

Transgender, aging and old age - Do transgender people get old?

Travestis, envelhecimento e velhice – Os travestis ficam velhos?

Pedro Paulo Sammarco Antunes
Elisabeth Frohlich Mercadante

ABSTRACT: This study is aimed to understand transgender aging context in Brazil. Normal and abnormal were especially created by biological sciences. For being considered deviants, transgender people are not seen as human beings. They end up living in violent environments. Their life expectancy is low. Many of them do not believe to reach old age. They face a lot of prejudice and death threat. Those who get to what we call old age are considered survivals. This investigation was able to show satisfactorily their demands and needs. To be considered visible, they have to count on public policies to give them existence since their childhood. That way, we believe they will reach what we call old age with respect and dignity, already assured by the Universal Human Rights.

Keywords: Old Age; Gender; Transgender.

RESUMO: O presente artigo objetiva avaliar o processo de envelhecimento e da velhice daquelas pessoas designadas como travestis. As ciências biomédicas jogam um papel importante na categorização dessas pessoas. A intenção é compreender o impacto que tais diagnósticos têm sobre aqueles que são reconhecidos como anormais. Foram realizadas três entrevistas abertas com foco nas histórias de vida dessas pessoas. Por serem consideradas patológicas e desviantes socialmente, atravessam a vida como pessoas invisíveis e quando vistas são avaliadas preconceituosamente. Isso as levou a improvisarem suas existências em todos os seus aspectos e, em geral, a partir de contextos violentos. Suas expectativas de vida são baixas. As que vivem até a velhice,

podem ser consideradas verdadeiras sobreviventes. A pesquisa resultou no levantamento de demandas e necessidades em relação às travestis. Verificou-se que precisam urgentemente de políticas públicas que as reconheçam desde sempre.

Palavras-chave: Velhice; Gênero; Travesti.

Introduction

This article concerns the aging context of transgender people. With the increase of the elderly population in general, transgender people who get old also deserve attention, precisely because they constitute a population group that suffers exclusion at any age. Little is known about this period of their lives, even among the members of their own group. How do the aging process and old age of transgender people take place? In what are they different from those of other people?

The scarcity of studies published on the aging process and old age of transgender people – who often do not even get to old age – is what led us to develop the investigation proposed herein.

The movements of fights for the rights of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender people and transsexuals have been gaining room. It is quite true that bias in relation to transgender people has been decreasing slowly in the course of years. It is fitting, however, to emphasize that bias is still strong and acts on a daily basis in the life of transgender people. Those that reach old age go through life being the target of constant attacks. Bias comes from the social organization process that classifies what is considered as normal and its opposite, what is abnormal.

Our society is built from social relations that come to be among individuals. Man is at the same time a social product and a social producer. Culture involves beliefs of the human being. The process of social objectification occurs through acts that become habits and these, in turn, create standards that are institutionalized, which become legitimate. We create something that at the same time creates us, culture and society.

Values – beliefs, myths – provide subsidies to institutions, prescribing roles.

Legalizations are justified in institutions. Created an objective reality, there are mechanisms for maintaining it. In case there may be a “rebel” who does not submit to the established standard, there will be an attempt of therapeutic application, with the objective of treating to correct.

If it is not possible to correct, what will remain is the prison or even its annihilation (Berger & Luckmann, 2006).

Transgender people, for example, are excluded and by rule annihilated from society, for not fitting into the established gender standards. At times, they are submitted to treatment in order to be corrected. Now transgender people in process of aging suffer a dual stigmatization: for the fact that they are getting old and because they are living as transgender people.

Thus, through what was explained in the foregoing section, this article focuses on aspects that were institutionalized namely: sexuality, aging process and old age, represented here through the aging process of transgender people.

Literature review

It seems obvious to ask about the causes of that which is considered as abnormal in any field of study. Only a certain minority of researchers, however, ask themselves on the causes of that which is considered as normal. Only a few are concerned to know how the construction process of “normality” was. Why is it that certain phenomena and manifestations are considered as normal? What are the criteria that define what is “normal”? That which is considered as normal is often set in hierarchical structure, naturalized and *essentialized*; it is, therefore, automatically exempted from inquiries regarding its constitution.

The statement on something does not always reflect the real world, especially considering that the reality is also built through statements resulting from those who declare them. The issue is always approached and defined according to the adopted cultural perspective. The individual who is considered as ill is not naturally given. Disease is the result of a set of statements that define it as such.

