



Travestis in the Brazilian Cultural Context: Narratives of Identity Fluidity and the Subjectivity of Taxonomies

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Research Article

Volume 7 Issue 2

Received Date: June 04, 2024

Published Date: July 17, 2024

DOI: 10.23880/aeoj-16000238

Abstract

This article aims to clarify some concepts that essentially reflect the way in which people express their gender and construct their identity, whether in relation to sexuality or simply because it is the way in which they conceive themselves as individuals and are perceived by others. We will focus on discursive figures that sometimes do not have an exact correspondence with the way, in which people express themselves, however, like all concepts, they are intended to be filled with some dose of arbitrariness and themselves are very much contested by those who feel, in one way or another, categorized by it. We will then take a deep look on concepts such as crossdresser, transvestite, travesti, hermaphroidite and others among this spectrum of concepts. With this exercise, we intend to highlight the unique identity essence of being a transvestite and Brazilian.

Keywords: Travesti; Gender Expression; Identity; Socialization

Introduction

On the Notion of Travesti and Others

Before moving forward in the discussion of the concepts and dimensions of analysis that underlie the empirical questions which we will approach, it is urgent to present a brief note on the concept of travesti used throughout this reflection and related discursive figures, likely to be analytically confused with the former and which are not relevant directly for the purposes of this work. For example, the translation for the word - to English - with a specific meaning in brazilian context, Travesti is transvestite, which has nothing to do with the framework of our research universe. So, this is ours first distinction.

Nevertheless, according to available literature [1-17], the term transvestite is applied to an individual with male

biological sex, who adopts however, a series of practices, postures and signaling marks, compatible with the female gender, namely body care (such as makeup, hair or painted nails), resorting to surgeries for the placement of breast implants at another stage of their journey, lips, facials, etc. and/or the ingestion of hormones [18-20]. This last pharmacological action is generally associated with an initial phase of transformation, not only because it is easier to access on the clandestine market, but also because it is financially less costly. The clothing used is equally feminine, as are a series of other accessories associated with female daily life - reflecting and monitoring ways of being a man and ways of being a woman [21,22]. However, we must make a reservation, in Anglo-Saxon literature the word transvestite does not correspond to transvestite and is generally associated with another trans category, that of cross-dresser [23], so for example, for authors like Ekins and



King, the reference to transvestism as we approach it does not exist [15,24]. Thus, taking into account the enormous amount of Brazilian anthropological production that calls transvestite the social and political actor who keeps the penis in a body full of female referents, often associating it with the exercise of prostitution and, on the other hand, the absence of this category in Anglo-Saxon production, the question can be raised whether transvestite, as we are going to discuss it, does not have a restricted geographical context of production, emic and etc.

In this context, it is necessary to make another conceptual distinction between two realities that could produce misunderstandings. We refer to the concept of transgender and homosexuality. In fact, they are terms that refer to different realities. Homosexuality is a concept relating to sexual orientation, while transsexuality/transgender refers to issues of identity and gender construction. Sexual orientation highlights sexual attraction to men, women or both; gender identity concerns the way individuals feel, live and express their gender [25]. This distinction between sexual orientation and gender identity is relevant throughout this exposition as it underlies two distinct areas of socio-structural coercion in the face of deviance.

Trans: Transsexuals/Transgender

In Portugal, data on the existence of transgender people is practically non-existent [25-29] and the available information is mostly limited to articles from medical sciences and data collected from health professionals in the services to which they belong [26] and relating to the processes that they follow within the scope of their professional performance. In this sense, from an analytical point of view, these identities are more than constructed by individuals from a perspective that involves the medicalization of the social.

In the field of social and medical sciences, some authors include transvestites in the group of transsexuals when they use the term “transsexual” [30-33], reflecting somehow the imprecision implicit in the generalizing way in which the GLBT social movement is often mentioned [25]. However, it should be noted that for Saleiro, this agglomeration in a community has advantages in terms of enhancing the capacity for demands of these various groups, although it may reveal a lower power and visibility of the T movement within the GLBT group, corresponding to its smaller number, when compared to the remaining components of the aforementioned community and, within the T movement, the smallest political organization of transvestites, for example, when compared to transsexuals. With these reservations in mind, in this study, the term transvestite will only qualify subjects who do not resort to genital surgery (sex change), although in other contexts of approach to trans issues there

