Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

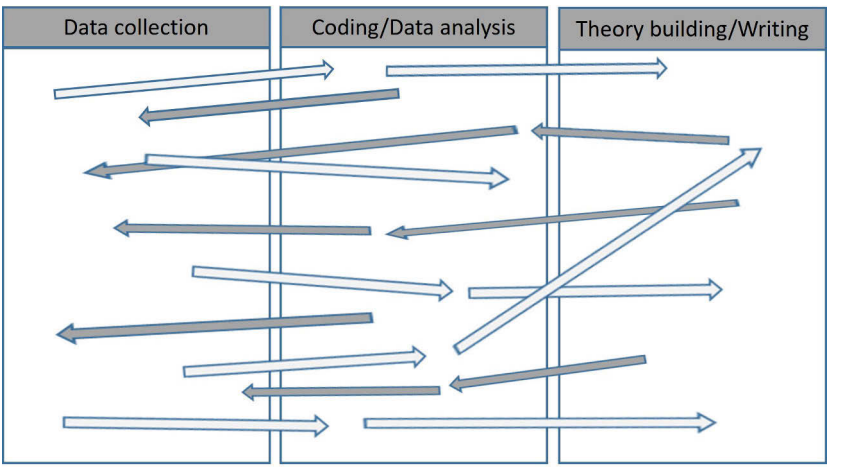
Having outlined these aspects and intentions, this introductory chapter continues with explanations of the methodology and theoretical framework before discussing terminology. It concludes with an overview of the structure of this work.

Methodological and theoretical framework

Methods and data collection

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Theoretical framework

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

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

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

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

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

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

Addressing the research subjects: The crux of labelling

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Structure

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

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

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

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

Further notes

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

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

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

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