



Non-binary identities in a cisheteronormalized world

Identidades no binarias en un mundo cisheteronormado

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Abstract

What is non-binary identity? Nowadays, it is increasingly common to come across words, meanings and identities that we do not know or do not understand what they refer to. Therefore, this research presents the results of a series of 3 in-depth qualitative interviews conducted with non-binary people in Mexico City in April 2022, who reflect on their identity and experiences in a society that questions and denies their feelings. For this purpose, a qualitative methodology was proposed that used a bricolage technique that included the codification of meaning and interpretation of meanings based on the processes of constitution of subjectivity and culturally inscribed gender identity.

Keyword: Non-binary gender, Gender, Subjectivity, Heteronormativity, Social Psychology.

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Resumen

¿Qué es la identidad no binaria? En la actualidad, es cada vez más frecuente encontrarnos con palabras, acepciones e identidades que desconocemos o que no comprendemos a qué se refieren. Por ello, la presente investigación presenta los resultados de una serie de 3 entrevistas cualitativas a profundidad realizadas a personas no binarias en la Ciudad de México en el mes de abril de 2022, que reflexionan sobre su identidad y experiencias en una sociedad que cuestiona y niega su sentir. Para ello, se propuso una metodología cualitativa que utilizó una técnica de bricolaje que incluyó la codificación del sentido y de interpretación de significados a partir de los procesos de constitución de la subjetividad y de identidad de género inscrita culturalmente.

Palabras clave: Género no binario, Género, Subjetividad, Heteronormatividad, Psicología Social.

Introduction

This research is the result of a modular investigation of the V trimester of the Psychology degree program at the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana Xochimilco in Mexico City. As part of the curricular and formative activities, research is conducted over three months around a problem-axis that seeks to articulate a series of theoretical and methodological discussions. Throughout module V called "Subject and Culture", we reflect on the processes of symbolic nature that -we suppose- constitute the subject and inscribe him/her in culture (Fernández, 2021), paying special attention to identity processes, discursive plots coming from the family, sexuality, gender and other institutions that constitute subjectivity.

Through these discussions, we were able to investigate and understand the different processes of crossing and inscription of the subject by culture (Fernández, 2021; Lamas, 2013; Benveniste, 1988), an implication that is not always problematized. An example of this is gender, a concept that has been widely studied but is still often confused with sex or sexuality. In other words, sex is the material basis for the construction of gender, that is, the "ideas, representations, practices and social prescriptions that a culture develops from the anatomical difference between women and men, to symbolize and socially construct what is 'proper' to men (the masculine) and 'proper' to women (the feminine)" (Lamas, 2000, p. 2).

As an effect, gender and sexuality are phenomena that historically have been naturalized, that is, they are conceived as given, eternal and that we hardly question (Foucault, 2010; 2007; Lamas, 2013).

In this sense, the mere existence of people who question their sexuality or the correspondence between their sex and socially constructed gender, are often seen as rare, problematic and even abnormal (Foucault, 2007).

An example of this is the recent movement of non-binary people, people who do not identify themselves within the binary genders, either feminine or masculine; subjects who appeal to question the normative sex-gender system; subjects who demand to be recognized and to be named in a certain way, particularly with the use of the "e".

In different academic and everyday spaces, there have been a series of debates regarding inclusive language and the use of the "e" to include those people who do not identify with the feminine and masculine pronouns. However, inclusive language has provoked endless discomfort and debates about the "correct" use of Spanish and the strict application of morphosyntactic rules. As the main advocate, the Real Academia de la Lengua Española (2020) has declared and published a report on the use of inclusive language stating that, the interpretations of inclusive language will refer to only two interpretations:

- 1) One, restrictive, in which express references to women are made only through words of feminine gender [...], or, in any case, with terms that avoid the generic use of the masculine (the Spanish population, the Spanish people, the Spanish people).
- 2) Another, broader one, in which terms in the masculine include in their reference men and women when the context makes it sufficiently clear that this is so, as happens in the expression *el nivel de vida de los españoles* (RAE, 2020, p. 26).