It is interesting to notice that, that which is said issues is a particular effect of “truth” that does not exist beyond the determined relation of power. There is no discourse free from any relation of power that produces it. For this reason, it is necessary to understand the principles of “truth” of the period and place in question. No “truth” is, therefore, neutral, sovereign and unchangeable (Foucault, 2008a).

The urbanization process occurred in Europe, during the ascent of the bourgeoisie (middle class), and the industrial revolution generated pressure, anonymity and the creation of the so-called “deviants” who do not get suited to the regulatory standards of social operation that were defined in the cities. In general, the one who was not economically productive and biologically reproductive, was considered as “abnormal” (Miskolci, 2005).

The sexual practices that were not in accordance with the standard of procreation and gender were being observed, described and catalogued. With the passing of time, now around the 19th century, the type of sexual activity, which before was considered sinful and abnormal, starts to be controlled and incorporated by biological sciences, represented mainly by medicine and psychiatry. Medical manuals were being written containing the “normal” and “abnormal” way of how the recently “created” sexuality “should” be practiced. The more it is issued through speech, the more visible, categorized and disciplined it is (Foucault, 1993).

The North American anthropologist Gayle Rubin (born in 1949) discusses the concept of the current sexual stratification in our western society. She proposed a value-based pyramid with the following categories: at the top is the considered good, normal, natural and blessed by religion, that is, heterosexual, conjugal, monogamous, procreating, non-commercial, exclusively between two members of the couple, stable relationship, of the same generation, in private place, without pornography, exclusively between two bodies (without any fetish object involved in the fetish act), pasteurized, of the same social class and ethnicity.

Then, comes the heterosexual sexuality of the unmarried, for procreation, which does not pay, which occurs only between two members of the couple, which can occur in an intergenerational relationship, in private place, without pornography, exclusively between the two bodies involved, pasteurized, of the same social class and ethnicity.

At the middle of the pyramid is the homosexual sexuality in stable relationship, in sin, promiscuous, non reproductive, for money, alone or in group, occasional, of the same generation, in public, with fetish objects and sadomasochists.

At the base of the pyramid are those excluded: sexuality considered as bad, abnormal, pathological, unnatural and condemnable, that is, single homosexual sex, outside of marriage, promiscuous, non-reproductive, commercial, alone or in group, occasional or compulsive, between generations, in public, pornographic, among fetishists, sadomasochists, transsexuals and transgender people (Rubin, 1999).

For the biomedical sciences, the transgender person, for example, is the result of a hybrid between two psychiatric categories that emerged: the homosexual and the hermaphrodite. The former was considered abnormal due to its sexual practice which is not in accordance with the standards of procreation of new consumers / producers. Now the latter, aside from not being in accordance with the standards of procreation, is not in accordance, as well, with the standards of gender. Such standards were stipulated with the objective of serving a determined adopted mode of economic and social organization. These, in turn, account for the determined proposal of social operation (Leite Junior, 2008).

The standard in this case, makes us to believe that it is as if there was an “essence” of coherent and natural gender that was inside each of us. Such coherence occurs between that which was called by the biomedical sciences as biological sex, identified gender and sexual orientation. Then, it falls on the subject only to manifest this “essence” in the course of life. Having in mind that, in accordance with this logic, men manifest the “male essence” and women, the “female essence”. Based on this way of thinking, the transgender person is considered a resistant to what is established, since he manifests the opposite “essence” in relation to that which should be.

Gender is a cultural construction and not a natural process. However, there is a certain insistence on the part of the biomedical sciences in “essentializing” and “naturalizing” the gender. However, he forms part of the social logic that establishes meaning to bodies, practices, relations, beliefs and values. Even though it is variable and culturally diverse, it seems to form part of a principle that endows sense to the reality that they live. Both the body produces the gender, and the gender produces the body in a

simultaneous relation (Benedetti, 2005; Scott, 1990).

For the North American philosopher Judith Butler (born in 1956), the gender must not be a cultural membership of importance on a pre-given sex. It must also designate the proper productive apparatus in which the sexes are established. Sex is not for nature as well as the gender is for culture. Gender is a cultural discursive medium through which a sexual nature or natural sex is produced and established as pre-discursive reality. As if sex were prior to culture and acted on a politically neutral surface (Butler, cited in Benedetti, 2005).

Heterosexuality is legalized as the sole “correct” sexual orientation. It is a set of prescriptions that lay the foundation of social processes of regulation and control. The objective is to form everyone to be heterosexuals and to organize their lives from a model that seems to be absolutely “coherent”, “superior”, “logical” and “natural”. And being so, heterosexuality is institutionalized, obligatory and compulsory (Rich, cited in Bento, 2006; Wittig, cited in Bento, 2006).