are individuals who conceive of themselves as transsexuals outside the corresponding medical category, choosing, as the transvestites, for keeping the penis and also deriving sexual pleasure from it [23]. However, our interlocutors mostly self-represent themselves and present themselves (for example on the internet, where they advertise sexual services) as transvestites - finding their economic subsistence in prostitution, in which “the penis becomes the central element of their work”. In this context of prostitution, the ambivalence that emerges from a body assembled with female referents, where the male sexual organ from which they derive pleasure is maintained does not make the term transsexual unfeasible in the sense that transsexuality itself goes beyond its medical definition, despite and privileging the way in which the subjects themselves are expressed and produced, we will use the category transvestite to refer to the individuals who make up our universe of study. However, subsidiarity, the Trans prefix constitutes an attractive resource in advertisements, used by some to describe themselves and captivate customers. This does not constitute any contradiction since the term Trans can also refer to transgender people or to contexts in which practices and social constructions of identity go beyond structurally imposed limits, functioning as a term that brings together all gender identities outside of cisgender/cissexuals [34-38].

The word transgender has also historically indicated an aspiration for unity among all trans minorities, bringing them together around common demands. From another perspective, it essentially reflects a transgression or non-correspondence between sex, gender and sexuality. These authors also mention that the word trans constitutes an umbrella housing several transgender communities and sexualities considered minority [23,33]. The term transgender was used for the first time in 1969 by Virginia Prince in an article she published in the magazine she founded - transvestia.

We also add another perspective - especially important for one of the issues underlying the carrying out of this work and consisting of the relationship between subjects and structures - built from the observation of the fact that these trans categories are also largely structurally produced as medical categories. This is the paradigmatic case of transsexuality. However, there is also a filling of the void implicit in medical abstraction, when individuals, through their practices, go beyond this institutional dimension. Namely and by way of example, when the term transvestite, who also finds its origin in medicine - describing gender dysphoria - reaches another level when individuals, through interactions, co-produce themselves in a dialectical way in relation to the structure, as Trans categories. This is why, at a given moment, transvestites, in order, to differentiate themselves from other transvestites, co-produce the category

of cross-dresser. There are therefore several meanings of the word Trans which, insisting on its polysemic character, can also indicate a migration, trajectory or, in another sense, a journey of gender, sex or both [39,40].

(...) It is important to remember that on our sociological, processual and relational understandings of these issues, meanings of narratives and their constituents emerge within the frameworks they are placed. Within the migration mode of transgenering, the sub-processes of erasing, concealing, implying, and redefining are variously co-opted and implicated in the service of the privileged sub-process of substituting.

This journey requires resources and submission to technologies that act on the body. Surgeries and hormone intake are not only the resources available for this purpose, but at the same time they constitute indicators of transvestite aspirations regarding their body - in a way reflecting rituals of initiation and passage from one state to another - their identity and structure, in the sense that the latter legitimizes or coercively repudiates certain practices [41-44]. In this sense, it could be said that the body constitutes a form of language privileged by transvestites through which they intend to communicate/signal and socially construct their gender (which may even consist of gender ambivalence), emerging in this way as subjects and, from a broader perspective, building an identity of which they are oppositionally aware of their insertion and evolution in a conditioned spectrum of social possibilities or impossibilities; in any case, maintaining relations with the social outside, through processes of identification or de-identification. Furthermore, on another scale of analysis we are often faced with the elaboration of differentiations and hierarchies within the group, depending on, for example, the existence of breasts, hormone intake (or not) or silicone applications. Therefore, different scales of approach tend to summon, in a diverse and strategically reordered way, the referents that serve as the basis for the construction of these repertoires, which are determined by a specific and scaled identity positioning vis-à-vis the other.

Gender Migrations Trips

Delving deeper into gender migrations as opposed to mere travel/tourism, Ekins and King draw a parallel between gender migrations and the concept of travel. The notion of oscillation between a home (gender) and a home away from home (metaphorically a welcoming context) highlights the differentiation established between migration and tourism. The first involves changing a lifestyle; the second a temporary trip with a consequent return home in the very short term, a home that was never actually abandoned. In the first dimension you move house, in the other you pack your bags and set off - with a return ticket - for a Trans tourism perfectly

delimited in time and space. In this second perspective, gender tourism implies extraordinary practices that provide new experiences - desirable and desirable for social actors - as opposed to a migration in which these extraordinary practices become everyday practices, replacing the original ones that tend to disappear [45-49].