This statement is problematic for several reasons. First, it ignores the fact that the symbolic universe is expressed through language (Benveniste, 1988). Secondly, language is constituted by binarisms that clearly reflect the social norm that is constituted on the basis of only two possibilities: the feminine and the masculine (Lamas, 2013). In this sense, as Laura Abratte asserts "There is a historical insistence on naturalizing linguistic uses and avoiding reflection" (cited in Toledo, 2019, para. 7). In other words, even when grammatically the masculine terms supposedly "include" women, in reality there is an invisibilization of the feminine based on their supposed inclusion with pronouns, adjectives or nouns in masculine (Suardiaz, 2002).

This implication leads us to wonder, on the one hand, about those subjects who escape a binary symbolic reality, such as the intersexual fan, and on the other hand, those subjects who subjectively are not located in either of the two fields -gender-, or who are located in both simultaneously -binary and fluid gender-.

In the words of Amelia Valcárcel and Sabina Berman:

Language is our instrument for naming the world. What language does not name does not cease to exist, but it is absent from our account of what the world is.

The world does not cease to change and neither does language cease to modify our account of the world.

What happens when the language contains rules that hinder its agility to relate to the world that has changed (2022, para. 1).

Therefore, we consider that it is of utmost importance to make visible and reflect on those genders that defy social norms, since historically, our society has tended to pathologize and make invisible everything that is different from the norm. That is, everything that does not conform to certain norms must be corrected, redirected, oriented, treated (Foucault, 2010), or, failing that, it is hidden, ignored, it is pretended that it does not exist.

Thus, under these discussions, it was decided to conduct an investigation on how a subject who identifies as non-binary gender is subjectively constructed. To carry out this research, three in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with people who identify themselves as non-binary in the month of April 2022 in Mexico City, Mexico. For the analysis of information, a bricolage technique was used (Kvale, 2008), which included a meaning coding technique, where the information emanating from the interview was systematized and coded into theoretical categories and then analyzed through the meaning interpretation technique.

As a theoretical foundation, the arguments of Marta Lamas (2010; 2013) and Judith Butler (2007) on the category of gender were recovered. Ana María Fernández (2021) on the processes of constitution of subjectivity and culturally inscribed gender identity. Daniel Inclán (2018) and Francesca Poggi (2018) to discuss forms of gender violence as a structural and symbolic phenomenon. Authors to be presented and developed in the discussion section.

It should be noted that, as part of the theoretical discussion, feminine, masculine and inclusive pronouns will be considered, so that in different sections of this paper we will refer to subjects with the endings /as, /os and /es. In the results section, we describe the experiences of the subjects who identify themselves as non-binary, which clearly show the complexity of feeling outside the binary norms, ranging from having suffered various forms of violence and discrimination at school and family; the importance of group and collective support, which are fundamental for the work on themselves; and the way in which they understand gender stereotypes and why they feel comfortable in both genders.

Finally, conclusions are presented that point to the importance of disseminating the variety of gender expressions in different channels, in order to promote and encourage a more inclusive society for everyone.

Materials and methods

The reflections developed in the research work are located within the field of subjectivity. We consider that this is an important task to build a space in which the experience of the subjects within a collectivity can be reflected. That is, to approach from the analysis the complexities and challenges of human experience, culture and society, so that the construction of gender identity can be known, understood and rethought (Baz, 1999; Fernández, 2021).

In order to do so, it will be necessary to recognize the subjects in their historicity, in their otherness, in a *who they are being*; that, through theorization, the development of a qualitative research and the use of in-depth interviews, it is possible to apprehend certain aspects of subjectivity. Thus, our interest in developing research with a qualitative approach stems from our curiosity to explore and learn about the subjects' own behavior and experience. Therefore, the phenomenological study is one of the main approaches for qualitative research. Thus, this discipline finds its place in understanding and interpreting the subjective phenomena of the self (Babu, 2019).

In the qualitative field there are several methods through which we can do research, one of them is the interview. It is important to start from the fact, on the one hand, that the interview as a research device has to be questioned, and also, that the interview situation can be an example of human occurrence and of the theoretical and ethical implications of social intervention. On the other hand, the interview as a research technique illustrates what is typically an intervening situation in which the interviewer is an active part of the process, where he/she is the main instrument. Hence the importance of knowing how to place oneself in the situation, the purposes pursued and its limitations (Baz, 1999).