In this perspective, the studies called *Queer* emerge which propose to understand the social practices that organize the whole society through “sexualization”, “heterosexualization”, “homosexualization”, of bodies, desires, acts, identities, social relations, knowledge, culture and social institutions. Standardizing social processes that create classifications, are questioned, generating the illusion that there are stable subjects, natural identities and regular behaviors (Seidman, cited in Miskolci, 2009).

The *queer* theory challenges sociology to no longer study those that break the standards, or the social processes that created them as deviants. Instead of this, it insists on focusing the standardizing processes marked by the simultaneous production of hegemonic and subaltern. Such studies are concerned with criticizing the standardizing processes. Therefore, the *queer* studies, according to Pelúcio (2009), seek to unveil mechanisms of naturalization and essentialization of terms and relations signified by them.

The *pathologization* of determined identities authorizes and grants power, to those who are considered as normal, to carry out with their own hands “asepsis” that will leave the society free from “contamination”.

The standards of gender solely bestow intelligibility, that is, existence and right to

life to those who are assigned in “appropriate genders” to their respective “sexual bodies”. Aside from this, they make possible the emergence of identity conflicts with these same standards. Therefore, medical knowledge, one of the “manufacturers” of the standards of gender, does not describe the nature but rather produces it. As we have already seen, no formation of knowledge that structures the determined concept is neutral (Bento, 2008).

In the case of elderly transgender person, we can notice that both the notion of old age and the notion of gender found in the body and/or in the mind is consequence of the standardized norms of old age and/or gender, and not their cause. The set of these acts forms that which we call old age and/or gender. What body specialists try to found as “old age” and/or “gender” is, above all, the expected competence of performance of “old age” and/or “gender” of that which is being analyzed and judged. This way, the concepts of gender and old age are instituted in time and space through social regulations that define them as such.

Since there are no “original”, “natural”, “essential”, “universal”, “unchangeable”, “fixed”, “neutral” and “real” gender and old age, the notion of copy of the gender and/or of old age loses the sense. In this case, there is no manner of copying that which was not concretized. All variations of old age and/or gender are valid. They are only concretized with respect to performativities. In order to be recognized and legalized, they need social acceptance.

Human beings only become viable through socially recognized categories. Therefore, according to such essentializing matrix, elderly transgender people are considered as abject and invisible, precisely for not corresponding to any category considered viable to the stipulated standards (Miskolci, 2009).

Large part of the transgender people are not on the level with women. They do not even want this. They know that they are transgender people and they constitute their transgender bodies from their male biological bodies. Transgender people in general move constantly between that which was called as female characteristics and that which was called as male characteristics (Benedetti, 2005).

From Foucault (1993), by taking into account the perspective of power, the idea of normality is not imposed. Its power is established through seduction of the individual,

by promising him acceptance, health, happiness, longevity and beauty. Such promises imprison people into a device of eternal examination and correction. The difference that exists between the idealized expectations of the body and the possible reality of being achieved generates frustration. The ideals are made perfect and sophisticated so that they may be more and more unreachable. This way, the person will continue to consume at the attempt of reaching the imposed goals.

For practical purposes, transgender people express high level of concern with the aesthetics of their body, with their look, even many living from prostitution. Therefore, the appearance becomes a requirement of great importance for them. A question is placed here: - How will they handle it when the body starts to suffer the actions of time?

The current society is characterized by volatility, competitiveness, individuality, quickness, instability and for being easily modularized and adjustable to the power systems that control him. There is a bias against those that are not moldable, fast and flexible (Foucault, 2008b). Generally, the elderly usually suffers the stigma of that which is characterized for being slow, strict, systematic, methodic, dependent and inflexible. The idealized body and produced by such society is the beefy, slim, “beautiful”, independent, forever young and “healthy” body.

Surveillance is placed precisely on those that obstruct the considered important flow for operation of the social order established by society (Mansano, 2007). The elderly transgender person, for example, is accused of placing in risk the considered correct flow. For this reason they are checked, watched, detected, classified, excluded and submitted to treatment for correction.

It is fitting to emphasize, however, the difference that older transgender people make in performing an important role before their group. They are proud to be “mothers” or “godmothers” of younger transgender people. Their task is that of starting, protecting and teaching the younger ones to live as transgender people. Among the functions that an older transgender person (as if he were a mother) plays in relation to the younger transgender person (as if he were a daughter) that stand out are those of teaching body techniques and potentiating body attributes. That is, he teaches the younger transgender person to take hormones, suggests to him what parts of the body must be “pumped up”, even prescribing the amount of silicon to be applied there.

