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Encounters Do Matter:
On Unveiling the Otherness in Oneself

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Abstract

The analytical focus of this research aims to explore the potential disruptive effect of encounters over one's inner normativities and how a "practice" of reflexivity is enhanced by the interactional order in which the usual and unconscious flow of exchanged signs might be interrupted or broken, generating the emotional commentaries that becomes part of one's inner talk.

A novel dimension in the analysis of gender inner structures is introduced through the description of the mechanism from which a subjectified subject could trigger the "politics of truth" and "operation of critique" of both his/hers external inner normativities. Through the observations and discourses that came from the encounters that occurred with sex workers, it was possible to disrupt the ontological aim of a hegemonic narrative that, not only establishes the exclusionary limits of discourse about sex workers but also the inclusionary limits of discourse about how women are.

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Preamble

In 2012, the Catholic order of the nuns Oblates of the Most Holy Redeemer have elaborated, subscribed and presented a project to the Lisbon's Public Budget Program for the creation of a "Safe House" – a house to be run by a cooperative of sex workers, where women could continue their sexual activity but in a safe, protected and clean environment. In fact, the presentation of a public project, seemed to represent a change in the nun's approach to sex work and sex workers and also a challenge to the Portuguese dominant abolitionist perspective regarding the activity of prostitution. Does the elaboration and presentation of the project "Safe House" entail the reproduction of the institutional normativities of religion and law or a digression from them? Does it mean that somehow, from the ongoing interaction of these two groups of distinct women a collaborative action for social change has occurred, pushing for the transformation of religious, legal and gender structures?

The previous questions entailed my initial empirical aim: if the public project represented a change in the subjective identities of the actors in order to understand how actors, immersed in their social and gender structures (as internalized normativities, interactional patterns or normative roles) might have engaged in practices of social change and which factors and mechanisms have led to it. This was why I entered at the nun's centre on the first place, to observe those "agencies" with aim of contributing to the understanding of agencies relating to gender.

Despite the initial aim, once the researcher started the fieldwork, a distinct layer of inquiry arose. During the 2 years of field work, through which I met and talked with sex workers, I experience the emotional commentary of being challenged in my gender self. Since the beginning, I found my gendered self obstinately being targeted in my inner talks. As a matter of fact, the first question that my mind wrote in my notebook was: From which social and gender identity was the researcher questioning herself?

Therefore, the fieldwork has been a process in which the researcher has looked into herself too many a times to neglect its ongoing occurrence, as relevant data

directly connected with the question of how reflexive thought can emerge over unconscious normativities.

This was why, in the course of the fieldwork, I switched to the topic to on “Unveiling the Otherness in Oneself” aiming to explore the potential disruptive effect of encounters over one’s inner normativities.

Therefore, Women’s gender structures became the material/content for and of the process of inner thought. Sex workers bring the consciousness of what remains unconscious. But to Whom? To whom contacts and interacts with them entrenched with a specific and normalized unconsciousness discourse and normative ideal. Through the relation with sex workers, I came across with a mirror image of what is left unconscious. What the mirror reflects is of the kind of what is “normally” not sociably thinkable, imagined or recognized – a hidden and forbidden narrative. Are These Women’s sexual behaviour a subversion of the public symbolic dominant narrative or are These Women’s sexual activity the inherent and non-recognized subversion that sustains the symbolic law and even maintains its ongoing production? And by raising those questions did not the individual behind the researcher had necessarily to bring to consciousness her own subjective structures?

The encounters between the researcher and sex workers have triggered specific interactions that turned back into specific “inner conversations”, that allowed the analysis about the social conditions for the operation of critique over gender inner normativities to occur.

1. Introduction

Gender starts long before one can actually become aware of it. It pre-exists in the new born, in its diversity of social forms, of liveable reasoning and social intelligibility. As a matter of fact, gender materializes in the body and governs its practices, and establishes normative ideals to become the frame in which one's understanding of the body and sexuality, sense of identity and subjectivity, is irreducibly ingrained. In other words, Gender is not a static condition of a body, rather a process whereby regulatory norms reiterate to form and materialize sexuality, an ideal construction materialized through and over time.

As the gender regulatory ideal is instantiated through a continuous and disseminated process of social discourses, actions, and interactions (on what is good or bad, worthy or unworthy, etc.) gender impinges upon an individual's body and self in ways one cannot easily discard. In co-presence and social gatherings with others, one grasps the normative order that binds individuals into common and unconscious symbolic hegemonic meanings. The interactional order is where symbolic discourses maintain their regulatory force through the ongoing and casual interpellations – re-citations, occurring in everyday lives. The subject is formed through and within the power that regulates its doings, by the symbolic power that is enacted in the most common and automatic sequence of acts and co-presences.

Embodying an intricate and complex myriad of values, “ought to do” and “ought to be” practices, discourses, stereotypes and thoughts, gender grounds, regulates and creates each person's interactions with their inner self towards a certain normative ideal. Therefore, the hegemonic discourse constitutes the normative grounds of everyday lives interactions which altogether generate the subjective “I” that reflects, becoming this “I” a product but also a producer and reproducer of those powers relations, through their interactional re-citations with others and in its inner talks.

Is it possible to overcome the limits that inner structures infringe upon self-talk?

By bridging Archer's *reflexivity* or inner talk, Foucault's *critique* and *discourse of truth* and Butler's foundational principles of subjectivation, a new account of agency is provided, whereas individuals might engage towards new forms of self-subjectivation and thus becoming aware about the social schemes of intelligibility that pervades the operation of inner talk. But how does the subjectified subject activates *reflexivity*, *politics of truth* and *operation of critique* about the normative structures that constitute the subject's unchosen conditions?

The field work experience created fissures in the natural "essence" of women's thought and discourse. It was the process of data collection that have exposed the instabilities of the gender matrix of inner norms and structures. The conversations and emotional commentaries that arose in consequence of the field work encounters, widen the material for one's inner talks because, there, one's subjectivity was interacting with the outsides of hegemonic discourse. Thus, instead of a methodology that pulls information from the field in view of its further analysis, the methodological process itself became the main source of data and assumed the main role in the present work.

Subsequently, if the Self is constituted by an ongoing relation with a certain discourse of truth, the interactional order does matter because it is in the flow of encounters that one enacts the matrix of power that constitutes the self while simultaneously becoming vulnerable to be undone through the enactments of others. It is within the interactional field that the power effect of discourses are daily conveyed through *performativity* but also where intended or unintended subversive re-citations may occur as the substance and effect of one's everyday relations with others.

If one takes subject's identity or subjectivity as determined by discourse, discourse is nothing if it is not operated through the interactional normative order. And if language frame, into which no one escapes, is where subversion and agency comes along, that subversion or agency are operationally activated through the same interactional order.

Thus, the present work introduces a novel dimension in the analysis of gender inner structures by the fact that the reflexive operation about the inner gender normativities emerged from (the practice) of the specific process of data collection – encounters - to conceive how the subjectified subject might relate with social and cultural structures, in order to produce unstructured practices.

The following chapter 2 presents a brief literature review concerning the distinct paradigms of sociological theory about the agency and structure divide. The methodology used in the present work is described on chapter 3. Since the methodology entails simultaneously data collection and its analysis, the latter is jointly presented in chapter 3 and 4, regarding the researcher and the street team partner's emotional commentaries. Chapter 5 and 6 describe the data analysis in what concerns women's sexual regulatory ideal and a critic over the client's archetype. The work also proposes to describe three different yet correlated and mutually supportive dimensions of normative social and cultural structures: the dimension of discourse; the interactional dimension and the intrapersonal dimension. The first one is engaged in chapter 3 regarding the public narrative concerning Prostitutes and Nuns as well as the pre-conceived ideas which were carried by the researcher and street team partners before starting the field work. This dimension is also analysed in chapter 5 and 6 in relation with Prostitutes and Client's one-dimensional social identities. The interactional dimension is provided in chapter 3 as well as through the use of the text boxes which illustrates the fieldwork as a continuum of social encounters. Finally, the intra-personal dimension is analysed through the researcher and street team partner's emotional commentaries on chapter 4 with the description of its impact in one's reflections and sense of being. Conclusions are presented in chapters 7 and 8 namely how *Encounters Do Matter: On Unveiling the Otherness in Oneself* by having a potential disruptive effect over one's inner dispositions, discourses and structures. Chapter 9 and the Epilogue concerns the researcher' personal accounts and a brief note with regard to the writing process.

2. The Unchosen Conditions

Distinct paradigms of sociological theory have focused on how social and cultural structures influences, causes or determines social practices. Less theoretical developments have been devoted on how individuals might relate with social and cultural structures in order to act in ways that destabilize those structures. It is not only a question of how to define individual's agency but moreover of how and in which conditions actors may embrace practices of social change. The previous assertion brings us to the theoretical debate of the subjective-objective divide (Mouzelis 2008:107-115) at the core base of social change theory.

Social structure as a whole of interrelated virtual objects was developed by Parson's normative functionalist sociology (Lopez and Scott 2000:29-31; Mouzelis 2008: 12-15). If individuals only pursued their self-interest, order and stability in society's interactions would not be a reality. Therefore, according to Parson's functionalist paradigm, the vital equilibrium for society's survival comes from social structures, and the mechanism that provides stability to interaction is the one of meaning, as a common interpretation that actors attach to theirs and other's actions and goals. These common interpretative meanings are a set of normative conceptions regarding how one should act and the expectations towards how the others will respond (Parsons 1951: 414-420). *"A stable system of interaction, therefore, orients its participants in terms of mutual expectations which have the dual significance of expressing normative evaluations and stating contingent predictions of overt behavior. This mutuality of expectations implies that the evaluative meanings of acts are shared by the interacting units in two ways: what a member does can be categorized in terms meaningful to both; also, they share criteria of behavior, so that there are common standards of evaluation for particular acts."*(Parsons 1961:429).

Parsons distinguishes between values - which members share and have a more abstract and universalistic character and norms - which represent what is specific to a certain role or collectivity and establish the concrete distribution of rights

and obligations for that specific interactional system (Parsons 1961:428-433). Both norms and values comprise the normative culture of the social system (Parsons 1961:428-433). However, they do not proscribe a certain action to be followed but moreover establish a frame within which interaction is possible because it provides the basis of its stability in time and a common goal beyond the actor's self-interest (Parsons 1961:428-429).

Thus social interaction is a structured affair maintained in stability through time precisely by the institutionalization of the normative culture of the social system, being its basic unit the status-role (Parsons 1961: 428-436). A status is a structural position within the social system, and a role is what the individual who has that status does (Parsons 1948: 407-413; Parsons 1961: 428-431; Lopez and Scott 2000:29-31; Mouzelis 2008: 12-15). Therefore, roles, collectivities, norms and values, are, for Parsons, the categories of social structure (Parsons 1948: 407-413; Parsons 1961: 428-431; Lopez and Scott 2000:29-31; Mouzelis 2008: 12-15).

Besides the social system, there are other environing systems: "*cultural and personality systems, the behavioral and other subsystems of the organism, and, through the organism, the physical environment*" (Parsons 1961:421). Parsons conceives each of the four systems as semi-autonomous: structured and close with their own mechanisms and processes and rules, with definite patterning and stability over time, but nevertheless open in a process of mutual interchange and influence with other environing systems (Parsons 1961: 421-424, 436-437).

Taking the wider picture of all systems together, for Parsons there is a hierarchy of control between the cultural towards the social, the social towards the personality and the personality towards the organism. Nevertheless, as open systems, with boundaries but in ongoing interrelations, all systems influence each other (Parsons 1961:421-428). The cultural system controls the social system by the fact that it is through the cultural system that values and rules are institutionalized as a pattern of normative culture within the social system and are maintained stable through the latency function (Parsons 1961:424-428). On the other hand, social system controls the personality system through mechanisms of social control: the positive and negative sanctioning of role

behaviours and role expectations; institution's coercivity and the socialization process (Parsons 1961:424-428) whereas, individual's motivations, expectations and creativity are shaped by the "*internalization of systems of social objects and of the patterns of institutionalized culture.*"(Parsons 1961:424).

Presented the main aspects of Parson's elements of social structure and their dynamic, how does the author relate them with the possibilities of structural change? According to Parsons, a certain state of a given system is defined in terms of a particular configuration of its parts and their interrelationship. A particular structure of the system tends to be preserved by self-regulatory mechanisms which immediately try to neutralize nonconformities towards that structure, arising from extra systemic sources (Parsons 1961: 423-428, 431-439). For Parsons, at the social system level, there are strains tending for disruption, disequilibrium and therefore change caused by: deviations in socialization, incompatibilities between current resources and individual aspirations and also caused by the coexistence of different logics of social organizations within society (Parsons 1961: 423-428, 431-439). These strains will lead to a change in the structure itself if they are able to cause transformation of the normative culture governing a certain relation between units (Parsons 1961: 423-428,431-439). In addition, social structural changes might occur as a consequence of changes at the cultural system level (Parsons 1961: 423-428, 431-439).

Yet, according to Parsons, for any kind of pressure towards change, either endogenous as exogenous, the social system will resist through its pattern maintenance function (Parsons 1961: 431-439). "*Accordingly, the focus of pattern-maintenance lies in the structural category of values (...). In this connection, the essential function is maintenance, at the cultural level, of the stability of institutionalized values through the processes which articulate values with the belief system, namely, religious beliefs, ideology, and the like. Values, of course, are subject to change, but whether the empirical tendency be toward stability or not, the potentialities of disruption from this source are very great, and it is essential to look for mechanisms that tend to protect such order - even if it is orderliness in the process of change*" (Parsons 1961:425). Although the theory introduces strains and tensions into the equation of social change,

Parsons emphasizes more societal integration and stability than conflict, through the system's functional mechanism of stability and of resilience towards equilibrium (Lopez and Scott 2000: 31-36; Mouzelis 2008: 13-15).

The higher probability of change, according to Parsons, mainly occurs at the higher control of the cultural system level. But who changes the cultural system? What changes of the cultural system can lead to social change? How individual practices in a time and space context, may generate tensions and strains? Parsons neglects to analyse which forces and mechanisms may trigger change at the highest level of cybernetic control. *"This point, it should be made clear, is independent of the sense in which individuals are concretely autonomous or creative rather than "passive" or "conforming," for individuality and creativity are, to a considerable extent, phenomena of the institutionalization of expectations. The social system which controls the personality is here conceived analytically, not concretely."* (Parsons 1961:424).

As many critics have pointed out, Parsons is more interested in how actors orient themselves to their roles than in how they use the norms entailed by these roles to act and interact in concrete situations (Mouzelis 2008: 12-14, 92-94). Social structures are conceptualized in objective terms with subjects portrayed as cultural passive beings (Mouzelis 2008: 12-14, 92-94).

Symbolic interactionism departs their focus of consideration from functionalist systems and virtual objects towards how concrete individuals interact and impinge meanings upon their concrete actions. Action herein includes all human behaviour as long as individuals attach a subjective meaning to it (Mouzelis 2008: 15-17; Ritzer 2000: 351-355, 369-373). Mead's theoretical construction of human action rests upon the dialectic relationship between impulse, perception, construction of meanings and symbols, their manipulation and consummation in a certain behaviour (Ritzer 2000:358-364). Mead gives primary importance to language as a significant symbol through which human thinking is possible. Significant symbols are also indispensable for interaction to happen, which is fundamental since it's through interactions with others that individuals become self-consciousness, taking themselves and experience themselves both as a

subject and object (Mead 1934:282-292; 1930). *“The individual experiences himself as such, not directly, but only indirectly, from the particular standpoints of other individual members of the same social group, or from the generalized standpoint of the social group as a whole to which he belongs. For he enters his own experience as a self or individual, not directly or immediately, not by becoming a subject to himself, but only in so far as he first becomes an object to himself just as other individuals are objects to him or in his experience; and he becomes an object to himself only by taking the attitudes of other individuals toward himself within a social environment or context of experience and behavior in which both he and they are involved”* (Mead 1934: 284). People basically put themselves in the same experiential field as they put everyone else. It is precisely the role taking mechanism, according to Mead, that is at the core base of communication, interaction and construction of the social self (Mead 1934: 284). And the social self is in Mead’s theoretical stance the Social Structure: *“The self, as that which can be an object to itself, is essentially a social structure, and it arises in social experience. (...) That process to which I have just referred, of responding to one’s self as another responds to it, taking part in one’s own conversation with others, being aware of what one is saying and using that awareness of what one is saying to determine what one is going to say thereafter - that is a process with which we are all familiar.”*(Mead 1934:285).

Through the socialization process, the social self reaches its full development by organizing these individual attitudes of others into social or group attitudes as well as taking them into himself, and therefore, reflecting or reproducing a general systematic pattern of social or group behaviour in which himself and others are involved. (Mead 1930; 1934: 158; 284-292;). The social self or the “ME” reaches its maturity when the individual is able to take the role of the *generalized other* (Mead 1934:284-292).

By *generalized other* Mead means the common collective meanings of situations and behaviours of the overall society or group where the individual participates as a member (Mead 1930; 1934:284-292). In the process of social interaction, people symbolically communicate meanings to the others involved. The others interpret those symbols and orient their responding action on the basis of their

interpretation, engaging in a process of mutual influence (Mead 1934:284-292). It is through the “ME” that groups influences the behaviour of individuals and exerts social control (Mead 1934:210-213). *“Social control, as operating in terms of self-criticism, exerts itself so intimately and extensively over individual behavior or conduct, serving to integrate the individual and his actions with reference to the organized social process of experience and behavior in which he is implicated (. . .) That is to say, self-criticism is essentially social criticism, and behavior controlled socially. Hence social control, so far from tending to crush out the human individual or to obliterate his self-conscious individuality, is, on the contrary, actually constitutive of and inextricably associated with that individuality.”* (Mead 1934:255).

Assuming solely the “Me” part of the equation, social structures are portrayed as irredeemably entrenched in one’s inner self in terms that evasion and change are almost impossible because that would entail the paradox of escaping one’s subjectivity, an evasion from the terms that simultaneously constitute the Self who thinks about itself.

But besides the social “ME”, Mead advances with the individual and unique “I” (Mead 1934: 292-294; Mead 1934:173-177, 192-200, 209-213, 273-280). The “I” is the unpredictable, uncontrollable and original aspect of the self, which is only revealed in a response to a certain situation (Mead 1934: 196-200). The “I” part is only acknowledged reflexively after its participation in the action, as past experience and memory which is then turned object of reflexive thinking for future decisions (Mead 1934: 196-200).

For Mead the relationship between structure and agency comes from the dialectic between the structured aspect of the Self, the “ME” and the original, unstructured and free part of the Self represented by the “I”. Both “Me” and “I” combine in multiple ways to generate unique individual biographies. The “ME” represents the internalization by the individuals of norms and values through social control and socialization. The “I” is the source that allows the possibility of social change (Mead 1934: 196-200). Social change and Social reproduction is thus revealed as the outcome of the interchanges occurring between the Self “Me” – whereas

individuals are carriers of multiple selves and *generalized other*, and the unpredictable Self “I”.

Despite the relevance attributed to interaction and to individual’s actions upon an ongoing dialectic between the “ME” and “I”, still the mechanisms that may generate social reproduction instead of change and vice-versa, are not clearer in Mead account. If self-awareness is a process embedded in social experience and through which social structures are internalized by individuals, thus that assertion prevents a reflexive subject to deliberately criticize, overcome and change the social structures that constitute its subjectivity. Moreover, agency, or the causal powers of agents, by being reduced to the “I”, as the source of novelty, originality and non-controllability, are enacted in the world by mere chance. Thus reflexive thought is incapable of capturing the “I” effect in social action before the moment it becomes materialized.

In addition, to be able to imagine a higher community (Ritzer 2000: 366) which may not be existent in the current interactional experience, means that the social “ME” has to have the capacity to be reflexive regarding its inner social structures while assessing them with regard to ideas and values which may not come directly from its social experience and context. By endorsing a reflexivity notion apart from the one of creativity which is regarded a part of the unconscious “I”, Mead presents a self that is unable to be critical and reflexive about the “ME” and to imagine possibilities beyond what exists and is experienced.

An additional critical point concerns the constitutions and development of the “I” part of the Self. Either the “I” is a product of socialization or is an essential feature of a free pre-subject which escapes altogether to socialization. In both cases something about human agency is undermined. Or the “I”, influences and is being influenced by the socialization process and therefore is also constituted by the inner structures of the Social Self and what is seen as unpredictable is surmounted by the *generalized other* or it is a human feature that stays irreversibly out of the subject’s awareness and deliberative control. What is missing in Mead’s theoretical approach is the interrelation between self-reflexivity and the “I” part of the Self.

Finally, reducing the possibilities of interaction to a set of common background symbolic meanings would mean that interaction and communication would not be possible in circumstances described as “the other side of dialogue”(Gurevitch 1988: 1189-1197), where self-awareness, inner changes and new terms of interaction can emerge exactly from situations where symbolic meanings are not commonly shared (Gurevitch 1988: 1189-1197).

Symbolic Interactionism, although making room for individuals action in the specific here and now situations, still emphasizes how structures influences or frames individual’s everyday life and less the exploration of mechanisms of self-consciousness or reflexivity based on which, people may modify or alter the meanings and symbols that they use in interpreting the same as well as new situations. Therefore, if one’s location in the social structure shape its ability to think and thinking shapes one’s type of interactions, the reproduction of social structures becomes a vicious cycle difficult to disrupt.

Garfinkel’s ethnomethodology introduces the concept of “reflexively accountable” (Garfinkel 1967:1-34) as the mechanism which make perceivable the social structures which organize the everyday life of individuals, expressed by the way individuals give similar accounts: organize, describe, criticize, explain, idealize and justify in a meaningful way, the events of their daily life, making sense of their world (Garfinkel 1967:1-34, 76-104; Ritzer 2000:393-395). Ethnomethodologists devote a lot of attention analysing people’s accounts, as well as to the ways in which accounts are offered, accepted or rejected by others (Garfinkel 1967:1-34; Ritzer 2000:393-395). Ethnomethodologists are concerned not only with accounts but also with the methods needed by both speaker and listener to understand, and accept or reject accounts (Garfinkel 1967:1-34).

However, what is left outside the social analyses is the mechanisms which might allow the transformation of the structure of practical accounts, into problematization, critical thinking, awareness and strategic action.

What is left outside the social analysis is how social structure and agency relates, by which factors and mechanisms agents can become self-aware of their accounts and in which conditions that self-awareness might lead to social transformation and social change. The way individuals create new interpretation and definitions may not be entirely free considering the existence of agent's cognitive and inner structures as Cooley pointed out with its term *self-looking glass* (Cooley 1902: 152). How individuals change the symbolic meaning that, according to Mead, make interaction possible in a daily basis?

In front of an almost inescapable quest concerning how object and subject interrelate towards the production of social practices either by taking a system or an interactional perspective, authors such as Giddens and Bourdieu conflated both into a single analytical frame.

Giddens conceptualizes social structure not has a systematic pattern of roles and roles expectations but as a virtual system of rules and resources, which are actualized, instantiated on the subjective level, whenever the subject draws upon them in order to act in a concrete social context (Giddens 1984: 180-206; Mouzelis 2008: 115-119).

Structures are both means by the fact that the subject has to draw on them to act and interact, but also as an outcome in the sense that it is via their use/instantiation that structures are reproduced (Giddens 1984: 1-37). Structures (i.e. rules and resources) are simultaneously constraining and enabling actions (Giddens 1984: 180-206; Mouzelis 2008: 115-119). If this is accepted, then the object (structure) is not something separated from the subject but is part of the subject's action (Mouzelis 2008: 115-119). For Giddens virtual objects do not exist beyond time and space only in their reproduction in a specific context of human action (Giddens 1984: 1-37). Thus, agency and structure cannot be conceived as apart from one another. In Giddens's terms, they compound the duality of structure (Giddens 1984: 1-37, 180-206).

All social practices involve the way individuals take both practical consciousness (which Giddens draws from Goffman and Garfinkel, regarding individual's

accounts and meanings of their social contexts) and the means and resources into their interactions (Giddens 1984: 1-37, 180-206). Therefore, agency and structure are inextricably intertwined in the ongoing human activity or practice (Giddens 1984: 1-37, 180-206). The importance of practical consciousness is that this type of consciousness is immersed in what agent's do in their daily file, which for Giddens is what agency is all about: "*Agency concerns events of which an individual is the perpetrator, in the sense that the individual could, at any phase of a given sequence of conduct, have acted differently. Whatever happened would not have happened if that individual had not intervened*" (Giddens, 1984:9).

For Giddens agency is the possibilities of individuals to act in a different manner (Giddens 1984:86-87). In fact, conflation theory is based on the practical consciousness (as opposite to discursive consciousness) where individuals, in their social position, pay attention to events going around them and have a reflexive way of controlling their body in interaction, their talk and gestures towards the patterns of interaction of social life (Giddens 1984: 45-92). Giddens tries to reconcile freedom of choice with the pattern of predictability which, for him, is the ontological base of human beings motivation: trust and security achieved through predictability of social life (Giddens 1984: 45-51).

It is the ontological subjectivity of human beings that leads to the reproduction of social structures. But besides social reproduction, social change, in Giddens terms, is turned possible through the unacknowledged conditions or unintended consequences of an individual's action (Giddens 1984: 281-327). In *The Constitution of Society*, social change or social transformation is driven from the combination of the agent's ontological aim for social continuity with the unacknowledged conditions and unintended consequences of agency (Giddens 1984: 281-327; Adams 2006: 513). "*The latter continually feed into the former; both fall routinely beyond reflexive awareness and can be 'traced out' in 'the mechanisms of reproduction of institutionalized practices', particularly in terms of class: 'Repetitive activities, located in one context of time and space, have regularized consequences, unintended by those who engage in those activities, in more or less "distant" time-space contexts*" (Adams 2006: 513).

Although Giddens conflation theory presents a way of surpassing the objective-subjective divide, it is still subject to critics regarding two major key points: methodologically and the notion of practical consciousness combined with the notion of extended reflexivity.

Despite the conflation of both structure and agency, Giddens defends dualism instead of conflation when applied for research purposes, namely, to allow the study and analysis of their interaction (Mouzelis 2008:118-119). Therefore, what is conflated in a theoretical perspective is pulled apart again for analytical purposes (Mouzelis 2008:118-119).

Additionally, if structuration theory is comprehensible only when the individual instantiates in its actions, through a practical reflexivity, the resources and rules which are available to him, that means that conflation between subject and object precludes the possibility for the agent to exert upon structures its reflexive apparatus and be critical about them. In fact, if structures are simultaneously constraining and enabling it becomes impossible their scrutiny by agents as structures do not have an existence besides the subject (Mouzelis 2008:116-117).

We would argue in favour of Giddens that social change would come from unacknowledged conditions and unintended consequences produced through the use of practical consciousness. However, Giddens' conceptualization of practical consciousness is incompatible with his notion of individual reflexivity as he develops it in his later work (Giddens 1991). For Giddens, in late modernity individuals are forced to be reflexive and to constantly re-examine events: *"Each of us not only 'has', but lives a biography reflexively organized in terms of flows of social and psychological information about possible ways of life. Modernity is a post-traditional order, in which the question 'How shall I live?' has to be answered in day-to-day decisions"* (Giddens, 1991: 14) His reflexivity concept compounds what is called *extended reflexivity theory* (Adams 2006) where political, economic and social transformation of late modernity, with its flux of information, cross culture interaction, globalization, imprints in the self the need

to be open, self-made and reflexive about social structures (Adams 2006: 512-513).

Critics point to the fact that an extended reflexive theory gives less focus on the way social structures still constrains agency, treating as if structures are of no care any longer (Adams 2006: 512-516; Adams 2003: 221-224). Secondly, it tends too much for universality not treating in adequate manner different degrees of reflexivity, of freedom and constraint with the agent's social position (Adams 2003: 221-234). Finally does not explain how social and cultural structures still shape the self (alluding to Mead's construction of the "ME") including its ability and degree for being reflexive (Adams 2003: 221-234).

Bourdieu also transcends the subjective–objective divide with his concept of "habitus" as referring to a subject's dispositions, generative schemata of perception, cognition and evaluation that actors acquire in the context of their varied socializations. These generative schemata or dispositions are "internalized social structures" or "embodied history" (Bourdieu 1977: 72-87; Bourdieu 1990:52-65; Mouzelis 2008: 119-121; Adams 2006: 514-516). However, the habitus concept is polysemic and polythetic, which means that the habitus is flexible and can apply to changing contexts (Bourdieu 1977: 72-87; Bourdieu 1990:52-65). As the internalization of objective social structures, it entails objectivity; as the subject's means of relating to others in specific social contexts in a practical manner, it entails subjectivity.

Bourdieu sees social practices as the outcome of the relations between two dimensions of social games: the agent's position in the social field on the one hand (objective social structures) and dispositional habitus on the other (where objective social structures are internalized by the agents) (Bourdieu 1977: 72-87; Bourdieu 1990:52-65).

Social structures, via various socialization processes, are internalized and become dispositions, and dispositions lead to practices which, in turn, reproduce social structures (Bourdieu 1977: 72-87; Bourdieu 1990:52-65). But considering the flexibility of the habitus, rather than determining practice, the habitus establishes

a limiting frame within a diversity of practices and contexts (Bourdieu 1990: 52-65).

The generative nature of habitus allows Bourdieu not to fall in determinism because the habitus, as the confluence of structure and agency, engenders countless practices. “*Fields limit what we can do, make some actions more possible than others, or encourage a certain bodily deportment rather than another, but there is often an opportunity to ‘play the game’ in more than one way (...) Bourdieu’s approach is often stressed skeptically in relation to the theorization of social change, emphasizing continuity of established social differences as the basis for identities*” (Adam 2006:515). Though individualized, the habitus in fact reflects a shared cultural context (commonalities of class inscribed in the body and a certain feel for the game).

The habitus is an unconscious formation, is enacted in a non-thinkable way, as an unconscious competence (Bourdieu 1990: 52-65; Bourdieu 1977:79). Therefore, reflexive awareness is for Bourdieu rare. According to the author is only in “crisis situations”, where the internalized structures of dispositions, perceptions and cognitions do not fit the positions of the social field that reflexivity over habitus can happen (Bourdieu 1977: 72-87; Bourdieu 1990:52-65; Mouzelis 2008:134-135).

Although in his book, *Science of Science and Reflexivity*, Bourdieu make additional considerations on the conceptualization of habitus’s reflexivity, in the end, that awareness only happens because it becomes an intrinsic property of a certain habitus practice (Bourdieu 2001:88-114). According to Bourdieu – relating to the sociological science and the sociologist – reflexivity is converted as a disposition constitutive of the habitus, “*a reflexivity reflex, capable of acting not ex post, on the opus operatum, but a priori, on the modus operandi*” (Bourdieu 2001: 89).

Reflexivity consists on the objectivation of one’s point of view, starting successively with the reflexive analysis of one’s position in the social field (Bourdieu 2001:88-114). The expression of “taking the point of view” is to be

aware of the particular position in the social space where that view is seen; is having in consideration that that point of view is not absolute but likewise is socially structured and conditioned (Bourdieu 2001:88-114). *“It is not a transcendent reflexivity it is simply a procedural requirement within that field; a necessary form of collective cultural capital, which becomes engrained in individual agency. Thus reflexivity is as much the habitual outcome of field requirements as any other disposition. Reflexivity becomes, in a sense, the very ‘feel for the game’ that it is initially defined in opposition to”* (Adam 2006:515).

However, what Bourdieu proposes for the field of social sciences could also be empirically investigated in other social field. Thus, critics have approached the habitus concept as over deterministic with strong emphasis on structure and difficult to relate to any conceptualization of a reflexive agency and to social change (Mouzelis 2008: 136-138; Adams 2006: 515-516). Furthermore, as Mouzelis affirms, Bourdieu’s theory misses the influence of the interactive-situational dimension. In fact, reflexive consciousness may also entail situations of inner habitus conflicts, not only linked to ‘crisis’ situations but resulting from the actor’s involvement with others or from changes on the habitus itself, causing different degrees of habitus awareness (Mouzelis 2008 136-138), which may lead to structural change instead of structural reproduction.

The challenging approach is to conceive the duality of social structures and agency - otherwise it would become almost impossible to accept the potentiality of structural change at both levels of social analysis: interactional and systems and to look at individual practices and their overall interplay – while accepting the undisputable arrangement that one is born under social and cultural conditions which were not of its choosing, conditions which constitute the subjectivity of the self in terms that restring its self-awareness and reflexivity.

Critical Realism sustains the duality of social structures and agency. On the one hand, social structures have a reality of their own, an impact on social practices, independently if people perceive, talk or are knowledgeable of them (Archer 1995: 66-79). On the other hand, because of their reality and external existence, social structures have characteristics or properties different from those of actors

(Archer 1995: 66-79; 132-134). Critical Realism divides agency from structure, a separation between actors' emergent properties and causal powers and system's emergent properties and causal powers (Archer 1995: 132-134).

Archer's morphogenetic approach (Archer 1995) while sustaining the distinction between social/cultural structures on the one hand and the property and power of human beings on the other, lays forward a stratified view, in which distinct properties and powers pertain *sui generis* to both structures and agents. This stratified view establishes the grounds of analytical dualism, meaning that we must examine the interplay of their respective properties and powers to explain the outcome for each and both.

At a certain moment in time, interacting agents, in pursuing their own preferences and interests, create systems which, beyond a certain developmental point, acquire autonomy (Archer 1995: 66-79; 154-161). Historic time is brought into the equation (Archer 1988: 25-100; Archer 1996; Archer 2004: 171-173; Mouzelis 2008:199-200). Structure and cultural properties have temporal priority over agents. In a certain moment in time and context, structural properties (distributional, positional, organizational or institutional) and cultural properties (propositional theoretical or doctrinal) impinge upon agent's projects and over the ways of how they may achieve their ultimate concerns because they structure situations in which agents find themselves.

Thus, constraints and enablements become activated in association with agent's own concerns, as subjectively they have defined it (Archer 2004).

Actors have to face external situations that entail real structural and cultural constraints and enablements but the way actor deal with this constrains or enablements depends on actor's internal dialogue – *reflexivity*, and *reflexivity* is not a socially appropriated emergent power, it is an agentic power (Archer 2007:6-15).

For Archer human being's properties are constituted by distinct strata that possess their own *sui generis* properties and powers, each one emergent from but

irreducible to lower levels (Archer 2004). Everyone relates with itself as having a sole and unique life, relating past and present experiences as well as expectations for further ones within one's own life span. From the awareness of a flow of experiences and the memory of them, as being lived by the same individual and thorough its life time, a sense of self emerges (Archer 2004). The sense of self is connected with the experience of one's doings, of its embodied practice in interaction with other dimensions of reality, before and beyond society's conversation (Archer 2004: 121-190). In one's relations with the physical environment one experiences notions of space, direction, materiality and separation of its own body from exterior matter which has real existence (Archer 2004: 121-190).

Of course one can always argue that cultures circumvents the possibility of body experience but regardless of culture, a certain and general body experience happens. Moreover, the body is a source of memory that lays beyond discourse and language - procedural physical and body skills acquired through one's interaction with the natural and practical orders of reality (Archer 2004: 121-190).

One's relation with the natural and the practical orders of reality are surmount for the constitution of one's identity and sense of selfhood which brings into the analysis that human identity does not come only and solely through the intermesh with the social world, although is a very important aspect of it. From human memory, especially the memory that allows the individual to experience a continuous sense of self, another human property emerges, consciousness.

From the emergent power of self-consciousness, *reflexivity* shows up as the key point for Archer's understanding of the possibilities of the existing knowing subject as one of its emergent properties (Archer 2004: 121-190).

Through the mediation of *reflexivity* or inner conversation both system's causal powers and emergent properties and agent's causal powers and emergent properties are articulated to produce social practices (Archer 2004:220-249, 2007:63-73). "*The subjective powers of reflexivity mediate the role that objective*

structural or cultural powers play in influencing social action and are thus indispensable to explaining social outcomes.”(Archer 2007:5). Actors have to face external situations that entail real structural and cultural constraints and enablements to their concerns and projects, but the way actors deal with this constrains or enablements depends on their internal dialogue – *reflexivity* (Archer 2007:6-15) as the human emergent power of taking that interplay into their inner thoughts and consequent capacity for reflexive deliberation (Archer 2007; 2004:220-249).

Without this personal emergent properties, agents would not be able to project any changes to their future perspectives, to make plans and even to challenge certain cultural and structural constrains if the latter forecloses the agent’s possibility for achieving what is of most concern to him. Without the emergence of personal proprieties apart of society’s discourse, it would be impossible for agent’s to envision their future self-change, their plans, to quest for a different “I” and consequently, in the verge of their self-modification to enact, with their actions, social change (Archer, 2003:116-129).

