entre dos claro me hicieron...se fue cada uno por cada lao (sic) y me pillaron. Eh bueno, no me llegó a hacer nada, pero bueno, la verdad es que a mí me impactó mucho eso de que vinieran a por mí, ¿qué me van a hacer ahora? Claro, yo llegué a casa, se lo dije a mi madre, mi madre montó la de dios allí en el colegio, a ellos no les hicieron nada, simplemente no se volvieron a acercar a mí y punto, creo que llamaron a sus padres por el hecho de que se habían escapado pero que no podían hacer nada más porque

lo que había sucedido había sucedido fuera del colegio, esa es la medida que pusieron en el colegio.

P. Y ¿participabas de actividades extraescolares que organizase la asignatura de actividad física o no?

R. No. Una vez jugamos cuando estuvo el profesor este nuevo fuimos a un campeonato de baloncesto, que por cierto acabamos fatal, acabamos fatal discutiendo con el otro equipo y casi a ostias (sic). El resto de actividades mi madre, o sea, campamentos, viajes de fin de curso, todo lo que fuera salir de casa fuera del horario del colegio, fuera, no se si era por un tema de gastos, de economía, que puede o por un tema de tenerme más controlado y que no me hiciera nada. O sea todo si afán ha sido “tú aquí no te salgas de la burbujita (sic)”, con lo cual tampoco tenía relación, ninguna relación muy mala con mis compañeros pues es que no había relación. Excursiones ninguna, bueno sí recuerdo una que hicimos, me dejó ir, pero es que claro, si no te relaciona pues pierdes el rollito que hay, es que eso es una cosa que tampoco entienden los padres “no hijo, tu no vas a esta excursión, castigado sin ir a la excursión”, ¿tú sabes lo que le supone eso a un niño? Es que es muy fuerte, es que ya quedas excluido para el resto del curso si no vas a la excursión

P. ¿y crees que...bueno entiendo que tus compañeros y el profesorado no conocía de tu identidad trans entonces en ese sentido, crees que a lo mejor se mostraron sensibles hacia tu identidad, o respetuosos, crees que el profesorado estaba por la labor?

R. No, desconocimiento total por un lado y si había algún tipo de conocimiento de que yo me comportaba de una forma extraña y diferente, ni puñetero caso, así de claro. Ya en 7º antes de cambiarme de colegio sí di con una profesora que mi madre habló con ella. Ella no se podía meter en medio porque no era mi tutora, pero sí en ese caso intercedió y se metió por medio. Y dijo “mira”, se lo dijo muy claro a mi madre “tu hijo tiene estos problemas, yo veo esto, esto, y esto pero yo no puedo meterme, lo más que puedo hacer es dejarle el aula mía que se meta aquí en los recreos y que se quede aquí leyendo en los recreos para que no baje al recreo y no le vuelva a suceder esto

P. ¿Tenías muchos recreos conflictivos?

R. Todos

P. Todos

R. Todos yo me pasaba los recreos media hora que se me hacía larguísima, paseando solo, por el...es que estaba solo, no se relacionaba nadie conmigo entonces ya tomé la decisión de en lugar de bajar me quedaba escondido en los baños y me paseaba por los pasillos, claro pasaba algún profesor, a esconderme, pasaba el director, a esconderme, y a veces me pillaban y me decían “bájate que tú no puedes estar aquí, te tienes que bajar”, lo que me suponía a mí bajar, y me obligaban a bajar al recreo. Y entonces claro una de las veces que me obligaron a bajar al recreo pasó lo que pasó, me dio de ostias (sic) una tía, se enteró todo el mundo porque claro, yo ya no me quedaba quieto. Me dio de ostias (sic) una tía, subí para arriba y según la pillé por los pasillos me lié a ostias (sic) con ella que la reventé la cara. Llamaron al director...