The “mother” indicates to which “*bombadeira*” (as he is called in Brazil, is a transgender person who transform the body of his customers through clandestine silicon application) her “daughter” must go. Many “*bombadeiras*” are also obtained as mothers, since they “make a body”, by orienting how to take care of it, by dominating techniques that place them in position of prestige among the transgender people. Aside from this, some of the older transgender people occupy the place of madams, organizing the ramified prostitution network among those who prostitute themselves.

Transgender people who are able to put together some cash in the course of life end up purchasing properties and renting rooms to the younger transgender people. Others even act as loan sharks in relation to those who intend to prostitute themselves in Europe. Some transgender people who are abroad provide this type of service, aiding the younger ones at the arrival and in their stay. They both take care of the younger ones, and exploit and maltreat them. As said, many transgender people, due to bias, end up creating a commercial network among them. “Manufacturing” a body, for a lot of “mothers” is also “manufacturing” a person. This implies, therefore, among other things, in the transmission of their own values of *transvestility* (*travestilidade*, the term used in Portuguese) (Pelúcio, 2009).

Several reasons can lead a person into transforming himself into that which we call a transgender person. According to Kulick (2008), the life of a transgender person is anchored on desire. Their bodies are manufactured as consequence of this desire. The desire is not always sexual. Thanks to the transformation of their bodies, many are able to achieve means of survival and recognition, aside from affection, kindness, money,

esteem, material goods, social ascent, recovery of affective ties with the family, friendships, prestige, status etc. (Kulick, 2008; Pelúcio, 2009).

In what refers to the aging process and to old age, it is fitting to emphasize here that, in capitalism, the retirement phase and the closure of production in the labor market were associated to old age. Elderly bodies no longer produced so much in relation to their youth. Since they continued to live, they had to be retired, until death got its hand on them. The old transgender person started not to be seen, either as a producer or as a reproducer, but, rather, as a useless and decadent parasite (Mascaro, 1997).

What has been valued currently is youth, this symbolizing beauty, attractiveness, strength, adaptability, creativity, productivity, consumption, cleverness, agility, versatility and quickness. Old age, on the other hand, is seen as a threat to such admired and valued attributes, which is as a rule, culturally associated with imminent death and physical decadence.

In the last decades, however, old age has been acquiring importance, due not only to increase of the number of elderly people in the world, but due to several and different social and political organizations with which the elderly people have been involved. Many from this age bracket are also being standardized through consumption and behavioral patterns.

The valued old age models are represented by elderly people who face challenges, make plans for the future, maintain a complete schedule of activities, show to be creative, merry and feel reluctance in retiring. It seems that the traditional model of old age that presupposed the elderly person at home, retired, ill, decadent, isolated and waiting for death to come, is rapidly changing (Almeida, 2005).

Generally, in our society, elderly people started to behave as young people in order to be accepted. The life experiences of the oldest people, thus, stop from being valued, with no one else “capable” of getting older, any longer. The physiological transformations inherent to the human body due to the action of time started to be cloaked by the fashion and cosmetic industries and all other branches of health.

A part of old age is being reinvented when being captured by new commercial requirements of the current society. A new consumption market was being created, promising eternal youth, through a new wardrobe, forms of leisure, lifestyles, and relation

with the body, family and friends. The classic model of old age being gradually replaced by another.

This “new” old age becomes related to terms like “senior citizen”, “best age” or “mature age”: new socially built categories, which include new consumers who do not wish to be noticed as standard elderly people. These new concepts on the aging process suggest that this is a life phase that reflects the continuity of a process and not the final lap.

While the classic old age caused losses to biopolitics, the “senior citizen”, in turn, generates profit for them, when addressing on healthy, productive, desirable, consumerist and acceptable aging process. Just like children, young people and adults, elderly people became object of power and knowledge production, which ends up controlling them when dictating how they “must” live their old age (Debert, 2004; Mercadante, 1997; Tótorá, 2006).

The old person’s model, for a long time, was built from the opposite what the young person’s model is. However, many elderly people are not recognized in this model, since the aging process is an individual process. Denying the established model so that everyone may get older in the same way allows other forms of producing old age to be inaugurated (Mercadante, 1997).

Transgender people, meanwhile, are now considered different in any age bracket of life. They go through life as individual persons who get old individually, even in relation to other transgender people. Non-transgender elderly people are accepted as they cloak better the marks of old age. The elderly transgender person, however, even though he masks the stamps of old age, will not be accepted, since he will still be a transgender person.