What is relevant in Archer’s approach under the realist chart is at the core of the relational aspect between the emergent properties of agents and cultural and structural emergent properties; and the importance of *reflexivity* which the agent will engage taking oneself and society as objects of its inner thought. Individuals have the emergent powers of self-taking as subjects and objects who talk listens and responds about Society as a relatively free and autonomous person (Archer 2003:130-150).

In Archer, society enters the internal conversation in an entirely different way. Her critic to Mead of reducing individual’s internal elaboration as simply a talk to Society. In Critical Realism individuals talk about Society (Archer 2003:116-129). Personal Emergent Properties entail the capacity to engage in an inner talk that allow for agent’s to project their ultimate concerns into actions, to deliberate upon those even if those projects entails self-modification and social critique (Archer 2003:116-129).

The subject cannot shape in what he wants and erase his past in which would turn impossible his own assertion and expression towards others (Archer 2004: 71), but the possibilities of the subject for shaping itself are real (Archer 2004: 121-190; 222-249).

Archer develops the analysis of four major patterns of reflective thinking, or modes of reflexivity which show to be predominant in individuals. According to Archer, modes of reflexivity have internal and external effects, which means that a particular kind of internal conversation has consequences on individual's projects and reflexive deliberations (Archer 2003: 153-341).

However, the fact that individuals can be aggregated in modes of reflexivity with internal and external consequences means that, procedurally, the internal conversation enhances or obstructs, depending on the mode of reflexivity that is dominant in each one of us, our probability of becoming more or less critical, more or less conscious about society's norms.

Is the procedural aspect of our own self talk socially neutral? Is the problematic which have been studied about intergroup communication or has I would mentioned Habermas's *communicative action* (Habermas 1984, 1987), very different from the problematic that might likewise appear in our self-talk, has a dialogue per se? How a certain talk about society is excluded and how it becomes excluded from self-talk as a consequence of a predominant mode of reflexivity?

One can question this just by understanding how Archer established a pattern of four major modes of reflexivity (Archer 2003). Considering that: 1) communicative reflexives are the ones whose internal conversations require completion and confirmation by others before resulting in courses of action; 2) autonomous reflexives are the ones who sustains self-contained internal conversations, leading directly to action and 3) meta-reflexives who critically problematize their own internal conversations becoming critical about effective action in society, one could conclude that only meta reflexives would have greater probability of becoming self-conscious in relation to certain social normativities (Archer 2003: 153-341).

It is true that with experimentation in the real world, one will realize the mismatch between the reflexive deliberative endeavours with cultural and structural emergent properties. But the choice of which endeavours will be object of inner talk, the way certain perceptions of reality are emphasized or not by linguistics, semantics, without agent's having much consciousness and saying, or even the way certain emotional commentaries are foreclosed to be ascertain by individuals are all remarks of possible limitations of the internal conversation.

Inner conversation is not only about the content that one takes as object but rather how it develops within oneself.

Reflexivity is nevertheless an inner practice done by and through language with its social categories, social meanings, social expectations, that may undermine the agent's capability of being self-aware and critical to every meaning or even to engage in self-talk about certain subjects and objects as a relatively free and autonomous person.

Thus, Archer provides the theoretical grounds for a practice of *reflexivity* that arises as a person emergent property apart from society's conversation but does not explain how individual's reflexivity may become unrestrained from social and cultural structures. In other words: during someone's life, can his predominant mode of reflexive thinking change? How may a self-interpellation occur in order to surpass the bias that crafts endlessly our intelligibility for even bringing certain social questions into our most deeper and inner thoughts? If it is a fact that in Archer's theoretical model, *reflexivity* expressly emerges as the crucial mediating link between structure and agency, the impact of internalized dispositions into the whole process of internal conversation is surpassed.

In which conditions and by which mechanisms and factors, *reflexivity* might involve practices of self-awareness for internalized dispositions or inner structures that constitutes the self in terms of shaping its own mental process of reflexive thought? What practice of thinking may decentralize the self from what he was always and repeatedly induce to invoke to himself? Norms are

simultaneously a constitutive part and effect of the social matrix of power relations. But social norms are also constituents of an individual's identity. Institutions, through their practices and specialized discourses that claim truths about the subjects and about reality generates normativities which effect constitutes one's body, one's movements, thoughts, ideals and desires (Foucault 1976, 1977a, 1977b). Subjectivity is thus constructed through a process of normalization that grounds the subject into the larger cosmos of society's power relations, in ways the subject not even realizes (Foucault 1976, 1977a, 1977b). How one thinks and perceives its thoughts, how one is recognized by others and acknowledges its identity is a cause/effect of social normativities that places the subject in a certain relation with institutional norms and discourses (Foucault 1976, 1977a, 1977b).

Taking the wider power relations of gender, gender norms don't have an identification card that pops up every time one is actually internalizing it, sustaining it or reproducing it (most often not discursively, rather through the ongoing generative practices, interpellations and imitations), one never realizes the totality of gender and sexuality normativities one is abiding, reproducing, instantiating, unconsciously embodying, each moment of one's life. Moreover, the symbolic realm of self-identification over what a "women" or a "man" is, usually discards self-questions such as "am I a women?" or "am I men?"; "How am I a women" or "how am I a men?". More than an exterior regulatory force, gender produces the subject as a subject. Every juridical form of power has its productive effect and to become subject to a regulation is also to become subjectified by it, that is, to be brought into being as a subject. Gender is, in one way, the exterior regulatory power and, on the other, a constitutive of subjectivity framing the schemes of intelligibility that would allow its own recognition as a regulatory ideal.

Interconnecting this interrogation with the Sexuality System (Rubin 1984): how often one's self inner talk expands over questions as how should I practice my sexuality, how my sexual pleasure and desire are regulated? Which practice of sexuality, sexual desires and sexual pleasures are socially produced as legitimated and sanctioned practices and which ones are foreclosed not only from the public

narrative but most importantly from subjectivity, i.e., from one's own recognition of its possibility? Does being a "women" mean that, through the binary gender system, the individual's entitlement to distinct forms of sexuality, pleasures and desires is overridden from even being intelligibly questioned and reflected upon by the subject itself?

The category of "sex" is a normative regulatory practice that creates and produces the body which it governs (Butler 1993: xi-xxx). Through reiterated practices, the sex ideal becomes the frame through which and in which our own cultural and contemporary understanding of the body is irreducibly entrenched (Butler 1993: xi-xxx). *"In other words, "sex" is an ideal construct which is forcibly materialized through time. It is not a simple fact or static condition of a body, but a process whereby regulatory norms materialize "sex" and achieve this materialization through a forcible reiteration of those norms"* (Butler 1993: xii).

Butler introduces her ground-breaking concept of *performativity* which implies that there is no such thing as a pre-existing subject, quite the contrary, a subject is formed in its doings (Butler 1990, 1993). All bodies are gendered from the beginning of their social existence. This seems to point towards the conclusion that gender is not something one is, it is something one does, an act, or more precisely, a sequence of acts (Butler, 1990, 1993, 2004a).

The importance of introducing Foucault and Butler is sustained herein because if initially their theoretical frames would inescapably erase the possibilities of agency, of a doer behind the deed. However, their later developments, either in Foucault (Guibentif 2010:50-56) as in Butler (Butler 2004a, 2004b, 2015), have brought back, into the equation, the possibilities for the subject to distance itself from the inner structures that constitutes its own subjectivity.

Is it possible to overcome the limits that inner structures infringe upon self-talk considering that their existence are as real as Archer's three dimensions of reality because they are precisely emergent from that reality? The question that I, metaphorically portray in the following inner dialogue with myself, as an example, manifests the difficulties for the self to take certain social normativities

that ultimately constitutes the “I”, as a recognizable subject, as part of the internal conversation and how one can change the terms of its relation with them?

1. Text box – Field Work Diary: Poem “Naive Dialogues with my self”

(First Part – Oct. 2014)

“Me: What is Identity? How is it built?”

Me: Let’s see. From the moment we’re born, we’re confronted with definitions and categories. We wish to fit entirely into them and we eventually manage to do so, by (wrongly) standardizing social models inside us, which they tell you that are “perfect”.

Me: What then? What if I don’t like it? Does it really have to be that way? Is identity crystalized forever after it’s developed?

Me: No.

Me: But, then what happens to “This is how I am, I can’t, I can’t nor do I have to change. But what am I?”

Me: Are you happy with your categories?

Me: Not really.

Me: Why don’t you drop it if it doesn’t suit you?

Me: Because that’s how I am.

Me: But what if you did... imagine you abandon that part of yourself, that category that doesn’t fulfil you? For example, the “woman” category.

Me: I can’t.

Me: Why?

Me: I fear I might lose my identity, that I might no longer know who I am or how to define myself... yes, and then how am I going to define myself and how shall I describe myself socially? As a non-“Woman”?

Me: Why isn’t it the other way around? For example, invent the words (new words, new ideas or fill the existing words with new meanings) through which you would like to recognize yourself...

Me: Hmmm... I’d be happy if I could say I’m THIS and NOT THAT, I guess I’d feel better... I suppose I’d feel happier

Me: And why aren’t you?

Me: But can I change? And with which words if the ones with which I would like to be defined don’t exist and the ones that exist aren’t sufficient?

Me: Make up new ones; we can be creative.

Me: And what if I don't want to be that new thing afterwards?

Me: You can try to be some other one, drop what is of no interest and add what makes you feel better.

Me: But then how do I define myself to others? How do I describe myself to the World? And what about social categories? You can't change the language, it's structural.

Me: We can forge new contents and expand meanings or even apply words in contexts where they're barely used till you feel that the way you define yourself is exactly the way you feel you are, that you feel comfortable in your boots at every moment.

Me: How about just Gabriela?

Me: And how about ditching your own name, Gabriela? It's a name, feminine, full of gender symbolism associated to being a "woman".

Me: No! Sorry, it's not possible. I can't give up my own name. If I did, it would seem as though I ceased to be, as if I didn't exist.

Me: Who gave you your name?

Me: My family.

Me And how did you learn it?

Me: I was called so many times I ended up identifying with it. This is paradoxical: the part of my identity that I don't admit to shedding or questioning, isn't even my fabrication. (...)"

Gabriela Farinha

Foucault did not reduce the individual to a mere finished product of social forces or reduced to the absolute internalization of moral sanctions with which the subject internally relates with. There is no state of domination that impinges upon a certain pre-free subject generating it into what it is. The myriad of intricate relations of powers which practices and processes encompasses the disciplinary apparatus of the state, constitutes the self, moulding its personhood and identity (Foucault 1981).

If those relations of powers are effectively impinging upon a body through an ongoing process of subjectification, that means that subjectification is not

exhausted in one act and moment in time, but has to be continuously reinstated and reinforced (Foucault 1977b). Thus, relations of power to be maintained needs the auxiliary intervention of a subject who is produced at the same time that exudes towards itself and others the same power that has been producing it. Being so, one has to accept that the ongoing generative effect of power depends on the possibility that individuals may always digress from it. Consequently, resistance has to be equated as, at foremost, an imagined possibility (Foucault 1982).

Hence, the accurate question for Foucault is how one might rework the power relations through which one is being done. In section three of the *Introduction to The Use of Pleasure*, Foucault addresses morality as the relation between a Moral Code and concrete actions of moral agents (Foucault 1984b: 3-32). He introduces the relational aspect of individual's actions towards values and rules on the one hand and the moral code and institutions' rules and prescriptions discourses, on the other.

As Foucault's subject forms itself, through its actions in relation with those set of codes, prescriptions and norms, a takeover of the hegemonic arrangement of power relations means a sweeping change in the way subjectivity is formed (Foucault 1984b: 25-32). Foucault is endorsing a self-practice, a subjectivity as both constituted and self-constituting, introducing Ethics as the relation of the subject to itself and in what becomes the major theme of Foucault's final volumes of *The History of Sexuality* and of his *Lectures at the Collège de France* concerning the ethical obligation to care for oneself and knowing oneself (Foucault 1981-1982, 1984a, 1984c).

Foucault introduces the concepts of *care for oneself* and *knowing oneself* with reference to its origin and practice in classical antiquity, supported in Socratic texts, and both consubstantiate two normative precepts, of moral content, whose practice entails a certain Individual's attitude and positioning about himself, about others and about the world. This attitude can be translated as a permanent practice of analysis of the one's thoughts and gestures resulting either from self-reflection and meditation as well as an ascetic practice aiming for the

materialization in oneself of a certain ideal state of being (Foucault: 1981-1982: 1-24, 81-106, 205-228, 247-270).

The Western understanding of *care of the self* had changed from a positive practice of an ethical morally artistic way of being to a negative practice for self-discovery and disavowal by shaping subjectivity into discourses of truth which effects over subjectivity entails identifying, defining, labelling and otherwise forming the self by turning one's attention to what one is within to be discovered, worked over and corrected according with standards and norms (Foucault 1984b:3-32). The enslavement of identity towards the institutionalization of what ought to be, what is normalized and what is considered acceptable. “[T]he meaning and function of philosophical ascetics in the Hellenistic and Roman epoch is essentially to ensure what I will call the subjectivation of true discourse. It ensures that I myself can hold this true discourse, it ensures that I myself become the subject of enunciation of true discourse, whereas it seems to me that Christian asceticism will have a completely different function, which is, of course, self-renunciation...It seems to me that in this Christian asceticism there is a movement of self-renunciation which proceeds by way of, and whose essential moment is, the objectification of the self in a true discourse. It seems to me that pagan asceticism involves coming together with oneself, the essential moment of which is not the objectification of the self in a true discourse, but the subjectivation of a true discourse in a practice and exercise of oneself on oneself” (Foucault 1981-1982: 332-333).

In antiquity, the prescription to know oneself is a practice for one's own ethical development and implies a continuous state of relational and reflective practice between oneself, its thoughts, its conduct and way of life in terms of its commitment to truth and ethical achievement. The permanent practice of analysis, reflexive thought and of discourses of truth positions oneself momentarily outside of one's relationship with the world, allowing the individual to elapse, even if momentarily, of the entanglement of relations of institutional truths and power relations, taking the larger power and normative structure that surrounds them for reflexive consideration (Foucault 1981-1982: 1-24).

Foucault introduced distinct techniques or practices of the self (Foucault 1982-1983). *Critique* as one of the techniques of the self, allows the individual to practice flexibility of thought, continuously and critically introspect oneself and its exterior and being able to feel at ease from putting itself in question (Foucault 1982-1983:339-355). The purpose is not to find the absolute self-truth but it is a practice that allows the coexistence of many truths and the relativization of determinisms and absolute conceptions (Foucault 1982-1983: 339-355). Thus concerning the triad between power, truth and subjectivity, *Critique* is one way of alter the relationship between the three terms “*And if governmentalization is indeed this through which individuals are subjugated in the reality of a social practice through mechanisms of power that adhere to a truth, well, then! I will say that critique is the movement by which the subject gives himself the right to question truth on its effects of power and question power on its discourses of truth. Well, then!: critique will be the art of voluntary insubordination, that of reflected intractability*” (Foucault 1978: 47). Here Foucault expresses the term “reflexivity”, as a practice, a state whereas a self asserts the innumerable possibilities for power relations to be intermingle with one’s own sense of identity. To question its surrounds but also its inner worlds. As Foucault states it requires a continuous practice of introspection that simultaneously allows for a realistic sense of one’s own surroundings, “*Extensive work by the self on the self is required for this practice of freedom to take shape in an ethos that is good, beautiful, honorable estimable, memorable and exemplary.*” (Foucault, 1984a: 286).

The care for oneself also asserts the injunction to adopt a practice of a right conduct. Here the ethical injunction is not sustained in a moral external code but on a practice of ethical transformation of the self in light of its own quest for a rational justification and truthful existence (Foucault 1984a).

A third practice related with the second is *Parrhesia* or politics of truth (Foucault 1981-1982: 355-369). *Parrhesia* is the act of telling the truth without either conveying towards others, an enhanced self or a *sacred self*, to avoid self or other criticism or for purposes of portraying a certain image of oneself in face of others (1981-1982:366-368). In what the practice entails is the act of showing what is

truthful about oneself and what is going on with oneself (Foucault 1981-1982: 366-368; 1982-1983: 339-355).

If the practice of *Parrhesia* is contextualized within a symbolic normative order of co-presence interactions, whereas a certain moral order is impinged upon social gatherings, I would claim that the courage of truth implies the practice of manifesting one's vulnerability or not being afraid of becoming vulnerable towards others. This practice is the objects of his final two lecture courses at the College de France (Foucault 1982-1983: 339-355, 357-374), in addition to a series of lectures *Discourse and Truth*, given at the University of California, Berkeley in the fall of 1983 (Foucault 1983).

Parrhesia as a practice of self that is centred on the relation of the subject to truth, and how through engaging in it, one freely constitutes one's subjectivity. Foucault specifies the constituencies of the practice of Discourse and Truth (Foucault 1982-1983: 357-374; 1983): 1) expressing one's opinion directly, without rhetorical elaboration or excuses, 2) standing in what is precisely his opinion and what knows is in fact true. According to Foucault, the practice of *Parrhesia* is validated and recognized by the subject because it entails sincerity, courage and exposes the self to other's reactions (1981-1982: 355-369). *Parrhesia* is not merely to state the truth, but to state it in a way that who states exposes its vulnerabilities as an act of criticizing and relativizing oneself through the verbalization of what one really thinks and consequently bringing towards itself, its own acceptance (Foucault 1982-1983: 357-374).

Foucault is not stepping away from subjectivation - to decentralize oneself one needs to be under subjectivation in the first place – but he is exploring theoretically the techniques whereas a decentralization of the self might be conceivable as an ongoing self-practice against governmentality and the matrix of power relations. The *practice of critique* and *politics of truth* would be able to shift the way subject relates with a certain set of codes, prescriptions and norms. It does not mean that the self has a human essence which can resist things done to it which are contrary to its nature. It means simply the possibilities of applying to oneself techniques, not essences or discourses, for its own decentralization. As

Foucault explains: *“It is a matter of acts and pleasures, not of desire. It is a matter of the formation of the self through techniques of living, not of repression through prohibition and law”* (Foucault 1981: 89).

The practice is the key, not a certain content or discourse (Foucault 1984a). Certainly, the decentralization of the subject is never full as well as the subject is never completely determined by social norms that the subject cannot fully escape. But the subject can trigger a practice that will allow it to acquire the necessary awareness and courage to establish other limits to the usual apparatus of constrain.

It is true that concerning the self-care practices of antiquity, *critique* and *discourse of truth*, Foucault asserts that there is no possibility of replicating those practices as they were configured in antiquity to contemporary times. Nevertheless, its previous existence opens the realm of possibilities to overthrow hegemonic subjectivation (Foucault 1984d). Citing Butler about these last Foucault’s theoretical endeavours *“Maybe the target nowadays is not to discover what we are, but to refuse what we are. We have to imagine and build up what we could be to get rid of this kind of political “double bind,” which is the simultaneous individualization and totalization of modern power structures. The conclusion would be that the political, ethical, social, philosophical problem of our days is not to try to liberate us both from the state, and from the state’s institutions, but to liberate us from the state and the type of individualization which is linked to the state. We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries”* (Butler, 1997:101).

In *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies that Matter* (Butler 1990, 1993) Butler claims that the generative powers of socialization generates and constitutes the knowable “I” (Butler 1990). The intelligibility of one’s body is not dissociated from the regulatory norms that provides signification to it. Gender is not only the social construction impinged upon the natural description of the body, but sex itself is called upon through the effects of discourse and regulatory power (Butler 1993, viii-xxx). *“Rather, once “sex” itself is understood in its normativity, the*

materiality of the body will not be thinkable apart from the materialization of that regulatory norm. Sex” is thus, not simply what one has, or a static description of what one is: it will be one of the norms by which the “one” becomes viable at all, that which qualifies a body for life within the domain of cultural intelligibility.” (Butler 1993: xii).

According to Butler, the formation of the subject is generated by a certain relation to the social – a community of others and their norms – which is beyond the control of the subject it forms as it is precisely the very conditions of that subject's formation (Butler 2004a: 3-16). Individual's subordination process is initiated by an emotional attachment to those on whom the individual absolutely depends on for survival. Babies are in the out most condition of absolute vulnerability and hence submissive to other's actions and discourses as critical for its own continuation in life. The inauguration moment of a being, discloses its absolute vulnerability from others as a condition of its own existence in the world. As the condition of becoming a subject, subordination comes from the desire to live and to exist (Butler 1997: 1-30).

Hence, subjectivation is produced through the workings of power, and that part of the operation of power is made clear in its psychic effect when power turns inside one self. Therefore, through subjectivation one embraces submission and prohibition in order to turn himself/herself into a possible being and will maintain an attachment to the power effect of regulatory norms and discourses from which the being becomes a viable one (Butler 1997: 83-105, 106-131).

Additionally, how one becomes a subject, by which power endorsement one became a being, an intelligible and recognizable “I” is never possible for someone to recall (Butler 2005: 3-40). One can never narrate the integrity of the story of its life, how in the first years one has been interpellated, treated and subject to other's discourses and actions. If a subject comes into being by a necessary attachment to power and cannot provide an account of the life story of that attachment, thus, how one is recognized as human, a an "I" in the first place, is a generative effect of norms and discourses that were not of its choosing and of which one cannot provide an account for (Butler 2005: 3-40). *"You may think*

that I am in fact telling a story about the prehistory of the subject, one that I have been arguing cannot be told. There are two responses to this objection. That there is no final or adequate narrative reconstruction of the prehistory of the speaking "I" does not mean we cannot narrate it; it only means that at the moment when we narrate we become speculative philosophers or fiction writers" (Butler 2005: 78).

Butler argues for an ethics based precisely on the limits of self-knowledge as the limits of responsibility itself (Butler 2005: 83-136). Any concept of responsibility which demands the full disclosure and knowledge of the self does violence to the opacity which founds its constitution. The ethics that Butler envisions is therefore one in which the responsible self knows the limits of its knowing, recognizes the limits of its capacity to give an account of itself to others, and understands those limits as intrinsically human (Butler 2005: 83-136). To take seriously one's opacity to oneself as an ethical deliberation means then to critically interrogate the social world in which one comes to be human in the first place and which remains precisely that which one cannot know about oneself (Butler 2005: 83-136). Simultaneously, by recognizing its opacity and simultaneously the opacity of others, one becomes responsible for its own potential influence and intervention in the foundational attachment of other's subjection as well as in the recognition of others as liveable and grievable subjects (Butler 2015).

In this way, Butler locates social and political critique at the core of ethical practice. It is the awareness of our original "unknown" condition (in our own biographies) that may allow the trigger of a practice of social and self-critique: a certain detachment of oneself upon oneself. The ethical practice comes exactly from the consciousness of our own vulnerability towards others and the fact that nothing is ready known and nothing is possible to know regarding how the "I" was constituted. It is not the content or a description which is taken as real, fixed and knowable but exactly the consciousness of its unescapable contingency within our opacity and vulnerability.

In that quest, one becomes aware of the necessity to recognize others as we all need to be recognized and accepted in order to be. Our being depends, from its

foundational moment of norms of recognition. *“In effect, our lives, our very persistence, depend upon such norms or, at least, on the possibility that we will be able to negotiate within them, derive our agency from the field of their operation. In our very ability to persist, we are dependent on what is outside of us, on a broader sociality, and this dependency is the basis of our endurance and survivability”* (Butler 2004a:32).

Additionally, the subject who is produced through subjection is not produced at an instant in its totality. Instead, it is in the process of being produced, it is repeatedly produced. It is precisely the repetitive cycle of recitation that undermines the force of the regulatory ideal (Butler 2005: 83-136). This notion of failure, citation and re-citation are crucial to Butler’s discussions of subversive gender performativities, in fact to her notion of agency (Butler 1993: 143-168). In *Bodies that Matter*, Butler sees potential for subversion in Derrida’s characterization of the citational sign, interlinking *performativity* with citationality (Butler 1993: xxi-xxx; 143-168, 170-185). As Butler puts it: *“the possibilities for rematerialization, opened up by this process that mark one domain in which the force of the regulatory law can be turned against itself to spawn rearticulations that call into question the hegemonic force of that very regulatory law”* (Butler, 1993: Xii).

Even though there is nothing beyond discourse, Butler’s subject is not trapped into an identity that is hopelessly determined by a single and deterministic category. In fact, discourse carries the conditions of its own alterity. Identity categories functions as generators of inclusionary and exclusionary effects. What is accepted and recognized within an identity category is simultaneously constituted and produced by what it is excluded and silenced by the category itself. Thus, it is within the existing discourse and through its subversion that the boundaries of apparent crystalized categories and identities may be expanded or restricted (Butler 1993: xxi-xxx; 143-168, 170-185; 1997: 83-105; 2005: 83-136).

Following Derrida, Butler argues that to perform is to re-cite but to recite is not necessarily to repeat. Citations can be faithful reiterations but no repetition is exactly the same. It is precisely in the potential of being recited otherwise that

subversion and change may unravel. Recitation to be subversive means one has to work within the frame of discourse but using it in ways which will expose its regulatory nature and undo its natural determined appearance, pushing far out the boundaries of what gender and sexed identities are (Butler 1993: xxi-xxx; 143-168, 170-185; 1997: 83-105; 2005: 83-136).

An “I” is turned into being through subjectivation established over the individual’s foundational need to strive for its existence and recognition from others (Butler 1997: 1-30). Through the subjectivation process, the “I” becomes affectious of its own existence, which will drive him to hold and accept the social terms by which it is allowed to be socially recognized (Butler 1997: 1-30). By accepting and recognizing its identity through them, the “I” may oppose to the signifier rebutting its power effect and re-citing it in subversive terms that rearranges the frame of discourse. *“Called by an injurious name, I come into social being, and because I have a certain inevitable attachment to my existence, because a certain narcissism takes hold of any term that confers existence, I am led to embrace the terms that injure me because they constitute me socially. The self-colonizing trajectory of certain forms of identity politics are symptomatic of this paradoxical embrace of the injurious term. As a further paradox, then, only by occupying—being occupied by—that injurious term can I resist and oppose it, recasting the power that constitutes me as the power I oppose. In this way, a certain place for psychoanalysis is secured in that any mobilization against subjection will take subjection as its resource, and that attachment to an injurious interpellation will, by way of a necessarily alienated narcissism, become the condition under which re-signifying that interpellation becomes possible. This will not be an unconscious outside of power, but rather something like the unconscious of power itself, in its traumatic and productive iterability”* (Butler, 1997: 104).

Bridging Archer’s *reflexivity* or inner talk, Foucault’s *critique* and *discourse of truth* and Butler’s *foundational principles of subjectivation*, both Foucault and Archer concede that *reflexivity* and *critique* entails not a theory but a practice that potentially might be embraced by a doer. Archer’s concept of *reflexivity* as a personal emergent property that allows reflexive deliberations can be enhanced

with Foucault's *critique* and *discourse of truth* as a practice where individuals might engage towards new forms of self-subjectivation and thus becoming aware about the social schemes of intelligibility that pervades the operation of inner talk.

However, Foucault does not develop how within the hegemonic subjectivation process, one starts practices of decentering the self, in the first place and submits normativity to self-scrutiny and self-critique. Butler's foundational principles of subjectivation provides the grounds for an account of agency as a practice of critique that can dispute, expand and recreate norms of recognition but notwithstanding having to operate within the limits, terms and practices of existing referents (Butler, 2005: 1-30). But how agency together with the "productive iterability" of discourse operates in precise social contexts of everyday life? How the re-articulation of discourse is triggered in the first place, from the self to the self and towards others?

Going back to social normativities, the symbolic ideal which the norm entails will never be fully exhausted but imbedded on enduring interpellations of the subject, of its body, of its desires, of its practices (Butler 1997: 160-131). At the same time that the subject becomes, in its interactional context, a cradle for the reproduction of the generative symbolic ideal reproducing its practical existence at every present time.

Both Butler and Archer, even if with distinct theoretical approaches stress the relational and dependence aspect of our human condition. Through the assertion of vulnerability and recognition Butler's emphasize the relational and interactional character of our primary need. Our identity, generated through power, is founded on our dependence from the outside other to persist. Archer puts forward the interactional dynamics between individuals and the three dimensions of reality: the natural, the practical and the social. Both stress the interactional or dependency of oneself towards others but none deepens empirically how that interaction might play a part in the individual's reflexivity as a mediator between subject and object circumstances or, in Butler's concept, in the subject's subversive re-citation of the symbolic order.

Another relevant aspect that brings together Archer, Foucault and Butler even if through distinct theoretical conceptualizations is the relevance of practice, of the doings before and beyond discourse which, from my perspective, points out to the importance of interactional contexts as the field where structure and agency are at play. In Archer's account, the relevance is enlightened under the primacy of practice as one human feature that allows for selfhood and *reflexivity* to emerge as a human property. Reflexivity is itself a doing, an action. The care of the self techniques are for Foucault practices enacted by the Self for the Self. Butler's *performativity* is untied with the workings of the social regulatory ideal, which do not impinge over the body but constitute and generate that body. *Performativity* of the body is an ongoing process of practices through which subjects are not only performing what they describe but they are what they describe. Thus, differing from the abovementioned authors, Butler's "doings" are the effect of power and do not entail any doer behind the deed. However, the potentiality for subversive re-citation, which are proper from discourse's iterability, must be materialized in the here and now contexts. The doings of subversive re-citation will have to emerge from the interactional context even if there is no predicament about how recitation or re-signification might be intentional instead of contingent.

Additionally, based on the foundational principles of being vulnerable and unknown to oneself, the interactional other may re-cite the norms in terms that displays the fissures over naturalized identities and cause self-critique and social critique triggered by the way the other may done and undone the self.

How the subjectified subject activates *reflexivity*, *politics of truth* and *operation of critique* about the normative structures that constitute the subject's unchosen conditions, must be empirically questioned within the interactional field, where power effect of discourses are daily conveyed through *performativity* but also where intended or unintended subversive re-citations may occur as the substance and effect of one's everyday relations with others.

3. The "I" that Does the Deed

The present work focuses on gender “encounters”¹ from which, failed interpellations and the emotional commentaries generated by them were taken as material, for the reflexive-self to reshape the terms of its relation with the regulatory gendered ideal. Actually, by addressing how gender internalized normativities might become consciously retrieved for self-reflection, the practice of ethnographic fieldwork exposed the relevance of “encounters” as enablers of one’s confrontation with the outsides of one’s own intelligibility, troubling the inner structures of gender norms out of their peaceful and unconscious normalization. Since it was the process of data collection that exposed the instabilities of the gender matrix of inner norms and structures, instead of a method that mainly pulls out data from field for its future analysis, the ethnographic process has acquired herein the status of data. In other words, the ethnographic fieldwork, as producer of gender “encounters”, assumes herein a substance per se. As already possibly inferred from the above, the ethnographic fieldwork encompasses, in a certain part, *autoethnography* (Reed-Danahay, 1997).

Autoethnography involves a writing which usually does not suit the standards of the scientific research method because it is insufficient rigorous, lacking in objective data and deep analysis or because it embraces the accounts of narcissistic authors (Ellis, C.; Adams, T.; Bochner A. 2010). The previous remarks might be assertive if the research work is sustained entirely in the self-experience of the author that portrays himself and his experience in a self-absorbed manner without sufficient theoretical support.

¹The term “Encounters” is used in the present work according with Erwin Goffman’s description “A social encounter is an occasion of face-to-face interaction, beginning when individuals recognize that they have moved into one another’s immediate presence and ending by an appreciated withdrawal from mutual participation. Encounters differ markedly from one another in purpose, social function, kind and number of personnel, setting, etc., and, while only conversational encounters will be considered here, obviously there are those in which no word is spoken.” (Goffman 1967: 99)

Differently, in the present work, the researcher's autoethnographic accounts do not stand alone nor are they located out of the scope of the researcher's sociological question, its analysis and theorization. The researcher's personal accounts are taken here as data together with the data pulled out from focus groups, informal conversations and newspapers.

The aim is to use the specific author's own experiences of self-reflexivity, which is one of the main theoretical concept in the present work, as data for analysis. Otherwise the theoretical findings herein would not produce effective meaning if the researcher had not reflected itself over its social contextual location (Reed-Danahay, 1997:9). The researcher account of the practice of reflexivity is an outcome of its immersion in the field, entirely constituted by self-other encounters. By writing about herself, the researcher does not pretend to portray its experience as if it was a major character and as if its experience was a unique and self-sufficient sociological endeavour, but to equally disclose its voice, normally implicit in silent authorship and not included in the presentation of findings, to stand together with the voice of the other participants in the present research: The Street Team Partners, The Prostitutes, The Nuns and The Nun's staff.

Data was drawn from ethnographic fieldwork (Clifford 1988:23-24) on which I engaged in the intersubjective experience of observing, participating and interacting with the Nuns, the Nun's staff, Prostitutes, and the Street Team Partners (Clifford 1988:23- 24). The results of the fieldwork might be described as a realist account of all observed behaviours and describes all symbol-meaning relations from what I observed in the field (Maanen 1988:45-72).

The ethnographic fieldwork started in July 2013 and ended in July 2015. Besides the ethnographic fieldwork, two focus groups were conducted and audio recorded: the first in June 2015 and the second in September 2016.

I set down information from the field notes, informal interviews (conversations) and Focus Groups, into a single Field Work Diary, divided by years: 2013, 2014 and 2015 and within each year by the location where informal interviews and

researcher's observations and comments were held as well as the date when they took place.

Data was carefully read and inserted into the MAXQDA12 Software Program in order to find behaviours and meanings which I identified under the sub-codes (Berg 2004: 266; 278-281): 1) Descriptions of "on the Streets Sex Work Events"; 2) Meanings and Descriptions About Client's and Men; 3) Meanings and Descriptions about Prostitutes; 4) Meaning and Descriptions about Women; 5) Relations with Institutions; 6) Nuns; 7) Researcher and Street Team Partners thoughts (Darlington and Scott 2002:143-146: 152). After this stage, I applied an interpretative style of analysis (Berg 2004: 266) to find common meanings and descriptive accounts of behaviour. Subsequently, I divided again the data and rearranged it but now only under the same sub-codes. Data was then analysed applying the same interpretative style (Berg 2004: 266), to find commonalities and distinctions across discourses (Berg 2004: 287-288).

All text boxes that will be presented in the present work were taken from more than 700 pages of the Field Work Diary, where the output of two years of ethnographic fieldwork are kept.

Each time I left the field, I would immediately embrace the task of writing down all interactions and dynamics I had experience and observe. Sometimes, the interactions were so dense that while still in the field I would write down the dialogues, the expressions, the tones and terms used by the participants. As all interactions and conversations were held in Portuguese, the Field Work Diaries were written in the Portuguese language. Thus, the parts which were selected to illustrate the pattern the researcher has verified, through text boxes, over the present chapter and the following chapters 4 to 6, were translated from Portuguese to English Language². The names of all women with whom I have

² It should be clarified that all text boxes were translated to English. Naturally, some vocabulary and specific linguistic terms, connected with street talk and distinct accents of the individuals with whom I have interacted and which dialogues I have reproduced in my Field Work Diary, were very difficult to be rendered exactly. Therefore, the English reader should bear in mind that as much accurate as the translation can be, inevitably tones, accents that could be "heard" by a Portuguese reader, are lost in the translation.

interacted with were substituted by the letter W. (for Women), followed by a number or a letter. A process of anonymization was also done with regard to the street team partners, the nuns and the nun's staff where their names were substituted by team partner 1 or team partner 2 and by the term Nun or CAOMIO's staff, followed by letters.

Furthermore, the importance and frequently use of text boxes aims at a two-fold outcome: to allow the reader to have contact with the Voices of the field while providing those Voices with the symbolic space for expression which they normally don't have; and to materialize the self-other interactions through the manuscript by entrenching the author's writings with the other's sayings while attempting for the reader to experience, even if only to some extent, the interactional context as if they had been there.

A detailed description of the fieldwork will be subsequently provided, together with an analytical exploration of its meanings.

3.1. The Entrance Door

My first contact with the field was made possible by the Catholic congregation of the Oblate sisters of the Most Holy Redeemer and their social work with Prostitutes, or as they refer in the institution, women in contexts of Prostitution.

The entrance door to the field should not be assumed as just a path that has lead the researcher to be in contact with Prostitutes. In fact, the entrance door is an institution, with specific aims, roles, activities and perceptions about what their relations with Prostitutes should involve. Thus, it is relevant to briefly describe the foundational history of the Congregation and assert how 150 years ago individual collaborative action outlived its founders and has transmuted into an institutional practice within which the researcher, in 2013, was enacting a particular institutional role.

The Catholic congregation of the Oblate sisters of the Most Holy Redeemer was founded in Madrid, Spain, in 1864, by Bishop Jose Maria Benedito Serra and Antonia de Oviedo Schönthal³.