The expression "in-depth interviews" is used to refer to this qualitative research method. Taylor and Bogdan (1987, p. 101) mention:

By in-depth qualitative interviews we mean repeated face-to-face encounters between the researcher and the informants, encounters aimed at understanding the informants' perspectives on their lives, experiences or situations, as expressed in their own words. In-depth interviews follow the model of a conversation between equals, rather than a formal exchange of questions and answers. [...] The researcher himself is the instrument of the research, not an interview protocol or form.

To conduct the interviews, an interview guide was prepared based on the theoretical categories: gender, gender identity, violence and family. Three interviews were conducted: the first one was conducted on April 3, 2022 and lasted 45 minutes. The second interview was conducted on April 9, 2022 and lasted 1 hour and 44 minutes. The third interview was conducted on April 10, 2022 and lasted 1 hour and 13 minutes. The interviewees gave their consent to be recorded and to use their information for academic purposes.

Once the interviews were conducted, the audio was transcribed and a bricolage technique was selected for the analysis of the material emanating from the three interviews.

[The term bricolage refers to the mixing of technical discourses in which the interpreter moves freely between different analytical techniques. This eclectic way of generating meaning-through a multiplicity of methods and *ad hoc* conceptual approaches-is a common mode of interview analysis. In contrast to systematic analytic methods, such as categorization and conversation analysis, bricolage involves a free interaction of techniques during analysis (Kavale, 2008, p. 158).

Thus, bricolage consisted of a combination of a meaning coding technique and a meaning interpretation technique (Kvale, 2008). With the first technique, a coding and categorization of the transcripts was carried out. First, a group reading was done to allow us to have an overview of the material obtained; the previous reading allowed us to identify discursive threads, as well as the location of signifiers that "insisted" in the discourses of the interviewees; the categories of gender, stereotypes, sex, family and gender violence were considered and assigned a color that clearly distinguished them from each other; finally, another group reading was done to identify and link categories in the same discourse thread. Subsequently, those reiterative signifiers and extracts from the transcripts that condensed the experience of the subjects were taken. Those excerpts that make possible the interpretation of the experience through the theoretical categories were selected. For the purposes of this article, a synthesis of the analysis carried out using the techniques mentioned above is presented.

Results

Based on the theoretical categories: gender, sex, gender stereotypes and gender violence, the interviews were analyzed. In the material collected, three discursive threads were found that were reiterative in the three interviews: peer groups, feeling "in the middle" and gender violence. In the first discursive thread 1) Peer groups: we consider that these became spaces in which they could meet, get to know and understand each other. These spaces were constituted by therapeutic sessions and accompaniment, where on the one hand, they shared in a group their experiences of "feeling "in the middle" and could affirm themselves, and on the other hand, there was some resistance to seeing and feeling themselves reflected in others.

In other words, group dynamics does not only refer to some processes of identification among peers (de Brasi, Lorenzo, Lucato, 1985), as would be the case of some of the people who attended, but there were also processes of discomfort and confusion in the identification process itself, which could be interpreted as "resistance".

These peer group spaces were constituted by acquaintances from the LGBTTTIQ+ community and friends, as well as psychotherapeutic processes. Within these spaces, the interviewees point out the importance of socializing the daily experience of feeling identified in a symbolic reality different from the binary and heteronormative one. For example, having the possibility of naming themselves and being named with a neutral pronoun marked by the "e".

From this analysis, the role of socialization of experience becomes evident in terms that Hugo Moreno (2017) points out as horizontal relations of sociality, which imply the collectivity of knowledge, rules, norms and experiences among peers, which are different from the verticality of socialization with other groups and other spaces, mainly conformed by adults. However, we could think that in this case, this verticality of socialization would undoubtedly be the heteronormative space that demands speaking with a pre-established binary language (feminine and masculine) and that ends up making invisible the experience of non-binary identification.

The second discursive thread 2) Feeling "in the middle": the feeling of doubt since childhood arising from not identifying with either of the two traditionally established genders (male and female) is recognized, since during the interviews the conflicts experienced due to not feeling comfortable with the gender their body represents are mentioned.