In relation to elderly transgender people, Siqueira (2004) in her master’s dissertation, pioneer on the topic, surveyed among her interviewees that, in spite that they are living a calmer phase and with better quality of life in old age, they stress that it was not easy to get to the age that they reached. The researcher interviewed five transgender people between 59 and 79 years old, residents of the city of Rio de Janeiro. They reported that to get old with dignity as a transgender person is not for anybody. To arrive at an old age as a transgender person still represents a position of status before the group.

The study also emphasizes that they feel satisfied for the times they were confused with ladies. Perhaps this happens, because they are no longer seen as ambiguous and abject people. It is not enough, however, to be confused with ladies. What is important for these interviewees is to establish that, for having lived from prostitution, they are currently very successful ladies who escaped from the HIV contamination, from compulsion for the use of drugs, from violent contexts and context of bias. They say that they move around through all social media and are respected at the place where they reside.

They emphasize that everyone gets old in a way and that is difficult to generalize the aging process even among them. They are usually engaged in political militancy and aid in relation to group problems for the fact that they are considered pioneers and experienced.

Aside from this, they reinforce that each of them traced their path singularly, with the objective of gaining some room, at the cost of a lot of battle. They further relate that they serve as mirror and example to the younger transgender people, whom they stimulate so that they may be engaged in militancy and may develop sense of citizenship and self-care.

On the other hand, they end up reducing their circle of friendships, selecting better established contacts. They even cite opportunely that, in spite of the age, they are still sought for sexually and desired. They recommend, finally, that it is important for the younger transgender people to prepare themselves for old age, since this period is very difficult in Brazil, especially for those of the low income bracket and particularly to transgender people.

Methodological approach

For the proposed investigation, the methodological option fell back on the approach of qualitative character, since this option keeps close relation, based on what we understand, with the objective of identifying the representations of the aging process and

of old age of the study subjects, i.e., to survey the perception with respect to the interviewees' own aging process.

Through contact with a Non Governmental Organization (NGO) that protects the so-called LGBT segment (lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people) three transgender people were contacted and interviewed, where two were over sixty years old and one was over forty. The latter was chosen due to his importance as a political militant, occupying, at the occasion of the interview, the position of president of the Brazilian National Articulation of Transgender People.

In any way, it is fitting to recall, of course, that old age (understood through the physical marks of the body) in the transgender context, sets foot earlier. Especially for those who end up prostituting themselves as form of gaining their own sustenance (Siqueira, 2004).

For data collection, open interviews were used with focus on the life stories of each interviewee. It is believed that, by knowing their life trajectories, it is possible to survey which are the adopted survival strategies.

According to Duarte and Barros (2005), such method involves the use and collection of narratives and documents of life histories. The focus is the experiences lived. Through life history, you can capture what happens at the individual's crossroad with the social dimension as well as it allows elements from the present to be merged with the past evocations.

The method is not ruled by preset and strict guides. Collection must flow in accordance with the situation of the "two-way conversation" (Haguette, 1987). Nonetheless, some points were proposed in the course of the interviews: thus, it was requested for the interviewees to talk about childhood, adolescence, adulthood and current period. Their experience as transgender person; their aging process and old age; their future perspectives.

The interviews work with memory and, therefore, with selectivity, which causes the interviewee to be able to go deeper into particular matters and to move away others from the discussion.

What matters when we work with life history is the narrative of the life of each one, in how each subject reconstructs it (Bosi, 1994; Minayo, 2010).

The dialogue that takes place between the two subjects in the interview creates interpretative possibilities at different levels which include both the researcher's perspective and that of the research subject's.

Therefore, when the researcher carries out the analysis of the interview, he will be reenacting the interpretation that the interviewee himself attributes to himself (Mercadante, 1997).

Collected data

The opening statements of the first interviewee already highlight the great impact that strikes the life of transgender people who get old supplying sustenance for themselves from prostitution: with old age at the doorstep, the physical attributes are not allowed to be maintained upfront, ceasing, therefore, from being considered as beautiful.

Then, he highlights the position of older transgender people before the other younger transgender people, whom must serve as mirrors and models. It is indispensable for these latter ones to know the trajectory of the older ones and to recognize them in their role; this way, the younger ones can realize that, they enjoy some freedom and certain room at this moment, this happens thanks to the older ones who "opened" the path at the cost of a lot of struggles.