Jose Maria Benedito Serra was previously a Benedictine priest. Due to a decree that abolished all Monastery orders in Spain, he was first transferred to the Benedictine Monastery of Cava in Italy, and later to the Monastery of New Norcia in Australia, on January 8th 1846. In 1862, after spending the prime of his life in Western Australia, he resigned and went back to Madrid. There, in San Juan de Dios hospital, he came across women who, after being healed of their physical illness, had to go back into the streets and to prostitution due to the fact that they had no other place to go. The social and economic constraints for women prostitutes were overwhelming. Women prostitutes were socially marked as such and ostracized as the lower of the lowest moral and social levels of society. For the priest, that encounter was felt as an appeal to save these women from their condition and although a pragmatic barrier stood between them – as a priest, he was not allowed to work with women – Serra was determined to find his way out.

Antonia Maria de Oviedo Schönthal was born in Lausanne, Switzerland. In February 1848, she went to Spain to work as the governess/preceptor of the Spanish Queen's daughters. Antonia was a well-educated woman, versed in languages and with the responsibility of caring for the queen's daughter's education. Antonia was absolutely integrated in the high society of the time. Serra invited Antonia to join him in his project to save Prostitute Women. At first Antonia refused the idea and thought her involvement with those women would be immoral. Later, after a period of introspection, Antonia accepted the mission and embraced the call. On June 1st 1864 in Madrid, the first women's refuge was opened, where the aim was to provide women with a place to live and with educational and professional skills. On February 2nd 1870, what has started as a social project became a religious Congregation with the name of the Oblate Sisters of the Most Holy Redeemer. On the same day, Antonia took her religious vows and became the first congregational sister. Two hundred years from its foundation, the religious congregation is still working under the same missionary

³Oblates sisters website <http://www.oblatesistersph.org/home>

aim of helping women victims of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. It does so by creating the conditions and opportunities for sex workers to seek for alternative ways of life and develop self-esteem. The congregation kept growing and establishing new centers around the world. In 1987, the congregation opened a new center in Lisbon, Portugal, in response to Lisbon's Cardinal appeal, who was concerned with the perceived diffusion of prostitution in the capital. As such, a few sisters came from Spain, based their organization in Lisbon's Mouraria/Electra district, and have been supporting sex workers ever since.

Of all the different services and activities promoted by the Oblates, "street encounters" is the core one, connecting the Institution with its founding history and principles. "Street Encounters" is the materialization of the motto "always keeping the door open" and is part of the "modus faciendi" of the congregational centers not only in Portugal but in all European countries where the Nuns run their centers.

I started working at the Congregation day centre (CAOMIO) in July 2013, meeting the staff, understanding the Organization's constraints and goals, participating in institutional meetings, co-writing projects and organizing a few activities. The aim was to create trust relationships both with the nuns and with the Women who sought the Caomio social services, process along which I became involved as a daily participant in its everyday life.

At the Oblate's Center, I would have two days, per week, where I would give legal counselling to Prostitutes. Each time I would attend 2 to 3 women. There was no time limit, thus I could stay with a women for more than an hour and the conversation would start from a discussion over the legal affairs but eventually would extend to other issues, from Prostitution to Life in general. It is important to mention that my education and legal skills were surplus in a way the Nuns have integrated my presence in the everyday life of the institution. Currently, I continue delivering my services and helping at the Congregation Center and its activities by providing legal counselling, once a week, to all women who requests it.

In September 2013, I showed my interest in incorporate the “street teams”, the volunteer group that participated directly in the “street encounters”. I started my involvement in the “street teams” in October 2013 and ended in June 2015.

3.2. The Street Teams

The street teams rely on volunteers from diverse age groups, training and educational backgrounds. They are mostly women. The teams are usually made up of three members. The activity itself consists of the following: the team of three members simply walks down the main urban areas where sex work is being delivered. When seeing a sex worker in the streets, the team approaches the woman and engages in a conversational interaction. It might last between a few minutes and more than one hour, while offering her condoms and, depending on the terms of the conversation, referring her to the social services provided by the Congregation’s day center (CAOMIO).

From October to December 2013, I integrated the afternoon street teams, and went out into the streets once a week from around 3 pm to 7pm or later.

For reasons of anonymity, the names of the urban areas: quarters, districts and neighbourhoods where the field work was held as well as specific references to sex work areas were replaced herein by fictitious names: *Electra district; Medeia Quarter; Andromeda Quarter, Iphigenia Street, Helen Street, Antigona District and Alcestis District.*

The street teams usually walked down Electra district, passed through Medeia Quarter and then ended in Andromeda Quarter, i.e., for those who know Lisbon, we walked around the historical, commercial, busy and touristic downtown Center. After January 2014, I started doing the night shift but in a distinct urban district. Together with two Congregation staff members, we would walk around, once a week, in the Helen Street/ Iphigenia Street district, from 9:30pm until midnight or later. Although this location is also considered part of the center of Lisbon, it is mainly a high-class residential neighbourhood between downtown Lisbon and its main business areas. On August 2014, I partnered with a

Congregation staff member and one volunteer. After September 2014 and until the end of my street team participation – June 2015, I partnered with two volunteers and together we teamed up the night shifts of Helen Street / Iphigenia Street. The volunteers became my steady street team partners with whom I shared most of my field work.

On the whole, I participated in 37 street team exits (6 during the day and 31 at night) of which 27 were carried out with the above-mentioned volunteers, who I will call from now onwards, Team Partners.

The content of the conversations held with the Team Partners during the street team activity are crucial sources of data in the present research work. Therefore, in October 2016, a year after I left the field work, I held a Focus Group with them. The Focus Group was audio-recorded and transcribed. Since the Focus Group was held in Portuguese language, the researcher transcribed the content in Portuguese and after its analysis, selected the relevant parts to be included in the manuscript and translated those to the English language.

Due to their role and importance, it is indispensable to briefly describe the street team partners' main identity markers. The following personal descriptions are autobiographic accounts they gave in reply to the researcher's question: How would you describe your social self? They are both heterosexual females.

Street Team Partner 1 (Volunteer A): *"I have lived in Lisbon for 38 years. This is the city where I was born and which served as a meeting place for my parents. A boy from Porto and a girl from a village near Guarda⁴, who met on a summer day. My Father died at the age of 61, after a period of great suffering, always accompanied by my Mother who is now 60 years old. When I finished primary school, my parents did not want me to continue in formal education, for safety reasons. I started attending a private Roman Catholic boarding school. After three years they dragged me into law school. Afterwards I moved to the Faculty of History, taking on all the consequences of that decision, the risk of*

⁴ Guarda is the highest city in continental Portugal (altitude 1,056 m), located to the northeast of Serra da Estrela (the largest mountain in Center East mainland Portugal).

unemployment, the work opportunities away from that area. I am the granddaughter of a shepherd from that Guarda village and I descend from a line of women traders and workers of the National Tabaco Factory in Porto. Since my great-grandmothers, all women have been working outside home. My mother is a nurse. My father should have been a writer, but he was a worker, manager and owner of an automobile accessory store.”

Street Team Partner 2 (Volunteer B): *“I am 42 years old and I am a sociologist/research assistant. I have a degree in sociology and a master's degree in education and society. Currently I am a PhD student in sociology. I was born in Lisbon and currently live in the municipality of Loures⁵. My father is 75 and completed the 2nd year of Liceu (secondary school) (current 6th year of schooling). My mother is 74 years old and completed the old 4th grade (current 4th year of schooling). My father still works as a retailer and my mother is retired. My mother worked until her retirement age as a barmaid.”*

The researcher is a heterosexual female, 39 years old, born, raised and currently living in Lisbon. I share the same social and economic upbringing with parents aging between 72 and 78. Both my parents came from the interior center countryside of Portugal and migrated to Lisbon. My father became a lawyer and he still practises it and my mother is currently retired but was a primary school teacher.

I was not holding the street team's encounters as a mere observer but I was one of the street team members, enacting an institutional role. My presence on the streets was not perceived as of being a researcher but as a volunteer integrating the Oblate's Street Teams. A symbolic attachment (Berg 2004:163) was affirmed therein providing invisibility to the researcher's work.

Besides, the street encounters were the opportunity to engage in the ethnographic technique in use in the present research: “The go-along” method (Kusenbach 2003). I have accompany the everyday life at the Oblate's Center as well as Prostitutes on their working environments. I had the opportunity to accompany

⁵ City that is part of Lisbon's Metropolitan Area

and interact with the individuals on the site exploring the circumstances of their daily lives, engaging in conversations, observing their experiences and listening to the subject's way of providing meaning within their ordinary environments and social and interactional contexts. To use this method in order to establish a systematic and coherent data I spent a consistent time with the subjects, being able to observe the subjects practices, regular conversations, and experiences while they are being enacted in the natural site of their everyday lives (Kusenbach 2003).

The street teams also allowed the dissipation a certain artificiality over the interactions that could be pointed out if the researcher had engaged in the same interactional context, to conduct interviews, only as a researcher. In this latter case one would have to admit a great probability for part of the interactions to be biased.

I must say that initially, in my fieldwork, These Women talked about certain topics in such a way that I thought they were saying that to make me believe they were trying to convey a better, worthy image of themselves, I thought. However, by being on the street team members whereas the researcher's identity marker was practically invisible, immersed in continuity on the field, the frequency and quality of the encounters, the same content accruing often during conversations, and the evident trust relationships that were built, provided the researcher with convincing results and reliable information.

3.3. Public Discourse: Prostitutes and Nuns

Before starting my work in the "street teams", I had conversations with the Congregation Staff and the nuns about the specific role I was supposed to deliver as a street team member, which was described as being sympathetically aware of women's needs for support, to talk and feel they are being listened to. The Congregation discourse conveyed a description around the Prostitutes social and economic context as one of abuse, poverty, lack of education and addictions. There was nothing from those descriptions that could apparently connect my identity with that outer-world, i.e., with that of women who lived outside the

boundaries of my socio-economic and educational context, which in this case were the ones delivering sexual services for the sake of their need for survival – as described therein with such assurance.

Actually, I have to mention the prevalent expectation that resounded in my mind about the reality I imagined I would encounter. I cannot tell if that notion came from a common-sense understanding of that reality, if it was conveyed through media information, social and family discussions, and conversations with the congregational staff or if it was just the output of a certain normalized moral belief that inseparably associates sex work and sex workers with descriptive terms such as depressed, sad, obscure, oppressed, dirty, deviant, violent, etc. I was not the only one endorsing such pre-conceived expectations. As I found out later, during the Street Team Partner's Focus Group, my colleagues and I had a similar pre-conceived notion about what to expect from the context of prostitution before starting the volunteer work. Soon after their first go at the street teams – which they emphasize they will never forget – they were deeply surprised by the contrast between the reality they were experiencing and the previous expectation of an encounter with an obscure environment where interactions would only develop around “welfarism”. Indeed, for both street team partners, the impact of the first day was shocking enough to deconstruct images and fears around the inevitable association of prostitutes to a sad, depressive, decadent side of life. At the Focus Group, one of the street team partners shared that her preconceived idea about prostitutes and prostitution even began when she was a teenager. She mentioned that a bus route that she often took late afternoon, passed through one of the main areas of street sex work. At that moment, she remembers that invariably, all heads inside the bus, including her own, would turn to the outside to look at prostitutes while expressing regards of criticism, sadness, shame and introverted words.

While I was carrying out the volunteer street work, I continued to appear weekly at the congregational day centre, talking with the staff and volunteering in every possible way to put my own skills into the Oblates' project. During that time, I had access to the Institution's activity reports and other information sources that the Centre had made available to me, namely their archive of newspaper collection, mostly with news referring to the Oblates' work with prostitutes.

The clippings below were taken from newspapers published between 2006 and 2013, some of local prints and with religious editorials, others with national coverage and scope. From the news kept by the congregational centre, I selected the national newspapers and magazines since those were the ones that were eventually reporting the story intentionally targeting the overall national public, thus implicitly carrying a wider symbolic narrative about these two relevant women's social identity markers: Women as "nuns" and Women as "prostitutes". Text box no. 2 presents the newspapers and magazines I selected through the above criteria.

2. Text Box: Collected Newspapers and Magazines

1. *"Prostitutes and Single Mothers receive support in Electra. All want to leave out of the streets"* (translated title), in *Jornal A Capital*, May 17th 1997.
2. *"Hundred thousand escudos per month to marginalized women"* (translated title), in *Diário de Notícias*, May 14th 1999.
3. *"Home welcomes marginalized women"* (translated title), in *Correio da Manhã*, May 14th 1999.
4. *"Women accept help to get off the streets"* (translated title), in *Jornal de Noticias*, February 23th 2003.
5. *"Wagon will go through areas of prostitution"* (translated title), in *Jornal de Noticias*, March 27th 2003.
6. *"From Night to Day. The center of the Oblate sisters, in Lisbon, works with prostitutes. They seek to create a space where these women are given psychological support. Many have already left the street and got a job. All recovered self-esteem"* (translated title), in *O Independente*, August 1st 2003.
7. *"Supporting Center open in Lisbon by the Municipality and Oblate Sisters and is bearing fruit: Women's Prostitutes Heading Life"* (translated title), in *Jornal A Capital*, November 17th 2003.
8. *"The Intendant's Shelter"* (translated title), in *Revista Única. Jornal Expresso*, December 06th 2003.
9. *"Maria already laughs again"* (translated title), in *Jornal Público*, January 22nd 2004

10. *“Betting Lives. They are prostitutes and have AIDS. They have become accustomed to society’s side look to them. Now, they are the ones who point out the finger and reveal a Pandora Box which content has already been much more frightening”* (translated title), in *O Independente*, November 26th 2004.
11. *“Interview with Maria Angeles called a Madre Teresa, committing her days to sex workers”* (translated title), in *Revista Visão*, January 27th 2005.
12. *“Women of the Square”* (translated title), in *Revista Única Jornal Expresso*, June 25th 2005.
13. *“From prostitute to teacher”* (translated title), in *Correio da Manhã*, March 09th 2006.
14. *“Changing life”* (translated title), in *Revista Única Jornal Expresso*, July 15th 2006.
15. *“From the Streets to the Social Institutions”* (translated title), in *Diário de Noticias*, April 5th 2008.
16. *“And after Goodbye, what am I doing here?”* (translated title), in *Noticias Magazine*, October 26th 2008.
17. *“Moorish Neighborhood”* (translated title), in *Revista Visão*, November 4th 2010.
18. *“Prostitution swerves to the periphery and leaves the street”* in *Jornal Diário de Noticias*, November 18th 2011.

I analysed the media content of the above news on how nun and prostitutes are described and which activities connect these women. I had two additional aims in mind. First, to try to underpin in the wider community if the preconceived ideas shared commonly by me and the team partners about the context of street prostitution and prostitutes find any social reinforcement, feedback or generative force through the news narrative. Secondly, to pick up on the description of the nun’s relations with prostitutes to grasp if our role in the street teams is supposed to copy that relation.

The first feature of the news content is the simplistic and inseparable blending of the social description of “Prostitutes” and “Nuns” with those women’s personality features, as if the identity marker Prostitute and Nun and its social symbolic meaning assimilates all dimensions of those women’s individuality. The terms

Prostitute and Nuns enforce a reduction of these women into a simplistic and fixed description in a way that social definitions and characterizations become intrinsically associated with who these women are and how these women are supposed to be. In the above-mentioned newspapers, prostitutes are depicted around a single solid and uniform description leaving most no space for diversity, for incoherence, for the possibilities to envisage a distinct being of a prostitute beyond the one that is repeated and reinforced therein.

A Prostitute is an individual with an unbearable daily-life that immerses the subject in the no self-respect and no self-esteem cycle. Prostitution is never described as a choice but as the non-considerable window that women are left with after being victims of family abuse, unemployment, financial distress, overall damaging circumstances and even physical or psychological impairments. The narrative that is inferred from the news frame of a Prostitute is that of a women that is incapable to make, good or wise choices by herself. They are portrayed as having fractured personalities, very low or no self-esteem, coming from everyday life struggles under contexts of abuse, violence, oppression, addictions. They are within the marginalized, the outcast, the left-out with narratives that invariably intermingle words and descriptions expressing darkness, fear, abuse, loneliness and violence with personal victimized accounts.

Prostitutes must be saved is what the common reader draws from the overall description and contexts explicit on the news. The symbolic use of qualitative terms such as “nightmare”, “night”, etc. when describing prostitutes’ lives and contexts, leads the reader to imagine a dark and depressive outside world disconnected from what is reinforced, although implicitly but in an obvious way, as the socially dignified, honest and normal life.

It is also conveyed that prostitutes desire and need to get institutional help to start a learning process towards their release from the entrenchment with an undignified life. The process is even described as a difficult one, stating how women face great personal challenges to learn and adjust themselves in what is necessary to become fully reintegrated in society, to be accepted and embraced by the social other.

As an example, the following transcribed subtitle (from one of the above-mentioned newspapers) entails the overall symbolic discourse enforced and reproduced by those public narratives that reinforce an idealized aim of Prostitutes' Redemption and Rebirth: *"They were Prostitutes for years - 5, 15, 30 - but they ended up being able to bounce back. Today, they are perfectly integrated in society; they have a job, a wedding ring, and they hold their heads up high. Four stories of women who have made the street their home and today have a new life"* (Revista Única Jornal Expresso 2006, July 15th).

The redemption and rebirth towards a dignified life is only possible within Society. The one route which Prostitutes should embrace is the one leading them to the public symbolic life meaning they are outcast enacting deviant behaviours. It also implies that a dignified life is reached through employment, counterpointing Prostitution as a dishonest, undignified and delegitimized activity. Finally, to close the trilogy, it implies the association of a dignified life within a frame of legitimized sexuality based on monogamist heterosexual and legally recognized relationships. In short, this symbolic trilogy – within society, with employment and legitimate sexuality – establishes the conditions for Prostitutes to acquire social recognition, re-enter the symbolic interactional order, and overcome the shame, embarrassment and guilt that forced their eyes to the ground.

The Nuns, on the other hand, are portrayed as saviours, the ones who are willing to provide support to Prostitutes, as women in need, and opening opportunities for the Prostitutes' reintegration in society. The Nuns deliver services to allow women to change their lives and rewrite their life stories. Those services are provided together with gestures of dignity, affection and respect. Their mission is to help these oppressed and outcast women who did not have the same life chances to develop their full potential and be recognized as dignified women and citizens. The Oblate sisters' social work has been launching programs to rehabilitate and reintegrate prostitutes into the workforce. The Oblates' activities is in accordance with the nuns' spiritual and social commitment. The underlined statement that it is upheld within the institution and for the outside community

is that women are free to make their own choices and the Oblates' goal is simply to add choices to women's portfolios through their enrolment in workshops, courses, or by widening their empowerment through the congregation's social and legal services.

From the Nuns' point of view, women in a Prostitution context are not free, but live in an oppressive context and their aim is to maintain the possibilities for their integration in the symbolic dominant world alive, meaning to achieve their place in society through employment and education. Therefore, the idea of a free life is linked with society's *modus vivendi* as it is illustrated from the box below.

3. Text Box – Field Work Diary: Interactions CAOMIO (Nov. 12th 2013,
Congregational Center)

“Nun's answers to the survey (survey by Helpimage, on the Congregation work).

What would you like people to feel / think when they speak / think about your organization? More specifically:

1.a. What would be the best description of your organization?

Nun's Response: Commitment to the Woman. Walking with her every day and putting life where there is death. Placing signs of Life and dignifying the lives of Women, give hope and also for women's of inclusion. And it has to be a solidary, affective and effective commitment with the woman in the context of prostitution to make it a way to liberation, meaning, to replace the idea of evangelization with the idea of liberation, walking together, under the Pedagogy of The Oppressed, by Paulo Freire. - (Researcher's notes: According to Sister's X statements in between responses, in 1983 there was a great change in the institution and in the congregation's mission, under the influence of a Brazilian Jesuit. Instead of dedicating themselves to prevention as before, they began dedicating themselves to the Woman that exists and who is already there in the street, a transformation towards the quest for social Justice.)

1.b. What are your most important values?

Nun's Response: The most important is the relationship of affection with the women and realize that it requires several steps, several little steps. We do not daily think of taking them off the street, we do not remember that, it is not the

highlight of our daily action, rather the daily affective relationship. First, to include them in our lives, and then, to focus on society and their empowerment in society, because the problem is not in the women.

1.c. What was your greatest achievement so far?

Nun's Response: Having arrived at Electra neighbourhood and having remained here, in this geographical place that continues with the same problems 25 years passed. We remain in the same neighbourhood and continue to maintain a relationship with the same women based on the value of the personal approach to the place and the person. Being able to be close to these women, give them affection, make them feel important people and that they are accompanied.

1.d. What is your greatest wish?

Nun's Response: Let women feel free to do whatever they want in freedom. Also that there is a recognition of the person in them as a person. (Researcher's notes: In her verbal replies, Sister X mention that she was bored of this already exhausted type of vocabulary. For her, it is better to say "a recognition of the human essence of each woman. Also, she mentioned that public acknowledgement of the social work done by the Sisters and the real context of the women in Prostitution. She continued by adding that "for an organized defence of women in their struggle against the economic and capital structures, for the defence of women in the unequal and oppressive social, cultural, and economic context of an economics exploitative system that places them in precariousness and blocks change."

The newspapers describe the interaction between Nuns and Prostitutes as one of social support, accompaniment and education delivered from the former to the latter while complemented with a grateful demeanor from the Prostitutes to the Nuns. The gratitude response from Prostitutes is considerably enhanced and publicized inside the CAOMIO through the exhibition of the written messages that Prostitutes deliver to the Nuns during festivities and celebrations and also during the conversations held with the Nuns and with the CAOMIO staff.

The Nuns are described in the newspapers as brave, caring and protective, carrying truthful gestures of generosity, compassion and courage. They are

portrayed as the ones who care for those women's potential to become fully integrated in society, materializing in their discourse and actions the Institution's ethical motto: "always keeping a door open to these women". According to the Nun's discourse, if society has forgotten those Women, it is their congregational aim to never give up on them and equip them with the necessary social tools and skills for their full and independent reintegration.

This is a discourse and aim that, in the everyday life of the institution's activities, as illustrated in the next text box, is many times confronted with the complexities, contradictions and ambiguities of Prostitute's real desires and actual behaviours that do not match with the institution's expectations of what those Women's desires should be, what behaviours they should have and the effectiveness of the Institution's practices. The inexplicable void of understanding that is generated is subsequently filled with interrogatives about the Women/Prostitutes.

4. Text box – Field Work Diary: Interactions CAOMIO (Sep. 17th 2013,
Congregational Center)

"The nuns and the technical staff working at the Oblates Sisters Social Center CAOMIO had an intense September month, with meetings aiming to reflect about the past center activities and how accurate and effective they have been in responding to Women's concerns. On the other hand, it was like a reality check, regarding what kind of real opportunities they should try to open up to these Women. According to Staff member X is not enough to simply attempt to bring to the center, Women's wishes and dreams if, in fact, their dreams are simply impossible in a short term to be achieved:

- Staff member X: For instance, the course of caretaker for older people, how can they be certified if they do not have the 6th grade complete or do not know where and how far did they went in school. And if we persuade Women to continue their work in the course, most of them will not have the will, the means or the time to make such effort which means such a strong and long term commitment for them."

A process of collective reflexivity between the staff and the nuns is ongoing. A collective process of understanding they try to figure out what has been going on not so right as well as the social constrains and enablements that society

offers and impinges to Women. Additionally they are trying to figure out Women's own constrains and enablements in dealing with themselves and their lives. They point out lack of education, lack of money, and a life which Women usually plan in a day by day basis. All of these were objects of discussion, reflection, verbalized and understood by the CAOMIO staff and the Nuns during a meeting. I take note that the sisters' work relies in a major aim: what are the necessities and the interests of the Women and trying to fit this in their services. During the meeting the following situations were raised as topic of concern: the Women have access to the bank food and if they do some of the Caomio activities they have access to a Scholarship (money) of 4 Euros per hour, which the nuns would give to these Women by the force this Women to organize themselves in terms of monthly income and monthly planning. However, by the time of the payment of rent and other expenses the ladies will not turn to the center, or to the activities, therefore the scholarship was not an incentive to them, an opportunity, which would lead them to decide for their best interest - to continue the activities and come to the center.

- Staff member X: Why, even with the scholarship these Women do not come? What prevents them from coming what is the option and forces around their own decisions? Also everything including their interests and aims fluctuates immensely. In Last June session the ladies told that one of their major concerns was discrimination besides others, but few months later, in a new session to see what to do in regard social discrimination, that was not an issue anymore. Everything fluctuates immensely, their concerns, their points of views. Is very hard to make a long stand project and activities with them. On other hand new courses we may offer like taking care of old people is not suitable for the ladies, 8 hours per day ? And they don't have the minimum requirements of scholarship, they don't even have the references of schools in which they took their last educational year. It is a major impediment for them. Maybe we have to give women with reality checks that not all their dreams are achievable and on other hand they also have to make an effort. What are their options, their wills, what motivates them? Maybe a tutor base system where people is on the track of singular individuals?"

Nuns pass on a symbolic discourse, as conveyed in the newspapers, that their practices and aims are tied with the ideals of unconditional support, of always being present no matter if Women have been forced to embrace an oppressive, non-free life, and regardless of their difficulties to get out of it. Prostitutes are generally portrayed as minors, who lack personal skills and capabilities, with lack of opportunities and foremost lack of self-esteem, barring their possibility to be independent, self-sufficient and mature.

These Institutional narratives of social categories for Prostitutes, as prodigal daughters, minors, still in need of care, and of Nuns, as the educators and care-givers, also frames the course of their interaction. The relationship between Nuns and Prostitutes is neither described in the newspaper nor is it conveyed within the institution as one where the parties involved – Nuns/Prostitutes - look upon themselves symmetrically.

The newspaper narrative shows the limits of what the hegemonic symbolic discourse recognizes and excludes. The newspapers are the product of the hegemonic discourse about Prostitutes and Nuns while, at the same time, being a reproduction source of that same discourse.

To become a fully developed individual, emancipated and free, the inclusionary effect of the discourse portrays women's self-worth through their association with the symbolic trilogy of: society (obedience), employment (productivity) and a legitimate sexuality (legitimate relationship) together with the role of motherhood or care-giver, personalized in its most extreme and spiritualized form by the Nuns.

The Prostitutes and Prostitution context are the symbolic personification of the inner consequences and external effects of deviant behaviour. On the one hand, the clear association of Prostitution with an undignified behaviour and Prostitutes as unfulfilled, unprepared, incapable and undeveloped human beings. On the other, the emphasis that is given to Prostitution and Prostitutes aims to highlight the use of those Women's body and those Women's sexual behaviour.

Thus, the undignified and deviant behaviour is clearly suggested as corresponding to a certain use of one's body and sexuality conveyed as a way of living – selling/merchandising the body and sex.

Considering the *generalized other* as the addressee of the newspaper discourse, a hegemonic symbolic narrative over women's body and women's sexual behaviour is implicitly conveyed as being the legitimate and dignified one, as constituting its regulatory ideal. This discourse is irreducibly a cause as well as an effect of the *generalized other's* perceptions and beliefs and consequently, part of my own inner perception and belief of how my gender self idealizes to be.

3.4. The Street Encounters

Street encounters consist of meeting Prostitutes in the streets, when and where they are promoting and providing their sexual services. In the first contact, the aim consists of introducing the Oblate sisters of the Most Holy Redeemer institution and the social services their daily center provides. Further, the purpose with such encounters is to build trust relationships where Prostitutes can genuinely talk about their concerns, their lives and eventually receive the words of support and empathy by the “street team members”.

In my first incursion as a street team member into the Electra district, my emotional and visual intake matched the newspaper description and consequently confirmed the perception of associating Prostitution with a depressive and oppressive context. The first three to four hours of fieldwork were an ongoing immersion into an environment of garbage, shouting, poverty, drug addiction, poorly-treated faces, unquietness, with tension increasing exponentially as people loudly announced an imminent Police raid. However, in the following visits, as I continued to meet These Women in the streets, I entered bars that served as contact points between These Women and their clients, where I stayed long enough to chat with the owners and attendants. I interacted with neighbours and even with a drug dealer when the team members requested his help to deliver an important personal document to one of These Women (and he did) and who engaged in the interaction showing politeness and deference to the

street team members. With time, the initial impact that concurred with the Electra's context, with the public narrative about Prostitution and Prostitutes, began to blur. Most likely my own senses became used to the depressive and dirty atmosphere initially so dramatically juxtaposed to my own context but after a period of immersion it allowed the researcher to see beyond that first layer of impression. In Electra, the confidence and complicity between bar owners, people who walk back and forth on the streets, Prostitutes, drug dealers, is impressive. It is really a small highly connected place, where people meet at crossroads of informal and illegal offices and jobs. It is a system in which the different actors know each other, have a perfect notion of their role in that particular economic system, in connection not only with sex work but above all with the universe of drug trafficking and informal economy.

While Electra may serve as a paradigmatic example of the depressive and miserable portrayal of Prostitution that matches the newspaper descriptions as well as the inherently symbolic narrative made of images and words that frame our mind regarding the topic, Andromeda Quarter opens to us a distinctive social representation of Prostitution and Prostitutes. In this latter geography, Prostitution practices and Prostitutes are so amalgamated with the overall scenery that an unprepared eye attempting to find a replication of the symbolic descriptions of Prostitution and Prostitutes will struggle to identify them there, as it is illustrated in text box no. 5.

5. Text box – Field Work Diary: Street Team's (Oct. 28th 2013, daylight, at Medeia/Andromeda Quarter)

“As a matter of fact, in terms of body language and dressing, it is a distinct set of codes. During the afternoon, none of the Women seem to be developing the activity they are developing. All wear discreet, normal / ordinary clothing, like any passer-by, despite a more pronounced neckline that is only noticed after you know who they are and what are they doing there. Otherwise, they would go completely unnoticed. Women X was the one who impressed me most by her discreet look, her hairstyle (blond-haired) in her pale brown gabardine suit and rain hat and her pink necklace. I would never say that that woman was there pursuing sex work. It would easily pass, as probably has passed in previous

moments, as someone waiting for someone, a friend or relative or a public transportation. At no point, her body is pronounced or displayed as a code used for announcing the delivery of sexual services. Instead, the code herein is of a different kind: exchanges of a certain kind of look between the sexes, no words involved, especially when a man passes, more discrete and subtle body language. Maybe they are already known by the Clients. The truth is that shortly after we were talking with Women X, about Caomio suggesting her to use its medical services, talking about how she did not work yet and life in general, suddenly, taking me by surprise as it was not obvious that another interaction was sustain at the same time as ours, she interrupted our conversation and smiling said “Got it already” and quickly left heading towards the pension. I did not even see the man she was with. They usually do not go together. The women always go further towards the pension and the men follows her maintaining certain distance. I was completely unaware of how the flow of interactions between These Women and Clients has happened in the first place”

If it wasn't for the street team's work, I would never have identified These Women that I met in that particular time and place - within Andromeda Quarter's usual commercial interactional frame, as Prostitutes. I would have contextualized them, quite immediately and unconsciously under the “normality” of daily life as I had always done so far - people waiting for someone, for public transportation, doing shopping, etc.

In Andromeda Quarter, Prostitution is discrete and invisible to the pedestrian's eyes. The interactions with clients are established mostly through eye contact in such subtle terms that will only be recognized by someone already versed in the codes. From the street contact point to the pension room, These Women usually walk alone followed by the client. Both of them keep a fairly safe distance barring any exterior signs that could convey the real dynamic that is going on between both to the *generalized other*. These Women's clothing, the smoothness with which they walk the streets or just stand at a certain place, the interactions with clients which are sustained at daylight embroiled in the agitation of a busy and touristic place, blends the street sex work with the normal activities and the

general public These Women and their clients continuously go past. Sex Work is hidden from and by the normalized glance of the public eye.

The confrontation with an invisible narrative through which I passed many times before without noticing has uneased my own senses. I realized that what my eyes are capable of seeing and how they account for everyday life events is as influenced by what unfolds in front of them as by how they are socially constructed to see. I became aware of the unquestionable and unconscious normativity that makes me see what I see through pre-conceived ideas of what, for me, is expected, intelligible and recognizable. I was becoming aware of my own inner narrative, of which I give not only an account about how I perceive others and reality, but also how I fill in the gaps when I really don't know or understand.

In Helen Street/Iphigenia street quarter, at night, the context and interactional dimension of street sex work is distinct from the other areas, as illustrated in the next text boxes no. 6 and no. 7.

6. Text box – Field Work Diary: Street Teams (Nov. 13th 2013, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia street)

"Women are in clothes that clearly show the contours of their body, their chest, and their legs. Many cars and cabs were seen circulating in the area. The feeling as if Women were exhibit in a street window, exposed along the Streets of Rodrigo da Fonseca and its parallels. The cars were passing, slowing down in front of them. They approach the cars, they talk with the potential clients, a conversation that last few minutes, and afterwards they would either go back to their place or get in the client's cars. Very busy, bodies very exposed to cold, women of different ages."

7. Text box – Field Work Diary: Street Team (Nov. 20th 2014, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia Street)

"We discussed in the car the report of a woman who said that a foreign man, young and handsome, stopped the car, got out of the car and approached her on the street. He led her into the car, opened the door for her to enter. The woman

told the episode to show how rare this approach is. Usually men do not get out of the car. Usually it's the women who go to them when the car stops. We also noticed with astonishment the number of women we had met on the street that rainy night. Contrary to what we expected, we found more than on the previous week. We also talked about the profile of women who are in that area and those who are in the Electra and Andromeda Quarter. My Team partner defines that the ones we find here are more "sophisticated and daring" and those in Andromeda Quarter are older, they "could be my grandparents, deep down, they are like us: neither exterior nor interior signs that distinguish them from us. Some way, even their talk is conservative."

In Electra, sex work is not a distinguishable or autonomous reality from the local informal and illicit economies that coexist there. Sex work is supported, supports, intercepts and cooperates with the other informal economies and its agents, creating a specific perception of integration as being part of the normality of the neighbourhood and of the neighbourhood's modus vivendi. In Andromeda Quarter, during the day, the work of sex workers and sex workers themselves inseparably mingles with the urban setting of a busy and touristic Lisbon, combined with circumstantial interactions and the hasty passing by of thousands of anonymous people every day. In Iphigenia Street, the clients, the police, and other agents of that social system are undeniably visible. The approach between clients and sex workers is straightforward, doubtless about its sexual content. Only in Iphigenia Street are sex workers and sex work a referential per se, an autonomous social and economic system in a residential high class neighbourhood, with little or no connection, with the exception of some coffee places, with the rest of the businesses and with few or no interactions with neighbours. Three geographies, three street environments in which sexual services are transacted but unequivocally distinct from one another, showing that the sex economy in place is not ruled by the simplistic portrait conveyed by the public narrative that establishes our own perception and expectations of who Prostitutes are and how Prostitution should be.

In Helen Street/Iphigenia Street, Prostitutes are themselves aware of how they are one-dimensionally portrayed in the media, generally associating them to drug

addicts, disease carriers, and stupid, with no education or capacity to think. Descriptions which they reject as representative of the whole reality, and some of them vehemently oppose being identified with. Their criticism evolves around the way newspapers and public discourses tag every Prostitute with a certain and rigid social identity, as reflected in the text box no. 8.

8. Text box – Field Work Diary: Street Teams (Helen Street/Iphigenia Street,
Night, Jun. 26th 2014)

"Women Y questioned the street team if we had seen the newspaper published in day before. We replied no. She than started telling that this news report was made down in that street and that Women A appeared in the Front Page. I asked her if she liked the content of the news. She immediately replied a resound "No", adding:

W.Y- Journalists, you know how they are, don't you?

She continued telling us that the news reporter talked with a neighbour that choose to remain anonymous adding immediately:

W.Y- which is always like that, isn't it? If I knew who the guy was, I would kick his ass. He mentioned he knows the price of girls and even knows the work that we practice, that he even knows that the prices ranges between 5 to 20 euros. 5 Euros? Maybe that it is the amount his wife charge.

She added that the news report portrays prostitutes as drunken, drug addicts and expressly mention that

W.Y- they pick up on everything, they mix everything up and put everything in the same bag, and that is the problem".

She explained that their portrait of Prostitutes does not represent all of them. According with Women Y the journalists went to the neighbourhood's bar and said they talked to a woman with 31 years old. She ironically mentioned she has 31 but a face of 40's.

She continued mentioning that the news described that 31 years old women's testimony, namely that she was a Prostitute since 14 and she continuous to do that because she has to support 5 children.

W.Y.- "I said that bitch only gave birth three and have all her children in welfare institutions, does not take care of them. She is an addicted and does it for her addiction and lives in Electra, only lies. And then her clothing, her look...the

journalist was straight to the target". Women Y even joked with the interviewed Women and her lies, and laughed about the fact that news pick the lies of that specific woman and generalized to every prostitute. According to her:

Y.Y.- They put everything in the same bag. It's all dumb, it's all illiterate, it's all drunk and drug addict. Even if other Prostitutes are not at all, they put us in the same bag. It seems that the journalists already have the story made and they are looking for the case that fits their preconceived idea." In that moment, a street member replied:

Street Team: And it is an ugly, dirty and cruel story.