P. ¿Cuántos años tenías o en qué curso estabas perdona?

R. En séptimo. Y ahí ya fue cuando mi madre se enteró de todo y ya la contó la profesora esta, tuvo los cojones de entrar y decir “yo no soy su tutora pero voy a hablar aquí, yo estoy viendo esto, esto y esto y yo lo único que puedo ofrecer es esto pero no puedo hacer más”, como tampoco se podía implicar más entonces pues bueno, me pasé casi todo ese curso, casi todo el curso metido en un aula en vez de tener recreo, pero allí yo estaba mucho más a gusto y más tranquilo, por lo menos, no estaba en los pasillos, porque a mí me preguntaron “¿tu quieres bajar al recreo?” “yo no, para qué, para qué voy a bajar”, “¿por qué te quedas en los pasillos?”, “coño (sic), pues no ves lo que me está pasando cuando bajo, cuando me obligáis a bajar, ¿no veis lo que pasa? Pues prefiero quedarme aquí en los pasillos”, entonces me dejaron el aula y bueno, por lo menos estaba ahí controlado y no estaba en los pasillos.

P. ¿Y hacías actividades extraescolares de algún tipo?

R. Inglés, me hubiera gustado hacer kárate, me hubiera gustado estar en un equipo de fútbol, me hubiera gustado aprender guitarra. Todo eran cosas que no tenían, según mi madre, no tenían futuro. Todo eran actividades que eran más bien orientadas hacia el hombre, incluida la guitarra, tú fíjate qué tontería, y me dijo “no, a kárate no te voy a meter, si quieres te meto a ballet”, le dije “mira, prefiero hacer inglés, que quieres que te diga, por lo menos aprendo inglés”.

P. ¿y con tu familia, con tus padres o tu hermano soléis hacer actividades físicas o al aire libre?

R. Mi hermano es que siempre ha sido muy vaguete (sic). Sí con mi hermano he jugado mucho al tenis porque era lo único que le gustaba, el fútbol no le ha gustado nunca. De muy pequeñitos nos íbamos a la academia de policía, que era entonces academia y tenían piscina, tenían pistas de tenis y allí jugábamos al tenis. Luego ya como aquello lo cerraron pues se acabó. ¿Actividades al aire libre? Pues íbamos al camping, bicicleta, mucha bici (sic), yo me perdía por ahí por el campo con la bici, cuando volvía con la bici me cogía el balón a balonazos contra la pared, yo solito me lo pasaba en grande y ahí me desahogaba.

P. Te iba a preguntar una cosa que antes se me ha olvidado. ¿De la asignatura de educación física hay algunas materias o alguna cosa que te hubiera gustado que se hubiera dado, algunas actividades que deberían haberse dado y no se dieron? ¿Te hubiera gustado que la asignatura de educación física hubiera sido diferente?

R. sí, mira cuando yo estudié las ciencias de la actividad física y el deporte, que se llaman ahora, yo toqué, un bodorrio, pero bueno, yo toqué historia de los deportes, historia de los deportes en diferentes países, qué menos, lo que...bueno eso es muy aburrido pero quizás lo que sí debían haber enseñado es diferentes actividades, es decir, no solamente fútbol o baloncesto sino no sé, introducción al tenis, las normas, las reglas del tenis, estudiar las...

P. ¿Tú no jugaste nunca a otros deportes que no fueran baloncesto o fútbol?

R. No.

P. ¿Si siempre era segregado por sexos?

R. Casi siempre.

P. ¿No había actividades que hiciérais juntos?

R. Era más que nada...o sea, por parte de un profesor él daba la elección pero era más que nada por elección de los alumnos, o sea, que darle lección le das la opción de elegir y al final se terminan segregando ellos solos. A veces se apuntaba alguna chica también a jugar al fútbol pero rara vez, entonces yo ya veía ahí "menos mal, no soy el único", no sé, podían haber hecho miles de actividades, limitarse solamente al fútbol y al baloncesto terminamos aborregados por no hacer más que...