This sensation should not be underestimated, due to the constitutive role of subjectivity played by the primary identification processes within the family that begin with the "attribution, isolation or labeling of gender", which is inscribed first through the clinical institution by means of the doctors who identify the sex of the baby, and at the same time, of the family that, based on this first criterion of gender identification, will determine its place, role and function in the family nucleus (Dio Bleichmar, 1989, p. 38).

In this sense, feeling "in the middle" of the binary assignment culturally produces psychic and social conflicts in the subject, as he/she does not know and cannot identify "clearly" according to heteronormativity and binarism. Finally, the third discursive thread, 3) Gender violence: the repression of gender expression inside and outside the family nucleus through the use of verbal, physical and psychological violence (considering that two of the people interviewed were born as male and one person as female). In other words, the family, as a primordial institution in the inscription and reproduction of social norms (Lévi-Strauss, 1975; Dio Bleichmar, 1989), becomes the one in charge of pointing out to the subject that he/she must identify as cisgender, that is, that there is a correspondence between his/her anatomical sex and all his/her biological secondary sexual characteristics, with the sociohistorical construction of masculine and feminine gender.

In the narratives, the interviewees elaborate the different family strategies to "re-channel" them to the cisgender path, which involved violent symbolic structures. Likewise, after the family's failed attempts, social orthopedics (Foucault, 2007) was left to other spaces and institutions such as school and society.

With this type of interventions, the interviewees insisted on the relevance of making their experiences visible, in order to problematize and question these "should be"-the cisgender and heteronormative social norm-which, being institutionalized (Castoriadis, 2013), ends up being naturalized and reproduces the binary social imaginary as the only existing possibility.

Likewise, it was possible to identify the close relationship between gender and sexuality, since even before the interviewees named themselves as non-binary, their families assumed them to be homosexual due to the lack of knowledge about non-binary gender; that is, the family pigeonholed them into a sexual identity before they formed their gender identity. It could even be said that the interviewees themselves presented this confusion at the beginning of their sexual discovery. Likewise, these stories allow us to reflect on how, despite sexual diversity, there is a reduction to two possibilities: gay and lesbian, making any other possibility invisible.

On the other hand, most of the time the interviewees name themselves in masculine and neuter; and speak of their feminine side only as an expression of gender that they only express in social environments in which they feel more confident, however, they make use of the three pronouns with the objective of making them visible and being inclusive in this part of their non-binary. The conversion of pronouns is done in a natural way and they did not present difficulties in using non-binary language.

As already mentioned, femininity is expressed only in places where they feel more comfortable since their childhood development is strongly marked by the stereotypes that mark a binary society, they make mention saying that they had to be girls or boys and establish themselves in this gender role; where they have been asked to be, behave, dress, look, etc. In a certain way to fit into a pre-established social mold, where there is no neutral point. These binary stereotypes are strongly rooted in society marking and controlling behavioral patterns (Dio Bleichmar, 1989; Lamas, 2013); it can be noticed mainly within the play in childhoods where boys must dress in blue or similar colors and girls in pink. It also makes mention of the rules of academic institutions where girls should go on one side and boys on the other, that is where they did not know where to place themselves. In this way, gender stereotypes are not reduced only to gender, but are intertwined with other expressions such as sex, sexuality, identity, roles.

Similarly, it is worth mentioning that the stereotype has also been instituted within the non-binary spectrum by pigeonholing it as androgynous (neutral) which reduces the capacity for gender expression. On the other hand, we emphasize that what is considered feminine, masculine or neutral depends on the society in which the subject is found. We could recognize in their narratives, the constant of "women's clothes" and "men's clothes" which again invites us to question the way in which society has implanted limiting beliefs, stereotypes, forms and binary lifestyles. Therefore, it prevents or at least limits the possibility of trying new things and can easily fall into an interpretation of "grotesque" or simply "frowned upon" that gender diversity.

Thus, it is important to highlight that as subjects, we are traversed by the culture that inclines us to a "this is how it should be", "this is how it always was", "it is natural that this is how it should be", all this crossed by the social imaginary (Castoriadis, 2013) which forces us to be part of it through social institutions, such as family, schools, gender, etc. This inscription is done through implicit ways, such as everyday language,

which is governed by the binary, and if we do not follow it or assume it, the subject can be annulled, made invisible and even transgressed. In this sense, the social imaginary envelops us through social institutions with their respective norms and stereotypes, hoping to build a certain subject within a collective subjectivity that must comply with the "normal".