W.Y.- It exists in everyplace, that reality exists everywhere, not only here. It's like everywhere, it's the same, but the worst in regard to Prostitution is that they put everything and everyone in the same bag. I read it and first I was angry about it, but then I laughed, what can someone do? And it is always that idea of the miserable Prostitute, who has no education at all, who lives in rooms and pensions. It is the imaginary they want to portray and is complicated and sometimes they put more of their little spoon on the story. Everything connected to drug addiction, god free me and then the other still opens her mouth to say she is in prostitution since the age of 14? I know the girl I even laughed in her face, 5 children, 5 children, all at your side?.

The Woman also commented that another interviewed person, transsexual, has appeared in the past in a TV show, crying her heart out, saying that she was miserable and all the same conversation".

In my first night shifts in Helen Street/Iphigenia Street, I understood I should continue covering only that area. The main reason has to do with the fact that there, the women are in great number, more relaxed and available to talk and to engage with the street team. In Andromeda Quarter, work is done in broad daylight, in a busy area, and the level of interactions with the street team are more time-conditioned and unfocused. In fact, at the same time sex workers are engaging with the street teams, their eyes are, most of the time, sustaining another frame of interaction because they have to be simultaneously prepared to engage in long distance eye contact with the clients. In the Electra neighbourhood, for many of those women, sex work is a means for getting money to provide for their drug addiction. Therefore, their conversations would be more

focused on expressing their own personal and health issues. In Medeia, there were not so many women to interact with, most times, we would meet between 2 to 5 sex workers.

At night in Helen Street/Iphigenia Street, clients and sex workers' interactions are visibly identified and the approach is done with clients driving their car near Prostitutes who, if interested, simply leave the conversation with the street teams and walk towards the client's car. So, our presence does not interfere with their work and Prostitutes do not have to be in effort sustaining, at the same time, a double frame of interaction. In addition, in each exit, the street team would meet an average of 16 to 20 women. This does not mean that our interactions in the streets would last the same time for each woman. As a matter of fact, and over the year and half of the street team's work, the only pattern I can establish in terms of duration and quality of each interaction is that the time spent and the level of engagement by These Women was proportional to the level of control These Women seem to have over themselves and their work. As the street teams became more entrusted by These Women, the conversations would grow in terms of time, intensity and level of sharing and reflection but normally with The Women who either do not have partners (husbands, boyfriends etc) or have partners but who do not interfere with their work in the time and location they are spending on it. The interactions of less quality we had, in terms of duration, regularity and content, were with Women whose sexual services are a means to meet an addiction (drugs or alcohol). Hence, they have a more limited and fractured discourse, only emphasizing their immediate needs.

Their presence is more unpredictable and they mostly float around in between areas of sex work. The same happened with Women whose sexual activity is controlled on site by their partners, who were called Pimps in the streets. Women with Pimps are regularly seen and met weekly, in the same spot, but usually they demonstrate not having neither the time nor the easement to relax and let the conversation flow, even if that was their inner wish. Some nights the conversation might last longer but usually that would occur when unknown contingencies allowed Women to be on the streets without their partners being present. It should be mentioned that my observations recorded that in Helen

Street/Iphigenia Street quarter, women with pimps were fewer in number – around 6, and much younger in age than other Women – between 20-26.

The street encounters, carried between 2013 and 2015, entailed the common and practical mode of go-along as a “walk along” (on foot) incursion on Sex Work Districts, encountering Prostitutes on the streets and letting the conversations flow.

As a researcher, the go along technique allowed me to be open to spontaneous interactions and available to become immersed in the field, without guidelines. I, as a researcher, seldom controlled or conducted the interactions. They were as spontaneous as possible. It also allowed a frequency, almost a routine I might say, of encounters with many women, during all fieldwork, which was extremely important for observing and subsequent register of a consistency in These Women’s accounts concerning the topics under discussion in the present work and thus, providing the researcher, with reliable data.

3.5. Stepping Out

The Street Teams Encounters are an important practice for the accomplishment of the Congregational ethical motto: “always keeping a door open to These Women”.

Before starting each route, the street team members would put on a blue vest, the back of which had small yellow letters identifying “equipas de rua” (i.e., street teams in Portuguese). The CAOMIO staff mentioned that the use of that vest by the street team members had the main purpose of identifying the individuals wearing it both before sex workers and “the other agents” operating within the sex work social system: police, pimps, clients, business owners, neighbours and pedestrians. Besides, the use of the vest as a symbolic marker carries two additional and indirect effects. First, it pulls us out of the field, i.e., it allows the individuals not to be mistaken as sex workers. Although the vest did not prevent clients from looking at us, it created the necessary barriers for sex workers’ reassurance of our non-interference with their market and expressed our identity

as not belonging to that social system. Second, with that vest on, the street team members we were not simply volunteers. We were playing a specific institutional role that became part of the sexual street economy and social system. An institutional role that embraces the ideal of the “care giver”.

Our institutional role entailed delivering condoms as the initial punch line followed by words of encouragement, empathy, and information about CAOMIO social services and activities. As members of the street teams, we were endorsed with that symbolic and institutionalized role, engaging in interactions structured around the act of giving, coming from one who believes they have something to deliver to those who are assumed to have less or nothing or are in need. We would identify ourselves as the street teams from the Oblate Sisters’ Institution as creating a continuity of institutionalized practice, associating our present interactions with previous ones, regardless of who had been performing that particular role before. Throughout the street team’s fieldwork, the street teams were often approached by or interacted with pimps and the police who conveyed their perception of the street teams as care givers.

At the initial stage of my fieldwork as well as during the first interactions with These Women, the exchanges evolved mainly around the role we were playing, both in the way we approached women and in the way they received our discourse and gave us feedback. The team resorting to big smiles and constant expressions of good humour together with the delivery of condoms and sweets was symptomatic. Sex Workers are aware of the role the street teams are supposed to perform and so, when they have disturbing financial or social conditions, requests for help, woes about the overbearing bureaucracy of social security, how business is going slowing down, they address the message directly to our care-giver institutional role. It is not so much about the content of their conversation, which is sincere, it is the way facts are described and emotions conveyed that induces the receptor to identify These Women as victims or someone in urgent need and that consequently triggers our doings as entailing the particular identity role of care givers – offering encouragement, a word of affection, a smile, a good, lighter moment, a helping service. In these circumstances The Women’s discourse appeals to our referrals or duties as social service providers.

In those interactions, These Women mirror the image that they normally appeal to when they interact with the state's bureaucratic welfarism. These Women disclosed the terms of their performance when they meet the social welfare workers by mentioning that they usually have to look poorly dressed, with bad and depressive looks, with a dramatic and sensitive story to tell and if possible crying a lot. To those descriptions they add their own assessment regarding the unfairness of the social system treatment: the only chance to get some support is if one actually has nothing because if one earns around 500 Euros, no matter if having children or daily expenses, you are not considered as a potential beneficiary. They express their outrage about how arbitrary the system appears to be, selecting one woman to receive benefits and not the other one living in worse circumstances. For women, their relationship with the welfare system is somehow uncontrollable depending on variables that are seen as not systematic or difficult to follow. Generally, they find it extremely important to maintain a good inter-personal relationship with the welfare agent responsible for their file. They perceive the state welfare agent as the one who has the biggest power, who can turn things right or wrong for them, the only one who was given the right to describe their situation. Thus, they act or know how to dramatically stretch their underlying needs and concerns to meet the expectations that the welfare system has about who they believe state beneficiaries are or are supposed to be, as the next text box no.9 illustrates.

9. Text box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Mar. 5th 2015, Night, at Helen Street/Iphigenia Street)

“W: What do I have to do to get the minimum welfare support? I am going there and pretend that I am blind? It gives me a rage that some get the family support and others don't. I have children and I do not have the right to a kindergarten? With welfare agent is not worth, they soon start with, you are that, and this, if I go there I have to go crying a lot.”

The street teams' work embraces the role of care givers which has an implicit understanding of the unbalanced positions of the subjects in co-presence and a unidirectional dimension of giving as coming solely from the street teams'

volunteers towards women. The street teams consubstantiate the institutional ethical motto of the Congregation which could be portrayed metaphorically as the “always open door” of a runaway channel between the outer-world of Prostitution and society’s legitimate inner-world, a door held open by the street teams and which Women can freely cross whenever they need or if they decide to change their lives. Consequently, the street teams, in their institutional form, with their role performance, are a concrete example of the narrative discourse that portrays this one-dimensional vision of Prostitutes as living immersed in a marginalized and outcast reality to whom it will always be necessary to preserve a hopeful look for a possible social reintegration. In that case, the mere exchange by the participants of their role’s doings deters any possibility of self-disengagement with it. As a care giver, that interaction confronts me with a reality to which I do not belong and have little or nothing to do with.

However, as the street teams’ work continued over time, the interactions became closer and familiar to the point that our role was often interposed with other kinds of interactional content where Women did not convey a victim portrait of themselves and were not addressing the team members as mere care givers. Mostly with Women whose needs were not necessarily connected or dependent on any kind of performance that our particular role in the streets could provide them with. The conversations between women and street team members became increasingly more mundane, absorbed with everyday life events such as children, school, car accidents, shopping, health problems, restaurants, festivities, etc., situations with which the street team members could connect and relate as being part of one’s own daily life. On site, we experienced the transmutation of our interactional exchanges from the prostitute/care giver to the women/women binary and thus releasing ourselves from the role we were endorsed to perform.

Women made clear to the street teams, by using an affirmative tone as if revealing something we were not supposed to be aware of, that during the day they have the same life and routine as every other woman. They use their official and real first names, take their children to school, go to the supermarket, go to the doctor, have problems with their families, live in apartments and in neighbourhoods where they know everyone, go and have coffee, talk with different people in

distinct contexts and social gatherings, have a family and do all of that, while concealing the fact that during the night they do sex work as a way of living. They express that most of their days they interact in social gatherings, they treat and are treated by others without any distinctiveness except the one that is common and transversal to all individuals or couples that live under economic and financial stress or have family problems.

Thus, economic or family or social issues are described in terms that could be accounted for and by any other individuals in similar circumstances. Their revelation is conveyed even in a playful way, when they explain that people talk and interact with normal deference according to common interactional standards of everyday life encounters because Prostitutes do not carry any exterior sign to reveal what they do for a living. There is no social body marker that provides the *generalized other* with the ability to know they are Prostitutes.

So they do live in the normalized and legitimized symbolic realm but with the constant awareness of the performance that constitutes the interactional game in the world of appearances. These Women do not need a runaway channel to cross to the upper world as if they were always living in the underground of misery. The reality is that most of them cross that line every single day. They shed light on what they understand to be the symbolic world of appearances. A consciousness they would not have, as team members did not, unless one interacts simultaneously with the visible and invisible stances of the symbolic world. In order for them to correspond to the expectations of the *generalized others* the only thing they have to do is conceal or lie about their way of earning a living. Exactly because they do not conform to the public social characterization of Prostitutes, These Women normally navigate in the world of appearances.

Prostitutes decide to live a double life. On the one hand, they are like any other woman and intervene in social gatherings as any other woman. On the other, they conceal what they do for a living and what is part of their inner privacy – secret. If someone poses the question of what they do for a living, they simply say they work in a restaurant, bar or café at night or they earn their money doing any other kind of job. Moreover, the double life is sustained not just because they do not tell

but because in social gatherings no one asks a woman directly how she lives her sexuality.

The one-dimensional fixity of who is a Prostitute conveyed by public discourse would be disrupted if These Women, who live a life as common and normal as any other women, announced themselves publicly as Prostitutes. If that were the case, the public discourse would have to recognize These Women Prostitutes as not being personally fractured human beings, immature and matching any other description with which the public narrative identifies Prostitutes. In that instance, the hegemonic social characterization of Prostitutes would show its true regulatory nature of pushing to the outsides of the boundaries of public discourse, a specific use of Women's sexual activity and the use they make of their own body. However, it is precisely what the public discourse excludes from its social characterization of Prostitutes' identities that allows These Women to cross the line over and over again, and interact in terms that fit the inclusive dimension of the public discourse. They blend so effortlessly in the public symbolic realm because sexual life is not part of the daily topics or part of the common questioning *line* (Goffman, 1967: 5-23) in social gatherings and interactions. Given the attributes and conventionalized nature of encounters, one will find that in daily life, choices of what Goffman calls *lines* and *faces* will be open for a participant (Goffman, 1967: 5-23). But none of the faces and lines entails the querying of a Woman's sexual experience. Sexuality as far as a woman is concerned is considered a non-subject, as long as the exterior and symbolic signs of the individual's life portray or deliver a legitimized sexuality or, at least, does not contend publicly with the symbols of a legitimized and validated sexuality. Once they do not contend, the part of the account of oneself that is not expressly told is assumed as normal by the other.

Text boxes no. 10 and 11 illustrate the above with three examples. The first is taken from the Focus Group that I held on June 12th 2015, with 16 Prostitutes, which lasted more than 3 hours. The Focus Group aimed to confirm, by using a distinct methodology, the data I had collected throughout my street team's fieldwork with the gain of feeling myself more skilful to conduct such interview

after a considerable time and experience and with trust relationships already in place. The second and third are taken from the street teams' fieldwork.

10. Text box – Field Work Diary, Sex Worker's Focus Group (Jun. 12th 2015)

W. 1: But wait there, there are women who work there by my side and their children will meet them there and they say their children do not know? So, what are you doing there? Taking the bus that does not even pass that street?

W. 2: (In irony) the stop is more back there...

W. 1: Children who are 20 years and 30 years old like mine and do not know? You mean my son comes to meet me and does not know what I'm doing there? Tell those stories not to me!

W. 3: You're there just holding the wall (laugh)

Researcher: But here is not the question of being good, better or worse telling it or not...

W. 2: It's the reaction...

Researcher: Why...why's that...

W. 1: It's like this, it's like this, we do not have a schedule, we do not have salary to take home, we do not have vacations, we're sick leave, we're sick and we do not have sick leave, so, I mean, the people there at home are all what? Atrophied of the brain?

W. 2: Where does the money come from?

W 4: From somewhere it comes.

W 1: Money has to come from somewhere."

11. Text Box - Field Work Diary: Street Teams (Oct. 30th and Feb. 5th 2014,
Night, at Helen Street/Iphigenia Street)

(October 30th 2014):

"W: I think they must be quite annoying. They abuse women at home. Women then abuse them too, and they come here and, as we need money and treat them well, they think we are different from the women they have at home, but if they take us home, we will become the same little monster, right? Because we are not going to put up with their shit. And we are like the women they have at home. Aren't we like the other women?"

(February 2014):

W: Take my example. Nobody has any idea I do this. During the day, I wear jeans, sneakers, this and that. I walk the baby, my father; I go shopping; I go to the park with the baby. No one has a clue.”

With family members, where maintaining it as secret might be a hard quest, the social shame of being a prostitute is so deeply entrenched in the public discourse that it even deters the question from being posed, despite all possible evidence or allusive signs. Another example I remember clearly was with one of These Women, in the streets, telling me that a friend’s partner saw her in there and told him. When the partner confronted her whether she was a Prostitute, she denied and he believed her.

After doing street team work for a while, I eventually came by two of These Women during the day, under a distinct *frame* (Goffman 1977) other than the sex-work context. On the first occasion, the woman clearly saw me but avoided eye contact. I respected her avoidance of social gathering in that context, probably afraid that I might not be restrained enough and I could make some remark or mention something that somehow might jeopardize and destroy her symbolic *face* – resorting to Goffman’s terminology (Goffman, 1967: 5-23). I, too, felt uncomfortable because I didn’t know if I would be welcomed or not or if I was allowed to cross that line. I met the other woman while walking in a street in opposite directions. We greeted each other, I never mentioned her false name, made no references to sex work, and we simply interacted as two acquaintances. She seemed to be pleased that I recognized her and by the way I respectfully drew the line between one scenery and the other although both of us smiled bound by an unexpressed secret.

This specific context of the invisible or the marginalized along with some ordinary members of society can be related to what Goffman states about modern society, that it brings transgressors of the ceremonial order to a single place (Goffman 1961, 1963). Goffman analysed the distancing practices sustained in connection with a group of outcasts in the context of the Mental Hospital and his notion of *stigma* which he refers to an attribute that is generally considered to be deeply

discrediting (Goffman 1961, 1963). As such, These Women are denied the stand of standards and are thus considerably less equipped to sustain self-images according to honour and dignity by the social system if they announced within the world of appearances, that they were Prostitutes.

So, in the first case, in what is called the basic kinds of face work, I triggered the avoidance process, meaning I avoided interaction altogether. In the second case, I applied defensive measures, keeping away from the interaction topics that would lead to the expression of information that is inconsistent with the line These Woman maintain in the public world. Avoidance rituals imply that the participant must refrain from doing certain kinds of rituals or speaking in such terms or topics otherwise they would risk not being accepted, as participants, in those interactions. They make sure they sustain their *face* upon which they rely to support their symbolic self-image. If These Woman have the sense that they are in a *wrong face* or *out of face* (Goffman 1967: 6-10) in the public domain of the symbolic world of social gatherings, they fear they would feel ashamed, inferior because that disclosure would affect their reputation as participants. They rely upon their families, their normal daily life or their everyday encounters to feel they belong to the *generalized other's* symbolic world, as any of us need to feel. The case is not that they feel ashamed or embarrassed or diminished as individuals or that, by being revealed, they would lose their dignity. In fact, during the street team period we seldom saw a glance of embarrassment or shame or anything that could resemble fear of being judged by us. Although they understand that what they do pulls us apart from them, the fact is that they do not show signs of self-disrespect or a pattern of discourse that reveals self-internalization of feelings of indignity, guilt and/or shame. Their fear is more connected with the disruptive effect that that revelation would entail in the possibilities of continuing to interact in the public domain of the symbolic law.

The double life they lead is maintained by a web of lies and make-believes, aimed at maintaining the appearances that consequently leads to solitude from not being able to share with anyone, any circumstance they live and experience during their work. The non-acceptance of Prostitutes as part of the Public Symbolic Law and the invisibility These Women have to endure, leads to their

struggle to live within themselves a double identity and materialize their double life every single day. It is not only society that reinforces a one-dimensional identity of Prostitutes, by constituting their identity as marginalized individuals and consequently rejecting visibility to any others that would not conform with that identity description. Through non-disclosure, hiding what they do for a living from family, relatives and friends, they reproduce the invisibility of their sexual life and by doing so, These Women are reproducing society's idealization of Prostitutes. Sex workers sustain and enforce the hegemonic one-dimensional self-portrait while preventing symbolic discourses to get in trouble. If they spoke out about what they do for a living, they would force the social discourse to deal with the question of having to distinguish Other Women from These Women, who dress alike, who have a similar daily life, sometimes with relationships, married. They would force the Public Discourse to reveal its regulatory effect over Women's Sexuality.

"(...) The nature of a "good adjustment" is now apparent. It requires that the stigmatized individual cheerfully and unselfconsciously accept himself as essentially the same as normals, while at the same time he voluntarily withholds himself from those situations in which normals would find it difficult to give lip service to their similar acceptance of him. Since the good-adjustment line is presented by those who take the standpoint of the wider society, one should ask what the following of it by the stigmatized means to normals. It means that the unfairness and pain of having to carry a stigma will never be presented to them; it means that normals will not have to admit to themselves how limited their tactfulness and tolerance is; and it means that normals can remain relatively uncontaminated by intimate contact with the stigmatized, relatively unthreatened in their identity beliefs. It is from just these meanings, in fact, that the specifications of a good adjustment derive." (Goffman 1963:75).

The enforcement by society of "good adjustment" materialized in the secrecy of sex work, does not mean that the Symbolic public discourse will always be indisputably reinforced. By being able to cross the line that divides the visible and invisible dimensions of the symbolic world, These Women may be confronted with opportunities to subvert the hegemonic public narrative and make claim for full-fledged acceptance. Thus, at the same time that the public discourse

forecloses These Women's acceptance, that exclusion is exactly what allows them to interact in the visible dimension of the symbolic world and to be able to disrupt hegemonic narratives about Prostitute's social identity.

Some of These Women I interacted with had publicly disclosed their way of living. When they were sharing their personal account about how they experienced the moment of revelation, the most frequent word I heard was "relief". The immediate expression of their emotional commentary was of relief because from that moment on they felt accepted, irrespective of a wider or more restrict sphere of social interactions dependant on the audience of such disclosure. For the purpose of better clarification and exemplification, I transcribe two examples in text boxes no. 12 and 13.

12. Text box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (May 15th 2014, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia Street)

"W: The judge said "ah, but he said that you work in the night" and then I said "I work in the street and I do not hide it from anyone". I said so, "I am a woman, I am old enough to do what I want, I work during the day in a hair dresser, my income isn't enough and I have a daughter to support and, unfortunately, my lady, is all I can do and I am not ashamed to tell it, because I, during the day, my life is another one"

13. Text box – Field Work Diary, Sex Worker's Focus Group (Jun. 12th 2015)

"W. 1: Me too. See, you see, depends on the head. It's the head.

W2: I have a son with college degree and it was also from my prostitution proceeds that he got his degree. He's been in private colleges and he's now an undergrad.

W3: He did not stop being a man, of course.

W4: It was with the prostitution money. And at home everyone knows it was with the prostitution money. I do not hide from anyone that...

W1: (interrupting) And your dear car as well...

W4: ...I'm a prostitute. I might be waiting by the wall there, and a relative passes by. If you want to greet me, you greet me, if not, you do not and go on.

W1: The head is everything that is

Researcher: It was difficult to reveal this

W4: Yes, it was difficult

W2: Yes, it was difficult. The first day was very difficult.

W3: It's hard for them to accept.

W4: It was difficult because I was very well raised and I did not give a dam. It came to the point of a failed marriage where I had no money to eat, look, that's exactly there I'm going. I started as a luxury companion and now I'm in the streets, I do not give a dam. This is my profession. I was not going to live with 400 or 500 Euros. How was I going to feed my son by myself? Would I be able to give him a decent home? Would I be able to get him dressed, give him shoes to wear? Do all this? And put him to study? With 500 Euros?

W3 and others: It is not possible...it is not possible...

W4: I do not forget that my son won a scholarship in college and just because I declared income of 700 Euros he did not have the right to the scholarship, that was a fortune (irony). You have studied, you know it is so. I paid for it.

Researcher: And how was the family reaction?

W4: I do not care, do not give a dam for the family. Some have stopped talking to me, others do not talk but are around here.

W3: For me, it was harder for me...harder...

W4: And my family are the people I have at home.

W1: It's like me...I don't give a dam either to the family. Remain those who accept us. And in my field it is even more difficult because...man turning into woman...

W4: It's even worse

W3: They did not accept me.

W1: But I succeeded right? she knows it well, I have my dear house in Amadora, I have my things.

W4: She is my neighbor

W1: We are neighbors.

Researcher: How was it with you, W1?

W1 With me, the only people who talk to me is my father and my mother...

W4: This is now that...

W1: Now? Since a while ago! I have 9 brothers. Some from my father and others from the mother side, then is me, a girl and a couple. No one talks to me, why?

Because of the transformation. They wanted a man. I was a man, a Latino male (laughing, playing around while gesticulating as a Male)

(They all laugh)

W3: You were born on the wrong side.

W1: Yes, on the wrong side, right? And then I started... also "fuck it", forgive me the expression...and I conquered my dear things, I have my dear things. Also, where I live, right, everyone says "good day" and "good afternoon" to me.

W3: My family was very conservative, right. Apart from my younger cousins. (...)

Researcher: Maybe here you are an exception because the common rule is to hide from the family and not telling them, right?

W1: There are a lot of people who cannot.

(...)

Researcher: So why do you think it's so hard to assume and declare what they do, their work?

W4: Because they are afraid of being rejected.

W3: Because they are discriminated.

W5: They are discriminated. So, I go to my village and say that I'm a prostitute in Lisbon. What are people going to say? I am putted aside and maybe even stoned.

W3: My aunts stopped having me to eat with them at the table, afraid that my cousins would also become all prostitutes, poor them.

W2: My children know what I do, but I told them and while I was telling them my tears ran down my face, crying.

W4: It's difficult.

W2: And my daughter and my son once said: Oh Mom, if you are in this life is because you need it. If one day things go better I'll take you from there. To this day still... I helped. My son got arrested and I helped him, now he is free, I phone him and he replies "Hello Mom, everything okay?" And not even come to visit me... all that I helped him, he now forgot.

Woman 6: There are also ungrateful children, too.

W2: He forgot. And she, I was living in one house and then I moved to another one and she... her job was over, she receive an indemnity, she arranged a house for her and she arranged a house for me, and what I can help her with – she

now has a little boy – , what I can help her with, I'll help her. Now, I thought my son was my friend, and she, that they would help me, and they didn't. One day if they need and I have money I will say "look I'm sorry, but I have not". I help Cristina, who has the little boy, and you, and all that I did for you, and you did not help me. Now I run my life and you run yours. Even if I am what I am earning for myself and your sister. For you I do not have and I cannot, and it is so!

Researcher: You have said that it is difficult, and it takes courage, to tell.

W2: So much

All: Yes

(...)

Researcher: And is that due to discrimination?

W2: Yes

W6: Yes

All: Yes

W4: Because the mentality of the Portuguese is still very backward mentality. If you travel in Europe people are accepted, people have discounts. Am I talking the true or not? People can make discounts...

W3: There are those who have a prostitute's license in Germany, they are treated and have a doctor.

W7: Also in Holland.

Voices: Yes Yes

(Women having parallel discussion about country's differences)

W3: Here, is a very retrograde mind.

W4: Because Latinos still have a very backward mind. We still live in a society that has been closed for many years. So the myth was to marry.

W1: Marrying and having children

W3: Marriage and procreation

W4: To put up with the husband even if he beats you up or not, even if you liked it or not...even decided by parents.

W3: It does not matter what you do outside the house but only inside the house

W4: We are still living in a very backward country.

W1: It has evolved a little

W4: Yes It has evolved a little yes

W3: Because in other countries they are all registered and have the right to a doctor, Social Security ...

W4: In some countries too, not all, in the most advanced

W3: For example in Germany, in France Also

W6: In Belgium, in the Netherlands

W7: Because there it's only considered exploitation when you're forced into while here...

W4: Yes, while here it is not. Why they do not legalize it?

(pause)

W3: Because they think...

W7: For various reasons...

W4: For various reasons, yes, because it's not of their interest, isn't it...

W6: Because they do not want to spend much...

W4: because the money from prostitution gives a lot of money to very good people to gain from and is not stated anywhere.

W2: I have already won a lot

(...)

Researcher: When you disclosed to your closest family members what your work was, how did you feel?

W4: It was a relief, it was a relief to me. They (addressing the Women around) went to my house, my son had dinner with them, sat with them and everything was fine.

W6: A relief, he had respect for women and that is how I talk with my kids and my grandchildren about my problems

W3: As I was never in that situation ...

W4: It's a profession like any other ... and it was from it that my son got dressed, ate...regardless if he accepts it or not.

???:...And in a coffee terrace, the son of W4 sits around and is ok...

???: But I also think the acceptance or nor depends on the individual's personality, because he could not have accepted.

(...)

Researcher: A while ago you were talking about how Prostitute is stated as a women with an easy life but afterwards you have stated that Prostitute is also

referring to a beautiful women...thus with a distinct content and even that other women would also like to be. Isn't that a little contradictory?

W4: It depends on the mind of who is on the other side

W3: Of how empathetic

W4: A person from the province, and may not even be from the province, who has little knowledge thinks that this is an easy life that we do not like to work or don't want to work. They cannot imagine that we live a life identical to theirs: we wash, we iron, we clean the house, and we take care of the children. They cannot imagine."

Concerning the possibilities of disclosure it is also relevant to describe an episodes taken from my fieldwork diary about a Woman I met at CAOMIO, which are transcribed in text box no. 14 below. At first, when I met her, she was introduced to me as a CAOMIO staff member.

14. Text box – Field Work Diary, Interactions CAOMIO (Oct 11th, 18th , 28th
2013 Congregational Center)

October 11th 2013:

"Preparation of work - awareness project. We continued the discussion of the project. It was a simple discussion meeting. The important thing to underline is that once again, although there is a discussion going on about the need for sex work to be recognized, for institutional communication, the Oblate Sisters continue to talk about women in the context of prostitution. Interesting to think that, differently, at the level of the project of social diagnosis, the words used are already sex work. In this day, when I spoke with X about my commitment to organize the archive and the archive of the congregation, I spoke of my interest in having access to the newspapers, documentaries, news, reports they had. X immediately offered to lend me some things she had at home, newspaper clippings, and so on, which I accepted, but we spoke so briefly that I was left with the impression that she was saying that with no conviction, (those things that are said to be said, for the convenience of the moment)."

October 18th 2013:

“Something very important has happened at this meeting: I sat next to X, and at the end of the meeting she handed me a black briefcase containing newspaper clippings with women's interviews, photographs in which she appeared as well as some pamphlets from a performance by João Galante and Ana Borralho, named Atlas, in which she has participated. (Performance website: <http://www.casabranca-ac.com/atlas.html>). It was a play I already knew and heard about. She told me about the briefcase's content and request me to be very careful with it (what a confidence), but at the same time she was expressing an enormous enthusiasm for the fact that I would get to know its content. She told me about the performance with such pride. I took the folder with me and only opened at night. Its content was constituted by interviews of her, images of her, because X had been already a drug addicted and prostitute. I was bewildered by the serenity with which she gave me this folder (it's like a diary, containing very important things about her life, a "relic" as she named it itself.) It was also as if she wanted to tell me her story, It was a very generous sharing and a willingness for me to know her past differing from what other women feel and do which is hiding it from others, as if they were ashamed of what happened in their lives. X was different and this difference struck me.)”

October 28th 2013:

“I had a conversation with X about the briefcase content. X is always talking about the same performance (she repeatedly told me that she went on the stage with her head down and it was not due to shame, she says, but because she could not see the front line of the stage where she had to stop, otherwise she would fall off the stage below - talked to me about this many times). She showed pictures of the performance that were published on the internet in one of which she appears walking to the front stage with her head leaning slightly down. The performance's description: ‘100 people on stage. A landscape of people with different kind of professions, claiming their position in society. The performance was inspired by the children song 'If one elephant disturbs many people, two elephants disturb much more, if two elephants disturb many people, three elephants disturb much more ...'. During the performance, people come and go

like in a catwalk, in waves, each one at a time says the phrase but instead of 'elephant' they say their own profession. Ex: 'If 4 Visual Artists disturb many people 5 Visual Artists disturb much more'. The performance starts with 1 person and ends with 100. The first half of the phrase is said only by the person who entered and the second half of the phrase is said also by the chorus of people that are already on stage.'

An important point of the conversation with X: She brought that performance into conversation many times, it was very significant, as she explained to me, because at the rehearsals she planned to walk to the stage and say that she was a former prostitute. However, little before her entering in the stage for the premier, she has decided by herself, In her inner talks, that although she was no longer a prostitute it made much more sense to declare, on the stage, that she was a prostitute and to say it clearly: "if a prostitute disturb many people, x prostitutes disturb much more."

In that moment, when she took the stage and declared it, she felt free as if her life had begun in that precise moment, as if she had made a cut with her past. After the show she felt as if she had won the lottery because people got woo!!! Because, as she explained, felt very good and happy about herself. She continued to describe that in in the midst of other individuals, with other jobs, some hugged her at the end and praised her courage and the fact that she went so well. She was recognized by others but also she has recognized herself, embracing her past and declaring it, on the stage, before so many people and together with individuals representing other jobs in society.

It was really a defining and meaningful moment for her, for her self-esteem that is why she keeps religiously as a "relic" all material from the play. She told that once she knew the performance was going to re-enacted she sent an email to the directors asking them a ticket and they reply to her that every time she wanted to see the play, whenever or wherever, that she would have always a ticket to watch it."

It is relevant to emphasize the fact that she was no longer a sex worker but had decided, in that last moment before stepping onto the stage, before her confrontation with a public audience, to identify herself as a Prostitute, as if society's non-visibility and non-acceptance of her past doings was still disturbing

her current life. Although she was no longer a Prostitute that does not mean that she can openly reveal it. It is a particularity of her biography that after having been unveiled, may irreparably disturb or even destroy her participation in the visible dimension of the symbolic world. Thus, it has to remain suppressed under invisibility and inner secrecy.

The transformative relief felt by Woman X along with the discourses of relief narrated by These Women that decided to unveil what they do for a living, are experiences of sublimation after years of enduring silence and invisible self. They overcame the fear of having their Prostitute identity revealed to the *generalized other*, a self-burden fear impinged by the Symbolic Law to disavow the possibilities for re-arrangement of its own meaning and the liberating effect produced within the individual through their symbolic self- recognition and self-acceptance as a Prostitute, by opposition to their self-repression and self-denial. The latter is a consequence of the effect of symbolic power turned against oneself. While keeping the appearance of conformity to society's moral standards of social behaviour, the individual lives the inner turmoil of their silence about their Prostitution doings. It is precisely the lack of self- embracement of the injurious term that sustains the injurious term. Thus, the Women with whom I interacted, play the double game of conformity. They enact the symbolic law as long as they repressively deny the self the public symbolic acceptance and declaration of what they do. It is a violence conveyed through the inner paradox of a legitimated sexuality portrayed to the *generalized other* together with an everyday practice of illegitimate sexual behaviour. And this paradox sustains and is sustained by a hegemonic discourse that describes Prostitutes as naturally identified with marginal and fractured individuals.

The Prostitutes with whom I interacted have to struggle to make sense of their own self-referential as Prostitutes outside the one-dimensional discourse imposed by the Symbolic discourse. They use the identity marker Prostitute but are nevertheless invisible within the boundaries of Prostitutes' identity as conveyed by the public discourse. An invisibility which they reinforce and reproduce throughout their interactions in the visible symbolic world by keeping it a secret.

In the case of the Woman referred to in text box 14, the particularity of her public announcement is even more sublime in that it is made before an audience of numerous and undifferentiated others as if her identity's shout was aimed at the social wholeness. In that moment, Woman X fully embraced her stigmatized identity. By declaring it to the *generalized other*, she is firstly accepting herself, her past and biography. Simultaneously, by addressing others in the shoes of her full social identity, she is demanding her acceptance and recognition as an individual alongside all the legitimate others that were sharing the stage with her, claiming herself as important as the others, demanding her visibility and legitimate place in society, as a Prostitute. Therefore, she targeted the hegemonic symbolic meaning of Prostitute. By declaring herself a Prostitute, she has used precisely the term of her stigmatization to force acceptance.

One must not undercut the symbolic relevance of the context from where that Woman was giving an account of herself. Artistic performances delivered within a conventional space like a theatre, carry the potential to open up the fissures of normalized discourse, to display their contingent insurgence and explore their normative nature. On the one hand, artistic performances may become dependent on numbers (subsidies, audiences) and entrenched in a certain dramaturgical and performative nature that enhances the reproduction of hegemonic discourses. On the other hand, artistic performances may engage public discourses to face their own alterity, causing subversive effects by displaying the flexibility and elasticity of concepts. Thus, it is possible to use the term *performance*, its display in a conventional space – theatre and the legitimacy of its interactional order (between performers and audience) as an overall context where discourses might be re-cited in subversive ways.

That Woman stepped into the legitimized space of social convention, a theatre, but although the interactional frame was that of a performance, she was being neither an actress nor a performer. It was her own voice and discourse, speaking the truth about herself and symmetrically placing her self-account, side by side, with others “If a Prostitute disturbs many people (...)”. In the end, 79 individuals, regardless of their social identity, joined in her self-account and in unison

declared "(...) 80 prostitutes disturb much more". Therein lies the subversion. On the one hand, that Women delivered an account of herself and told the truth about herself, addressing the Other in their stigmatized identity as a Prostitute, letting the term do be used and be assumed in a symbolic interactional context, exposing herself and consequently the unnatural symbolic depiction of a Prostitute's identity. On the other hand, by having 79 individuals jointly re-cite the noun in a self-referent way exposes the contingency of the identity marker and its normative effect as generating and being generated by the symbolic law.

By exposing themselves and exposing the truth of their sexual practice before the *generalized other*, These Women accepted to become vulnerable to the actions and reactions of their recipients, risking either acceptance or repulse.

As Foucault pointed out, any relation to the regime of truth is, at the same time, a relation of the individual with himself. The materialization of the process of deconstruction cannot occur without this reflexive dimension (Foucault 1983-1984). Questioning the regime of truth, where this regime of truth governs subjectivation is to call into question the truth of oneself and question one's ability to speak the truth (Foucault: 1983-1984). This truth-telling makes the individual vulnerable to the other, putting them at risk because it means unsettling a hegemonic discourse that imposes the norms of recognition that govern how a woman should live her sexuality and become recognized (Foucault 1983-1984).