Some practices make it impossible to return home, revealing themselves as aspects that indicate migration or leaving home permanently. This panoply of substitutions or implications/reconciliations tending to structure migration or tourism based on gender and/or sex seems to observe some fundamental rules pointed out by Garfinkel in the approach taken to the specific case of the transsexual Agnes who followed her for several years. Agnes would constitute, in the light of contemporary paradigms, a case of intersex, since she apparently simultaneously presented male and female physical traits [50].

Garfinkel builds an argument based on conceptual innovation, implicit in the fact that he never uses the term gender/s, replacing them with the designation "morally dichotomized population". According to him, this dichotomy resulted in delimiting and distinctive heteronormative principles of gender, based essentially on binary oppositions that gave great rigidity to the process and that would also influence other authors, although with different approaches [51,52].

- 1 - There are only two genders.
- 2 - All individuals belong to one or the other. Gender invariability.
- 3 - Transfers from one gender to another are not socially permitted.

In this chain, Kessler and McKenna, corroborating the three previous normative axes, add:

- The genitals constitute the essential sign of gender.
- Exceptions to these two genres are pathologies.

Travestis and the transgression of the moralizing dichotomy: "silicone, the pain of beauty". Seeming to contradict some current assumptions in dominant schemes of thought, interventions on the body are the beginning of gender migration in the travestis case. Often carried out underground, these interventions neglect institutionally produced knowledge and put at risk many of the transvestites who, under these conditions, undergo surgeries, which consist of the application of industrial silicone (liquid) acquired and administered illegally [53]. These procedures are carried out using veterinary syringes for large animals - such as horses - and often result in the death of the individuals subjected to them, as, a result of complications. Arising from this surgical process. The risk implicit in the

act of being pumped can even be increased in situations involving less scrupulous pumpers who mix other products that are harmful to humans with silicone. This strategy aims solely to increase the profits derived from carrying out that activity [54].

These actions on the body are motivated by varied but confluent factors: wanting to be a travesti with a full “made” body by silicone, wanting to dedicate herself to prostitution or wanting to be accepted into the travesti group as a real TRAVEST and not as a mere gay/fagot. In this sense, they also seem to confirm the idea that there are only two genders, since they apparently seek to achieve the structurally permissible replacement of primary and secondary characteristics of one gender with those of the other. In extreme cases, some authors such as Pinto and Bruns point out situations of incompatibility between body and mind, often leading to suicide [55]. In the male case, when they are not psychologically capable of living and coexisting with their penis; and in the female, when the main object of this incompatibility is the uterus – a fact, in the first case, not observed in relation to the transvestites who constitute the study universe of this research. Confluent, Virginia Prince argued that only in cases of incompatibility between mind and sex would corrective surgeries be permissible or advisable [56].

Our study universe is therefore made up of subjects who place on their bodies a series of available technologies (legal and illegal) for shaping with feminine attributes, sometimes exaggerating them (large breasts, wide hips, prominent lips, accentuated waists removing some ribs for this purpose, silicone on the lips, eyebrows, cheeks, forehead, etc...), maintaining, nevertheless - and his gaining identity and material gains - one of the parts of his body, the penis. In this case, the incompatibility is felt at the level of the mind and body in a dimension of gender construction, not of mind and sex [57].

In this sense, some authors underline that travestis constitute another possibility of feminine. In addition to being aware of not being women, their gender construction is based on wanting to be more than women. This is evident in the exaggeration with which they are sometimes created or express themselves, in both dimensions, in terms of physical marks and in terms of adornments, maintaining - and we emphasize again - a striking and distinctive masculine element: the penis, which, however, outside the private sphere and prostitution, they seek to erase in the face of other people’s gaze. The travestis we followed clearly undertake a gender migration through which practices compatible with their original home are permanently modified or replaced, going beyond the level of mere oscillatory performance or gender tourism, which, however, in certain circumstances

it seems to emerge, namely and by way of example when in the exercise of prostitution they are called upon to play the male role in sexual intercourse. Ekins and King do not refer to transvestites when they elaborate on migrations and gender fluctuations, we chose to make an analogy from which it seems to us that there is an intermediate, liminal form between migration and gender tourism operating in Brazilian travestis and prostitutes [58-60].