P. ¿Durante toda tu trayectoria académica? ¿o con algún profesor fue algo distinto?

R. Sí bueno, el lanzamiento de pesos, cosas así en plan atletismo, correr,

P. Salto de altura...

R. Sí esas cosas, pero todo en plan...pues eso, atletismo. Yo me refiero más bien a deportes de equipo, que es lo que te he dicho antes también, hacer actividades y hacer tú los equipos de forma que todos estén bien integrados y no marginen a los demás torpes, tanto tíos (sic) como tías (sic) y claro, cuando dicen “vengan los dos líderes que pidan equipos” y siempre te van dejando el último. A mí me elegían de los primeros pero cuando ya se habían fundido a todos los tíos (sic), el siguiente era yo y después venían el resto de las tías (sic), yo era el que estaba entre tías (sic) y tíos (sic), ¿no? “a Pablo, a Miguel y a Oscar les cogemos primero, luego a éste, y después al resto de las chicas”, pero no sé, a ver enseñado otras actividades, no solamente existe fútbol y baloncesto. Yo veía mucho desinterés por parte de las chicas. Primero por la educación que se les ha dado a las chicas de que bueno, pues el deporte es que antiguamente se pensaba...yo creo que es que mi barrio es súper atrasado mentalmente hablando, porque yo conozco gente de mi edad que no ha vivido lo que yo he vivido con el fútbol, que había chicas que jugaban al fútbol de mi edad, sin embargo allí en ese colegio era como...te tachaban de, pues no sé, veía mucho desinterés por parte de las chicas de hacer otro tipo de deportes pero es que tampoco conocían. No sé de haber jugado al tenis, de haber jugado al basketball. Sí, mira, hubo un año que hicimos un equipo de volleyball me estoy acordando

P. De volleyball

R. De volley, sí y ahí sí se...ves...

P. ¿Mixto?

R. No, hicimos equipo para jugar con otros colegios de alrededor pero no era mixto. Ahí si que se implicaron más las chicas. Recuerdo que las motivó más el volley, lo que pasa que bueno luego decían “me duelen las manos, no se qué, me he hecho daño”

P. El tema de los vestuarios ¿seguíais sin cambiaros?

R. No es que allí no había...había vestuarios pero no había vestuarios eran baños. No, allí no se llevaba mucho eso de cambiarse. En el otro donde estuve tampoco, no recuerdo que hubiera y ya en el instituto menos.

P. Y cuando tuviste, imagino que tuviste, el tema de los cambios típicos físicos que se producen durante la adolescencia, ¿cómo los viviste?

R. Pues horrible, cuando bueno, además veías a tus compañeros que se metían con la chica tetona “bu (sic) vaya tetas que tienes, que te están saliendo, no sé qué”

y yo decía “dios mío, por dios, yo no quiero que se me desarrollen tanto. Horrible, o sea, no...me acuerdo una vez cuando era pequeñito que nos bañaba mi madre juntos y una vez le pregunté a mi madre, “¿Cuándo me va a salir eso a mí?”, “calla niño, que eso no...que tú no tienes de eso”, o en plan de las reglas y esas cosas pues mi madre me intentó explicarme dentro de su...pobrecita mía pero la verdad es que yo ni puto (sic) caso, me aburrí tremendamente, me saca ahí una enciclopedia, me intenta explicar las cosas y me aburría entonces no me enteré de nada, luego me enteré cuando a una compañera le bajó la regla cuando estuvo en clase y entonces claro, ya no lo explicamos entre nosotros si eso. Y no sé

P. ¿cómo viviste los cambios típicos de la adolescencia?

R. Mal, mal, o sea, a ver la regla a mí lo que me explicaron es que la regla te viene para que, porque ya vas a estar preparado para procrear y tener niños y no sé qué, y esto es para ésto y ésto es para lo otro, o sea, solamente lo orientaron hacia la procreación. Si a mí no me gustan los niños, si yo no quiero tener niños si yo no me voy a casar nunca, pa (sic) qué coño (sic) todo esto y “¿las tetas pa (sic) qué?” “pues mira para darle de mamar al bebé”, pero otra vez estamos con la historia, si yo no voy a tener niños pa (sic) qué coño (sic) quiero yo tetas”, vamos a ver, con el tema físico, ¿tú ves mis piernas, pues siempre las he tenido así ¿vale?, mi madre no tuvo muchas luces, si quería que fuera una señorita como decía ella, no tuvo muchas luces para depilarme a su debido tiempo, se metían conmigo, me llamaban mono, porque tenía tantísimo pelo en las piernas y no me depilaba. Cuando empecé a desarrollar mi cuerpo pues igual, camisetas anchas, no quería que se me viera nada.