"I am a Prostitute", are statements that assault the public symbolic discourse. The statements allow its recipient to become aware of the unnatural limits of discourse. If one's perception of Prostitute is of someone fractured and marginal, how come these Women are declaring they are Prostitutes? What is mismatching there: the entailed hegemonic meaning of the noun Prostitutes or the individuals who in the here-and-now context are self-referencing their identity as one of being Prostitutes? What that Woman did in the mentioned performance was more than speak the truth about herself. Simultaneously she forced the invisibility of her identity into the boundaries of discourse and consequently

undermined its one-dimensional meaning, its stigmatized nature, and its power effect.

In Foucault, the politics of truth offers the terms that make self-recognition possible. The Self that can be is limited in advance to the existing forms of recognition. Although the truth regime decides in advance what forms of recognition it can take, in Foucault there is always a relationship in the context of the rules in question and specifically the possibility of negotiating a response to the question of who I am and how I will relate to those rules and it is in those precise terms that the norms of recognition and acceptance can be changed.

In *Bodies that Matter*, Butler develops the poststructuralist theory of Derrida, to emphasize the power which resides in the workings of language (Butler 1993: xxi-xxx, 170-185). To have the desired effect on reality, according with certain conventions, a performative utterance has to be intentionally articulated by the person who is entitled to do so under the contextual frame in which the utterance is supposed to be verbalized. Derrida countered the above statement by claiming, differently, that performative utterances can extrapolate their original context and use in ways that do not conform to the intentions of their original speakers. Thus, linguistic signs can be verbalized and expressed out of their supposed contexts. Linguistic signs can become malleable and expanded or constrained in their own signifier by being uttered in inappropriate contextual frames (Butler 1993: xxi-xxx, 170-185; Derrida 1977: 1-21). Butler asserts that what could mean a linguistic failure is, in fact, the materialization of an inherent characteristic of linguistic signs: the always possibility of becoming appropriated, reiterated on and re-cited.

The concept of *performativity* is an account of the citational process in which norms are being uttered in the contextual frames in which their productive and regulatory effect is successful in producing the reality they aim to produce. But because *performativity* is an on doing of doings, the regulatory effect of norms depends on their continuous recitation in accordance with the desired effect (Butler 1993: xxi-xxx, 59-80, 139-168). Thus, the doings of re-citation are essential to produce reality but it is exactly the need of re-citation that renders

the sign vulnerable to be re-cited in a different way, wrongfully or out of the desired context, ultimately showing its instability instead of its fixed content (Butler 1993: xxi-xxx, 28-57). Butler specifies that the performative process is not only reiterative and material but also exclusionary (Butler 1993: 28-57). If social norms define the realm of recognition and accepted subjectivity, their content is also constituted by its negative, i.e., by what remains excluded from the definition and establishes the limits beyond which the intelligible and unacceptable lies, namely those who do not adequately cite the social norms (Butler 1993: xxi-xxx).

The limits of discourse in the symbolic public domain have not only suppressive effects but productive ones, too. The fundamental prohibition, far from working in a merely negative way, is responsible for the production of sub worlds which, far from threatening the system of symbolic domination, constitutes its inherent transgression, that is, its invisible and unacknowledged support. *“The forming of a subject requires identification with the normative regulatory ideal of ‘sex’, and this identification takes place through repudiation which produces a domain of abjection, repudiation without which the subject cannot emerge”* (Butler 1993: xiii).

A Prostitute is recognized in the public discourse as being associated with marginalization whether it is one of extreme poverty, of fractured personality, addiction, etc, provided that this marginalization identifies and personalizes the integrity of the Prostitute woman as being constituted and constitutive of that marginalized world. Consequently, the use of her sexual body is conveyed in the Symbolic Law not for what it is: a certain use of a woman’s sexual activity, but as an unworthy and undignified use of her own body by others as a result of an overreaching arch of oppression and helplessness. For the public discourse, Prostitution is equal to coerced sexuality and a Prostitute is a subject with no agency whatsoever. Prostitutes who remain invisible in the public discourse are exactly the ones who would provide accounts of a daily life as well as a sexual behaviour not that different from any other woman and would claim that Prostitution and Prostitutes entail more control, decision making and agency than one could even imagine. These women Prostitutes are those who, in the event of being accepted by the public discourse, would challenge the normative

intentionality of the effect desired by that Symbolic interpellation of Prostitute: to regulate women's use of their body and sexuality. Their invisibility mirrors the outside limits of discourse, of who is unrecognizable and unaccepted, i.e., those that do not adequately cite the social regulatory norm.

The citation of the regulatory norm presumes: a. That the term of self-identification, Prostitute, is not named, as its own referent, by whoever is a Prostitute woman. It excludes, from the outset, its use as a reference for self-identification; b. When the Prostitute makes herself known as such, her self-referential is admitted as long as the description or justification is contained within the "victimizing", "oppressive" discourse that socially frames prostitution "as coerced sexuality" and c. That the Prostitute is neither participant nor relatable to the *generalized other*.

The Women mentioned above experienced the relief of practicing the discourse of truth about themselves before a *generalized other* at the same time as they compel the other to have to relate to their identity marker. By verbalizing or practicing the performative elocution "I am a Prostitute" and doing it within the interactional contexts of the public symbolic world, These Women forced their visibility exposing the fact that the intrinsic regulatory effect of the normative citation, in this case failed: that the Prostitute is not a product of misery and that not all prostitution is coerced sexuality. Moreover, this visibility, once rescued, is then cited and re-cited by these women.

As the street teams were performing the metaphorical role of keeping the door open for These Women to come back to a social and dignified life, in fact, that door functioned as a two-way frontier to be crossed by the researcher and street team partners, bringing the interactions with the outer world into the inner boundaries of their dominant symbolic life.

At private meetings, when I was questioned about my research topic and explained to the participants – of distinct economic, educational backgrounds – my fieldwork, I would capture their interest and attention as if I was wandering in obscure unlighted areas that drove everyone's imagination and curiosity but

no one was allowed to experience or to mention it. People would ask me, how the night atmosphere is? Who are those sex workers? How is their experience? Do they have pleasure? It seemed I was penetrating a certain field that everyone knows exists but is restrained from interacting with, an appeal to a certain fantasy or exoticism connected with an obscure side of sexuality. Similar circumstances were reproduced by my street team partners who explained, during the Focus Group in October 2016, that their volunteer work aroused the stubborn curiosity of their friends about: who were those women? Are they doing sex-work willingly or not? Is it because they are in need? Our common experience in those social gatherings revealed that in what concerns the Prostitution context, our interaction in it surprised the participants as if mismatched from the context where our social identities are supposed to belong and denounced which lines we are actually crossing. In my particular intakes of their responses, the curiosity and astonishment was connected with the Sex factor and with Prostitution which involves the practice of sexuality in unconformity with what they expected me to know, interact and be. By saying “I go out at night, into the streets and talk with Prostitutes” I was providing my audience with an out of context interpellation of myself or the identity they expected from me. It shows that from the symbolic point of view, there is a dividing line between my own social and gender identity and the social identity of a Prostitute.

Additionally, the Prostitution topic revealed another norm that sustains symbolic interactions. The trigger of being in contact with prostitution provided the opportunity for the participant’s expressions and questions concerning what is normally avoided from being expressed and questioned – Sex Topics. I was creating a fissure in the symbolic hegemonic narrative of the *generalized other* by mixing that world with my own personal accounts of it. As if when someone talks about a subject that reveals a disconnection of the participants with the usual rules of the game. In this particular case the topic is SEX and sexuality connected with the outside world of public appearances, with sexuality beyond the public and hegemonic constraints. However, as time passed and I gradually became more acquainted with the fieldwork, “normalizing” the conversations with Prostitutes and personally relating to them and their discursive and emotional states of minds, the persistent curiosity expressed in those social

gatherings began to annoy me. At some point, I started to see the recurring and persistent curiosity about sex workers and sex as expressions of childishness to the point that I began to completely avoid the topic. Oddly enough, the Street Team Partners mentioned that they too began to feel disgusted by the persistent curiosity expressed by the others, to the point that they also self-imposed a vow of silence regarding the subject in their day-to-day social contexts. In their accounts, people were not demonstrating curiosity about the deeper aspects of that reality, or the women's knowledge and their view of society – which was what we really wanted to convey to others - but still the same superficial and exotic curiosity about the underworld of sexuality. Both of them also confirmed, that once they replied their enjoyment of talking with These Women, that they are very interesting individuals with so much for us to learn from, the faces of their participants showed disbelief and subsequently transmuted to disinterest. As one of the Team Partners expressed *“it is the fact that we are portraying the context with such normality”*.

According to my team partners' explanations, the weekly street team volunteer work was unmissable. Even if they were tired, if they had family obligations, lack of money to commute to the site or were under emotional or economic stress, that encounter was so important in their lives that they would not skip it. And when in the Focus Group I asked them why it was so important, both of them replied that it was the nature of our interactions in the streets.

15. Text box – Field Work Diary, Street Team Partner's Focus Group (Oct 2016)
“Street team Partner: There were always moments of thoughtful thinking about a series of things and aspects that contributed to my well-being and to think about my own life. The many conversations that were generated in the street were conversations that helped me to go deeper into a reality that is not accessible to most people...to understand how people live their sexuality, to realize what works or does not work, for men and women, in regard to intimacy and relationships. That generates a lot of personal curiosity and being able to access it in this way, in this context, is a privilege ... the faintest idea of what it means, what women think about men and men of women...accessing a field which the overwhelming majority of people do not.”

That same personal attachment to the fieldwork was also experienced by the researcher as the next text box illustrate.

16. Text box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Jun. 26th 2014, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia Street)

“The team and I were talking about the time we are usually leaving out the street and ending the run as being too late. But in the end, we realized and declared to ourselves with amusement and joy: We always think about it but in the end we always stay longer. It is as simple as that.”

Talking seriously about our work would mean to expose and discuss not the specific context of sex workers but extrapolate to our hegemonic narrative of men and women’s sexuality, share our vulnerabilities which were not the verbal statements and glances that triggered the *generalized other* curiosity. In a way, avoiding conversations about the topic revealed that we, the street team, had changed our relationship with the work, with These Women and most probably with ourselves. Avoiding meant two things: we were saving these women’s faces and no longer reproducing their simplistic identification as Prostitutes; we were no longer playing the symbolic ritualized interaction because we became aware of its reproductive force over the farfetched exoticism, simplicity and marginalization with which Prostitutes were normally portrayed.

As time went by and the experience in the streets grew, our role as care givers became less tangible in our interactions. Even without forgetting it completely, the conversations with some of These Women necessarily developed into dialogues about life in general and around sexuality, men, society and relationships, in more reflective and abstract terms. There is no doubt these conversations had a substantial impact on the way the street team members thought about themselves, not as care givers but as gendered individuals, expressed in the conversations, states of mind and emotional commentaries shared both before, during and after the street team’s encounters, as illustrated in the text box no. 17

17. Text box - Field Work Diary: Street Team (Dec. 4th 2014, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia Street)

“The Women S asked us how we were enduring the cold and that we could be on the bed sleeping and we were here. We replied that we were having a good conversation: ‘That it’s good. We like it.’ She said ‘get out of my bed to talk to another on the street, fuck!’ and we replied that sometimes you go out to work and you talk to uninteresting people. A street team partner added that she had much more interesting conversations here than during the day.

‘W: I think you're right about that. Because the conversations here are so different, so informal. Here the things you hear you will never hear in a cafe, at work. No one will hear this in the cafe, at the market.

The street team partner replied that conversations on the streets are genuine. That they speak what they want and the street team partner speaks what she wants. That there is no falsehood. That no one is impressing anyone.

Another street team partner added that on the street we have conversations that correspond sometimes to the situation that we are living. The Women replied:

‘W.: It's true, it's that experience that I lived and you did not but automatically, maybe, the one you have experience, fits me.

Street teams: How many times are you here talking and saying things, and I, damn, had never thought of that perspective.

W. Yes. But the conversation always strikes the same: money, man, woman.’ ”

Immediately after each day of work in the “street team” I would embrace the task of field-note writing. But invariably I would spontaneously continue writing about the overwhelming emotional commentaries with which I had often left the field as illustrated by the text boxes 18 to 21.

18. Text box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Jul. 17th 2014, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia Street)

“From the interaction I held with the street team partners in the end of the night. First we realized that it passed already 00:30 am. We left the street and while driving home we started discussing deeply how we were affected by the conversations in the streets and how that was impacting our thoughts and feelings. We talked about the last conversation of the night with Women Y, how

we really like her, how she talks about the things we usually don't know or say. We both talked that is because she lives something that is ...that she is aware of Machismo. She lives a relationship with her partner but is completely aware of something like the difference between female monogamy versus male monogamy. She is conscious that even married men continue to have these habits, it may not be with prostitutes, but they are with other women, or with women they meet...but women are not aware of this, prefer not to know, or think in a preconceived mind that their partner is not so and live that ideal. However, women Y delivers a work that confronts her with this duality. My partners than replied that usually the conversations with Y are so strong, from when she began to tell us of the excuses the clients give not to be with their wives when they go with her, she becomes mad and crazy because she is with him, listening to the lie, and standing on both sides. I immediately confirmed: "Yes, she stands on both sides, it has a depth".

19. Text box - Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Oct. 3rd 2014, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia Street)

Street partner's comment during the street run referring to the group of Women we have just met and who we meet every week: 'the story that stood up....that had greater impact to me....in that day...in that night'"

20. Text box - Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Oct. 16th 2014, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia Street)

"The conclusions they draw, what they have just said...! So much work I have put on to think, to analyse and these Women ... it's incredible, all my conclusions and I come to the end of it and I have Women Y telling me exactly...."

21. Text box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Oct. 23rd 2014, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia Street)

"My teams' partners explained to me that in a conversation with Women Z, both shared the experience of pain caused by grief. Woman Z, like a stranger who crosses one's path, knew how to be an intimate and empathic person in that moment to my team partner. My team partner said: 'Once upon a time ... the story of my life that will always be told, will remember Woman Z'"

Thus, out of the scope of the initial research question I found myself “in trouble”, having from the start of the fieldwork my gendered self obstinately being targeted in my inner talks. How could one get involved in a research project on reflexivity and self-awareness without surrendering your own normative inner self to the process?

The fieldwork has been a process in which the researcher has looked into herself too many a times to neglect its ongoing occurrence, as relevant data directly connected to the question of how reflexive thought can emerge from unconscious normativities. I must declare, for the benefit of my own research, that when I started the fieldwork I could not contemplate that the first question my mind would pull out of the notebook would be: From which social and gender identity was the researcher questioning herself?

If the present work is about reflexivity, it is about how one might become aware of their gender inner structures and relate to them differently.

How could I portray in the present work the women’s vulnerability, thoughts, questions, discourses and emotions, sometimes so deeply entrenched in their inner selves, shared in an act of such generosity, without putting myself, on an equal stand and becoming analysed and observed? Why should I distance myself from the women with whom I interacted so closely by enclosing my experience behind the scientific veil?

This amplified lens over the field work allowed the emergence of the street team partners’ reflections about and upon themselves. The interactions in the streets generated the material for the street team partners, including the researcher, to think about their inner structures.

4. Emotional Commentaries

4.1. Why Street Team's Emotional Commentaries matters?

Reflexivity, as Archers ascribes, is the internal dialogue through which individuals submit themselves, their thoughts, their concerns, their projects and their emotional responses to society's enablement and constraints, as objects of their inner scrutiny (Archer 2004: 193-221). Emotions are singled out as material for inner talk. Emotions are commentaries concerning the responses individuals bring from their interactions with different orders of reality (Archer 2004: 193-221).

But emotions are not only commentaries upon one's already defined projects and concerns and what accrues to individuals from their interactions with the natural, practical and social dimensions of reality. *“Emotions are clearly embodied, but they should not be reduced to mere feeling counterposed to reason; rather, as Archer and others have argued, they are responses to and commentaries on our situations in relation to our concerns (Archer 2000, Barbalet 2001 Helm 2001, Oakley 1993). They are cognitive and evaluative, indeed essential elements of intelligence (Nussbaum, 2001 pag.3). They are strongly related to our nature as dependent and vulnerable beings. They are about something, particularly things which are important to our well-being and which we value and yet which are not fully within our control”* (Sayer 2010: 113-114).

Emotions are continually being triggered throughout one's interaction with others because they are, first of all, body responses to the interactional order (Holmes 2010, Rosenberg 1990). One usually feels a complex myriad of body states during one day. Those body states, that might last for a long time or be ephemeral, might not be consciously perceived by the subjects; they can be automatic responses enacted by and through internalized dispositions acquired through a process of learning how to interact with others without even thinking how one is interacting and in which way emotions are conveyed through one's actions and responses (Rosenberg 1990). But emotions do not depend solely on

how one is used to interacting with the world, but how the world of events and people may suddenly disrupt one's usual emotional display and that unexpected switch might bring the individual to the awareness of a certain emotional experience and make him reflect on it (Holmes 2010).

The interactional order is a class of events which occurs during co-presence and by virtue of co-presence: glances, gestures, positioning, and verbal statements – these are the external signs of orientation and involvement of the states of the body and mind through which a normative order is uncovered: the behavioural order (Goffman 1967). As Goffman explains, a normative structure is at issue in a social gathering in a face-to-face encounter (Goffman 1967). In face-to-face confrontation, Goffman describes what he calls *a line* which is “*a pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which he expresses his view of the situation and through this his evaluation of the participants, especially himself*” (Goffman 1967: 5). *Face* is an image of the self, in terms of approved social attributes and in accordance with what is normatively valuable. “*The term face may be defined as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self-delineated in terms of approved social attributes-albeit an image that others may share, as when a person makes a good showing of his profession or religion by making a good showing of himself*” (Goffman 1967:5).

If in a right *face*, one experiences an immediate positive emotional response from others and becomes attached to it, depending on the expectation of a taken for granted image he has of itself and the expectations one believes others will have (Rosenberg 1990). An individual will keep and convey the *face* to which he has attached great emotional feelings in accordance with the treatment others convey. Thus, the feelings that accrue to oneself from his/her interactions with others might not even be consciously perceived because it is part of the ongoing, unconscious, interactional order, where one became part of it and knows how to interact, in a certain social economic and familiar context, not even thinking about it (Flam 2010). The reproduction of power relations and power relations through the interactional order are also mediated by emotions concerning the way one already instantiates in that order a *face* and *line* in accordance with how

others will value and will convey his/her self-worth, pride and dignity (Sayer 2010).

Nevertheless, Goffman (1983: 10-11) opens up the possibilities of a contingent mismatch between the *face* one is emotionally attached to and some disturbance of the interactional order that brings him out of his *face*, positions the subject within a distinct and unusual set of emotional matrixes, regardless of whether that matrix is in terms of right/wrong, self-worth/indignity and inferiority. In Goffman's terms, "*what the person protects and defends and invests his feelings in is an idea about himself, and ideas are vulnerable not to facts and things but to communications*" (Goffman 1967:43). And one cannot control all interactional communications (Goffman 1983: 10-11), removing all contingencies with which the communication of others may confront and surprise our ideas of ourselves and the expectations we endure, unconsciously, through our internalized dispositions, triggering in us certain unusual emotional states. This can happen all the time with more or less frequency, with more or less relevance. So, even if one is more inclined to sociological reductionism, to internalized dispositions for maintaining and unconsciously reproducing a certain feeling of him/herself, it is unquestioned that one's everyday life is threaded with many other lives and individuals, where distinct biographies keep momentarily touching and crossing each other and not always in the same way or reproducing the same interactional order. Individuals tend to emotionally experience not only a one-dimensional reproduction of a certain interactional order but to see that order being disturbed sometimes by small but significant events that change, for better or for worse, their usual *face* as well as the expectations others might have of their face.

When a mismatch happens within the interactional order, between a certain context and the expected Face one is used to portraying in that context, that disturbance triggers, first of all, an emotional bodily response. And if connected with the Idea one experiences of oneself in that context, of their self-worth, those emotional states may generate the subject's turning over itself and posing the questions: why did I feel that way, why did I feel a certain emotion? Those questions bring the subject to scan the situation, to analyse the specific frame of

the interaction, which actions and reactions momentarily put him out of his expected Self.

Of course, the individual might not even want to attribute any importance to them, to dismiss the emotional feedback or it might not have the frames of intelligibility to name the emotion, to understand it or even to allow himself/herself to understand it and give it relevance in the overall assessment of the situation, of himself/herself and others (Rosenberg 1990, Flam 2010). And this can happen also by the influence of context or by a certain internalized disposition that removes the awareness of emotions as non-important (Rosenberg 1990, Flam 2010). But the emotional impact is bodily felt beyond individuals' control and before their intellectual assessment of it. And this disturbance of the interactional order does not happen only once in a lifetime; it is potentially on the verge of happening again and again. And the more frequently it happens, the more it will allow subjects to *face* it and think over their situation and their inner states.

The interactional order is vulnerable to communication (Goffman 1967:43). Communication, be it through verbal, gestural or other signs, bears information about how one interacts with oneself and with others. However, stable as it may seem, the iterability of signs, as Butler points out, makes its subversive recitation possible, which generates an emotional experience caused by the incompatibilities and incongruences within the interactional order, where internalized emotional attachments pertaining to certain social identities and social roles are expected to be delivered as *faces* and *lines* are expected to come through them and actually they don't. Thus, subversive recitation may not become immediately rationalized and framed into the discourse by the subject. It might accrue to the individual, first of all, as an emotional experience of a sudden disconnection between the subject's internalized dispositions and expectations of how that order should unfold and how in the contingency of the moment, the order actually revealed itself.

Even if power relations are ubiquitous and the subject constructs its subjectivity around discourses of truth which are cited through the interactional order,

emotional commentaries matter because they can accrue to the individual from the outside of hegemonic discourse and power relations.

Emotions do matter because they generally reveal something about the individual's situation, his/her well-being, his/her sense of self, his/her context and relation with others and consequently with social normativities and institutions. For Foucault (1982b: 234-242), self-consciousness, introspection and reflexivity and other techniques of the *practice of the self* constitute an avenue through which the subject finds his/her own truth instead of being shaped and constructed through institutionalization and normativization. Through the practice of the self the subject gives himself/herself the right to question the truth concerning his power effects and to question discourses of truth (Foucault 1984a). Most importantly, all of these practices have the goal to lead each individual towards the exploration of his/her sense of freedom and truth (Foucault 1984a, 1984d: 253-280).

Emotions are the substance/material of that *practice* because upon a certain disarrangement of the interactional order, one questions oneself: what do I feel; how do I feel; why do I feel. This may allow subjectivity to become "undone" if upon the emotional commentaries, the subject practices an inner talk that leads the subject to experience himself/herself outside the normality of social arrangements, outside the usual schemes of intelligibility and become aware of the unnatural quality of those arrangements.

As mentioned before, whenever the topic of my fieldwork was raised in a social gathering and very often brought into conversation by others, I would suddenly hold the floor of conversation for a long time. I also noticed that in the first occasions when that happened, during the course of my narration, my enthusiasm would increase. Of course, this was accruing to my interactional *line* as a result of the other's feedbacks with glances of surprise, admiration and wonder, which would cause and reinforce the image I was portraying at that precise moment. For a while, during my social gatherings, I would maintain the *face* because I was effectively presenting an image of myself that is internally consistent and supported by the judgements and evidences conveyed by the other

participants. I was delivering an idealization of myself to correspond to their increasing expectations of that self or the expectations of others that the self wants to display. My verbal statements concerning meeting sex workers, going out at night to the places where they are working, being it Electra, Andromeda Quarter and Iphigenia Street, and delivering a discourse with such ease about the topic in question, I was conveying an image of myself reinforced by their verbal statements and glances of curiosity and admiration. I refer to an *idealized self* in the sense that I was portraying a partial and enhanced dimension, namely the one that would capture the others' best expectations and deliver the appropriate expression of my relative social worth.

I linked the above intakes, written in my personal notebook, with a newspaper article published in a nationwide magazine called *Visão*, on January 27th 2005, with a report about the profile of the Lisbon Oblate Congregation Director at that time, Nun X. The title of the news report was "The Mother Theresa of Electra" and the subtitle "In Electra, the most problematic district of Lisbon, Nun X devotes her days to Prostitutes and against direct orders of the Pope, delivers condoms to them". The Nun is described as going to a problematic quarter, described as a war zone, where on the left, one has Prostitution and on the right one has drug dealers. A place full of war trenches and where there are dead and wounded people both in their bodies and in their souls. The nun goes out there, fearlessly wearing civilian clothing, blending in that marginal scenery and gets together with prostitutes, "her friends" as she calls them. Neither the joints nor the loud music coming from the bars, bother her. She is described as having a restless, talkative, festive and unorthodox character; wearing simple yet elegant clothing, she reads philosophy while being well-versed in computers, candid in her interactions but fearless in her spirit.

The idealization of the nun conveyed by the public narrative of the newspaper resembles the *face* I was delivering in social gatherings where my research topic was raised. Portraying a *face* of confidence, intelligence, bravery, independence, emancipation, knowledge and above all, of one that is defiant of the normal and regular frames of interactions by making acquaintance not only with the marginalized/unspeakable/ unknown/transgressors but with Prostitutes. The

face I was conveying to the *generalized other* was a correspondence to others' expectations, which in Goffman's terms, would be my *sacred self* (Goffman 1967: 32, 91). Which assessments by others are the nun and the researcher conforming to, be they the newspaper readers or friends respectively? What appeals to the reader's interest is knowing that a nun, as an institutionalized identity conferred by the Catholic Church, mingles with Prostitutes and Drug addicts and Marginalized environments. What appeals to my friends and acquaintances is knowing that myself, who's social and gender Identity and context they know, mingles at night with Prostitutes and with their idealization of what that underworld is. We are showing signs of individual emancipation, fearlessness, intelligence, independence and courage to break down the rules of old conventionalism. Materializing the ideal of meeting and interacting, arguably in a symmetrical stance, with Women who do not share the same social, hierarchical and educational position, women that are socially portrayed as deviant and marginalized and oppressed. Additionally, I am interacting with someone whose social identity marker immediately draws the attention to sex and moreover, immediately drives thoughts to sexual fantasies, sexual deviant behaviour, promiscuity or open sexuality. Thus, I am bringing to the floor of interaction an idealized conception of myself as a ground-breaking woman. A ground-breaking woman is also portrayed in the nun's case, by conveying an image of herself as fearless and not being afraid of breaking the Pope's rules and their instructions and act differently according with her own moral values and code with regard to Prostitutes.

That *sacred self* is our idealized self and what we want others to expect from us. An ideal that is a mixture of emancipation, independence, self-rule, someone who is already beyond the old naturalized gender conventions or institutional order while maintaining humanist and caring features.

However, contrary to the display of the nun's *sacred self* by the news, breaking the strings with the institutional discourse and the social marker of Prostitutes is less strong and evident in everyday life. Nuns' institutional narrative marks the boundaries of what is idealized in terms of their identity and their relationships with Prostitutes and consequently what is accepted as being reality. However, the

fact is that at the contingent interactional dimension sometimes the idealization becomes fractured.

Very often the nuns as well as the congregation staff, in private settings with me, would expose their incomprehension regarding the repeated requests from women wanting their help to leave Prostitution but then, once opportunities arose, they would themselves boycott their chances and continue delivering sex work (Text Box no. 22 illustrates the above)

22. Text Box - Field Work Diary, Interactions CAOMIO (Nov. 4th 2013, Congregational Center)

“CAOMIO’s staff member: “I do not understand arrrrrr it does not matter if women are more differentiated or not, if they have access to more opportunities or not, deep down they do not materialize, when opportunities arise they do not grab them. They do not take the small steps necessary for the change they themselves want and want ... why? Why this boycott? These women sacrifice for the sake of all, men, family, but do not do the little things they need, when opportunities arise they resist, they have inertia. Because? Are they afraid of change? The fact that they have been doing this for years and years has something crystallized within them? Because they live for the immediate, why they want the change, they want, they express that change, and when the opportunities arise they do not grab it? Why? There is a manifested interest, a desire to see a project, to idealize what it is they want for their lives and to express the desire to embark on this project, but then, when it is to materialize, go to social security, finance, deal with the divorce, etc. etc., these women do not mind about it, do not want to know. What prevents these women from actually changing their life projects and destinies, all the more so when they themselves thought, idealized and expressed that it was the project that would be best for them, for their life and that was their Initiative contact with the Centre? They want help in realizing this plan but when the opportunity arises they self-boycott which is a pattern of social behaviour of these women.”

While conducting the fieldwork, not seldom would I be approached by the Nuns with interrogations like why do they continue in the streets, why do women X or

Y choose not to change their lives? As if the research I was conducting would be able to deliver answers concerning why the narrative that Nuns embrace so firmly extended to their identity and the Prostitutes' identities and does not produce the envisaged outcome? The emotional commentary that the nuns convey is one of frustration.

The crucial point here is that although the reality of interactions between Nuns and Prostitutes was disrupting the normalization of the relational ideal, providing both the nuns as well as the congregational staff members with allusions about its mere discursive character and effect, those unsettling moments and deep questions are still not enough for them to unsettle their own pre-conceived and normalized ideas about Prostitutes and Prostitution. The answer to those questions would always have to come from Prostitutes themselves as if an aspect of their identity was still uncovered. The questions were never posed in terms of bringing self-reflection to the nuns' own frame of thinking and intelligibility. Nevertheless, what did not occur then might occur in a future as long as the contingent interactions start to make the Nuns feel more frustrated and question how their work is not fulfilling their aims and consequently the realization of their Ideal Selves and their Ideal Relation with Prostitutes.

About the latter, in 2012, integrated in the Lisbon's Public Budget, the Roman Catholic congregation of the Oblate Sisters of the Most Holy Redeemer, at Lisbon, drew up, subscribed and presented a project for the creation of a "Safe House": a house to be run by a cooperative of sex workers (to be constituted), where women could continue their sexual activity but in a safe, protected and clean environment. The Project did not succeed. The initiative was debated by the public opinion with opposing opinions both from the civil society, women's organizations and political institutions. The newspapers, local and nationwide, were taken by surprise, which was then projected in their tabloids⁶ as it was never

⁶ Newspapers: 1. "Brothel in Mouraria to take Prostitutes out of the Streets" (translated title), in *Diário de Notícias*, March 1st 2012; 2. "Lisbon Municipality is studying the opening of a Brothel in Mouraria for 2013" (translated title), in *Jornal Público*, March 1st 2012; 3. "Brothel planned for Lisbon" (translated title), in *Correio da Manhã*, March 1st 2012; 4. "Cooperative of Prostitutes in Mouraria is under study" (translated title), in *Jornal de Notícias*, March 1st 2012; 5. "Brothel of Mouraria would need a new Legal Frame" (translated title), in *Jornal Sol*, February 29th 2012; 6. "Nuns who help Prostitutes were cover for proposing a Brothel in Mouraria. We want to dignify this Women they say" (translated title), in *Jornal Sol*, March 16th 2012; 7. "Mouraria: Prostitutes

imagined that the Nuns could come up with a project that would mean shaking the hegemonic abolitionist discourse with regard to Prostitution, it was never imagined the nuns would visibly interfere with the political and cultural structures of society. In the end, the project was rejected by the Municipality and the nuns completely gave up insisting in its approval (see text box no. 23).

23. Text Box - Field Work Diary, Interactions CAOMIO (Dez. 18th 2013,
Congregational Center)

“Researcher: What motivated the Congregation to design and present the project and afterwards why the Nuns did not continue insisting on it?”

CAOMIO’s staff member: Because at that time the Nuns were bombarded with this and by all people. The motivation came from the Director, with a reference from Madrid. There, I do not know how many years, Women practice Prostitution in closed and specific places. Here, when public authorities started their action over Electra quarter, there was massive police intervention. The women ran down and up the streets, sometimes three times a day, especially the Nigerians, which was unbearable to see. At that time it was considered that they were so uncomfortable staying on the streets, in the public space, and while Prostitutions was not going to disappear so easily and they would end up moving to another place, which is not in line with our social intervention, the idea was to arrange for a space for them to be. That’s all. Then came Y from GAT⁷ that reinforced the idea because he knew that would be an innovative initiative, not only here but elsewhere in the world and invested in the idea. That’s how the “safe house” came about. But then the Nuns were completely bombed, were called upon and had to be accountable before the Catholic Lisbon’s Patriarchy, before the Municipality, before everyone and about everything. At that time another Staff member was on maternity leave therefore I went with nun X to all meetings and it seemed we were in the inquisition,

having doubts about the Project for a Safe House” (translated title), in Jornal Expresso, March 1st 2012; 8. “Prostitutes having doubts with the Safe House project.(...) the Project is not being well received by the Women already used to be on the streets”(translated title), in Radio Televisão Portuguesa, March 1st 2012; 9. “O Ninho Association against the Brothel in Mouraria” (translated title), in O Público, March 1st 2012; 10. “Nuns deny the news about the brothel in Mouraria” (translated title), in Radio Renascença, March 2nd 2012.

⁷GAT - Group of Activists in Treatments, founded in 2001, is a structure of individual adherence and cooperation between people from different communities and different organizations, affected by HIV and AIDS

asking about this and that, and thinking they had the right to do so. The ideal would have been to continue with the project.”

Likewise the Nuns, as a consequence of the street team encounters, I found myself not being that progressive and ground-breaking woman after all, aware that my *idealized self* is not as real as I thought it was.

4.2. Street Team Partners’ Emotional Commentaries

It is necessary to position the self not only in its economic and social context but within the wider matrix of cultural and symbolic power relations that generates the subject and constitutes it in its own identity. Thus, schemes of intelligibility produced and reproduced under the symbolic law foreclose possibilities for self-articulation and self-thought just because it brings about within the subject self, the internalized dispositions of inexistent thinking or talking. Subsequently, the wider matrix of power that sustains the symbolic order is repeatedly enacted in the interactional order and the subjectivation process disavows the subject with the potential to even consider that, somehow, a “silenced self” was left out (Flam 2010). Considering the social and economic context of the street team members, it is unquestioned that their subjectivity is constituted by the inside boundaries of the symbolic discourse, in terms they are not aware and should not be aware precisely for what social norms, enacted through the interactional order, define as the realm of intelligible and feasible subjectivity. In that sense, reflexivity is silenced from the beginning in regard to what is not even thinkable or feasible to think.

However, by being involved in street encounters with the invisible others, with the ones who are prevented from eventually being accepted and recognized, the emotional commentaries that accrued on those occasions had the effect of leading the street teams’ members towards a practice of reflexivity that allowed a new prospect of the subject’s relation with the wider matrix of cultural and symbolic power.

The street team's emotional commentaries that emerge from the street encounters can be fractioned into three distinct dimensions of analysis: 1) Embarrassment/Surprise 2) Release/Vulnerability and 3) Self-Consciousness.

4.2.1. Embarrassment/Surprise

At my first street team outing, I left the Congregation Center, wearing the vest that identified me as such and together with the other members, we walked down the street carrying a shopping cart filled with condoms, crackers and chocolates. We started descending the street towards Medeia. Still in the Electra quarter, we met three Nigerian girls. In this meeting, I confronted myself with a relationship of intimacy between the women and the other street team members. A meeting of familiarity that even though they are frequent, the sensation that conveys is one of being a pleasure, a joy shared in that encounter like that of a friend who we have not seen for a while.

I was immediately introduced to These Women. I was compelled to say hello and good-bye with kisses and hugs, which is pretty normal within a frame of social gathering with friends, or even kisses with acquaintances or in other social occasions. In Portugal when we meet someone for the first time, unless you believe you have to pay them deference, it is normal to greet with that physical contact. But in that context and frame, I felt particularly uneasy and awkward doing so. My discomfort was significant as I wrote in my note book as illustrated by text box no. 24. Afterwards I wondered why I felt that particular way if rationally it is common to greet people with kisses and why did it surface if I have done previous field works.

24. Text Box – Field Work Diaries, Street Teams (Oct. 25th 2013; Mar. 12th 2014, Day, Electra/Medeia/Andromeda Quarter)

Oct. 25th 2013

“As before, here too, we greeted each other and said goodbye with kisses and hugs.”

March 12th 2014

“It is important to point out how strange it is for me that at a first meeting I should kiss. How strange it is to use the second person. How strange that the I should advance so immediately with this physical contact of kisses. Is giving kisses and physical contact important? I do not know it seems forced, I have not created a space of trust yet and I am already in that register. People do not know me.”

What I felt was embarrassment. The feeling was not of an intellectualized order or immediately apprehended by discourse. It was, primarily, an emotional experience, a feeling of being forced to an interaction that I didn't feel was necessary or that I was willing to have, as if keeping a certain distance and willing to maintain that interaction at an impersonal level. I was in fact trying to apply a mechanism of defence – avoiding contact and greeting with kisses.