In short, we use the term travesti when we refer to individuals who do not resort to gender reassignment surgeries and who live their day-to-day lives using feminine references (some irreversible), dedicating themselves mainly to exercise. of prostitution at home. To do this, they use paid internet advertisements. Their day-to-day lives - “assembled” or produced with reference to certain definitions of gender-based situations (and structured and structuring sub-situations) - reflect their everyday practices, rather than extraordinary practices that imply a return home, masculinity. There are, however, other situations that can substantiate some misconceptions about what it means to be a transvestite. Let’s delve deeper into them [61].

Cross-Dressers and Drag Queens

Gender oscillation is evident in cases such as cross-dressers and drag queens. Cross-dressers develop implications, insinuations and temporary reconciliations of gender-defining elements. In turn, drag queens appear in a dramatized context, of spectacle and audience. Actor/performance and audience are key concepts in this case. However, artistic performances, as will be seen later, are not excluded from the transvestite universe, however, they appear associated with the nighttime show and its segmented consumption, as well as identity strategies and identification processes elaborated in this context. In the case of a cross-dresser or a drag queen, we witness performances and not performativity’s, as their practices and discourses do not imply the aspiration to emerge as subjects who publicly assume, live and construct this difference. This difference is only “experienced” in a temporary and socially compartmentalized way, not affecting with permanent character to the externalized identity sphere of those who execute them. In a certain sense, by reversing roles and not publicly confronting the structure in most cases, they end up confirming it given the extraordinary nature of these practices and the consequent return to male cissexual heteronormativity. According to Saleiro, the distinctive element of cross-dressers compared to transgender people such as travestis, lies essentially in the fact that they live as masculine and feminine separately, their practices lacking the hybridism that characterizes travestis in many contexts [62,63].

In summary, although travestis operate replacements that tend to be permanent, the vast majority, of them do not have the aspiration to undergo surgery on their genitals, living ambivalently with their sex and not identifying with homo-oriented men. At this level, their most evident difference is experienced at the level of their gender expression, rather than in relation to their sexual orientation, and homosexuality - per se - does not imply a new construction of gender. To do this, they take hormones and use technologies that act on the body through silicone applications. And if hormones bring them closer to femininity, silicone is seen as the pain of beauty. When acquiring skills within the scope of a femininity project, taking hormones is one of the first steps on this journey. However, in the discourse within the group, other ambivalences emerge; if, for some, being a travesti, actually involves taking hormones, for others, being a travesti is the result of applying silicone to the body "creating a particular feminine, with ambiguous values". A feminine that is constructed and defined in relation to the masculine. Quoting Benedetti, they live "an ambiguous, blurred gender, without limits and rigid separations.

In this sense, it is a phallogocentric feminine because it was created with the center of masculinity as its archetype, supported by a binary perspective of its opposite - the feminine - which, thus, socially structured, constitutes itself as supports of the heteronormativity center and its relations of asymmetry and domination. In turn, the drag queen is the individual who, in a show or in specific contexts, dresses as a woman but without necessarily inscribing permanent feminine marks on the body (surgeries, hormones, etc.). Chidiac and Oltramari state that "drag performers present themselves in everyday life as men" (postures, gestures, clothes, and behaviors understood as falling within the scope of masculinity), manifesting and characterizing femininity in the characters they create and represent, generally in spaces of nightlife intended for consumption by clientele with minority gender constructions and sexual orientations, in the face of dominant cissexuality and heterosexuality. In this way, they present a more flexible modality of transvestism (in the literal sense of cross-dressing), displaying the feminine gender in their performances and remaining masculine in their day-to-day lives, that is, not changing their identity. Nevertheless, and although with a reversible nature, they seem, to once again, confirm the existence of just two genders, between which they oscillate without, however, mixing them. In general, the authors' analysis points out that, when assembled (Benedetti, 2005), drag queens combine male and female physical and psychological characteristics in a single body, a stance that relativizes the tendency towards essentialization in the concept of identity/performance given its androgynous character, which Saleiro calls hybridism [64].

In this framework, our understanding regarding the transgender category is that of someone who undertakes another social construction of gender, which in the light of the structure is not compatible with their biological sex, allowing us to conceive, at the practical level, male individuals living as women and vice versa [65]. We also emphasize that in this experience of gender expressions, the ways of experiencing the feminine and/or masculine are not identical. As we have been referring to, there are individuals who see themselves as transsexuals without intending to change their sex, there are transsexuals who only see themselves as such after surgery, there are straight and homosexual cross-dressers, etc. Therefore, there are different combinations of masculine and feminine expression. And among transgender people there are points of contact and differentiation, particularly in the cases where we see, that if in cross-dressers and drag queens the concept of gender tourism is applied in a more, or less, consensual way, and in transsexuals there is a gender migration, in travestis we see a state of liminality in which both migration and oscillation/tourism operate.