P. ¿cómo te imaginabas de mayor cuando estabas en estos cursos?

R. ¿cómo me imaginaba yo de mayor? Pues, no sé,

P. O ¿no te imaginabas?

R. Buena pregunta, no, no me imaginaba yo vivía el día a día, creo. Pues no sé, de esto que sí a veces ves películas ¿no? de estas de...no sé las típicas de los típicos dramas, casados, con hijos, o enamorado (sic) con una tía pues siempre me imaginaba pues eso, me imaginaba como hombre, con mi pareja, o con niños, o yo que sé, esto que te suelen meter en la cabeza de tener que casarte, tener hijos y tener una familia. Hoy por hoy no pienso así pero bueno, siempre eso pongo eso, es lo que nos han fomentado desde los medios de comunicación, la televisión, las



películas y todo eso pues, sí me imaginaba...me gustaba Indiana Jones por ejemplo, me montaba películas en plan aventurero, me gusto mucho la...

P. ¿Cuándo hiciste el grado de Educación Física entiendo que es ciclo formativo no? ¿Fue ciclo formativo lo que hiciste? ¿Educación física o ...?

R. Es como una FP,

P. Porque lo hiciste en el extranjero ¿no?

R. Exáctametne, es el equivalente al FPII

P. Y allí sí que hacías actividad física, deportes....

R. De todo, lo disfruté como un enano, porque era lo que quería hacer de hecho, a mi me dijeron “a ver elige rama FP, elige rama”, me trajo mi padre un libro así (señala la gordura con las manos) me lo leí de pe a pa (sic) y lo que yo quería hacer era educación física. Educación física “no, no, no, no, no eso no tiene salida, además eso es de marimachos. Las mujeres no tienen salida en eso. Imposible, inaceptable”. “Bueno pues de no ser esto, veterinario”, “no, no, no eso tampoco tiene salida”, fíjate lo que pensaban entonces, “tú sabes la cantidad de cosas que les hacen a los animales, a tí eso...tú no vas a poder hacer eso, porque tú eres muy sensible”. Na (sic) un médico que se le ocurrió decirle a mi madre que tuviera mucho cuidado conmigo que yo era hipersensible, y es verdad, sí lo soy, soy muy sensible a muchas cosas, me afectan las cosas el doble o el triple de lo que le puede afectar a otro. Yo veo un gato muerto en la carretera y me echo a llorar. A ver, me da pena, piso una hormiga y también me da pena y es que hay gente que es que pasa (sic) de esas cosas. Yo era muy sensible de pequeño pero a ver, uno se va acostumbrando y los palos que te da la vida, te tendrás que irte acostumbrarte, no protegerme de eso sino irme acostumbrando a que la vida es así

P. Y en el fp, los deportes y actividades que hacías ¿de qué tipo eran, de todo tipo me has dicho?

R. No, igual que en el otro...

P. Actividades de expresión corporal hacías...

R. ¿eh?

P. Actividades de expresión corporal ...

R. No

P. ¿No?

R. No, lo que sí que formamos fue un equipo de fútbol ahí en Vicálvaro pero, nada, es que yo lo que he visto en general es que a la mujer....he estado jugando en

equipos de fútbol, he estado jugando en el Manchester City. Allí en Inglaterra hay mucha más aceptación de la mujer en el deporte. Esto ya a nivel general independientemente de si eres trans o no, ¿dónde te metes? ¿en qué equipo te metes, ahora hoy por hoy en dónde me meto? Yo si físicamente estuviera en condiciones para jugar al fútbol, que sería lo que querría hacer, ¿a dónde me meto? ¿a dónde me voy? No hay salida, o sea, no...¿te metes en un grupo masculino, te metes a los vestuarios con ellos, te duchas con ellos, que te vean físicamente y que te expones a que te violen? Porque es así, la realidad es así de cruda, ¿te expones a que te violen? Desde que te violen hasta que...y el miedo siempre está ahí, hasta que te hagan total vacío “tú no vales para esto”, porque físicamente sí tenemos más fuerza que antes pero no tenemos el mismo físico que ellos biológicamente hablando, es imposible llegar a eso. ¿Eh...la pregunta era de antes? Si me gustaría también tocar ese tema porque...

P. O sea te gustaría apuntarte a fútbol pero ¿actualmente no le ves salida?

R. No le veo salida. Yo no he visto que a la mujer en el deporte se la integre, ni se le tome en cuenta, ni se le tome en serio, o sea, lo hacen sí, pero por fachada, fachada, todo es fachada. Eso es lo que he visto una falsedad pura y dura en cuando a la integración de la mujer en el deporte, durante toda la vida lo he visto. El hombre sí le dan todo tipo de material, les proporcionan becas, les proporcionan ayudas de todo tipo, tienen de todo pero para la mujer no tienen nada.