He reveals further that the older transgender person generally tends to hide himself. Old age is not valued, even among the transgender people. It is as if the transgender person lost his function when getting old. Then, he ends up disappearing out of sight. There are accounts of some who get old and return dressing up like men. They go through a kind of "*de-transformation*". Others end up assuming diverse tasks, like those of: dressmakers, maids, cooks, hairstylists, make-up stylists, *bombadeiras*, madams, renters, bookies, artists etc.

He recommends that it is important for transgender people to gather together in NGOs in order to strengthen themselves. He believes that it is essential for the younger transgender people to contribute with social welfare so that they may have an income at old age. He recommends further that they also need to study again, since this way they

will increase their possibilities of acquiring other jobs that may protect them at old age. He says that if there were public policies that recognize transgender people from a tender age up to old age, some would not have to hide when they get old. As political militant that he is, the interviewee, anyway, emphasizes that there are still so much to be done for transgender people who, if they are able to get old, are more unprotected, physically and socially, as any other old person.

Old age associated to physical decadence and to absence of social roles – precisely the current model in western society since the second half of the 19th century, as scholars attest to it in which Debert is an example, in this sense (cited in Siqueira, 2004). The transgender person who prostitutes himself, under this perspective, starts to be seen, consequently, as an old person as soon as his body ceases from being attractive to his sight and to the sight of others, showing himself physically decadent. Which is what happens quite early in the case of the transgender person, according to the first interviewee, that is now around the age of forty.

The second interviewee in this research highlights that, currently, the opportunities that are set in large urban centers (professionalizing courses, for example) are still fragile and uninteresting proposals for the current generations of transgender people. He alleges that the money that they gain from prostitution is considerably larger than with other activity that they can perform.

This interviewee believes that life did not pass uselessly for him, since he calls himself creator of concepts that never get old and that they express his lifestyle. He relates that younger transgender people, before him, notice that it is not horrifying to get old as a transgender person, if they know how to do it.

He considers that it is important to have had an upbringing, a good family education and contact with cultured people. From there, he could build his life, creating his own and example style for the younger generations. He declares that it is preferable to be considered elegant in proper attitudes than elegant for physical beauty alone; that it does not help to be lovely at the age of twenty if you have nothing constructive to say.

He does not consider himself a sexagenarian. He says that each of us has the tendency of seeing old age in others. Others are the ones who get old, then, finally, he relates that he performs activities that people of his age no longer perform. He reveals

that he is sexually sought for even today and others of his age are not sought for sex in the same way as he is. He notices himself as someone who wakes up interest, since people like to talk with him and to be on his side. He says that with age, he started to know himself better, mainly in relation to his body. He knows how to choose better when he is in a sexual relation, for example. With the passing of time, he has gone acquiring greater quality in sexual life, as well as in other aspects of life.

He considers that old age is characterized by the encounter with his “roundups” (experiences) in the course of life. The goal is to gather all these “roundups” and make a bouquet of glorious flowers. For this purpose, it is necessary to have sensitivity to notice the flowers that are collected along the way. For him, to continue learning prevents him from getting old. The learning is an anti-aging antidote. He declares that when we learn we do not get old.

He reinforces further that the concept of aging is very restricted in the physical appearance of the people. He affirms that the fact of being interesting does not allow people to see the wrinkles that appear on their face. People do not want, in fact, for the aging process to appear in that which is considered interesting. From these attributes, he describes the young person as a tree with bright sap, leaves, flowers, fruits and shade, around which everybody wants to be. On the contrary, for him, the old person is like a dry tree, with no leaves, sterile, with no flowers, fruits, sap and brightness, which is therefore, empty and solitary.

Now the third interviewee talks of his experience as an artist. He relates his trajectory from Cuba, where he was born in 1938 until he arrived in Brazil in 1958. He suffered homophobia in the family, mainly through his mother. He talks of his transformation, from the artistic career as transsexual and from involvement with influential people who could defend him. He relates that he never wanted to be an icon or a model for anyone. He said that he ended defending himself; consequently, opening a path for younger generations. He recognizes that he ended up serving as a model to other transgender people, although he did not desire it. He associates old age with death. He says that he does not want to suffer from dying, however, he considers himself calm in relation to his own death, since he receives protection from religion in which he believes: *candomblé* (voodoo).

It is worth highlighting that, just like the third interviewee, many transgender people who lived in the artistic world end up getting old as artists. Thus, they call themselves, not being recognized in the category of transgender people or as prostitutes.