Transsexuals

We have been discussing possible understandings of what a transsexual is, according to more emic or etic approaches, there is, however, bibliography that considers him/her as the individual who "views surgery as the only possibility capable of eliminating their sexual discordance". Understand surgery to reconstruct/transform the male genital organ into a female one or vice versa [66]. In the same sense, for Bussinger, "transsexuality can initially be defined as a feeling of non-correspondence to anatomical sex, without delusions or organic causes, pointing to incommunicability between body, sex and gender. This approach essentially operates from the medical sciences, considered as a more classic position on the subject, with the trend being observable, both in the social sciences, both in the production of laws, to remove the theme of transsexuality from the more or, less restricted scope of medical practices, returning it to a category produced essentially from the action and aspiration of subjects who classify themselves as transsexuals. In this sense, Saleiro states that in Argentina a law emerged in April 2012 that does not make the legal recognition of a gender identity dependent on any medical assessment. However, this is not yet the generalized panorama and transsexuality is still an imminently medical process, more than a question of self, agency.

In Portugal, they represent a group of people relegated to some invisibility, as their small number induces this. According to Saleiro, there will be no more than 210 transgender men and women in Portugal. In the same sense, the administration of Hospital Júlio de Matos (clinical space where medical care is provided in the area, of transsexuality

and psychological health), stated - in 2007 - that the waiting list in terms of care aimed at transsexuals consisted of around 70 individuals, while the Hospital de Santa Maria reported having followed up only 50 individuals in the previous decade. This data is provided to us by medical sources, which is why we mention again the fact that there are many individuals who consider themselves transsexuals and who are outside the scope of the medically assisted process of transsexuality [67]. However, as we will see throughout this exhibition, more Brazilian travestis dedicated themselves to prostitution in Portugal than transsexuals using the Portuguese SNS, which could mean that the category of transsexual authorized by the SNS is not the one that, the majority, of transgender people relate to. Identifies. In fact, between August 2008 and April 2012, 389 travestis advertised on the most popular site for this purpose in Portugal, Vrip T. This reveals not only the dimension of this migratory phenomenon when adjusted to a Portuguese scale, but also the fact that transvestites and transsexuals present differences in the way they dialogically produce and are produced in relation to, and by structure, and on another scale, between themselves as differentiated categories. In this sense, Saleiro states that transsexuals are at the “top of the hierarchy” of transgender people, not only because they are the most stabilized category, but also because it is the one that is structurally most valued and supported.

Still within the scope of travesti and transsexual identities/bodies, and in the light of an analysis that reveals the need for their realization on different scales, Pelúcio glimpses another differentiation in the Brazilian context: the social origins that tend to be distinct from one another. As mentioned, the vast majority, of travestis come from lower-middle classes, while transsexuals are mostly from the middle and upper-middle classes. In Portugal, and conceiving subjects as identities in process, if a travesti wishes to overcome her condition as an individual with identity disturbance and regularize her socio-construction of gender, she can, under the terms of Law No. 7/2011 of 15 March in its article 3, no. the performance of a civil marriage. However, these administrative acts can only be completed after presenting the subject to a panel made up of 2 doctors, who diagnose the subject as an individual with a gender identity disorder compatible with transsexuality [68].

Hermaphrodite/Intersex

As it proves to be a situation of social and personal discomfort - a non-place (since neither within the heterosexual parameters does it fit into a feminine or a masculine one), the solution for hermaphrodites (who have genital characteristics of both sexes) often passes, by corrective surgery. This is also true in the case discussed by Garfinkel when he argued that it is not possible to perpetuate

the lack of definition of sex, as it will have consequences in terms of the construction of gender, which sooner or later will be undertaken by the social actor. It either belongs to one or the other, never to both. In any of the previous cases, and since the body and sex mark individuals and delimit the frequency of social spaces, male and female reflect socially and historically (politically) assigned roles, meaning that their performance takes place in socially confined spaces and areas. To each of them.