P. En tu caso...

R. Yo he estado jugando en un equipo aquí en España, en el Canillas te puedo decir

P. ¿Masculino?

R. Femenino. Vamos a ver, hay una diferencia bestial del Real Madrid, Dios Santo y pensar que yo he sido del Real Madrid y yo he defendido a ese equipo a capa y espada, hasta la muerte. El Real Madrid era patrocinador de este equipo del Canillas. Los medios que teníamos en el equipo femenino eran una mierda. Camisetas así de grandes, o sea, no me puedes traer una camiseta ya está, a esos niveles, ¿no me puedes traer una camiseta?. A veces nos traían hasta las camisetas usadas y sudadas de otros, porque no había. A ver, si quieres hacer un equipo femenino simplemente por dar la fachada de que eres el Real Madrid estás patrocinando y tienes un equipo femenino. El Real Madrid no tiene equipo

femenino, a día de hoy no tiene equipo femenino que se llame en sí Real Madrid Femenino, no.

P. Participabas entonces en competiciones...

R. Sí, tú te vas al Atlético de Madrid y tienen un equipazo que te cagas, tienen de todo, se lo pagan todo, o sea, ¿qué diferencia no?

P. Y en las únicas competiciones que has participado ¿ha sido como chica?

R. Sí, sí porque ahora dónde me meto. Es lo que te digo, ¿qué voy a un equipo femenino que me tachen de...? Hace muchos años había una mujer jugadora de baloncesto, no me acuerdo cómo se llamaba, María Teresa o María algo, físicamente era muy masculina y le hicieron unas pruebas hormonales y descubrieron que tenía mucho nivel de testosterona en sangre y bueno, ya fue el fin de su carrera, prácticamente. El hecho, el hecho...y hay estudios que hoy en día lo demuestran, esto te hablo de los años 80, el hecho de que una persona tenga mucho, de que una mujer tenga mucha testosterona en sangre no significa que sea transexual. O sea, el sentir es diferente a lo que tú tienes dentro del cuerpo. Tu puedes...hay mujeres muy masculinas, físicamente muy masculinas con unas facciones muy marcadas y no se sienten hombres, se sienten más femeninas que ninguna. Que no tiene nada que ver el nivel de...el nivel hormonal con lo que tú te vayas a sentir. De hecho yo te puedo decir que yo tengo, tenía unos niveles de testosterona antes de empezar el tratamiento totalmente normales dentro de una mujer biológica, ni demasiado altos ni demasiado bajos, normales.

P. ¿Participas actualmente en algún colectivo LGTB?

R. Estoy...Soy socio de HT.

P. De Hombre...

R. De Hombre Transexual. He estado muy en contacto con casi todos los colectivos, con casi todas las asociaciones por el hecho de lo que me pasó de la empresa y tal y conozco a un montón de gente que me ha echao (sic) un cable, me ha echao (sic)...

P. Y en HT, vamos, en Hombre Transexual, sí que hacéis, creo recordar, por una vez que estuvimos que tenían un equipo de fútbol.

R. Nos juntamos, pues por esto, por lo que te digo, que si no tenemos opción de meternos en un equipo masculino, ni tenemos opción de meternos en uno femenino, ¿en cuál nos metemos? A nivel oficial...

P. Ese es el origen del grupo de fútbol

R. Pienso que sí, entre otras cosas, ahora te explico el resto de los motivos, pienso que sí, a nivel federal no podemos meternos en ningún sitio, por poder podemos ¿vale? Pero surgen luego otros problemas y otros miedos como te he dicho, te arriesgas a meterte en un equipo masculino que te hagan el vacío, desde que te hagan el vacío hasta que te violen, así de claro. Luego también pues bueno...entran chavales nuevos, jóvenes además, que cuando uno es joven pues tienen más ganas de movimiento, de ejercicio. No han realizado nunca ejercicio físico a lo mejor porque se sienten un poco desplazados, no quieren llamar la atención, han vivido como mujeres, se van reprimiendo de realizar una actividad física, a lo mejor están gorditos y necesitan hacer un poco de actividad física, que nos viene genial y por relacionarnos también, por tener una actividad lúdica entre nosotros. Como a todos casualmente nos gusta el fútbol, pues fútbol, no quita que un día nos juntemos y hagamos un partido de baloncesto, o de otras cosas. Así que pues sí, nos juntamos pero a nivel asociación como en plan colegas, nos juntamos un día, reservamos una pista y jugamos al fútbol, o juegan, porque yo no puedo ir, encima eso, no puedo ir, pero es que no hay otra opción de realizar deporte a nivel oficial en ningún otro sitio y a muchos, a mí por lo menos sí me gustaría competir o me hubiera gustado competir, yo ya a mi edad me retiro pero sí que me hubiera gustado que me hubieran metido en un equipo aunque fuera femenino, pero es que ni eso