In general, by treating others deferentially one gives them the opportunity to handle the sympathy with good manner (Goffman 1967: 47-95). Deference images tend to point to the wider society outside the interaction, to the place the individual has achieved in the hierarchy of society in relation to the position other participants possess (Goffman 1967: 47-95). Therefore, considering my recognisable hierarchy and asymmetrical position towards These Women, I would have no problem to comply with those greeting rituals because they would show deference in what would entail an enhancement of my deferential position. Thus, if the emotional commentary was not caused by the care giver role, I question what was the cause of it?

“The expectations relevant to embarrassment are moral, then, but embarrassment does not arise from the breach of any moral expectation, for some infractions give rise to resolute moral indignation and no uneasiness at all. Rather we should look to those moral obligations which surround the individual in only one of his capacities, that of someone who carries on social encounters. The individual, of course, is obliged to remain composed, but this tells us that things are going well, not why. And things go well or badly because of what is perceived about the social identities of those present. During

interaction the individual is expected to possess certain attributes, capacities, and information which, taken together, fit together into a self that is at once coherently unified and appropriate for the occasion. Through the expressive implications of his stream of conduct, through mere participation itself, the individual effectively projects this acceptable self into the interaction, although he may not be aware of it, and the others may not be aware of having so interpreted his conduct. At the same time he must accept and honor the selves projected by the other participants. The elements of a social encounter, then, consist of effectively projected claims to an acceptable self and the confirmation of like claims on the part of the others. The contributions of all are oriented to these and built up on the basis of them. When an event throws doubt upon or discredits these claims, then the encounter finds itself lodged in assumptions which no longer hold” (Goffman 1967: 104-105).

To whom is it embarrassing? To me, the street team member, who is conducting the role while approaching These Women in that specific street setting. For whom is this embarrassment felt? The embarrassment is felt firstly for me and secondly, after deeper reflection perhaps in relation to someone who, in abstract terms, might be there but it is not, the *generalized other*, the one that symbolically unifies the eyes of everyone with whom I relate daily. During interactions, the individual is expected to portray a coherent and unified self, suitable for that interaction. Somehow, my uneasiness to embrace the greeting rituals means that I wanted to keep a distance, not to become too familiar within the interactions as if I was there but at the same time I was stating that I am not part either of the setting or of the acquaintance. I was protecting my self-worth. These Women I was meeting for the first time, and still in my mind constituted by the one-dimensional marker of Prostitute, were undignified to me, to my acceptable self.

The awareness over the uneasiness produced a secondary level of emotional experience: I felt ashamed of my previous embarrassment, because it was not coherent with the idealization of my Self as a humanist, progressive individual playing the specific role of care giver, of a Self that I genuinely thought was real before. I realized that within me the moral order of symbolic discourse is a living

being and further became aware of how that moral order is intrinsically entrenched in my self-worth. The facts at hand: being in the context of sex work, out in the streets and meeting Prostitutes and not being able to handle it with easement, a simple normal greeting, with docility and familiarity, threatened and discredited the assumption that I had projected about myself, about my identity. My idealized projected self was somehow confronted with another self. The former, although valid in other contexts, was incapable of being sustained therein.

The mismatch became more intense in a few other occasions beyond mere greeting rituals.

I felt uncomfortable with my body figure. How to put my hands, what body position I would have to assume in those social gatherings. I felt strange without knowing the necessary body codes, what the proper body language in that concrete situation would be. I had to find the solution to overcome the strangeness and the difficulties I was feeling throughout the interaction. One in particular, was when I leaned against the wall next to one of These Women and immediately tried to observe what kind of codes and messages that position of my body could elicit from others. I was in the street, in a corner of a street, absolutely under the stereotype kind of image one has of a street worker. Could I not be mistaken for a sex worker? I was there in broad daylight, in a busy area that I frequently pass by with friends. Was I afraid of it? Of the pedestrians that would pass or that some known person would see me that way? What signs was I giving out to the exterior world? And finally why was I so concerned about this?

I had to make a conscious effort to focus my attention solely on the micro system of interaction that was going on and forget about the frame and the setting in which the interaction was developing.

The Street Team Partners, during the Focus Group held in October 2016, shared a similar emotional experience that emerged from their initial interactions in the streets. Mostly connected with having those encounters in busy areas where people can pass by and look upon and identify them. One of the Team Partners

explained that her first meeting with These Women was not on the street but in a CAOMIO event, in what she described as a protected place. There she became aware that Sex Workers resembled her mother, grandmother, aunts who would dress alike and with whom she had similar conversations to the ones she would have with any other Women and family members. She became conscious of her first meeting as occurring in a “normal” environment by counterpointing that context with the emotional experience she felt when interacting with These Women on the streets.

When describing her first interactions, during the day, in Andromeda Quarter, she remembered perfectly her need to protect the visibility of her body with an umbrella she would carry with her in rainy days, or to always be the carrier of the shopping cart filled with condoms and sweets, as she needed something because she did not know what to do with her hands. She felt bodily vulnerable, exposed to the eyes of the *generalized other* (See Text Box no. 25).

25. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams Partner’s Focus Group
(Oct.2016)

“Street Team Partner: The embarrassment I felt...and I feel is to see the look of criticism on us, about all of us, and it affects me, but in the same way that should affect them perhaps. The Look of criticism. And it is not the look of men, it is of women that affects me during the day, as if the World was not prepared to see this during the day. Both in Alcestis District and Iphigenia Street at night, I did not have the same level, I did not feel so observed than in Andromeda Quarter, during the day. Maybe it is psychological.”

The same street partner expressed her discomfort and embarrassment for having to greet These Women with kisses and hugs at their first interactions on the street which caused her a second level of embarrassment.

She also added that during interactions she would place herself in a position in which she would always be facing These Women, in front of them and never side by side. By acknowledging her emotional experience and her recurrent body posture, she felt ashamed of herself for feeling such embarrassment in the first

place. Consequently, she deliberately forced herself to interrupt her body defensive pattern. One day, on the streets, she sat down next to one of These Women. While doing so, she was examining her emotions and became aware of how uncomfortable and hard it was for her to remain in that position during the interactions. She recalls being afraid that someone would pass by and recognize her. That experience forced her to be confronted with a foremost contradiction within herself. That emotional experience she felt was incoherent with her role and her purpose and intention, i.e. with her expected ideal self. The emotional body distress she experienced and still experiences every time she goes out in daylight with the street teams to Andromeda Quarter, is mismatched from what she would rationally expect not to feel at all.

The second street team partner explained that she had always done the night shifts and neither in the Helen Street/Iphigenia Street area nor in the Alcestis district had she ever felt any kind of body distress. However, once she started the street teams in Antígona District area, at 9 pm, she felt uneasy and unquiet. There, the street teams interact with These Women in narrow streets, side by the side with the road, in a very busy area connected with nightlife, where the Team Partner frequently goes at night with her friends. According to her, she felt worried, not about any potential client but that someone passing by might know her and ask something, and that could interfere with the interactions. Someone that she didn't want to see her in that interactional context that might ask what she was doing there, and she didn't want to share.

Like my street team partners, I would not feel the same if I was holding a private interview with These Women in an isolated setting, nor did I feel the same during my street team encounters at night at Helen Street/Iphigenia Street quarter. It was on the street, where I usually pass in broad daylight, interacting at the same time and in the exact conditions where simultaneously sex work is being elicited.

Despite their focus in our conversation, These Women do not fail to widen the lens of their attention to the reality of the street, beyond our particular interaction. They keep looking for clients with their "radar" gaze. While sustaining the normal flow of our conversation, their attention on us is briefly

diverted to other events occurring around and outside our interaction. The street team's interaction overlap with signs used by These Women in their work and which they continue to enact. Both interactions co-exist at the same time, crossing each other, interrupting each other. If These Women are talking with a client, the street teams do not interfere. They provide space for that interaction to run normally while waiting for its outcome. Sometimes the interaction with the street teams is interrupted by the sudden appearance of a client. Other times These Women make the clients wait until the street team's interaction reaches a certain end of topic.

The street team's feelings of embarrassment are the symptoms of a need to remove any possible confusion, in the public setting, of one becoming assumed as a Woman delivering sexual services. Our concern would not be how to interact with These Women, but how we could interact without fearing the misperception of our social identities. Relevance should be attributed to the *interactional frame* (Goffman 1977). The frame is the time and place where they are eliciting their sexual services. Hence, the emphasis on sexuality and the fact that the street team is constituted by Women, proposes an inner conversation about the duplicity of both women's sexual identities which are there in confrontation and manifested through the team member's emotional commentaries. Moreover, a second order emotional experience of the shame over the initial shame is generated by the inner incoherence between our expected selves and the concrete emotional feedback we were experiencing.

When doing the night shifts, and without noticing it, I would prepare myself, in terms of what to wear before going out to the streets. It was a mechanic routine to take off my daily clothes and to put on some practical outfit, like trousers, shirts, tennis shoes, in a way that my body figure would become as discrete as possible, avoiding any attention towards me. However, one night I did not have time to change clothes and there I went to the street with a mini skirt and tennis shoes. The responses I got by some of the Women on the streets were not what I was expecting. As if I had broken a certain identity marker code that would be considered as if I was transposing the boundaries of my particular role therein. It did not happen with all the Women but nevertheless it brought my attention to

the censorship of trespassing the limits of the role I had to play and the position I had to stand for in the street social system as I illustrate with this passage from my field work diary in text box no. 26.

26. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (May 15th 2014, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia Street)

“One night I went to the street in skirt and backpack. And having that skirt on it was a bit embarrassing to me because some women looked at me differently. When I mentioned this to I. (CAOMIO staff member) later, she told me that one should never go wearing skirt to the street. That women do not like it.

In that night a Women told me:

‘W.: Look you cannot come with mini skirt.

Researcher: oh gosh, I came from work still with the backpack on, it actually seems I came from school.’

Another Women looked at me with a strange look of reproach because I was wearing my skirt. I did not feel very well pulled my skirt down several times during the street run. My comment to my street team partners: "but they even made me feel bad, rule number one never bring a skirt ... I even felt a pressure..."

The most interesting thing was not that that time I wore a skirt and had the reprimand glances of a few Women, what really drew my attention was the fact that only then did I realize how I would spontaneously, without anyone mentioning it to me before, change clothes before going to the streets averting any sort of identity confusions. Once more my inner self was resilient to present itself apart from These Women on the street.

Both street team partners have recalled feeling body disquiet with regard to Sex Workers’ clients. Both of them expressed that initially during the street team rounds, they would maintain a position of facing the Women with their backs always to the cars. For them, that was the way they found to help them distance the concrete interaction from the constant presence of cars and clients that could approach These Women while we were interacting with them, as it happened. They said that they would stay face to face with These Women and avoid any change of their body position or even the slightest glance towards the clients

because, as they mentioned, they were not prepared to see them. One of the street team partners explained that it took her about 5 to 6 months to feel comfortable walking down the streets where sex work was being elicited, even though she was wearing the street team vest. During that time, she stated, she would not position herself in terms that would allow her to widen her vision beyond the surroundings of that specific interactional space between her and the Women. She would always remain focused on the Women.

Interestingly, the team partner was using the same strategy or interactional remedy that I also used to surpass the unquietness I felt during my first interactions. In order to continue my work without paying too much attention to my own emotional commentaries, I forced myself to focus solely on the Women's names, forcing my oblivion to all other interactional symbols and markers that could drive my thoughts to Prostitution. I was, in fact, annulling the sexuality and sex work reference and by doing so, my body went from a state of discomfort to a state of greater fluidity and tranquillity because I stopped wondering about the social context and became increasingly connected with the individual with whom I was talking.

The team partner continued to explain that, when a car passed by or a client approached us, despite her curiosity to take a peek at the client's physical profile, it took her a long time to muster the courage to look at them, to be able to see who they were. In the back of her mind she expressed that she avoided actually knowing what the clients looked like. First, she did not want to see or even know what they looked like physically because she felt that if she looked she would be exposed and feel uncomfortable and ashamed, although she was perfectly aware that rationally, she knew what she was doing there and that the client would not mistake her identity. Nevertheless, only after 5 to 6 months of street rounds did she find the courage and sufficient ease to look at the clients as she actually did. According to her own inner conversations, she became aware that her inner reluctance to look clients in the face was connected with her inner fear to deconstruct the image she had in her mind of a particular man's profile. In fact, as she expressed, perhaps she was unwilling to release from her mind a certain idealization of who those clients were, meaning men whose profile would

automatically exclude them from her normal relations, both in terms of age and level of education.

According to her description, which both the researcher and the other street team member shared, the preconceived idea of a “client” would always be an older man, over 50, eventually in contexts of long marital relationships, and with a lower education level.

When she started looking at clients, she felt disturbed. In fact, the profile of the men who gathered on the streets provoked the destabilization of her idealized archetype. From the profile of clients, she perceived that all of them could be her brother, a friend, or someone with the profile of her ex-boyfriends. What disturbed her most was that suddenly her own reality of male friends, male family members and male acquaintances could potentially be there. They could all be clients.

As it happened with me, initially in my fieldwork, These Women talked about the clients’ profile, namely: some were non-educated and working class, others were well-educated and with a high social status, with money, cars, showing signs of having high class standards; some were lawyers, judges, engineers, doctors, architects; some were old but others were young and handsome, well-educated. I may confess that I thought they were saying that to make me believe they were in a less depressed environment and that sex work was not, in fact, that awful reality. They were trying to convey a better, worthy image of themselves, I thought.

Having looked at the clients that approached These women, as well as being immersed in the fieldwork for a year and a half, listening to women in different interactional contexts, on different days, at distinct times, the above client’s profile was consistent in all of them and moreover consistent with what my eyes saw.

Thus, I also shared that pre-conceived idea of the Client being over 50, less educated, with tiresome marital relationships. However, I found that the client’s archetype coexisted with men that could potentially be within my circle of

interactional gatherings. This deconstruction of a client's preconceived idea disturbed us in the sense that surprisingly a reality that we believed was apart from our everyday life was, in fact, mixed, crossing, interfering and co-existing with our own symbolic world. The disturbed unquietness was so great that my team partner ended her reflection with a self-account for inner calm "... and with time that makes no sense and you stop shuffling realities and this is a context and you cannot shuffle or extrapolate this, as you cannot extrapolate and generalize anything else."

The social deconstructions were not limited to the client's profile. For me and likewise for both team partners, one of the surprising dimensions of the first times was exactly encountering the contrast between the preconceived idea of going out into a depressed atmosphere and finding, after all, a joyful, pleasurable and caring environment upheld throughout the street encounters.

On the street, we would always have significant laughing moments similar to our everyday life encounters and social gatherings. Their sense of humour, laughs, irony was remarkable and constant throughout the interactions, only once in a while having a more serious tone, when discussing stressful situations lived either in the streets or in their personal lives or simply when the conversation became deeper and more reflexive. We shared amusing life events, talked about children and their school, health issues, situations with family members, financial distress and any other topic that could easily come up in our social circle and regular social gatherings. (see text box no. 27)

27. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams Partner's Focus Group

(Oct.2016)

"Street Team Partner: I have the feeling that the first day on the street, in Alcestis quarter, I never forget ... it was immediately a deconstruction of a series of things and myths about the street itself. I had no idea what women would talk about, the kind of conversations would be generated, what I thought it would be were more service-oriented encounters, and especially the more obscure reality. Hence my surprise, very pleasant. The women had at our arrival a loving way of welcoming, which I was not expecting, welcoming, greeting ... that there was

a certain level of affectivity that I did not expect it to be like that, wanting to know the name of the volunteers. That, immediately, gave me a positive feeling and put me - I am not extrovert - willing to contribute to the good atmosphere of the conversation. I remember the first interactions, to be surprised at the level of the trivial and mundane subject-matter of the conversations: to talk about the television program; I spoke with young Romanian that just arrived from a visit to her family and told me how the marriages were in Romania and to feel that. It was a space that I also needed considering the framework in which I lived at the time, more closed. It was a window that enchanted me ... and deconstructed fears images and fears that I think I had. I associated the street, the prostitutes, with a sadder and more depressed side. But what I found was that the prostitutes laughed, they told jokes, about their life, about their condition, and I, before I started the street, had that vision ... and they gave me the idea that they even had fun many times.... And the reality that I imagined was sad, decadent ... I do not know ... of the underworld, that was it, and that even I could not have the skills to deal with that reality ... There was deconstruction. It was so nice. The conversations were in good mood and the interaction was genuine.”

Also, the kind of interaction one has in the streets with These women depends on what they freely want to share and give of themselves in the encounter. The availability, time, topics, all depend on them. There is no pattern besides the one that makes These Women in power of establishing the terms, conditions and time of the interaction per se, the existence of conversation, the density of the conversation, and the truthfulness of the conversation. They have the saying and the power to establish the rules about how the street team encounters will unfold.

4.2.2. Release/Vulnerability

The interactions with These Women would inevitably, although not only, cover sexual topics addressed with crude language and disclosed in what at the beginning was felt by the researcher and the street team partners as intrusive, shameful and indiscrete terms. Text Boxes no. 28 to 32 illustrate the conversations where sex was addressed during the interactions with sex workers and their initial intake by the street teams.

28. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Dec. 3rd 2013, Day, Electra-Medeia/Andromeda Quarter)

"While delivering condoms, they immediately mentioned how bad that brand was. Either it quickly rips off or gives you allergy. And then, under this subject of condoms that quickly rip off, it begins one of the most unusual and fun interactions I experienced. One of them starts saying that when she puts it, it explodes right away. The other laughs and says it must be because he has or must have a bomb on the edge of the dick. We all laugh. Why don't you put it in your mouth – another reply – this way it might not explode, it's good, it goes well. "Not me. I even started having my nails short once, to prevent ripping it over, but it rips as well the same". And then begins a conversation in which each of them tells the most incredible moments with their clients. Not that the situations reported were violent, but rather unusual situations: the physical characteristics of the clients, their behaviours in bed, their bizarre fetishes, strange characters. In some of the stories told, I was honestly thinking about how reality can overcome fiction. Interesting how, in some of these stories of these women, it seems to address perfectly the concrete realization of the most bizarre fantasies and desires of the clients, and yet none of the mentioned cases were situations of aggression, violence, discomfort for these women. On the contrary, they told me situations that generated shame and embarrassment for the clients and they laughed at it, with a feeling of incomprehension on how there could be such crazy people. Some of these man are well known by these women since it is not the first time they go there. The funny thing is that they always characterized the clients with "who would say", "a man dressed in suit", "well-resembled and then... who would say...", "we never know what's coming". One would start telling the funniest story, and already another of them had one more, another funnier story to tell. For 20 minutes we were there, it reminded me of those meetings between women in the kitchen or someone's place, among friends, each one telling the funniest story, one after another, laughing together, each being worse and funnier. Those were hilarious moments, and so interesting by the way these women report the contents of their interactions with the clients, of their life as sex workers. Given such sense of humour, is obvious the most bizarre aspects of those stories did not put them into anything

violent or aggressive or in discomfort. It rather ridicules the clients, allows these women to deconstruct their image, which makes them intimate of the client's self."

29. Text Box - Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Dec. 13th, 2013, Day,
Electra/Medeia/Andromeda Quarter)

"We talked about this with woman Z., who started by saying that she has been there since 11 am and has not done anything yet, that the business is running very low. Then she added that there are clients who only go to the room when they are drunk, that she even worries because most of the time they are "the ones who demand a lot of work". Then told us that once she had only realized that a client was drunk when they reached the bedroom and he began to undress himself. According to her, she was not aware before because usually the women goes first into the bedroom followed by the client. But this one, by the way, did not demand from her any extra work because barely arrived, he was already prepared and in less than 10 minutes everything was done. She continues to mention that another time, she went with a man who would only go to the room if already drunk. He was already someone known by the pension owner who assure her not to worry that everything would be ok. In fact, the man did nothing, he just wanted to be there, he would sit there doing nothing, and then he would leave, pay and everything. She ended her narration by stating "We put up with such situations!"

30. Text Box - Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Nov. 27th 2014, Night, Helen
Street/Iphigenia Street)

" W14: My business is to give. That whole suck-sucking silly act, I do not like. I like to give to sit on the guy. By the moment, I put the money in the bag, I like to give.

W13: God forbid, I like getting out of the car. I like the time the car stops and I descend from it. I am not able to look to guys' expression any longer, or anything.'

The Women 14 began to describe an interaction with a client from the day before. She said that she left the pension were already 6am in the morning. She said:

W14: I told her. The minute I took off my clothes, he thought I was a transvestite: You are a transvestite, you are a transvestite. We went to the bedroom, I start to take off my clothes, the time he saw me naked...

W12: He wanted to see your cock.

W14: The time he saw me naked he asked me: well? Aren't you a transvestite? - No! "I told you I was not a transvestite." He then started to run after me, in the bedroom, both naked, we played. I ran and jumped onto the bed and he followed me to grab me and I started yelling.'

She continued describing a playful and theatrical moment of enjoyment. She added that at the some point the Pension owner knocked on the door and asked what is going on, anything wrong? And she replied to him that the men wanted to grab her. Then the pension owner looked the Men and said: You Sir. Must behave.

She continues describing that once they closed the door, the men started picking her from behind, that she wanted to leave while he wanted to stay there all his life.

The other women said:

W13: This woman is crazy.

W12: He wanted to see your cock. Yeah... they like it.

W14: Give me a kiss without anyone seeing... or else "I am leaving but you are going by taxi." - I did not want to go either, actually I live nearby. The other girl with whom I went to the pension and was with the guy's friend, was knocking at the door saying: let's go W14, let's go. I had to leave with my boots in my hand, naked in the hallway, to dress myself in another room. I loved that scene, looking like a child.'

The conversation continued and W12 said that there are men who wants her to take off her shoes to stay small like that. W13 added that are the ones who like small woman go with small, those who like big, go with big. They hold a pattern.

W14: There are others who like big women. Good thing because I only go with a young man.

W12: The younger ones they like bigger women.' ”

31. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Sex Worker’s Focus Group (June 12th, 2015)

W1: Oh, dear, I was about to go there. I was going to get to that part. Because, they do not know with who they live with... there are some guys who want us to beat them up... there are some who bring lingerie from home...

W2: some who wear... some wear women's clothes....

W3: Some others who want us to piss on them...

(laughs)

W4: And a lot more that we should not tell... ahahahahaah

(laughs)

W1: And there are others who want us to go inside coffins and they pay well ...

W4: I've seen such extraordinary things...

W1: There are others who want us to call them all names possible and some more...

W4: I had a surgeon... he liked me to hang his legs ahahahaha

W2: another that wanted (imperceptible)

W1: us to burn them or that we put cuffs on them. I already had one that liked me to sprinkle pins on him... And now tell me something, the women at home, know with whom they live?

W5: And they're passive ... and they're passive ... why and why? Because they have a little mix of homosexuality...

W1: A few yes too

Researcher: And with you, they can be who they...

W5: Yes, because they do not know us, they know that in everyday life they will not cross with us. It's different, because... because it's a passing moment and so they talk with us and feel more at ease and know that we are working on the thing and that there are no taboos...

W4: Exactly

W5: That's it.

Researcher: Their women do not think...

W4: No, they do not even imagine, they think they have a man at home and they do not...

W5: Isn't it, dear...

W1: and then we have another problem that is: many men do not even need to go to the street. There are massage centers where they are prepared to be

mistreated, to be masochists, where they are handcuffed and burned, everything and anything else... the private apartments... you know what I mean, and there go Judges, Lawyers, Doctors, everything...

W5: ..which are the worst.

W1: I had clients that rented apartments just to take girls there.

W5: The upper class is the worst

W1 and W4: They are the worst

W5: They are frustrated people, all frustrated people.

W4: They are such nuts ahahahahah

W1: I already went to a house of a man who put me in a coffin

Researcher: Why do you say they are high class?

W1: Because they are lawyers, judges, doctors, surgeons, university professors...

W4: Mine was a surgeon. He liked me to tie his legs in the air, I would wear my gloves and then...

W1: ... psychologists ...

W4: They're rather psychopaths...

W1: ...they're government dudes, deputies."

32. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Team Partner's Focus Group (Oct. 2016)

"Street Team Partner 1: Hearing this language was liberating. There were records of conversations that I confess that in my normal and personal interactions and even in my works, I had never been with someone who knew so many profanities, as I encountered out there. I confess that if I did not blush I was stuck on the floor and surprised...I don't know...It was a way I was not used to."

It was not only the crude language used during the conversation, but also the fact that, as the team members were complete strangers to These Women, that circumstance was not an impediment for them to talk about men, sex, with all the words and descriptions which, for us, was initially felt as too intimate and private.

I did not know what to say with regard to their detailed descriptions of the clients' fantasies and the way they talked about sex, desires and their own sexual experiences as direct participants in the fulfilment of those fantasies and desires. Having Women talk about those issues with such knowledge and personal experience was totally new and overwhelming for me.

Both for me and for the street team partners, our immersion in a sexual discourse totally apart from the structured accounts we had always heard, talked about and thought in what concerns to sex, had a major impact on us. It opened the spectrum of possibilities concerning how to listen, think and talk and give an account about sexuality. And that consciousness, as well as the discursive practice we were encountering in the streets, drove us to recall how those accounts were previously unthinkable for us.

As our routine of participating in the street teams developed, and the encounters became more and more familiar, we gradually became imbedded by the conversations, the tone used, the amusement of talking freely and non-judgementally about sexuality, body, men, sexual intercourse, fantasies, etc. And it was not only the fact that conversation unfolded around sex. It was mainly the way that topic was introduced and talked about in the same tone and ease as one discusses the most trivial aspects of daily life. In fact, all trivial topics jointly with the sex topic could be covered in a single encounter, all of them discussed with openness and indiscretion, without the subject sex being introduced with any distinctive linguistic or body inflection.

Very often, the researcher and the street team partners would talk to each other expressing exactly the feeling of overcoming inner barriers of shame and repression concerning the sex talk that we were not aware of before. The feeling of freedom to think, question and talk about the most intimate aspects of our own sexual being without any embarrassment in terms of the kind of language we would use to talk and to think about it, as illustrated in the following text box no. 33.

33. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Team Partner’s Focus Group (Oct. 2016)

“Street Team Partner 2: What was contributing to me? I was having access to a way of talking about sexuality that I had never had access to or that I had never thought of ... it is a way so detached, so without prejudice, without ... a language that, at first, I was at odds with, but then, somehow, I became familiar with... because it is very direct, it is very spontaneous ... culturally I learned not to speak as such or to repress it... you can even think but you never speak it. Thus, to hear it like this, in the streets, in a conversation with woman, it was a novelty for me ... even the capital I gained by learning a new language... and especially made me think about aspects that I had prejudice about or about which, even from the point of view of sexuality, I have never personally experienced but heard about and it gave me knowledge or in a certain way I had access to stories that made me understand and accept better, even from the point of view of the demand for such sexual service, for example, the most vulnerable part of our human condition”

An emotional commentary of free speech was felt by the street teams and that release came from the practice we encountered in the streets with the use of words and the crude and factual descriptions of sexual encounters, in terms that one would normally not even think of, let alone share it with others. Those talks were sustained without feelings of shame that could lead to self-censorship.

The crude language; the rudeness of comments; the lightness and normality with which sex and sexual pleasure are spoken of are the attributes of a elusive narrative that therein, instead of being repressed as “deviant”, is openly discussed, as participants easily engage in lively conversations about sexual fantasies and “kinky” behaviours, with a light tone and providing natural accounts regarding the body, that forced the street team to confront themselves with the unthinkable and unutterable (see the example of text box no. 34).

34. Text Box – Field Work Diary: Street teams (Feb. 12th, 2014, Night, Rua Rodrigo da Fonseca/ Iphigenia Street)

“On the other hand Women Y took a huge dildo out from her beg, we were all shocked with the size of that and Women Y said there were men who want her to stuck it all inside them. Another Women began to wonder: would my former husband have any desire to use this? And then she added, if I saw a man with one of this size I would just jump out of the car. And we laugh.”

Our emotional commentaries must be taken as empirical data that emerged in the course of our interaction with These Women, with the potential to endow our inner talks with new linguistic material and lead us to assess ourselves differently from before. This counterpoint was later assumed by the street teams with regard to sexuality and the acquisition of a practice of thought and discourse about sexuality that, previous to the street encounters, was silenced, non-existent and unintelligible.

On the streets, Women speak about sex dissociated from any emotional tie, relationship or romanticism. What stands out is mostly the physical component of sexual activity and pleasure. Initially, I was stunned by the language they used in the multitude of details mixed with descriptions of intimate episodes experienced by the women with their clients. Afterwards, the non-romanticized discourse power of their sexual experiences, voiced by women in what was similar to a social gathering, sustained on the public streets, was for me a liberating experience. As a woman, I discovered the possibility of openly and truthfully thinking and sharing one’s physical experience of sex, no matter the content of what one says or the feelings that occurred to the individual in relation to it, i.e., outside the frame of romanticism and emotional attachments.

On the streets, sex is affirmatively exposed and fully assumed by These Women when they talk about it. Therefore, they engage in a regular conversation about its intrinsic carnal aspects as well as about “kinkiness”, pleasure and fantasies with great normality because sex is their work. Due to the fact that they deal with sex in its most carnal and crude form, the same normality with which they assume sex is also transposed into the conversations they had with the street teams.

However, for the researcher and the street team partners, those interactional experiences have exposed us to distinct forms of approaching sexuality. Moreover, it was not only the talk, but the relevant fact of having these conversations, in a public social gathering, with women, under a frame that looked like a "female" talk, but where the sex topic was intertwined with everyday issues like children, politics, welfare, family, housing, with the same natural tone. This context and sense of normality was felt by all of us – researcher and street team partners, like rescuing something within ourselves that we did not even know was missing.

We rationally assume that sex is natural, pleasure is natural as we endorse those progressive catch phrases in our symbolic interactional contexts, but the practice of talking about sex with that rational naturalness and openness is not embraced in our everyday interactions. We do not practice a sexual discourse with the same naturalness and carnality with which we think we could and should practice it. We do not practice.

In social gatherings among women we do not practice the description of the sexual act, out of the paradigm of love, affective or emotional relationship. In the street conversations, the sexual act is brought back to a sequence of purely carnal moments and interactions are hearty. At the same time our engagement in those conversations did not take dignity from These Women before our eyes. On the contrary, the emotion was precisely one of perplexity due to the ease with which they spoke without conveying any sense of shame or censorship or judgment of value of themselves and their experiences. The language and tone engulfed us and opened another dimension regarding ways of talking about sex, "femininely" and by "females" that are not part of the hegemonic narrative about how a woman thinks and talks about her sexual activity. The experiences with clients are shared. We talked about: pleasant or unpleasant experiences; regular or kinky sexual intercourse; which fantasies are requested and which ones are enacted; about big or small penises; big or small breasts; what men like; if Prostitutes have sexual pleasure or not. Sometimes the conversations slipped into the analysis of male stereotypes and of behaviour expectations versus what actually occurs within their intimate interactions.

What is really relevant is the practice of a current, spontaneous and natural conversation about sex. On those streets, the intimacy of Prostitutes with clients is exposed and the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the physical sexual pleasure of both is unveiled, in objective terms, without censorship or discursive repression. It does not mean that the conversations are carried out exempt of any judgment mostly on the part of Prostitutes in regard to the Client figure, but their assessment is a counterpoint to what usually constitutes the moral order and behavioural expectations maintained and reproduced by the hegemonic narratives and above all reveals and normalizes what is left unspoken and what is considered unthinkable within the hegemonic narrative.

Discourses that, if introduced into the public symbolic interaction, would translate into an unbearable or intolerable account of a subject's most intimate vulnerability. It would represent an irremediable loss of his/her *face*. And it was this confrontation with that account of vulnerability in such an unveiled way that initially troubled the researcher and the street team partners, but then overwhelmed us with a feeling of release and liberation from something that was previously suppressed in us in an unconscious form, as illustrated by the text box no. 35.

35. Text Box – Field Work Diary:, Street Team Partner's Focus Group (Oct. 2016)

"Street team partner 2: There is one side of the conversations more linked to the question of sexuality and the great ease to talk about sexual life, which in fact I was not raised talking about it... neither with my mother or my friends... never had spoken with that level of openness..."

The researcher herself and the street team partners are influenced by the interactional context and discourse, moving from an initial emotional violence to perplexity and from perplexity to a feeling of release.

At some point, we began to share the same disposition and laughter while deconstructing the tensions and pre-conceived frames that resounded within

ourselves before the street encounters, which had blocked our ability to think and speak of sex in that way or even to imagine a woman publicly sharing her sexual experience in those terms (see Text Box no. 36.).

36. Text Box - Field Work Diary, Interactions CAOMIO (Nov. 12th, 2013,
Congregational Center)

"I met Y. at the entrance door of the Oblate's Daily Center. We talked a little in a relaxed mood. She talked about having to put on a handkerchief to hide her cleavage because she was going to a job interview around 11 a.m. This comment gave rise to laughing moments and exchange of tales about breasts and the body and how men get crazy with cleavage and breasts and how is her daily routine, how many men does she speaks with, and about blow jobs. Conversations which content, although it's amused tone, I would portray as neither frisky nor vulgar but as stress-free, opened and sincere way of talking about these topics. Later, that day, during the street teams, in Medeia, we were jointly talking with 4 women and in the street there was a car with a very good looking chauffeur. During the next half hour, women were laughing talking about how beautiful that men was, how they would imagine him in bed to the point that they were saying that with him they would go free of charge. The conversation evolved around the topic with jokes and laughs. It was a very amused and pleasant interaction."

That openness and relief to be able to think and talk about sex in such terms, embodying a practice experienced in those encounters gained a dimension that surpassed the symbolic division line that apparently separated that world from ours.

The vocabulary and ease of thinking and talking in such terms became part of my own communication skills, instantiated during my public symbolic social gatherings, every time the Sex topic was discussed.

4.2.3. The Inner Talk

The street team encounters staggered fixed and naturalized beliefs about who and what constitutes reality. The deconstruction process generated from that experience targeted not only our naturalized views about Prostitutes and Prostitution but moreover about our own self idealization. The second level of shame generated from the initial embarrassment that we all felt in our bodies during the first interactions with Prostitutes on the streets revealed to us, as mirror images of ourselves, that our beliefs as to who we are — ground-breaking and emancipated non-reproducers of the dominant matrix of power relations — was an illusion. Personally, the emotional commentaries that initially occurred to me during my fieldwork, unmasked my illusion: I was not that progressive and ground-breaking woman after all. I became aware that the emotional experience had disavowed my *sacred self* and exposed me every time I maintained my face, every time I unquestioned the expected face, i.e., the expected mirror image of myself for others and the contexts of interaction where I would usually convey that face.

Additionally, the street encounters were the mechanism that led us to change our position in relation to the normalized and unconscious ideas, which constituted our view of reality, that we were outsiders to that particular social context, whose self-worth made us believe that we did not belong there or had anything in common with These Women.

An idealized image that was tarnished over time and our engagement became deeper. The second important deconstruction, provided by the fieldwork, was exactly about the general idea that the “care giver” role was the only one through which the interaction in that context was possible.

The duality and polarization provided by the hegemonic narrative between the identity markers “care givers” and “prostitutes” became increasingly dissolved as our immersion in that reality increased, and the materiality of our encounters went beyond the mere enactment of our social role. (see text box no. 37)

37. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Team Partner’s Focus Group

(Oct. 2016)

“Street Team Partner 1: The awareness that we are all much more alike, much more normal, that there isn’t such thing, there isn’t that sordidness with which I used to link this world, and there isn’t greatly perversity as I used to connect with this world.

(...)

Street Team Partner 2: When you go to the street, you can access totally surreal nights in the sense that everything goes wrong, in the sense that everyone is with bad mood, have bills to pay, have problems, invoices to pay which she cannot... it has everything be a tragic night but somehow, the great majority are not like that. In the great majority, people want to have clients, they are cheerful, or they are not properly sharing the tragedies of their lives and everyday life. And what I felt in relation to my daily life... which was monotonous at the time and itself full of worries, and tense, what I felt was that it was a moment of rupture in my week, that was, the day... (...) When they said they did not even have the money to go home and so they had to stay there for several hours, or when they told you that they had not eaten today... this has an impact because I had never heard anyone tell me that, that way... or that “I did not eat anything today”... it has an impact in myself that I cannot explain... maybe because at that time I was going through a period of my life where everything was unstable... because I was going through that, to arrive at the end of the month and not have... to feel that the frontier was very tenuous... to feel that much more close... to feeling that this can happen in the life of any person, even of a person that always had everything until there... feeling of terror... that one has family structure, that had protection... and this had an overwhelming impact on me...”