Analysis of the collected data

A common datum that appeared in the discourses of the interviewees of this research is related to the fact that they are seen or they see themselves as hybrids since childhood. They rely for support, to explain the foregoing argument, on an essentialist view, when they relate that they felt different, since they had a male body and a female soul. Therefore, elderly transgender people are considered as aberrations even before their transformation process into transgender people. Those who reach old age are real survivors. They often need to prostitute themselves to assure survival, when younger. Their lives are marked by marginality, dangers, diseases, violence, exclusion, drugs and exposure to diverse types of risk of death. They are considered invisible in the course of their entire existence; therefore, unprotected. Their chances of reaching old age are pitiful. The longer time passes for them, the more invisible they are becoming to be, due to accumulation of biases that they are bumping into: to be homosexual, transgender person, elderly person.

Getting to know their life trajectories makes possible the identification of which are the most critical points where there is no type of existential, social or political protection at all. They are great improvisers of their lives, since they are not recognized by the standards of normality.

They need to invent their lives in a singular way. Since they do not “exist” before the law, they are subject to all kind of violence and annihilation. Who defends them?

This research detected that it is necessary to have public policies that take into account their existential specificities so that they may protect them. They need health policies that help them in their body transformation processes so that they do not have to risk themselves in a clandestine way with industrial silicon and unregulated hormonal intake.

In parallel, there is another great challenge that refers to their profession and means of survival. Occupations where they do not need to risk themselves. And if it were so, may it be by choice and not for being the sole form of financial maintenance.

Finally, the public policies will continue to protect their old age, since they will be made suitable to the specific needs of each transgender person who gets old.

To exist through the principle of public policies allows the withdrawal of transgender people from the situation of marginality and violence. Even the transgender people defend themselves from the accusation of being themselves violent, alleging that, often, they are in order to defend themselves from violence that they suffer for being discriminated. It is seen therefore that the issues of public policies directed toward transgender people is a very complex theme and that there is still so much to be done.

Final considerations

The exclusion of the transgender person already starts in the family, precisely for not adapting themselves to social rules. The next challenge is the school. The social name that they wish to use combined with the appearance is element so that they may be refuted in school, both by colleagues and by the teachers and other employees. Many relate that due to this, they were not able to finish their studies.

At the same time, due to intense bias, they leave their home or are thrown out. They lose their home early in adolescence. Afterwards, they find in older transgender people the reference to build their own way of being. More experience transgender people will have an important role in the life of the younger ones. They will help build new bodies, styles of dressing and ways of being of the younger transgender people.

Due to the difficulty of finding a job, due to appearance, allied with low educational attainment, they end up prostituting themselves to survive. They need to mold their bodies in an almost clandestine and risky way, since they do not have public health policies that protect them. This requires large investments, since the less ambiguous and attractive with their bodies are considered, the less would be the discrimination and greater will be the financial gains.

The condition of pathological beings where they are placed facilitates society to see them as abject beings, accused of having deliberately modified their bodies to the point of no longer being fit to the current standards of the gender. Most of them are considered aberrations, subject to treatment, punishment or even extermination. All aspects of their lives, like dwelling, food, health, wardrobe, relationships and finances become fragile and improvised.

Those who were able to trick the risks inherent to the existential context of marginality had to adopt strategies. For this reason, they followed their own way of existence. There is no manner of generalizing their way of dealing with the adversities of life. Each one will have his own way. Aside from having survived, reaching old age is also a reference synonym, example and alert to the younger transgender people.

After sexual revolutions that occurred at the end of the 20th century in the world, the concepts of family and gender suffered profound transformations. The transgender person started to have more room. He left clandestineness and started to prostitute himself on the streets of large urban centers. As prostitutes, they move along elegantly through space in large centers until they get abroad, being able to gain in a short period of time, a lot of money. When they could no longer live from their body, now they would be considered as old. For the transgender people, the concept of old age is linked to work that they perform as prostitutes. While they work they are useful, productive and, therefore, young. If they are able to put together a good capital, they could live their old age with more dignity.

For the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), it is necessary to live and to accept this life in its totality, including old age and death, with all their joys and vicissitudes. The thinker warns us that to be worthy of that which happens to us is to face life without indignations, or denying or dissimulating the situations (Giles, 1989). In order to serve the market, old age is cloaking itself with youth and masking the reality. Biopolitics do not allow people to be sick or to get older.

Man currently is in a situation of uncertain passage. If there is an abyss to be traveled, then man is the bridge between the two margins. He is a means of passage and not the destination. Crossing this abyss involves personal risk and self-overcoming. Instead of desiring to understand the meaning of the world, the new man is able to

impose to the world his own meanings and moral values. It reverses the conventional way of thinking. This is exactly what the elderly transgender people have done, from a tender age (LeFranc, 2005).