Several authors refer to this ambiguity as one of the greatest human dilemmas: the sex one is born with and the non-compatible gender one belongs to “sows doubt within society, constituting one of the most radical conflicts a person can be exposed to”. In cases of mere genital nonconformity, it can currently be corrected by medical biotechnology. However, some ethical and deontological aspects must be taken, into account when this non-compliance is detected early. There is no way to ensure in advance that the decision taken regarding the correction of the child’s sex will be the most appropriate, without including variables in this process (which only later) will confirm both the sexual positioning and the gender construction of that child, allowing that it becomes viable satisfactorily. This principle assumes the social constructed character of the gender, and this only takes place on the social stage interaction and not prior to this public performance. If the previously mentioned assumption is not observed and in situations where the person involved is a child, it would be said that his or her body belongs to society, according to the designs of heteronormativity, in light, of, this established and morally dichotomized standard. Instead of this perspective, the position adopted today is to wait for the subject’s gender identity self-definition, being given the right to inscribe their own history in their body and mind, through and in social interaction. This highlights another aspect of extreme relevance - the body understood as a repository and vehicle for signaling a part of the individual’s history, a fact of unquestionable relevance also for travestis, however, there is another dimension to this choice or imposition resulting from processes of identification and disidentification. Agnes, for example, - who according to Garfinkel and the doctors who accompanied her, would currently be considered as a case of intersex considered the idea of someone placing her in the category of homosexuals or transvestites repulsive; She even distanced herself from them in her day-to-day life, as she did not want to be confused with these identities, assuming herself, according to medical science, as someone with sexual ambiguity. However, as he sought to achieve his structural legitimacy, in the moments prior to carrying out the corrective surgery, he experienced the anguish resulting from the wait necessary to carry out the various interviews with psychologists and psychiatrists, which would result in the decision on whether to observe or no, the conditions for being a transsexual woman. Finally, she underwent surgery

and only at that time, just as today in many contexts, was the structural and legitimizing green light for her gender identity activated [69].

However, Agnes, who had always sought the discursive naturalization of her gender narrative (which, according to such arguments, could never be an option or construction) and who had made Garfinkel understand that all the signs printed on her body had been born with her, She confesses after the surgery that, after all, since the age of 12 she had been using hormones to make her breasts develop and her voice become more feminine. In fact, discursively she always sought naturalization but in practice she produced her femininity. In either case, however, he prepared a speech about her, about others and for others, revealing the effectiveness of the structural pressure acting on her. Thus, Agnes - who initially presented herself as intersex - was a travesti who, through corrective surgery, became a transsexual. Three relevant aspects of this episode that highlight the procedural dimension present here:

- The body signals and legitimizes subjects' aspirations towards the structure or towards themselves.
- The use of technological mechanisms that act on the body - transforming it - thereby allows individuals to be integrated into one or another structural classification and, at the same time, provides them with referents to understand themselves and be understood in their relationship with themselves and in relationships with others.
- The legitimization of a certain conceptual classification of transsexuality by medicine clearly highlights the fact that this category is found in this dimension, framed in the structure.
- The illegitimate nature of a transvestite gender construction - in which sex and gender do not correspond - discontinuity - nor are individuals interested in it corresponding - clearly collides with power.
- The negotiated dimension of all trans categories, whether between subjects and structure, or between subjects with transgender identity affinities, or between subjects with differentiated trans specificities. We also underline the role of language/discourse and slang in incorporating models and structuring experience/action/behaviour.

In the travesti context, the incorporation of models of subjectivity - which link, in an ideally coherent way, gender, sexuality, personality and emotions - resurfaces when travestis self-velaborate as people in multiple relational contexts, recreating meanings and establishing efficacies that legitimize their practices. This multiplicity of relational contexts demands from travestis a plasticity of performances which reflects the ambivalent relationship developed and maintained with the structure.

These performances find in language and their transformed bodies, referents that organize the concrete experience that guides their practices in a way that they intend to be credible, for themselves and for others. This profile of constant action on the body reflects metaphor of transitivity and fluidity inscribed in contemporary sexualities. This form of social affirmation reflects an incessant search for ontological coherence in highly changeable practices - which, precisely because they are changeable, generate performative instabilities, both in the self and in the non-transvestite interlocutor with whom they interact - resolved by travestis through verbal and non-verbal language, through which they seek legitimacy and authenticity for their specificities contextually experienced and resolved in interaction.