P. No sé, ¿y qué solución propondrías ante este panorama, de que no encontráis salida a vuestro interés deportivo por el tema de los equipos masculinos, el tema de los vestuarios y tal, cómo crees que se os podría ayudar o cómo se podría hacer para que personas trans pudieran estar integradas en estos equipos.

R. Pues te vuelvo a repetir si es que es muy difícil primero tendría, para podernos integrar en un equipo masculino, porque si yo quiero estar en un equipo masculino ¿por qué me tengo que meter a uno mixto? Si yo no quiero jugar con mujeres, que en mi caso no me importaría, pero si no quiero jugar con mujeres y estar al mismo nivel que un futbolista profesional, ¿por qué no tengo esa opción? O sea, no tengo esa opción. Todo debería cambiar desde aquí, la mentalidad de la gente y el trato que le de la gente a esa otra persona que la ven diferente, que tiene menos fuerza pero que al fin y al cabo está ahí y que puede ser igual de bueno o mejor que los otros. Primero cambiar la mente de la gente, visualizar el colectivo transexual, que no estamos nada visualizados, que no se nos toma en cuenta con

ningún sentido, que se nos confunde con...a las chicas se las confunde con travestis, que la gente sepa, que la gente sepa que existimos, que somos personas normales, que no nos miren de esa forma que nos miran y luego ya el resto es que, el resto de medidas sobrarían, una vez que se hubiera cambiado eso el resto de medidas sobraría. Sí el caso de los vestuarios pues como te he dicho, poner cierto apartados por si alguien tiene algún problema en tener un poquito más de pudor y quiere meterse a solas y hacer lo que quiera hacer, eh las duchas individuales también, ¿equipos mixtos? pues bueno, sería un parche,

P. Un parche

R. Yo lo llamaría un parche porque al fin y al cabo hasta que la mente de la gente no cambie en un equipo mixto sobra también, porque si hay cinco tíos (sic) y cinco tías (sic), los tíos (sic) van a hacer su piña (sic), se van a pasar el balón entre ellos y las tías (sic) van a estar ahí de comodines para cuando no haya nadie más, y es así.

P. A grandes términos, ahora mismo podrías afirmar que estás a gusto con tu cuerpo.

R. ¿Afirmar?

P. Vamos que si actualmente estás a gusto con tu cuerpo o hay algo que te gustaría modificar

R. Por supuesto

P. ¿Si?

R. Siempre hay cosas que uno quisiera modificar, siempre hay cosas que uno echa de menos pero creo que lo más importante es sentirse bien con uno mismo, por dentro, no físicamente, no tanto a nivel estético sino a nivel interno y eso es un trabajo mental que uno tiene que hacer, mental, psicológico y muy interno y muy profundo. O sea, yo soy como soy, he nacido así y me acepto tal y como soy y al que no le guste que no mire, el problema es que tenga, pues no sé, a nivel físico y demás pues me tengo que ir, por supuesto, puliendo un poquito pero igual que otra persona tiene que aprender a vivir con una celulitis que no nos gusta y ahí si lo puedo asemejar un poquito más a un complejo, una vez que tú superas, que tu estás por encima de tus complejos, bueno también hay ciertos aspectos un poco más fuertes y más profundos pero a nivel físico hasta donde uno pueda llegar, claro, uno tiene más aspiraciones, como en todo en la vida, a nivel laboral, económico y de todo, pero hay que saber conformarse hasta donde uno pueda llegar, y no aspirar a