As a result of this process, those who do not follow the pre-established and implicitly agreed upon norms are subjected to various forms of violence. Through the interviews it was possible to identify some forms of violence towards non-binary identities: verbal aggression in response, that is, by *saying words to them* - hurtful words and jokes -, elaborating discourses of rejection and discrimination, or even through silence or resistance to naming them with the neutral pronoun or the one they have been told is the one they feel comfortable with.

In the opinion of the interviewees, these actions only perpetuated the cycle of violence, and led them to seek more information to find out who they were and if there were more people who, like them, did not feel comfortable within this binariety. On the other hand, while these forms of violence may encourage some information seeking or "educating" about gender diversity and identities, this educational work can be an exhausting task, they say:

You don't have to educate all the people [...] It's not your duty (Excerpt from interview transcript).

During the interviews, the frustration at a certain point of wanting to educate everyone is notorious. Although at the beginning of the formation of a non-binary identity there is enthusiasm for its dissemination, as they face the violence sustained by the binary social imaginary, the feeling diminishes and becomes frustration and anger not only with society but also with themselves for not understanding at the time that the educational and dissemination work does not depend solely on one person. However, we insist on the fact that the development of a certain social imaginary does not prevent it from being changed.

Institutions have the quality of hiding before our eyes, turning historical-social constructions that appear to be natural and eternal (Castoriadis, 2013). An example of this is gender, which is presented to us as a biological fact and not as a:

set of ideas, representations, practices and social prescriptions that a culture develops from the anatomical difference between women and men, to symbolize and socially construct what is "proper" to men (the masculine) and "proper" to women (the feminine) (Lamas, 2000, p. 2).

With this we can affirm that the term "gender" alludes only to a social construction and that such creation is formed in relation to biological sex; two sexes are going to be equal to two genders (feminine-masculine) which leads to a naturalized gender binarism (sex/gender system) (Lamas, 2013).

Being a social construct, it will have variations from one culture to another. Each culture selects the aspects that it considers feminine and masculine, and even varies within the same society in relation to social class, ethnic group, historical context, etc. Thus, each culture will establish social norms of what is considered feminine and masculine, which will be manifested through clothing, gender stereotypes, prescriptions and social roles and, of course, through language (Lamas, 2013).

In the words of Marta Lamas (2013):

[...] Our male-female dichotomy is, more than a biological reality, a symbolic or cultural reality. This dichotomy is reinforced by the fact that almost all societies speak and think binarily, and thus elaborate their representations (p. 340).

Likewise, we consider it important to explain what Judith Butler (2007) mentions. First, she states that gender is the result of a process through which people receive cultural meanings, but we also innovate them. With this idea, Butler (2007) points out that gender, besides being a social construct, has a variability of forms in each context and therefore, has a reinterpretative capacity. With this, we consider that it is thanks to this reinterpretation that the range of existing genders has been opened and made visible and that little by little it has destabilized the naturalized binarism.

In this sense, the conformation and identification of subjects who assume themselves to be "non-binary" implies the movement and dynamism of culture, that is, it is not a static and immovable social fact.

In this way, the proposal of *queer* theory takes on potency, insofar as:

[...] rejects the idea of being able to classify people in static and general categories, such as sex, gender identity and sexual orientation, as it considers this to be something imposed by a vision of compulsory heterosexuality (Henríquez, 2011, cited by Vázquez, 2020, pp. 9- 10).

In other words, *queer* theory aims to denaturalize gender binarism and, therefore, not to take feminine or masculine and heteronormativity for granted (Vázquez, 2020). An objective that aims to question the norms instituted on the basis of a heteronormative binary thinking, which on many occasions can lead to behaviors and expressions of intolerance and violence towards those practices and people who challenge the established "reality" (Álvarez, April 22, 2022; Actualidad, September 28, 2021).

As developed by Daniel Inclán (2018), violence requires a reason and an objective that is limited by a specific time and space. Thus, although it may sometimes seem absurd, all types of violence are grounded in a social fact, structure, symbolism or difference.

Likewise, the author points out that, being a process where physical, symbolic, cognitive and affective force is mixed, it generates differences between people and from which "principles of identity and externality (an us and a them) are established" (Inclán, 2018, p. 3).