However, contradictorily, this mutability of practices that rests on fluid discursive statements becomes a stable identity trait, as a strategy for travesti action and survival. While in drag-queens or cross-dressers we detect a mutability that is reversible, by definition, given the socially extraordinary nature of these actions, in transvestites mutability is an ordinary, everyday practice, as it does not involve a return home. Somehow, part of the foundations of this new identity house are constituted and made viable by this fluidity. The unfinished nature of the "doing" and "re-doing" of the body as a vehicle of language reflects these instabilities and generates a double effectiveness. The body is not only a language in, itself, but it also, constitutes an object for, the production of a discourse about itself. In this sense, the body not only frames experiences as a language that reflects and organizes them, but it itself becomes an experience structured by language. In this way, body and language emerge as basic elements in the construction of the travesti identity narrative or in the words of Ekins and King - gendering - an unfinished and continuous process of doing gender, managed in and through daily interaction. Citing practices is to make them emerge as actions of political subjects in a concrete social context and, at the same time, to produce them as unic travesti subjects. This constructed character of gender in travestis points collaterally to this same procedural and constructed nature of heteronormativity, mirrored in the way they reversely adopt the dominant straight hetero discourse [70].

In the same sense, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet maintain that language is a vehicle of symbolization; it invests or disinvests the subjects of power, connotes and organizes them or, on the contrary, destabilizes them through that same connotation or denotation. Performativity exists because discourse and structure give it intelligibility. In turn, this discourse emerges in a system of concrete interactions, which, when cited and performed, place the subject on the plane of social and political existence, reinforcing in parallel a certain scheme of relationships or thought. In short, it establishes, reproduces, or produces a model, updating it

contextually through a hierarchy of people and values. As this process unfolds, language can be used as a marker of inclusion of the other in the group or of self-exclusion from groups constituted by the other/s.

In a framework marked by openings and closings to majority socio-structural contexts, Marcos Benedetti, when working with travestis in Porto Alegre, considered that they, during a process of searching for their ontological legitimacy, have sought to exercise through language an attempt to naturalize being travesti, finding a biological cause for its assumption of gender and erotic desire. "It's not an option, it's something that is born with an agent", states Júlia Vellaskes, involuntarily converging on society's representation of them, as suffering from a psychosis, pathology, or anomie – a deviation from nature. However, and at the same time, this is the development of one of the many strategies designed and implemented by travesti with the aim of preventing the stigmatization of which they are the target. The use of naturalization aims at legitimization in the same way that heteronormativity is based - the norm fictitiously elevated to the plane of nature - which takes us back to the starting point of this topic: language and the built body constitute catalysts for this naturalization of gender. On another scale, it is transsexuals who conceive of naturalization as a way of differentiating themselves from transvestites, stating that being a transvestite is an option, unlike what happens to them, who were born that way.

In this biological/naturalized perspective, a woman is born a woman - contrary to Simone de Beauvoir's argument, according to which no one is born a woman but rather becomes a woman. Contrary to this constructivist argument by Simone de Beauvoir, the naturalist perspective assumes that being is not an option. In the first case, we witness a strategic re-signification, an operationalization of explainable identity instruments given the fact that both identities and experiences are variable and positional concepts [71].

The contextual identification of the subjects' positioning in the interaction allows us to uncover the repertoires called upon for the construction and affirmation of their identities. As such, individuals are organized discursively and in their practices in a contextual way, seeking a social topos, an "objective" intelligibility for the subjectivity of the concrete. There is, therefore, in the travesti case a distortion of heterosexual law/normativity that ambiguously constitutes itself as a referent of this subversion (Foucault, 1967, 1978), depending on the circumstantial execution of strategies and their positioning vis-à-vis the structure which they intend to legitimize at various levels and at different scales of concrete agency.

Conclusion

We therefore see different ways of conceiving and experiencing gender in a way that is not directly connected to sexuality. The Brazilian Travesti is above all a social construction within Brazilian culture and a result of the resocialization process with sisters on the street where they start working in sex, often when they leave home around the age of 14 or 15. The context of sex work is equally decisive for their identity narrative and a unique way in which they emerge as subjects, regardless of specific contexts, journeys, or fluctuations. They are a community, a group, and not individuals who independently decide to act and be different in a certain context, or like others who do so solely for biological reasons. They form a social microcosm with its own rules, norms of expression, actions, and accepted behaviors. They are indeed a socially and culturally innovative construction and an anthropological expression of individuality in several parallel journeys that subversively confirm a structure that oppresses them, but from which they benefit for their life projects.

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