The described anxieties about how our bodies could be mistaken with Prostitution; the expressed fear of being addressed by someone from our symbolic interactional order during the street encounters; the anguish felt when we realized that the Prostitutes’ clients were like any of our friends, all of these emotional commentaries were coming from a symbolic discourse that constitutes our inner selves.

At the same time, those emotional commentaries and the reflections that we underwent due to them led us to become aware of the existence of a symbolic border that in our minds apparently separated both worlds. The perception of its elusive nature had the consequence of disrupting our symbolic identity. We became conscious that the border line existed within ourselves because the emotional commentaries felt during the street encounters were generated by the practical experience of its dissolution by and through those encounters. We were being participants of an interaction where both dimensions of the symbolic world— the public and the suppressed and both their codes — were being enacted simultaneously. Frames pertaining to both worlds overlapped, linguistic signs and gestures of each co-existed therein, and both worlds were always risking being intercepted, crossed and mutually contaminated.

That was the disruptive power of the street encounters. What had always been unconsciously divided within ourselves was pulled together in those interactions.

The subject itself is formed and constituted through and within the matrix of gender relations. Gender, according to Butler, is an ideal of the symbolic order whose matrix and power effect are materialized through continual interpellations. (Butler 1993: xi-xxx). *“Construction not only takes place in time, but is itself a temporal process which operates through the reiteration of norms; sex is both produced and destabilized in the course of this reiteration. As a sedimented effect of a reiterative or ritual practice, sex acquires its naturalized effect, and, yet, it is also by virtue of this reiteration that gaps and fissures are opened up as the constitutive instabilities in such constructions, as that which escapes or exceeds the norm, as that which cannot be wholly defined or fixed by the repetitive labor of that norm.”* (Butler 1993: xix)

Are the emotional commentaries, generated by the encounters, the outcomes of a distinct symbolic interpellation? Were the encounters subversive re-citations of the public symbolic order, where power relations were revealed in terms that undo the very effects by which gendered selves and sexuality are stabilized?

The emotional commentaries felt by the street team partners and the researcher are relevant while connected with a fracture of our previous ongoing internalized dispositions endorsed through our usual symbolic interactions and our ideal selves. Thus, those emotional commentaries allowed for the inner structures that constitute our gendered selves to become recognized and serve as material for our inner conversations.

The researcher and the street team partners were exposed, for the first time, to interactions where sexual language and sexual discourse were exchanged in their most objective form. Although we cannot generalize our point of view to represent Women in general, the fact is that we are the personification of the internal boundaries of the gender matrix. We “do gender” (Butler 1990, 1993, 2004a) in our daily lives and our doings are circumscribed to the sphere of the dominant cultural and symbolic structures as far as gender of heterosexual women is concerned.

It was an encounter - interaction that caused the emotional commentaries that disturbed the unconscious normalization of a certain sphere of intimacy that is usually not exposed, let alone in everyday conversations and with the verbal lightness and crudeness with which we were confronted. To reveal in public social gatherings, the descriptions, commentaries and personal narratives with regard to sex as they were conveyed by These Women, had never ever occurred to us, due to the insecurity and fear of public shame that a disclosure like that would bring upon us. Moreover, it was self-suppressed within our inner thinking in the first place. Thus, it is an insecurity and shame that thwart this possibility before it even becomes tangible in our inner conversations. It is the material that constitutes our *silent self* (Flam 2010).

The emotional impact first felt as a shock, then perplexity and finally turned into release, awakened the researcher and the street team partners to their internal structures that regulate how one can think and talk about sex.

From those emotions came the matter for reflexive thought: why did the team members initially felt discomfort that was transmuted throughout their practice

into the opposite sense of well-being and release? Because the experience of the street encounters created fissures in the natural “essence” of women’s thought and discourse about their own sexuality. And there, on the streets we were immersed in a practice of talk and exposure of vulnerability that was felt as a sort of rescue. We experienced, in practice, in deeds, the possibility of having a language and a channel of expression. A freedom to form a thought and a discourse about one’s vulnerability, about one’s physical intimacy, that the symbolic discourse disavows.

On the streets, our subjectivity was interacting with the outsides of hegemonic discourse. We were exposed to words, narrations, expressed in terms of vocabulary and content which provoked a distinct emotional discharge we immediately counterpointed to anything we had otherwise experienced in our lives. Of course, one is aware of feminism, is educated, and understands the social powers of patriarchy and the gender inequalities attached to it, but it was only there, on the streets, that one sensed the naturalized normativities that deeply constitute ourselves while they were being destabilized through the encounters with Prostitutes.

Was the experience of encounters lived by the researcher and the street team partners not a failed interpellation of our own symbolic reality, which had the disruptive output commonly experienced by us? Was the experience of the interaction with the out-boundaries of our own ideological contexts not as generative as the fissures and troubles created by it? The embodiment of the encounters provided us with new layers of understanding what happens to us, by naming what happens to us and more importantly affirmatively stating what we may feel about ourselves and don’t know about ourselves (see text box no. 38)

38. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Team Partner’s Focus Group

(Oct. 2016)

“Street Team Partner 1: The challenge ... the challenge of being in a much more naked manner and be able to... what in the early days scared me, in the first days of the street teams, that scared me and which afterwards I admired them for, was their way of eye contact...was the way we were welcome in a first

moment, but there was a distinctive way of looking to you from the way we look at other in other contexts. Because there, in the streets, the street code is the eye contact code, with what they communicate with the clients and with whom crosses the streets ... (...) I felt that so much. They greeted me and embraced me right away, at the beginning I felt awkward with that ... I was not used to it, I was not used to be greeted with two kisses in the face so normally, I was not used to be there with the Women looking at me and talking to me, looking at me in the eyes...having them scrutinizing what am I coming for. From a certain moment, they must have realized that and things entered in total ... in total ... normality. What I feel, with others telling me the same, is that, since I started the street teams, I am not the same person when I am hugging others. I have gained a dimension, a greater spontaneity and greater affection with people since I started the street teams. What I gain from the streets was normality ... at all levels.... if I had to summarize I would say that I gained normality, I became aware that even all prejudices, preconceived ideas regarding my sexuality, of that of what I did not verbalize but I felt and I was afraid to express, are normal"

The researcher and the street team partners realized that the gender regulatory ideal, the matrix of the symbolic ruling is intrinsically part of oneself. Only by being mindful about, it is it possible to carve an ongoing ethical practice. The device that triggered the awareness was the street encounters. Thus, the Self is constituted by an ongoing relation with a certain *discourse of truth* and the interactional order does matter because it is in the flow of encounters that one enacts the matrix of power that constitutes the self while simultaneously becoming vulnerable to be *undone* through the enactments of others.

5. The Sacred Body

In the first chapters of this work I alluded to the one-dimensional symbolic identity of Prostitutes as it is materialized in the public narrative, producing the symbolic frontier that excludes and makes These Women invisible. In the following chapter, the aim is to share what these invisible Women think about the “Other Women”, the ones that live the everyday of the public symbolic world.

These Women’s thoughts about the “Other Women” are expressed around what pulls them apart, around the key features that one finds in Prostitutes that are not seen in the “Other Women”. In the Sex Workers’ Focus Group, Women referred to themselves as Prostitutes. While describing the positive attributes that they believe they have developed as a consequence of their sex work, These Women identify which of those attributes are lacking from the subjective dimensions of the “Other Women”.

The differential aspect between Prostitutes and the “Other Women” is, according to These Women, based on the way each one experiences Sexuality. Indeed, These Women develop their self-referent Prostitute around sex and the detached and objectified way they relate to it, which is the only dimension that sets them apart from “Other Women” since, outside the context of sex work, nothing else distinguishes them: at home, in their relations, their worrisome, everyday reality.

For These Women, the distinction concerns a sexuality lived outside the parameters of a monogamous heterosexual relationship versus a sexuality lived inside of it. In the street encounters as well as in the Sex Workers’ Focus Group, the “Other Women” are identified as those who maintain a legitimate heterosexual monogamous relationship. The term “Other Women” is used by These Women to refer both to the legitimate partners of their clients and to the wider addressees of the “Symbolic Women”. Thus, for a better understanding of These Women’s discussions, I will intertwine both terms depending on which Women they refer to: “The Other” or the “Symbolic”.

These Women pointed out that, in comparison with “Other Women”, they do not live an illusion. They have unveiled to themselves the deceiving character of the legitimate relationship while underlining the illusion that the “Other Women” are still making of it. By refusing to assign the quality of Reality to those legitimate relationships, Prostitutes reveal what, in their perspective, is the material from which Illusion is made.

The illusion of the “Other Women” is built upon the belief that they know the person with whom they "share the bed". In other words, the “Other Women” have an idea, which they take as Reality itself, about who they think their partners are and what they expect from them and their behaviour. “Other Women” think that their knowledge of their partners corresponds to their entire subjective self and that nothing else is intelligible and expected beyond it. Which is not real. The content of this idea is completely underrated by Prostitutes in terms that reveal and demonstrate its illusory and fallacious character.

These Women often used expressions such as "if they knew", "they think they know", "they do not know" when referring to the “Other Women’s” ignorance about their legitimate partner. They use those terms aiming an insightful effect, that is, they are aware that if they disclosed and shared their knowledge with the “Other Women”, they would disrupt the foundations of the symbolic legitimate relationship and shake “Other Women’s” beliefs regarding the reality of their truthful stand within those relationships and their partners. These Women consider themselves the holders of the real perception of who their clients are and that knowledge would shatter Other Women’s illusions. Here, the message is clear: the content of the revelation would have the potential to cause fissures in the normative matrix that sustains the legitimate relationship. The “Other Women’s” belief that they know their partners is the illusion that is part of the gender normative law, otherwise it would not be a projection of theirs about who they think their partners are.

The first instance of These Women’s revelation would be the "Betrayal" component that is entrenched in legitimate relationships. And to betray the

“Other Women”, their partners do not just omit facts, they create facts and make up the reality for “Other Women” to believe in (see text box no.39 below).

39. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Sex Worker’s Focus Group (June 12th 2015)
“Researcher: And which other things you think you have more knowledge about?”

W.1 and W. 2: We know men better.

Researcher: You have to be more specific.

W. 2: Because men are liars and they are fake

W. 1: At the very first glance, we already...”

The client lies. The lie, while being objectively assessed as an immoral conduct, does not make the client turn upon himself in terms of guilt or self-reprimand. Thus, for These Women, betrayal is executed and maintained through the creation of an illusory reality which aims to hold “Other Women” in it. That is the reason why Prostitutes strongly affirm that men are deceitful because they deliberately and without remorse create and perpetuate, the illusion of a self-image that they have created and projected to the “Other Women”, as individuals whose subjectivity conforms to what is expected from them under the symbolic Law: a legitimized relationship, commitment to a single family, a common heritage and monogamous sexuality. Text boxes no. 40 and 41 below exemplify These Women’ descriptions of hilarious lying situations involving their clients.

40. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Team (Jul. 10th 2014, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia Street)

“I asked to W1 ‘What truck is that: Hot Dog lovers?’ W1 explained that the truck had been passing around there three times, but that one was like normal, she mentioned another truck that has just passed before, in which the guys brought the dog and everything to tell their wives they went walking the dog to the street. We started discussing the client’s lies and we were laughing with their descriptions and comments:

‘W2: Yes, they give such excuse and the other was all nervous: “I’m here I’m here baby, there’s a lot of people throwing the trash out, yes baby.” I told him: “oh man, stop talking with your wife, I want to do my job, get over with it”. The man

like that and I'm there... "yes yes darling I'm throwing the trash out"... and then people still want me to be correct, that's why I hit my boyfriend, oh Gosh.'

I mentioned that the dog's excuse was hilarious and W2 continued by saying that the dog one was to kill and talked about another client's excuse for leaving their homes - to put the garbage out. She added another one:

'W2: I was already a year ago, with a man who was with me at the pension while talking to his wife saying "yes yes, I'm already in the McDonalds, Mc of that, Mc of other, looking up... what do you want love" Talking about Mcdonalds food.

Researcher-Most are married?

W2-Yes, those then, do not talk about wives to me, I hate men who come here and start talking about their wives. There are men who come here and talk about their wives and even speak badly about them. They are wrong because they come looking for us having a wife at home and they still talk about them to me! I hate it when they talk to me about their wives.'

She continued her narration about one client that almost died one day because W2 was with her husband and they both went to replace a thing that they have bought in Worten. They were in the line and the man (the client) in front of them was with his wife and child. When the man saw her he almost fainted:

'W2: the idiot. Did he thought I was going to say hi dear? I hardly want to look at the man's face. And the man there saying to his wife: "let's go, leave it, let's go" to his beautiful wife, very beautiful indeed, gorgeous with a beautiful son, this man is a real tramp. The wife asking him " Why are you in such a hurry" and I'm thinking because he's a bum and a sucker, with a wife like that and come here ... There are men who have the stupid face of telling us that their wives are beautiful, good shaped and then I ask them "what are you doing here? Leaving your wife at home, not giving assistance to her back home?" It is an addiction. An addiction of men but are all man like that? Every man is like that.'

(...)

She ended her narration by saying:

W2: 'So much lies, it disgusts me.'"

41. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Oct. 30th 2014, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia Street)

“W10: You know how long the client takes to betray you. Depending on the environment in which you are, the radius of distance from where people work. I have a client who lives three or four blocks from here, right? He comes down to smoke a cigarette and put the garbage in the container. The client tells his wife that he is just going to the trash can, smoking, because the wife does not like smoking in the house. He will smoke and throw the garbage away. He goes down, throws away the trash, gets in the car, comes over here and approaches is like this: "Come in fast! Get in fast! ". He gives a fuck of two seconds and returns home. He takes the exact time to throw the garbage and smoke a cigarette. So, it takes between 15 minutes to come and go! How are you going to imagine that your husband can betray you in fifteen minutes?!”

I replied that one cannot. She added that even if you have any suspicious about it, he always turns around. W10 stated that the man makes the wife believe that it is her who is painting the scene like that. That the man puts it in a way that the wife is the crazy one, paranoid, that are seeing things, crazy. That is the wife who is sick. She then started to describe another episode:

‘W10: I worked in an apartment, a client stopped and came to the apartment, he called first and said, "Look, be exactly at this time and it has to be very fast! So, he stopped the car, went to meet me, two seconds after he paid me and then he: "I have to run, I have to run! "And I:" Wow, what is it, are you dying? "And he: "My wife is down there in the car! "And I:" Is your wife down there in the car? "And he: "Yeah, because there's a lawyer here on the first floor and I told her I was going to bring him paperwork and I would come down in just a second". And there was a lawyer there in the building. How were you going to wonder? It was exactly the time to deliver a paper because it was fast!’

She ended her description by saying that the problem is not to betray, because at that moment the men are a shit, a pile of shit, even when they are married, for the wife is annoying but she can give to a man too. The problem is the money they spend on it cutting with their family, and their wife.”

The lie is continuously being reproduced by the partner in a deliberate way which reveals that he has escaped the internalization process of morality and public

order. In fact, he maintains, in coexistence with his public legitimate relationship, another intimate interaction and the “underground” context of Prostitution allows him to keep both, his legitimate partner and the Prostitute at a distance, not only in his doings but mainly in his mind (as shown in text box no. 42 below).

42. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Sex Worker’s Focus Group (June 12th 2015)

W1: Because men are all liars and deceivers

W2: As soon we see them...immediately at first...

W1: I will not say that Women are not

W9: Many are worse than they.

W1: But they are all liars. They're in the room with us and they're on the phone saying they're on the subway ...

W3: And go on in the phone saying: “ahhhhh my love”

W1: Have I ever told you that I met men whose wives were, at the same time, buying shoes at the shoe store right underneath the apartment I used to work? That she knows, she knows her too ... they give a damn while women are buying shoes. Men getting laid while their wives are buying shoes. Men talking to be on the phone asking the price while their wives look at the storefront. They are phony.

Other: They are fake

W1: They are liars. Do you think a man..., there are exceptions ... but if it bursts questioning and discussions at home...the man never admits, he never admits he came to the prostitutes. He never comes to prostitutes, phony guys from who we have been running our lives.

W2: It's true, it's true, it was always someone who seduced him and he never went to prostitutes. No, no.

Researcher: Never takes responsibility

W2: No, no ... that.

W1: and they always say that he never paid to have sex ... he pays every day ... (They all laugh)

W2: and even when it is a case with another woman it was always the woman who seduced him and he was drunk, he was usually drunk...

Researcher: Someone else has something to add, do you all have this idea?

W6: Nothing else to add...

W2: It's what we feel

Researcher: W3 ...

W1: Do you think they will assume that they went to bed with a man

W3: Some assume ...

W1: But do you think that they will confess to their wives that they went to bed with you?

W3: With their wives... depends on how the couple themselves make their own life ...

W1: Yes, there are those who swing and exchange couples ...

W3: But it depends, but for the most part no, most are frustrated.”

According to These Women, the “Other Women” live the fantasy that they and their partners are just what their socio-ideological identities expect them to be both at the level of subjectivity and in the daily life of their legitimate relationship. Other Women’s partners continuously reproduce this illusion of a public legitimate relationship. Therefore, the revelation of the “betrayal” and the “lie” would cause fissures in the “Other Women” idealization of their partners and their relationship, revealing their fanciful and illusory character, and consequently, the two-fold normative matrix of Symbolic Law.

The personal and social validation that their clients bring to themselves for having a legitimate monogamous heterosexual relationship, in all that is translated into legal, patrimonial, financial and family ties, does not encompass sex while for the “Other Women” the monogamous exclusiveness is extended to sexual activity. The “Other Women” think that sexual activity exclusiveness applies both to them and their partner that their sexual activity is only experienced together and that sexual exclusiveness brings personal and social validation to both. The “Other Women” think they are the exclusive object of their partners’ masculine affection and desire while, through their socio-ideological identity, they keep their sexual activity conditioned within the boundaries of an idealized emotional tie. The “Other Women” project their partners’ subjectivity as if the latter was also circumscribed within the limits of the same socio-ideological identity: that is “Other Women” archetype of a romanced monogamous relationship.

In addition, it is the recurrence of the lie that perpetuates “Other Women’s” illusion of the monogamous rule, which in turn sustains their sexual relation. Their illusion is maintained and reproduced, not by an abstract apparatus of imposed social normativity, but by the effective and concrete actions and lies brought to them by their partners. If Prostitutes revealed what they know, they would bring the “Other Women” the awareness that their partners are the ones who, within the symbolic regulatory ideal of a monogamous sexual relation, enact, in their everyday life, the proper actions to keep them under that illusion. They are the concrete agents that reproduce the inequality of both their status within the regulatory frame. Further, Sex Workers would unveil to the “Other Women” the sexual fantasies and kinky activities requested by their partners, which, in sex workers’ perspective, “Other Women” would characterize as deviant sexual behaviour, disclosing the clients’ inner selves as mismatched from idealized and projected manhood (as shown in the text boxes no. 43 and 44 below).

43. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Feb. 12th 2014, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia Street)

“And the men that go there. She told us about some. She says men ask for such strange things that she wonders whether their wives have any idea that their husband ask for those things. She told us about a fetish one of them had that she hates and that the man often goes there and tells her, “Well, then, is it today?” and she answers, “Perhaps, we’ll see, maybe”, trying to put the man off but always with a smile although deep inside she totally dislikes the man. And according to her, he is a classy man, a lawyer. I wonder if their wives have any idea of this. Because if they told their wives what they ask for, they wouldn’t believe them. That it would be a good idea to tape men’s requests and then show them to their wives.”

44. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Sex Workers’ Focus Group (June 12th 2015)

“W1: And I’m sorry I’m telling you this because this happens because the ladies at home, the wives of you-know-who think they are saints. They do not know the person they’re living with. If they did...”

W2: We know them better than they do...

W1: They don't know who they're living with, their quirks or what they're capable of. Because many are family men and they pay visits to transvestites at night (laughter)

W1: It's true. I've been in a brothel where transvestites used to go and well-to-do people went with them. They didn't want to be seen. There's someone who knows, right there, there's someone who knows. They worked in my house. They went there in the small hours because they didn't want to go to guesthouses so nobody would see them. And they have children, a wife and they are big shots. They are shit. They go and see transvestites.

W2: And the diplomatic corps...

W1: They get junkies to get it done cheaper.

W4: And they don't want to use a condom

W3: Here I am

(a hustle of side conversations about clients started when W3 came into the room. W3 is a transsexual who works in Iphigenia Street and was invited to be part of the focus group — she was the only transsexual in the room.)

Greetings and everybody laughs...

W2: Did you call her?

W1: I called her...

W3: Don't talk about transvestites because I'm here... come on...

W1: Transvestites went to my house with well-to-do people, didn't they?

W3: What?

W1: A place I had with big shots...

W3: Exactly

W1: Because they didn't want to be seen in (...) or in Iphigenia Street, so they went there to see transvestites

W3: They're frustrated and then after that short moment, they're big shots but then they're pole smokers... oh, please, can I have a glass of water 'cause I'm thirsty.

W1: That's what I mean. That's why, in a case like this, as I was saying, their family never admits that Mr So-and-so is that type of person...

W5: And when they passed by us...

W1: I'd like to write a book on the guys who visit prostitutes because their wives watch television, sit and say prostitutes are this and that. They don't know the shit they live with.

?: And they treat them great

W1: Yes, because at home they have their children, their wives, the mother-in-law, the parakeet, the parrot...

W3: But they come to us because they are lacking, because the women they have at home don't do what...

W6 and W2: What we do.

W1: Excuse me, what do you do that the women at home do not? What do you do?

W3: Hmmmmm... most women

W1: There are many men that...

W6: Give them money at the end of the month...

W1: The point is that if they don't give them money at the end of the month and they are fed up with them. It's too much. It's too much, sister. After 56 years, it's just too much. He is listless and so is she, but there's the furniture, the cars, all that crap...

W4: And they are miserable all their lives ...

W3: But there are men who come for something else...

W1: Wow, but there aren't. There are men who come to prostitutes just to talk, to complain about their wives, their children, their mother-in-law... (voices concur in the room)

W2: And sometimes they're the ones who pay more

W6: True

W1: I have made a lot of money just listening

W2: Me too. Just to listen. I made great friends, good people

W1: Do you know why? Because we don't know the other side. We don't know their wives or their children and they can speak openly with us...

W3: Of course

???: Because they can't talk at home

W1: It's not only at home. It's with friends, too, because his friend might tell another friend, and his wife or family might somehow get to know, and we won't tell the family

W6: We don't know their families.

W1: We don't know their families. We're there. They pay so much an hour and there they are...

W3: And they want to get it off their chest...

W1: And they want to get it off their chest and we listen

Researcher: What do they talk about?

W1: They talk about a whole lot of things, about everything

W3: Loneliness, their lives... that they're not happy

W7: Yeah, hmm, hmm

W3: That they aren't happy.

W2: Weariness...

W1: They talk about the problems they have at home: his children who are over the hump, that his wife is now fat and used to be thin when he met her, and that he doesn't love her any more but there's the furniture and the family...

W3: That's right

W1: That the wife is no good in bed; she doesn't know a thing; she talks nonsense; they say all sorts of things about their wives: that their wives are good for nothing but they have lived with them for thirty years...

W3: And why? Because of marriage...

W1: And the furniture, the cars, their bank account

W3: Of course

W1: That is what? Is that Life?

W2: This is what Life is not.

W1: But aren't I right?

All of them: Yes, you are

W1: They don't have a life

W2: They are oppressed by that... that routine... and everything, and by the family and when they catch someone who... can see your other side...

W1: Yeah

W2: And many of them, spill their guts... well, there you are...

W1: Because we can understand... I mean, we don't understand a thing; we're making our money...

W3: Our money. Of course

W2: Because they consider we're good because we stop and listen. That is what women at home don't do

W1: We play the psychologist

W7: And what when they pay us to beat them? (laughter)

W1: Sweetie, that was what I was getting to. I was about to get to that part. Because they don't know who they're living with... there are certain guys that want us to hit them... there are some that take underwear home...

W8: some wear... wear women's underwear...

W6: There are others that want us to pee on them... (laughter)

W2: And a whole lot more that we shouldn't tell... ahahahahah (laughter)

W1: And there are others that want us to get in coffins and they pay good money for that...

W2: I've seen extraordinary things...

W1: There are others who want us to call them all sorts of rude names...

W2: I had a surgeon that was hopeless... he liked to hang his legs ahahahah

W8: another one that wanted... (indiscernible)

W1: to be burnt or for us to put handcuffs on them. I had one that liked me to stick pins into him... And now tell me: do women at home know who they live with?

W3: And passive... and passive... why? Because they have a touch of homosexuality...

W1: Some do, too.

Researcher: And with you they can be who they really...

W3: They can, because they don't know us. They know that they aren't going to meet us when they go about their business. It's different because... because they're just here in passing and that's why they let off some steam and feel comfortable and they know it's our job and that there are no taboos...

W2: Absolutely.

W3: That's the idea.

Researcher: Their wives don't think...

W2: No, they haven't a clue. They think they have a man in the house and don't...

W3: They aren't affectionate...

W1: and then there's another problem. Many men don't even have to come outside. There are massage parlours where they are prepared to be abused, to

be masochists, where they're put in cuffs and burnt and all sorts of things... Those are the private apartments, see, where judges, lawyers, doctors, all of them, go.

W3: Those are the worst

W1: I had clients that rented apartments just to take girls there

W3: The upper class is the worst

W1 and W2: Those are the worst

W3: They're frustrated, all frustrated

W2: They're nutty ahahaha

W1: Once I went to the house of a man who told me to get in a coffin

Researcher: Why do you say they're upper class?

W1: Because they are lawyers, judges, doctors, surgeons, professors...

W2: Mine was a surgeon. He liked me to tie his legs up. He would put on his gloves and there you are...

W1:... psychologists...

W2: They're really psychopaths...

W1: They're government, parliament members"

The disclosure of clients' sexual fantasies could import the rupture of the symbolic, legitimate relationship by shedding upon them the judgment of their indecency or deviance according to the normative ideals that constitute the socio-ideological identity of heterosexual men.

The revelation of Partners' lies and sexual fantasies could have a disruptive effect on the Idealizations of the Symbolic Law and the emancipatory potential for "Other Women" to see beyond the illusion and relate differently with certain discourses of truth. Moreover, it could also entail the subsequent questioning and journey into the "Other Women's" deep intimate selves. Through the troubling effect on legitimate sexual relations the "Other Women" would have to make sense of it all, questioning their own sexual behaviour within the relationship and forcing them to come to grips with their sexual selves.

The revelation would provoke the destabilization of the "Other Women's" romanticized idealization of their own sexuality, lived in tightened forms and

limited to the context of the legitimate symbolic relation. In other words, it would provoke the deconstruction of an idea that the legitimated and normalized sexuality they have, is the only one in which their experience of sexual desire and pleasure is possible and imaginable.

When These Women transfer the analysis from the clients' partners to the wider social gender dimension of Women "the Symbolic Women", they clarify that, in their perspective, women's sexual pleasure is intrinsically connected with the pre-existence of an emotional connection, be it "friendship", "complicity", or "chemistry", as shown in text box no. 45 below.

45. Text Box- Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Feb. 5th 2015, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia Street)

"W: A man like this, that goes with a woman like you, like to have sex, someone like you doesn't go... one night and bye... no! You have a purpose (right?)... when you go to bed with a man, you have a purpose (right?)... You expect something, don't you? What does he think? "If I don't perform..." He is worried."

The "sexuality" of the symbolic interpellation is that which structures women's sexual thought as backed by the existence or expectation of a reciprocal emotional relationship. And for the "Symbolic Women", that interpellation that brings women's sexual pleasure to the expectation or existence of an emotional relationship is also constitutive of their subjectivity.

During the sessions of that Focus Group, These Women often questioned themselves, overlapping their interventions and the researcher's script. One of those moments was led by the female transsexual who suddenly addressed the other participants directly and asked the following question: "But you ... excuse my asking ... and sorry to ask you all but you ... but you all ... if you didn't need the money could you not still lead this kind of life ? For pleasure?" This question opened the interactional floor to conversations about female and male sexual pleasure, and it is certain that the position of the female transsexual woman exposes the imminently social character of gender sexual behaviour and pleasure. The answers were unanimous in the sense that while men pursue pleasure for the

sake of pleasure, for women it is more difficult to reach physical sexual pleasure dissociated from the existence or expectation of a relationship, company or an emotional liaison. The passage is transcribed in the Text Box below no. 46.

46. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Sex Workers' Focus Group (June 12th 2015)

W3: "but you... excuse my asking... excuse my asking you all about this... but all of you... but you all... if you didn't need money, wouldn't you be able to lead this life? For pleasure?"

W2, W1 and others: For pleasure? No.

W3: Yeah, for pleasure, going with one and the other...

W2: No

W1: If it was for pleasure, I'd go to the club and I'd get a cute guy

W3: How funny. We, homosexuals would

W1: Homosexuals are different...

W2: You seek pleasure and we don't

W3: As a woman you don't

W2: It is very rare for a woman to have pleasure unless they can have some kind of relationship and with that get some pleasure... with everything, the company you have but...

W3: Well, with us it's different. We go somewhere and hook with one guy and then another, and you don't, it's not that way...

W2: No

W1: To do that, a woman goes to a club and meets three or four

W3: You see... I go straight to the point and say, "Wow, the guy is good, I get laid and that's it, I leave..."

All laugh: No... he has to pay up (laughter)

W3: It's different...

Researcher: So, do men and women experience sex differently?

All: Yes, they do"

But when I followed up questioning directly whether it was possible to achieve sexual pleasure in Prostitution, These Women deconstructed the previous unanimity. They all responded unanimously, as well, that it was possible to achieve sexual pleasure, although it was more difficult in comparison with men,

but still possible. Each of them somehow presented their personal experience of that: whether it was physical attraction; a beautiful man; a certain immediate complicity; a man that knows how to touch a woman and give her pleasure even if there is no physical attraction whatsoever. I got similar responses in the street team encounters where These Women would talk about having sexual pleasure with clients. At the same time as they bond female sexual pleasure with emotional connection/attachment, These Women describe, from their personal experience, sexual pleasure that can be achieved by the mere contingency of an encounter between two wills, even if those wills are manifested under the frame of a service agreement. According to them, the meeting of a Prostitute and a Client may transmute into a pleasurable sexual relationship for the Prostitute: either because she feels an attraction and chemistry or because she decides to have or maintain a friendship, complicity or any other relationship with the client. Otherwise, their sexual activity is a mere mechanical one, the presence of a body but the absence of spirit.

Thus, These Women enclose the archetype of female sexual pleasure connected with emotional attachments. These Women enclose the reproduction of the model of feminine sexual pleasure. That is why the transsexual woman concludes, after listening to the women's explanations of female sexual pleasure that "we - and by we she is referring to homosexuals - we see things differently ... (...) It is a different way of seeing life".

However, in their working context, they have experienced the dissociation of the emotional liaison as a necessary condition for having pleasurable sexual experiences. In the sex market and the logic of contingent sexual interactions, These Women experience sexual enjoyment from which their personal disruption with the internalization of the Public Symbolic Law or at least the awareness of its unnatural, deterministic or absolute feature derives as exemplified below.

47. Text Box - Fieldwork Diaries, Sex Workers' Focus Group (June 12th 2015)

Researcher: But is it not possible to feel pleasure in prostitution?

All: Of course it is, of course... it's possible (in unison firmly)

Researcher: It's that you're so emphatic when you say no, it's not possible and that...

All: But it is...

W2: Let me explain. There are two sides... there are those who have pleasure and give pleasure

W6: Yeah, we have pleasure... there some that pay and we have pleasure

W2: There are some that are able to create a relationship and in that case it is easier to have pleasure. Because it is more difficult to get a man willing to enter a relationship, so it is unusual for a woman to say she is there for pleasure, while...

W3: Oh, not me. I see a man talking to me and I go, "Come on love"... (laughter)

W2: It gives you a hard-on, doesn't it? Well, not me.

W3: Yeah, but it's different...

W1: But sometimes you see a handsome man...

Researcher: But why don't you get a hard-on? Why?

W2: But we seldom do. It's the exception unless there is physical attraction between the two persons, but it's uncommon. Yeah. There can be that... but as a rule...

W7: But sometimes there may not be attraction but you go with a man that gratifies you...

W2: That's true

W1: You kill two birds with one stone...

Researcher: But it's not so common, is that what you mean?

All: Yes, it's quite rare

W2: Yes, it's different

W3: We see things differently... our life we see things differently

W2: We see men every day, for us it's easier to conquer... while for you it's not that easy... that's why you have more pleasure

W3: No, the point is that we see work differently...

W2: But excuse my asking, when you work you have to have a hard-on, don't you?

W3: No, no. I'm quite passive... love... (laughter)

Researcher: Hold on. What you are saying, W3, is that even if it wasn't for the money, you would still do it, right? The other women wouldn't, am I right?

W3: Yes, I'd do it. I'd do the same. I love... I love... huhu

W2: It's different. It's power, power, power, power.

W3: It's a different way your mind has of seeing life

W2: of releasing... of feeling...

Researcher: But my question is not really why, but how. Can you please tell me the difference?

W3: I love the life I lead, prostitution, all-out prostitution... I've known I'm gay since I was 14. I like to get fucked in the arse (laughter)

W3: And then I started and loved it. I became a woman and I love it. This life for me... they say it's bondage and I agree as with time it all gets harder and that, and then when you get older it gets even harder but when you're young everything is easier... for everybody...

W2: I agree

W3: But I find it pleasant, being here in the street. It's good to be there showing your tits and saying "Oh, love, this, yes, that, yes, you come from there and go somewhere else. I love those things... (laughter)

W3: It's exactly like that. I love it... now... but I understand there are other women who are there with an obligation to sustain their children. I accept that, right.

W2: Often pressed by men

W1: Yeah, it's different

W3: Yeah, I know it's different

(...)

Researcher: Earlier you were talking of a Prostitute as someone who has an easy life, and so on, but then you said they are pretty women... with different contents, that other women would also like to do it. Isn't that kind of contradictory?

W1: It depends on the mind of the person on the other side

W2: Their understanding

W1: Someone from out of town, or even not from out of town, with little knowledge thinks this is easy, that we don't like to work. What we want is to work. They haven't the faintest idea that our life is similar to theirs: we do the washing, the ironing, we tidy the house, look after our children. They don't have a clue.

W3: And also put up with the clients, that's also... (they laugh)

W1: But you're crazy (they laugh) and then they can't see that part. There are those who think we are pretty because they focus more on the hooker than on the woman they have at home, or they take them out...

W3: Hmmm, I don't think so.

W1: Yes, yes, yes. Don't say they don't because there are lots of them.

W3: I wouldn't say so. It's more the fact that they use us as objects. It's using and then discarding.

W1: But sometimes it happens that they don't even use us as objects.

W3: They even use me as an object, "Oh, you're beautiful and wonderful", but after that they want to get out of there.

W2: Tomorrow it will be someone else

W1: But there are men who think you're their woman.

???: They're even jealous

W2: That we are their possession

W3: Well, I don't know about that

W1: Hard life

W2: They paid twice or three times, and because they always choose me they ask, "What? Who with?" as if we were an object.

W6: "Have you made a lot of money? How much have you got?"

W3: And for free. They made friends with you and they already want it for free. It's free. They pay you dinner, make friends with you and they want it free.

W2: "Oh, today I have no money"

Researcher: So, there are men who dispose of you, there are others that...

W1: That fall in love. Dangerous.

W2: it's terrible.

W3: But it never lasts, they never have money

W2: That's what's wrong with them but there are others that do it for you.

(...)

Researcher: But I'm curious: you mentioned before that women's sexuality is much more dependent on their emotional relationship than men. So, how do you do your work?

W1: Because it's mechanical.

W2: Yeah, that's a good answer

W1: They get there, wash and lay down.

W6: And it's over

W1: They talk about what they're going to do at night and leave.

???: It's just like baking a cake.

W1: Exactly. It's mechanical, the time comes when it is mechanical. You perform your role like in the theatre.

W3: There's no chemistry. You just get there, hurry up, discharge, and then nobody knows anybody any more

W6: Move!

W1: And theatre, you have to act with your voice

W2: But that is only when they ask. If they don't, it's like, "There you are, hurry up because I want to get going"

W3: But that kissing stunt... for God's sake, as I see some girls do. I see... I see some friends of mine kissing those fat slobs and (kissing sounds) on the mouth, for God's sake... without knowing them, they have never seen the man, and that (they laugh)

W2: I've never kissed any man. I think it's more disgusting to kiss a man than to do other things

W3: Me too, and they've never seen the man before and making gestures...

Researcher: Dealing with that then is mechanical

W2: Exactly and that's why it's very difficult to have pleasure

???: Exactly

W1: You have to have a very sound mind to be able to do that. Not everybody can do that.

W2: That's why you have to be very brave to be a prostitute.

W2: Because I often cried and to no avail, I still had to be there.