The French philosophers Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) and Michel Foucault (1926 – 1984), influenced by the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), differentiate the senses between ethics and moral. By ethics, those facultative rules that evaluate what we do and say as result of the way of existence that this implies are understood. Ethics suggest the use of freedom. Moral is composed of coercive rules that judge actions based on referential values, which vary according to the period and place in question.

The subjects are produced through relations of power and forms of knowledge. Power is a relation of forces. The whole force has the power of affecting and of being affected. The resistances take place within the scope of this relation. The subjectification escapes to the forms of subjection or resistance inside the relation of power and ends up constituting itself into a relation with itself, which results in singular forms of existence and subjectification.

Foucault understood the aesthetics of existence as an artistic way of living that does not follow established codes. In the Greek-Roman society, the subject's production was also related to the aging process. It was necessary to live in order to be old, because only then the subject would be completed. To reach old age constituted the objective of life. Therefore, it did not make sense to attribute a specific way of life to each phase. Life inasmuch as process. Then, being old became a privilege: that of having enjoyed a long existence. There was nothing to discover. It was necessary to become, to be built at every instance. To keep one's own desires and not the desires of others (Deleuze, cited in Tótorá, 2006).

In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche (1999), through his philosophic aphorisms, he talks about the course of a new beginning for the affirmation of life. It concerns transformations that occurred through the spirit of man that becomes a camel, lion and finally a child.

Transforming into a camel represents bending down to carry all moral values and the guilt of the world. It is the “must be” contained in moral values. In general we are

formed culturally for us to always be camels. As such the camel walks loaded with supplies through the desert, man walks through his own desert loaded with social moralities. The emptiness of the desert aids in the process of creativity. There the second transformation takes place when the camel turns into a lion. There are conditions for becoming the lord and creator of his own values. He will no longer be a servant of unfamiliar values. It is necessary to destroy former values to create others. For this reason a lot of force, struggle and courage are necessary, in order to go in search for the great dragon that represents the current moral values. The “you must” of the dragon has to be conquered by the “I want” of the lion. The strength of the lion is necessary toward the inventor’s freedom. To create new values the lion suffers another transformation and becomes the child, which represents the becoming (or series of transformations). These phases are not chronological, but indeed capable of being experienced at every instant in which you live. They are part of a continuous process. To be released from the weight of moral impositions is the path toward production of the ethical subject in harmony with his existence (Nietzsche, cited in Tótorá, 2006).

Using Nietzsche’s metaphor, elderly transgender people learned since childhood that the current moral values were not identified well with theirs. They faced since early in life the dragon of social moral in the family and school. They were camels who took refuge in the desert, by transforming themselves into lions that say no to heteronormativity. From then, they were transformed into children, since they had to invent their own way of living that is based on the care for themselves... crossing life as artists and creators of their own lives. They imposed on the world their way of being, making themselves respected at the cost of a lot of struggle and effort.

Therefore, as we see, the existence of the transgender person is precarious since adolescence. They are also considered inhuman and, therefore without any place. Many leave or are thrown out from home, due to intense bias. Thus, they seek to dwell in spaces where they will be accepted. Most of them find in prostitution refuge and minimum functionality. They go through life in violent contexts. They inhabit the world in an improvised and fragile way, since they are obtained as abject beings. They improvise their existences in all aspects. Those who get to that which was called the aging process are real survivors from exclusion and annihilation.

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Pedro Paulo Sammarco Antunes – graduate from the School of Psychology of the Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie (2002) and Master's in Gerontology from the Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo (2010). He also obtained the titles of postgraduate *lato sensu* in Human Sexuality from the School of Medicine of the Universidade de São Paulo (2007) and in Gestalt Therapy from the Instituto Sedes

Sapientiae (2004). He has experience in the field of clinical psychology with emphasis in human sexuality and is a columnist of the magazine G Magazine since 2008, H Magazine and Bear Mais Magazine.

E-mail: pedrosammarco@hotmail.com

Elisabeth Frohlich Mercadante – graduate from in Social Sciences from the Universidade Federal do Paraná (1966), master's in Social Anthropology from the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (1969) and Doctorate in Social Sciences from the Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo (1997). Currently she is a Professor, Researcher and Counselor of the Postgraduate Study Program in Gerontology / PUC-SP. She is also professor of the Course of Social Sciences: Anthropology. She has experience in the field of Anthropology and Gerontology. Acting mainly in the following themes: old age, senior citizen, collective memory and social identity.

E-mail: elisabethmercadante@yahoo.com.br