tanto. Lo que te decía, a nivel, a nivel instintivo como hombres, tenemos unos ciertos instintos que no podemos satisfacer, ¿vale?, por lo menos lo que yo he vivido. Yo tengo ciertos instintos que no puedo satisfacer hoy por hoy ni tampoco la ciencia me ha dado una solución para ello hoy por hoy, entonces una de dos, o busco una alternativa para satisfacer esos instintos o me amargo la vida y no follo, dicho claramente ¿no? Entonces hay momentos en los que sí eres capaz de superar psicológicamente esa pequeña frustración que sientes y hay otros momentos en la vida en los que, pues mira, el sexo al fin y al cabo es libre y se puede disfrutar de mil maneras diferentes, sí es verdad, pero es que yo tengo un instinto que no puedo satisfacer y me gustaría satisfacerlo y me produce una frustración y una impotencia tremenda. Ahí ya entra cada uno como quiera tomárselo y como quiera superar eso. Hay gente que ya directamente pasa a “prefiero no hacerlo” y hay otras personas que intentan “voy a buscar alternativas porque al fin y al cabo el sexo es libre y ¿estoy disfrutándolo? Pues sí, mientras lo disfrute bien, es lo que hay.

P. Para terminar ya quisiera preguntarte en general ¿qué significa el deporte, que significa el deporte para ti y tu actividad física?

R. Mi vida. O sea, o sea yo sin deporte no puedo vivir. A ver me dedico a ello, me ha gustado siempre desde que tengo uso de razón siempre con el balón detrás. El deporte para mí significa mi vida, porque tanto si me falta o me ha faltado en alguna parte de mi vida me ha jodido (sic) tremendamente. De hecho yo cuando vine aquí a España, estuve jugando a un Manchester City en Inglaterra,

P. ¿Durante cuánto tiempo?

R. Pues creo que me duró la suerte un año nada más, porque me salió trabajo, entrenábamos los viernes, me salió trabajo en un restaurante y lo primero era comer, tuve que dejarlo. Cuando volví aquí a España me quise quitar la espinita, ¿vale? Me metí en un equipo, aunque fuera femenino pero me metí en un equipo y bueno pues, ni tenía edad ni tenía...seguía con los mismos problemas ¿vale? Porque eran niñas (sic) las que estaban en ese equipo y seguía con los mismos problemas de marginación y de rechazo pero ¿por qué? En parte esta experiencia me sirvió para darme cuenta de que no era la edad, lo que me estaba impidiendo relacionarme con la gente era mi género equivocado. Me di cuenta entonces pues porque sentí el mismo rechazo y me sentí exactamente igual que cuando estaba...o sea, volvía revivir otra vez lo que había vivido en el colegio y en el instituto, entonces yo hice, me hizo pensar, dije bueno “¿qué pasa conmigo, con 27 y 28

años, todavía a mi edad me están rechazando por querer jugar al fútbol cuando aquí todas son mujeres y están jugando al fútbol? O sea...

P. ¿Fue en ese momento cuando decidiste dar el paso y hacer el cambio o a raíz de qué vino?

R. Sí, fue uno de los principales motivos que me hizo replantearme las cosas porque claro, para mí lo que yo he vivido en el colegio fue traumático, muy traumático, el hecho de revivirlo me....o sea, es que me planteé y dije, vamos a ver, yo he pensado toda mi vida que el problema era mío, el rechazo ese que yo sentía a la hora de jugar al fútbol era mi problema ¿no? era el único que quería jugar al fútbol. Y claro te ves en una situación igual, te están rechazando pero estás en un equipo de fútbol femenino, ¿quién me va a marginar aquí? Si es un equipo femenino y ellas mismas me siguen marginando, ellas que quieren y que han vivido lo mismo que yo, que les gusta y viven el fútbol ¿por qué me están rechazando? O sea, ya te das cuenta de que no te estaban rechazando por el hecho de querer jugar al fútbol sino de porque eres diferente, te ven diferente, eres diferente y te rechazan por eso. Esa es mi conclusión. Esa fue mi conclusión en la que entonces ya me hizo replantearme y fue como...esas son las piezas del puzle que te van encajando cuando te vas dando cuenta de que lo que tú pensabas que era no es, es otra cosa mucho más seria.

P. Pues muchísimas gracias, no sé si quieres añadir alguna cosa más o algo.

R. Yo creo que ya lo he dicho todo y demás, vamos se te van a acabar las pilas.