Thus, Daniel Inclán (2018) proposes six categories in which violence intervenes: systemic, social, gender, ethnic, epistemic and revolutionary. On gender violence, he mentions that in the case of women and men, the peculiarity of violence lies not so much in the acts, but in the construction of an artificial hierarchy between the two sexes. In this case, we could think of this hierarchy in terms of inequality between "The Same" -binary gender- and "The Other" -dissident gender identities, sex-gender diversities-.

Many of the acts in some cases are not merely instrumental, but are responsible for strengthening and giving continuity to a discursive order and a social aesthetic. These violent acts are never an act of individuals, as they arise from and participate in a collective imaginary or collective form (Inclán, 2018).

Daniel Inclán (2018, p. 13) mentions:

[...] Gender violence is accompanied by subtle, almost unconnected acts, such as the didactics of cruelty and perversion, in which pedagogical strategies are constructed to teach how to violate bodies and organize them into two poles: the masculine [...] the feminine or feminized. The discursive order and its criteria of truth are fundamental in this field; in many cases it responds to a long history of artificial construction of hierarchies.

In the same vein, Francesca Poggi (2018) in her essay on the concept of gender-based violence and its relevance to law defines gender-based violence as:

Gender-based violence is the general term used to capture violence that occurs as a result of normative expectations about the roles associated with each gender, along with unequal power relations between the two genders, in a specific society (p. 294).

In this sense, gender violence is intertwined with other *forms* of violence: systemic and symbolic. An example of this is the resistance to the use of inclusive language.

On the one hand, the purist arguments of language, as well as the unreflective application of the use of language, make visible a symbolic violence, on the one hand, by making invisible those subjects who decide to identify themselves in one, neither or both binary forms.

On the other hand, it is elucidated what violence is transversal to other forms, for example of systemic violence, which, demands from the subjects a series of "coherent and congruent" behaviors of the sociocultural system of which one is part (Inclán, 2018, p. 6).

Daniel Inclán mentions a key point: "all material culture [has a] biplanar logic: it is at the same time material and semantic" (2018, p. 6). So in this dimension of violence, the subject is inscribed in its meanings-objective and subjective-in order to maintain the order of things. In the case of binary gender, by questioning the given "order of things", it will seek to redirect the subject immediately, deploying violence on different scales to correct the supposed "deviation" to ensure the reproduction of the existing cultural

system, in that case, binary, through cisgender correspondence, binary language and the disqualification and infantilization of their experiences. As if it were a "phase" that will be overcome or that it will be enough for them to meet "that special person" who will make them feel "truly" men or women.

Therefore, gender studies and *queer* theory must continue to expand discussions on those categories that tend to be naturalized and essentialized, such as gender and sex, but also sexuality, gender stereotypes, sexual orientation and desire, or the diversity of behavioral forms and expressions that go beyond the heteronorma.

Conclusions

We understand that gender identity is a construction that begins before our birth with language, as meaning and signifier that is assumed and reproduced on the basis of a heteronormative binary thinking (Fernández, 2021; Butler, 2007). Thus, it becomes a process for which there is "no" space when it comes to gender diversity. Norms and institutions are strong pillars that run through us - subject us - and, even when on very particular occasions there is a desire to "be inclusive", insufficient, unequal and hostile devices are maintained in the face of differences.

Likewise, we find that the family plays an important role in the shaping of gender since, in addition to being the first means of socialization, it is an institution of the social imaginary that reproduces binary gender and heterosexuality (Lévi-Strauss, 1975; Dio Bleichmar, 1989; Lamas, 2013). In this sense, non-binary persons, from a young age, when identifying their difference, are appealed by the institution of gender -cis-heteronormative-, which is inscribed through adults and parents. In this process, there is a tendency to annul the other, to interpret the "difference" as just a stage they are going through, downplaying the importance of their feelings.

We make the clarification that as a work team, we consider that difference must stop being linked to the negative and that historically it has been taken for granted that difference must be discriminated, stigmatized and, as a last resort, eliminated. Why do we see "The Other" as negative? Since when has this been the case? These are questions that require more time and research, however, reproducing difference as "the bad" only limits and invisibilizes the diversity that is emerging.

We note how society's binarism restricts gender expression and hinders the ability to identify the gender with which you feel comfortable. Although a large part of society lives within the comfort provided by gender binarism, there is a part of the population that lives a conflict for not identifying with the feminine or masculine. Therefore, limiting the expression to two poles is represented in all areas: health, activities, school, clothing, etc., in addition to the fact that the stereotype, the "should be", is so embedded that although it is beginning to be questioned, it has not caused a radical change. This research was carried out during 10 weeks of work that coincides with the day of *trans* visibility in Mexico (March 28) and the day of lesbian visibility in Mexico (April 26). Undoubtedly, this context favored the way to reach people who lent their

experience as support for this research, as well as access to information regarding the LGBTTTIQ+ community.

However, despite all the laws and commemorative days that have been established, gender violence continues to be repeated, with this we are not trying to downplay the importance of the great advances that have been achieved in the legal framework, but we try to highlight that if we do not change the way of thinking and seeing, to the non-binary, there is no sense in these advances. In that sense, we express that, it is not necessary to understand or accept people to respect their identity, but what we cannot continue, are the cycles of aggression that represses and violates their gender expression and consequently their rights. That is, beyond independence and autonomy. On the other hand, the present research put into play our way of writing (us), thinking (us) and speaking (us). Addressing the issue of non-binary gender opened a panorama that problematizes and makes gender binarism visible to us and that hopefully can reflect a change in our way of seeing this binary society in order to expand this vision to future generations.

Writing the paper helped us to elucidate our own naturalized binarism, since it was only after reviewing it that we noticed that, despite being only women team members, we found ourselves writing in masculine, a situation that necessarily led us to question not only the institution of gender, but also the scientific and academic institution that demands -implicitly and explicitly- a certain form of writing. Similarly, when analyzing the discursive content of the interviews, we asked ourselves, "How should we write and refer to these people now? This was undoubtedly a challenge for all of us.

We believe that in addition to academic learning, there was also a great deal of personal learning. The members of the team had knowledge of the LGBTTTIQ+ community but we did not know enough about non-binary gender, therefore, this research broadened our view of non-binary people. We had the opportunity to get closer to people who identify with this gender, to hear and know from their own voice both life stories and experiences. This allowed us to delve even deeper into the topic, to gather information and knowledge necessary to achieve the research, but also to gain knowledge in our own way. The work not only allowed us to practice curiosity, to question our context and knowledge, but also our own position in the face of inequalities and identity construction.

With this work we experienced a whole problematization not only of the use of pronouns but also of the use of "e". Listening to the interviewees make the change of pronouns so naturally and in several words that do not refer to gender (for example objects) led us to question to what extent this inclusion with the "e" can make the "a" invisible. Nevertheless, we position ourselves along the same lines as Emmanuel Theumer who states that:

Inclusion through language can, in the best of cases, be a will of inclusion, a horizon in successive expansion", she says. And she explains: "Language is finite and cannot contain the experiences of gender; on the

contrary, it has been and is a technology of gender government in the sense of contributing to the maintenance and naturalization of a bicategorization of gender. I like to think of the use of the x or the e as exercises of destabilization of a genericized language, as fissures in the ontological security produced by that language. For some reason it provokes anger, laughter, stumbling blocks, discomfort. A way of assuming that we are thrown into culture (quoted in Florencia Alcaraz, December 18, 2018, para. 16).

Another challenge we had was to stop pigeonholing sexualities and identities, taking into account that we seek non-exclusion and we deal with a topic that demands non-classification... At the time of analyzing the information, we experienced a whole process of reflection on what is said and how the interviewees identify themselves, which implied the fall of prejudices and stereotypes we had. Confronting our positions, prejudices, limiting beliefs, stereotypes, the "should be! It was quite an adventure, we were involved in circumstances in which our opinion or feeling could not be perceived by the interviewee, as it could hinder the communication of the interview. The fact of being in front of a person of whom we have a social preconception, either feminine or masculine, and he/she asks you to speak to him/her in a pronoun totally contrary to what you see, was the watershed to question an entire society and a rigid binary thinking that has been interwoven throughout history.

In this sense, it is worth asking the question: Is there such a thing as a "correct" gender?

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