W3: No, but today, it's like this, I can see it's like this. You go to a disco at night and you can see it's like that... it's the same thing. It's not like before.

W1: No, hold on, hold on. You go to the disco, hook up with a guy...

W3: And you kiss him on the mouth and everything and do the thing...

(W1 and W2 at the same time)

W1: And do everything and more... but then you're a virtuous bitch

W2: But you had some chemistry while...

W3: All right... but because of the actual man

W6: But even after lots of years doing this, there are still some you have sort of...

W1: respect

W6: you treat them with respect and there is...

W2: You develop affection, right?

W1: You develop a cosy relationship.

W6: Yeah, you develop a friendship, friendship, and so do they. I have clients that were 22 or 23 when I came here and they're still my clients today, so I don't treat them as though they were someone who showed up out of the blue... because you know them, you become friends."

As mentioned above, from the experience of being a year and a half in street teams and from the analysis of the street data, resulted unambiguously and strikingly, the crude and stripped way These Women talked about sex and sexual pleasure, not only about the clients' sexual fantasies but how they themselves experience those sexual relations, whether they had pleasure or not.

The street team members' surprise was not only caused by the openness with which they talked about sex, but by the easy flow of their talk regarding the details about their physical intimacy with the clients. In this lies the destabilization created by those discourses: on the one hand, Women speaking of pleasure and of the sexual act, on the other, the non-romanticized or idealized feature of their descriptions.

These Women assert that they are freer than "Other Women" both in what concerns their sexual experience and sexual will and in the ways they verbalize them.

They also affirm that they know men better and express and talk about sex with each other and with others without shyness. Unlike "Other Women", they verbalize what they like and dislike in sexual intercourse because for them sex is as normal as any other daily activity. They describe the "Other Women" as: not being open to talk about sex or about their sexuality; not spontaneous to communicate what they think and what they feel about their and their partner's

sexuality; they are ashamed to speak out their feelings, they suppress them; they do not tell their partner what they like or do not like to do in bed; are ashamed to show themselves physically because they think they will not match the physical expectations of the general other (See text box no. 48).

48. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Sex Workers’ Focus Group (June 12th 2015)

“Researcher: And you feel it’s easier for you to talk about sexuality and sex with those people than it is for them

W1: Yes, we’re more open-minded

W2: We’re more open-minded and more spontaneous. We have a different, more open speech

W1: There are people who have never seen a gynaecologist or anything...

W2: They’re embarrassed...

W3: (side conversation)

Others: Because we talk about everything...

W1: Because they’re embarrassed, because they have to show...

W2: There are women who never took their clothes off in front of men and...

Amélia: (laughs)

(W3 still in side talk)

W2: And many new ones... because their boobs are no longer as they used to be, because their butt is no longer as it used to be, when they were younger... do things more under the sheets and that makes men go out into the streets, there you are... and we see women with all sorts of...

(...)

Researcher: And about that other issue, the fact that you feel more comfortable talking about sex and your body than women that haven’t got your experience, regarding both your body and your life: do you feel they have taboos?

W2: Yes, lots of them, and mostly unnecessary...

Others: Yes

Researcher: Give me examples.

W2: Look, the fact that they don’t tell their own husband what they like to do in bed, see, is one of them, see... to the point that they don’t say so when they don’t like it, let them know (these last words were more emphatic)... many don’t.

W6: Some are afraid...

W2: And they often have intercourse with their husbands and they don't like it...

W7: with no pleasure...

W2: just because they don't talk and don't tell them... (in a low voice) I don't like that, I don't.

Researcher: And you are more...

W2: it's because, as that's what we do, we try to take some liking or some pleasure... although it might not happen but...

Another woman: There are lots of women doing what we do and it has a lot to do with their husbands. I have lived with someone...

W2: I've also been married for twelve years...

Another woman: and because of the nuisance and for him not to bully me around, "if you don't want to, I'll...

Another woman: Oh, I don't know...

Researcher: But you're aware of that

Another woman: But it happens... (commotion) "nuisance" and "No way"

Another woman: Many start brawls and you end up in the street...

W2: What you mean is that a man withdraws when he is having sexual intercourse with a woman, because that is like "I'm here at your disposal"...

Another woman: A hooker can feign very well...

W2: Jeez, it takes a lot of courage...

Another woman: I lived with someone for many years and then I decided to live on my own, but I lived with that person for many years and did a lot of things unwillingly

W2: I have never done things unwillingly

Researcher: But would anyone else like to tell us about this? About the sex issue...

W2: But it's normal to have sex. We live in that sort of environment and it is normal for us to comment to one another what we liked or not; it's normal...

Researcher: And what other things do you think you know more about?

W2 and W1: We know men better"

These women identify the existence of a pattern of silence, of suppression with regard to the "Other Women" objective discourse about their sexuality and sexual pleasure and that had a mirror image effect on the researcher and the street team partners. There, on the streets the ongoing interpellations with which we were

being targeted concerning sexual intercourse and sexual pleasure materialized in the form of language, which outside the street encounters had never been experienced before neither by the researcher nor by the street team partners.

The street team members were confronted with the option that it is possible, among women, to talk about pleasure and their sexual will, with the same disregarded value and emotional detachment as when discussing other more prosaic subjects. Finally, the awareness that if sexuality was verbally expressed like that, if it was incorporated in our interactions in the public symbolic world, we would be vulnerable to the symbolic other, while there on the streets, discussions flow without embarrassment or indignity being felt by none of its participants.

Our immersion in the practice of thinking and talking about our sex, our body, our pleasure in those terms, triggered the need to question our relation with the symbolic normativity that constituted our “I”, and as a consequence of this confrontation, we realized that somehow this “I” has been silenced.

As the street team’s partners said during the Focus Group: "It gave us words, naming things" (See text box no. 49)

49. Text Box-Field Work Diary, Street Team Partners’ Focus Group (2016)

“Street Team Partner 2: One part of the talk is associated to sexuality and their willingness to talk about their sexual lives. In fact, I was not used to talking about this... not with my mother not with my friends... I had never talked so openly...

Street Team Partner 1: Talking about their meeting and sexual intercourse in a way that is so stripped of other emotional involvement as though more and more crap was necessary...

Street Team Partner 2: More romance...

Street Team Partner 1: An economic need with an economic purpose where there will be payment, and on the other end there is a need... a need I don’t know why I still haven’t been able to put myself in the boots of those who resort to this service... being a man, what he expects or not... so I can’t see further than the

rendering of a sexual service. Sometimes I wondered why it is easier and more direct to have this encounter there, and in my life in my other conversations everything always has to be so elaborate, so wholesome and so socially acceptable so that in the end, after a long way with turns and bends and grand justifications, there is...

Researcher: And in those conversations they free you from all that conceptual structure that seems necessary for you to be able to realize...

Street Team Partner 1: That's right... when this is actually more about normal life. The need of this encounter, this sexual encounter with more or less emotional involvement... but when they refer to the lack of respect towards them, some women accept that rationally, and that was a liberating experience, for me it was a liberating experience to think why I cannot have access to this. Why is it so difficult... why is it so difficult to be in a I-want-you-you-want-me position and that's it. Why do we have to make this encounter between two wills so complicated?

Researcher: Before the impact of this street situation, did you wonder about these issues?

Street Team Partner 2: No. I had never had experienced this level of openness, that's why it is new... It cannot be dissociated from our life path, the way we live our relationships, our relationship with others. Each one of us has their own trajectory in that field. But mainly girls are told that this contact issue, knowing someone and immediately getting sexually involved, is something that is not... at least I was brought up — and I'm 42 — with this idea that it is something that is not becoming... and about which throughout our lives we do not reflect a lot, also because of the contacts that we have; we don't have the time and we might have an uninhibited girl friend we find interesting, whom we talk to... but the point is that then we come into contact with the kind of reality where this issue is central and where women talk about it because it's their job and it's normal, in a way and as comfortably as you had never heard before, this is a contribution you can't make... It is inevitable that it messes with you and, when you leave you, question your prejudices, your impediments, why you have them and why you are so complicated, why you twist everything... I used to reflect a lot when I went into the streets, thinking I sometimes make things so difficult

when they are simple... that are urges, so to speak... that could be envisaged in a much calmer way... It was the women who made me see it like that...

Researcher: In the Street, I had chats I wouldn't even have with myself...

Street Team Partner 2: Absolutely

Street Team Partner 1: Call things by their name...

Street Team Partner 2: Sometimes it was disturbing ... it was disconcerting... I remember a chat I heard. I had never heard anyone talk about sex that way... and well... I am not the kind of girl who never saw a pornographic tape... absolutely not... so... I was raised with boys, two older brothers... I had access to all their pornographic magazines and so these things crossed my life... It's the way we transmit the relationship... our sex life... our relationship with our body... with the other person... the challenge... even the way we interact... that kind of observation... focusing on how two persons, in a certain place make contact... it's exactly that... how does that encounter happen there. I remember our conversation with S., a transsexual... who had developed a peculiar way of talking... was somewhat different from the other women... the way she reasons about her encounters, her experience, being in a room with a man she doesn't know at all and what can go wrong or right...

Researcher: Yeah, we talk about these things in a romanticised, ethereal way and then we have complete incapacity to say we've had pleasure, or not...

Street Team Partner 2: Yeah. You stop talking about that...

Street Team Partner 1: Or then you overrate it ... like, we are so well, so well, we don't even need the physical part, when in the street it is the physical part that happens without the other part and it's not less real than the other one, and not less important...

Street Team Partner 2: Then we refrain from commenting with others...

Street Team Partner 2: My relationship with my body has changed completely

Street Team Partner 1: They had vocabulary... they gave a name to things... Yes."

Without vocabulary and a platform to think and communicate it, there is a void in the linguistic identification of what you feel and your potential for reflection and communication. Without vocabulary, what you feel is assumed to be non-existent, as unrecognized by self.

And considering that we are talking about the carnal, organic physiological aspects of sexual experiences and female pleasure and desire, this confrontation with the overrating of carnal sexuality experienced in the conversations with the Prostitutes brought up, in the researcher and the street team partners, a question over their own lack of linguistic codes.

A void that entailed a symbolic asexuality.

The hegemony discourse lies in this difference: in the difference between the carnal sexualized discourse of the invisible symbolic narrative and the romantic asexual discourse of the public symbolic narrative and their inherent tension mirroring the tensions between the symbolic identities of "Prostitute" and the "Symbolic Women" both limited in what they include and exclude, in what both suppress to become recognized in the other.

By contrast, in the few dialogues with the Nuns in which the topic of sexuality and the exploration of the sexual body was mentioned, sexuality was incomprehensible in its physical and carnal aspects. For the Nuns, who do not deny having sexuality, for them sexuality exists to be sublimated by and through spirituality (see text box no. 51 and 52).

51. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Interactions CAOMIO (Dec.6th 2013,
Congregational Center)

“Meanwhile I told them that we had to have a meeting so I could start working seriously on the social diagnosis. That we had to sit down and think what the sisters need to know, what they really want with this diagnosis and Sister Y soon answered, “How are you going to start? Why are you going to start? (...) And then Sister Y also commented, “Is it really interesting to think about what sexuality is? What kind of energy that is? What for?”

52. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Interactions CAOMIO (June 23rd 2014,
Congregational Center)

“Sister W. apparently left soon after and they said she was a bit depressed, taking medication, seeing the psychologist and so on... While I made the introductions, Sister Y said the nuns have sexuality that it’s an energy, the problem is that sexuality is all focused, is seen as genitalia.”

Is it not the ability to think and speak and mainly to express one’s sexual body, activity and pleasure in the ways mentioned above that is excluded from the gender matrix? Were the street encounters not the entrance door for our awareness of the spectrum that constitutes our gender identity under the symbolic power? This lack of linguistic signs is the recognition of a void that the conversations with These Women made possible for the researcher and the street team partner’s to become aware of and to think about.

The control and use of the linguistic signs and the practice of their communication in what regards the sexual body and sexual pleasure has an empowering effect. By acquiring the linguistic skills to acknowledge, think and express the carnality of their sexual body and their sexual desire, the “Symbolic Women” would gain control over the codes of their objectification by others. Sex workers are aware that they are objectified by clients, but their professional activity allows them to be in control of the terms and codes of their own objectification and they relate to them not as constitutive of their gender identity, but for what they really are: a social construction on the one hand, and a fantasy on the other.

Likewise, in the context of the legitimized heterosexual and monogamous symbolic relationships, women may objectify their partners as both the subject and the object of women’s sexual pleasure.

Sex workers know the codes of their own objectification. For example, they diversify what they wear, what dresses or clothing are more suited to the context of their work that may or may not make their bodies more attractive to male sexual desire. The body is a work tool aimed at male pleasure and fantasy. But

their way of speaking and investing in their bodies and in their clothes is made with the awareness that it is merely a manipulative mechanism that serves that purpose of the sexual market, and that purpose will be ultimately for the economic benefit of sex workers.

They are also aware that these codes of objectification are socially constructed idealizations because all the women on the street, whether fat or skinny, ugly or beautiful, with small or large butts, large or small tits, will always be good-looking for the male client. It all depends on their preferences. And clients' preferences are as diverse as the multitude of women's natural body figures. For sex workers there is no idealization of a female physical body that constitutes the canon of male sexual preference. The preference I heard as most relevant on the street was novelty - when a new woman turns up on the street.

From the Prostitutes' working experiences, female physical idealization is an illusion which they then bring into their reflections about the physical complexes that women generally endure. Namely the fact that "Symbolic Women" are ashamed of themselves, if their bodies do not correspond to a certain ideal image. According to Prostitutes, the psychological disturbances felt by "Symbolic Women" with regard to their body derive in part from the fact that they integrate in their subjectivity the eternal comparison of their own figure with an idealized image of a female body, whether they do not believe they are like that image or they want to correspond to that image (see text box no 53).

53. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Feb. 5th 2015, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia Street)

"W2: It's the case of women with fallen breasts. Others have this and that! We all have some little problem. Any woman has some little complex, many have, others don't, and it's fine. Either because their belly juts out a bit too much, or then their breasts are fallen or because their butt is not big enough. They might have cellulite and they think men are going to judge that. It's not true. It's like when we think, 'Oh, he'll notice my fallen breasts, he'll notice my tummy, or I'm swollen, he'll see my tummy!' They even like it!"

W2 started to describe one episode that illustrated her previous statement. She explained to the street team that her brother's ex-girlfriend used to go to bed with him and she would never take off her bra. She had two children and her boobs were like fallen skin. She told us that her brother, because he knew what she does for a living, spoke to her and blew out saying that his girlfriend never took off her bra and won't even let him touch her boobs. W2 explain to the street team that once, during a conversation with her brother's ex-girlfriend, she told her: 'Look here, sometimes we're embarrassed because of our breasts or this or that ... pretending I didn't know... That night, she took it off... Until then, she had never let him touch her boobs, he had never seen them. She would go to bed with her bra on and sleep with it, for God's sake...Two or three days later, I don't know, she took it off and he said, "Wow!" She feels comfortable now because he said, I've never had so much pleasure with her, as I do now. She has fallen breasts? She has the breasts of a woman. Did she think I would judge her? I hate silicone breasts! They're a woman's breasts... they're the breasts of a woman who breastfed...!'

W2 continue her narration by saying that doesn't matter, that men like it, that women often say 'Ah, my tummy is big, I'm swollen, and what not when Men like it!'

Again, she illustrated the previous point with an account of hers. She told that when she was pregnant she had a huge tummy and lost two or three clients. However, she had a client at the beginning of her pregnancy, when her tummy started growing, she used to go out with him two or three times a week. He would pay, a guy with a chain of boutiques and all that. His wife was very thin, blond and tall while W2 was the opposite. After she had her daughter, he went to the room with her and said 'Sorry, you lost too much weight' and never came back! He liked a bigger woman and that is why he didn't have pleasure because after the pregnancy she was thin as his wife so why would he want two thin women!? When she said this, we all laughed.

W2 told us:

'W2: You have that complex, "Ah, we have cellulite!!" They don't give a damn! Always, "Oh, I won't wear this! Oh, you can see this or that! You are who you are. Those structured things, a man even feels bad, and he feels inferior to a woman like that. If you look at those girls, either men have wives like them or a

normal guy doesn't want them. Why? Because that thing is plastic! A plastic woman. Do you know what my brother says? These are for the others: They're for you to look at!'

We continue the conversations about women who are always keen with a certain image and W2 mentioned that a woman like that, man gets used to seeing her as a doll all the time. When she's normal, she's not the same. On the contrary. If they're with a normal woman, when she dresses up and that, "Wow, my wife looks smashing today" Why? Because he already likes her in her normal state, he's used to her normal state. So, when she dresses up he is excited! Differently when they get used to a girl who is all dolled up, even she is embarrassed to show herself differently. Because it's a mask you put on.

During the conversation, the street team partner mentioned that what W2 was saying was so interesting because it has to do with self-esteem. W2 replied that a man thinks the same thing and people have very little confidence, very self-conscious.

The street team partner added that even handsome they're self-conscious. For W2 they are almost more self-conscious than the others because they seem to think they have to prove something and that she sees that in kids.

The conversation prolonged by W2 stating that the more confident a woman is, the sexier she is and about all the efforts, sacrifices and self-judgement a woman makes to correspond to a certain image. When the street partner asked W2:

'Street Team Partner 1: Bottom line, what do they want?

W2: They want her to make him comfortable.

W2. If you aren't comfortable with yourself, you can't be comfortable with others.

Researcher: And the guy also has to make the woman feel comfortable, like your brother did with your sister-in-law. It was important that you had that conversation with her, but it was also important that your brother said, "Look, it was the best sex I've had with you!"

W2: She'll take the initiative and you'll have to make her feel that that initiative was the best she could have done" and I think it was successful, because she was...

Researcher: Exactly. When she got confident she felt free...

W2: She broke free. These are things you learn with the other girls, but most people' ”

These Women relate to the Symbolic Law of women's objectification for what it is, a fantasy, and use it as a work tool, with autonomy and relativity, never judging their own physical and natural characteristics as deviant from the symbolic idealization. As a matter of fact, if that fantasy serves the purpose of capturing male sexual attention, the latter is in fact as diverse as the plurality of female bodies. These Women want to control the terms of their objectification as well as their use by third parties. These Women allow themselves to be objectified when the provision of their sexual services is at stake, rejecting its use by men that do not intend to request their services. The recurring examples of women expressing their indignation and aggressiveness against men who only drive by to observe them but do not intend to engage in a service provider interaction.

These cases are paradigmatic of the circumstances in which they feel they are being objectified outside the sieve of the commercial relationship within which they authorize and control their own objectification. Another example of controlled self-objectification is the way women joyfully use the term "I'm going to debut" or "I have not debuted yet" to refer to the first customer of the evening. Within the commercial relationship, sex workers objectify the person of the clients meaning that their sexual need is seen exclusively as a means to achieve Sex Workers' economic purposes. By making their bodies and their sexuality their professional activity, sex workers are able, in this context and as a consequence of this commodification of the body, to control the codes of their own objectification as well as to objectify the other and their sexual relation.

They are the subjects of a repeated practice of failed interpellations of their gendered socio-ideological identity by becoming aware of the Illusions of the Symbolic Reality and consequently dying for it. And this death is not merely figurative. The death of the Symbolic Ideal of a Romanticized Relation or the belief that its realization may not even by mere contingency happen to them one day, manifests itself in Solitude as illustrated in the text box below.

54. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Sex Workers’ Focus Group (June 12th 2015)

“Researcher: Do you feel you are alone and by yourselves?”

W2: Because we are the ones who have to find solutions, because it’s our case...

W1: We’re the ones who have to come up with a solution

W2: I stopped walking the streets because the person I’m living with doesn’t want me to...

W1: There may be one case or another because they have a relationship, a family, but that’s not the majority. We’re on our own.”

Either because of their distrust and generalized repulsion for men, who they consider to be liars and deceitful or because they live the uneasy coexistence between their sex work on the one hand, and a legitimate relationship on the other, having to battle between the lies and Illusions and the symbolic romanticized and monogamous relationship (see text boxes no. 55 to 57).

55. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Sex Workers’ Focus Group (June 12th 2015)

“W1: There’s one question I ask when they (women) criticize prostitutes. First, you must know who you’re living with at home. That would be one of those questions I’d like to ask publicly. First, they should find out who they’re sleeping with, because I don’t know who I’m sleeping with either, just as they don’t. Nobody knows.

Another one: Nobody can stick their neck out for anyone

W7: I don’t.

W1: Nobody ever knows who they sleep with. Just like nobody knows what we can do...

W2: I won’t stick my neck out for anyone.”

56. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (July 3rd 2014, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia Street)

“W1: If you went to my friend’s apartment in Lourinhã you would lose count

W2: I love it. The problem is I am not able to like any man. I could never have a relationship because it’s always mechanical. I’m an actress. I got myself a boyfriend and we live together, with me working. It’s difficult to separate things.

You get a boyfriend and all that and it's difficult to live together. You can't separate things.

W1: Well, you can't separate them and that's very bad.

W2: I can't. So it's time to have pleasure with myself, do you know how? By myself.

W1: When my daughter's father was here, this was how it went: if I came here and did not work, I'd go home in a good mood. I was happy so I would make him breakfast before he went to work, I would often ring him. But if I worked, holy moley, if he was still home, I would look at his face and kaboom.

W2: Do you know why that happened? Because you'd leave here thinking that men are worthless. Men are rubbish. They're actually rubbish. They're filth because they cheat, right?

Researcher: You're the ones who "see" that part.

W1: Of course"

57. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Team (Jul. 10th 2014, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia Street)

"W1: They expect me to be some kind of goody-two-shoes. That's why I beat my boyfriend. You get crazy... and he keeps saying I need to see a doctor for treatment. And what about him? I get paranoid and he also has a dog and when he goes and walks it I watch him through the window. And when he leaves the factory, he has to call me so I know...

W2: I'd never put up with that.

W3: No way!

W1 was refereeing to the lies of the clients and described a few episodes of those lies and she expresses how hard is for her to believe that her boyfriend is not like the clients. As she mentions: 'W1: I think I'm the worst schmuck in the world because this creep has screwed a whole lot of women. I get all steamed up and nervous. I just put up with him because I can't stand any other man. If I leave this one and, if I still do this kind of work, I want no husband or boyfriend. My head can't take it'

She explained that before, when she didn't do this kind of work and stayed at the salon, she used to say "Oh, lovely old man, how nice. Had grown old and with their wives. She remembers her grandfather and grandmother. I questioned:

'Researcher: But they can't all be rascals, I suppose

W2: Obviously

W1: The other day I bumped into one on the zebra-crossing when the traffic light went red. I almost hit him but then I thought, "Jesus, look where I've landed. I've always respected older people. The things I said to that man and people were looking straight at me. All because of those suckers in our minds, we think our father was always a saint but then you start thinking, "Was my father also like this?" My parents have been married for over forty years. He is like this for sure, it's just that we don't know. You have to get away from this or it will drive you mad and there's no way you can have a man.' "

Or because of the social stigma associated to the commercialization of their sexuality. It is relevant to mention how These Women counteract the stigma with social hypocrisy by pointing out how their sexual activity is similar to other social behaviours namely, women who have one night stands, women who had many husbands or even married women who, because they dislike going to bed with their husbands, go anyway for the sake of the economic and social security that comes from the legitimate relationship. The difference, These Women say, is that they are on the streets, doing it, while the other cases are enacted outside the streets and do not contend with the public narrative (see text boxes no. 58 and 59).

58. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (July 3rd 2014, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia Street)

W1: He's so, so beautiful. He is like, with his skin colour he's so, so damn beautiful

W2: he's only twenty

W1: I don't like older men. He's been ringing me every day for two months now. I only kissed him once.

W2: still a boy

W1: I kissed him once and that man. But if he asks me to leave this, I won't, I don't want to. If he knew I was here, he'd be nagging me, he wouldn't let me.

W2: And there would be no more respect. They have no respect, especially being twenty. At a bar, it's different. You're at a bar, your boyfriend knows but he also

knows it goes no further than that, that outside that door, it's over. But in the street: the bitch goes with this one and that one and the other one

W1: No respect. At a bar, a man can put his hand on your thigh and that's all. You don't walk around flashing your boobs

W2: A man can't respect. He just can't"

59. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Workers' Focus Group (June 12th 2015)

"W1: Now explain something to me (addressing everybody): I'm a Prostitute and show my face what about those members of my family who've had ten husbands, 20 wives who have affairs with this man and the other one?"

W2: We usually say, "A Prostitute is someone who shows her face and sells her body; a hooker is someone who hides her face and gives her body away."

W6: We show our faces but there are women who don't... they give away their bodies in exchange for a pair of shoes or dinner...

W2: We show our faces and sell our bodies."

Sex-work has a twofold effect: it generates solitude and at the same time it is a remedy for that solitude, since These Women assume their own pleasure and sexual desire and may experience distinct typologies of relationships outside the canons of the legitimate one (see text boxes 60 and 61).

60. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (June 5th 2015, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia Street)

"X is 54. She is a classic woman; she dresses to impress and is very sophisticated. She explained why she leads this kind of life. She had lots of things, lots of shops with her daughter's father, but he squandered it all: bingo and so on, trips to Spain. They got divorced. She got on with her life, and he died penniless. And in spite of all the things he did, she recalls the good time they had together, "I had a good life." And in spite of it all, because he was her daughter's father, she looked after him until last year, when he died. She mentioned how her ankles hurt, how she fell when she was getting off a client's truck, when her knee had just healed. Then she talked about having had that good life (and you can see she is a sophisticated, educated person, with manners). She said she hadn't been ashamed; she cleaned houses, worked at hairdressers' and so on (she showed

her hands that had small deformities because of the water at the hairdressers) and she also sold gold. And it was at that time, when she was selling gold that some girls she had sold it to, brought her there. She said it had been difficult at the beginning but that she had had to focus, close her eyes and enjoy because otherwise it would be impossible because of the nerves and all that. She said she has a lot of friends, although some have emigrated or no longer live in Lisbon. Those friends have been clients all along, they know her; they have wives and all that. When she sprained her ankle with that client it was exactly because her friend was in a hurry. His wife rang him when they were together and she sprained her ankle because she got out in a hurry. She said they know her. They know they can trust her.”

61. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Team Partners’ Focus Group (2016)
“Street Team Partner 2: (...) And when did they feel afraid? And when did they feel disgusted? And when did they feel pleasure? And even when they felt they were starting to fall in love with the guy that was there before them... when it started to get blurred... because the guy matched what she wanted and we heard accounts like that... and they share things... emotions included... (...) For example, you share at this level, with Woman B, and immediately acknowledged, because it is part of our life, the difficulty in finding a partner you get along well with, you like to be with, someone who is part of our lives, of our needs. Woman B said this...I also remember that conversation, and I recall thinking about what she said, “Well, I also find it difficult to find a partner or boyfriend, but the truth is I come here and somehow I also relish it: I’m seen, appreciated, desired, right? And that still makes me come here.” I also recall another one at Alcestis District saying, “I had been in the streets before, I’m working at (...) in a traditional work register” and saying what she felt, “I really feel... I got used to being here at night and I have nobody. That’s Loneliness.”

Finally, when during the Sex Worker’s Focus Group the question posed was directly aimed for pulling out Sex Workers accounts of how they believe they are perceived by the “Symbolic Women”, the answers were surprising as seen in text box no. 62.

62. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Workers’ Focus Group (June 12th 2015)

“Researcher: What do non-prostitutes think of prostitutes?”

W3: They would also like to be prostitutes. There are some, there are many that would like to try and be one.

W2: That would like to have the courage, because it takes a lot of courage.

W1: Because there is the type of woman who works and nobody talks about that case. For example, I have a friend who has an apartment in Benfica and there are women working there. Sometimes I feel like it and go and have coffee with him. The other day I got there, and there is a room and all that, and a woman came and paid. When she saw me, she was all nervous and she shunned me. He asked me, “Where did you meet her?” “I don’t know. Somewhere. I know her, she knows me and that’s it.” Conclusion, the woman works at the till in Pingo Doce near my house.

W6: Oops.

W1: That means she has to earn a bit more because her salary is not enough

???: Not enough?

W1: I told her, “Look here, your life is your life, mine is mine. You do what you have to because I don’t know you.” Why do many women work in private houses and can’t show their faces like us in the streets?

W2: It’s true, they don’t

W1: Because they might lose their jobs. Because many who have a job have a site on the internet with a fake name. They see clients in hotels, have rooms to see their clients and they have regular jobs. And it’s not only women who work at supermarkets: There are doctors, lawyers, business women. All sorts of jobs.

Researcher: You mean that people try not to be identified as prostitutes. So why is it that this identification is so difficult? What do people immediately imagine when they hear the word Prostitute, because it can’t only be an easy life?

W1: It’s taboo

Others: Taboo.

Researcher: What taboo? Let’s see what taboo is. Because earlier you were saying that many of them would like to be prostitutes when I asked what other women thought of prostitutes.

W3: They’d like to be like this: go with a man they don’t know and have the courage to...

W2: and have the courage to do what many of them don't do with their husbands at home

???: To be outgoing, do their faces, be unrestrained

W2: To dress up, have intercourse in different ways from what they do at home because they're embarrassed to tell their husbands they don't like it that way, that they'd rather have it another way.

W3: Of course, that too.

W2: They aren't able to have the same courage we have to do with men what they can't do at home...

W7: To show their faces as we do out there...

W1: I'm sure they're able to but they can't because their husbands won't allow it

W2: That's why they say, "That one there is a prostitute, the one who does what I can't at home in the street."

W1: And sometimes it isn't exactly that...

Researcher: Would they like to do it?

W2: Yes, yes, yes. They admire our courage, which is good; they admire the courage we have

W6: And when we're standing at the corner of the street, they look even more than guys themselves

W1: True. Once I was in Andromeda Quarter and two women pass by me. One of them said to the other, "But these bitches are here leaning on the wall..." and I answered, "Look, lady, you know what? I'm waiting for your husband, who agreed to meet me here. You missed a good opportunity to shut your trap."

Researcher: But what you were saying was that women who pass by stare at you more than men do.

W6: They do.

W1: And the less educated, the more they stare

W2: They stare more and fear prostitutes more.

W1: A woman from out of town, the conservative kind who only lives for her husband

W3: Because it's also a shock for them. They pass by and say, "These women are so beautiful, they're standing here at the street corner waiting for men" and they stand there in awe. And there are others who envy us, who would probably also like to be in this situation, usually the younger ones, between 25 and 30; for me

they're chicks; they would also like it, or then they stare because they probably think, "Oh, it's sad to be there."

W2: They immediately think, "These bitches are here to destabilize my life..."

W3: There are also many ways of looking at the issue"

It is not possible here to infer a trend through the answers but it is important to emphasize the immediacy of the first replies and the descriptions that followed concerning the fact that for Prostitutes, the "Symbolic Women", in reality, would like to have the experience of being a Prostitute. They refer to the sexual behaviour that is desired by the "Symbolic Women". Do they not frame the symbolic fantasy of the "Symbolic Women?" A desire that projects the suppressed control over her body and her sexuality?

The street team's emotional commentaries with regard to Prostitutes' sexual discourse, lead them to become aware of the sexual linguistic void which constituted their subjectivity, which I have named above as the "asexual" feature of the "Symbolic Women". As a street team partner mentioned, Prostitutes gave us names to things, gave us vocabulary. Additionally, Prostitutes refer to the "Other Women" as the ones who do not know how to express their sexual desires; they do not know what they like in bed and do not express it to their partners. Likewise, they mention how "Symbolic Women's" sexual desire and pleasure is intrinsically connected with the existence of an emotional attachment or emotional expectation under the frame of the romanticized monogamous heterosexual legitimate relationship. Finally, one can bring into the equation the nuns' sublimation of sex through spiritualization. If I pull the above data together with the information concerning how Prostitutes control their sexual body and the codes of their own objectification, the overall arch of understanding points to the "Sacredness" of the "Symbolic Women's" body.

There is a symbolic narrative, a regulatory ideal that features women's body, and particularly women's sexual body as sacred. Being so, due to its sacredness, women's sexual bodies can only be explored, experienced and expressed through a legitimate heterosexual monogamous relationship while their subjectivity attaches sexual pleasure and desire to emotional involvement.

The regulatory ideal constitutes women's subjectification around the BODY. A Body that is assumed as sacred, something to be preserved, spiritualized as an ideal. And it might be due to that idealization of women's bodies at the same time as their subjectification is centred on it, that Prostitutes mentioned society's idealization of a women's body figure which "Other Women" are compelled to correspond to or compare themselves with.

The BODY is key in women's gender identity as it is from the BODY that motherhood is a social institution. As the symbolic discourse of sacred necessarily entails an outside, institutionalized truth about what sacred is, the symbolic discourse suppresses, the natural carnal features of their sexual bodies in women's subjectivity, i.e., the terms of their own recognition that they have a body that is matter, that is flesh, that can be a sexual object for themselves and others.

Prostitutes had, at some point in their lives, to manage, to address, their sexual activity within their inner structures that constitute their subjectivity structured over a "sacred body"; they had to distance themselves from the "sacredness" of the hegemonic discourse seeing it for what it is: a regulatory ideal. Was it not the interactions with These Women that forced the researcher and the street team partners to gain distance, through reflexivity, from their "sacred body"?

The scientific literature on the intersectionality between sexuality and gender can be divided into two blocks: the axis of this distinction is relegated to the essentiality or not of Sexuality as the generative force of the symbolic power of male domination. In this sense, sex, in its essentiality, creates gender. Such is the substantiality of Catherine MacKinnon's theory (1989). Women and men are divided by gender, made into the sexes as we know them, by the social requirements of heterosexuality, which institutionalizes male sexual dominance and female sexual submission. By bringing the essentiality of sexual behaviour back to the heterosexual model, as the generative nuclear force of gender identity, the sexuality envisioned within this paradigm incorporates the forces that translate into male sexual domination and female sexual subjection. The aim is

to deconstruct heterosexuality itself as a sexual behaviour which essentially encompasses the domination / submission binomial. Dominant feminism roots the distinctions between gender and gender identities as a consequence of sexuality, as if sexual acts were the unitary source of the symbolic identity.

Feminists, called pro-sex, argue against the thesis of the essentiality that sexual behaviour, in its heterosexual configuration, makes necessary and consequently the production and reproduction of relations of domination / submission. In fact, it is not the sexual act, per se, that produces and reproduces power relations. , It is the meaning or the meaning attributed to a certain sexual act, which is socially constructed, and can therefore be the target of deconstructive practices and reconstruction, not of the sexual act, but of the symbolic meanings attributed to that act. Sexual acts, depending on the contents and meanings attributed to them, can be producers of models of domination, but they can also be expressions of agency and resistance. Considering an analysis of female sexuality, as it has historically been controlled and regulated, this trend understands that the deconstruction of models of domination may involve women demanding "more sex" in order to empower them to regain control over their own Body, over their sexuality. Sex has not only a reproductive dimension of a given model of power, it can be the field that generates redefinitions and reconstructions of identity that resist and subvert the patriarchal model, even if they are framed inside the heterosexual model.

The relevance of this last trend, as suggested by Gayle Rubin (1984), is the analytical split between the sexual system, on the one hand, and the gender system on the other, and the need to analyse the relations between the two (Rubin G. and Butler J. 1994). However, the analytic divergence ended up being consummated in an epistemological division that allocates feminism within gender studies and sexuality in the context of queer studies. The only way to prevent the reification of heterosexualism in the feminist currents as the natural reduction to the domination / submission of the sexual act is exactly to bring together analyses of the sexual system and analyses of the gender system and vice versa even because the acts do not reveal anything ontological about identity or

subjectivity. It is the symbolic linguistic power that is billed on them that is determinant.

First of all, one must not forget that These Women with whom I interacted are women whose sex work is not physically coerced. They are not victims of trafficking, they are not inserted in networks of exploitation, and they do not have "pimps". We can say that they are free-lance women, i.e., they control the terms of the execution of their sex work: time, price and type of services. It is obvious that business interactions matter as negotiation and risk, as in any other profession. Above all, it is understood that the universe of the commercialization of sex is multifaceted in terms of controlling the terms of the sexual interaction of those who practice it. Prostitution cannot be framed as a one-dimensional reality. These Women with whom I interacted are those who demonstrate that they have decision-making power over their activity. It is obvious that I should not disregard the vectors of economic, work, educational opportunities that These Women did not benefit from at an early age and how the existence or not of opportunities is the cause of their presence on the streets. But the influence of these factors is reducible to other social and labour circumstances that define the contexts of power inequality between genders in other dimensions of social reality, that is, it is certainly not the sole and proper cause of prostitution and is certainly not a force that is exercised over passive bodies. There is scope for decision and autonomy in These Women. In addition, they are doubly interpellated in their subjectivity, on the one hand by the symbolic narrative of sexuality and female pleasure inseparable from a love relationship - romanticized sexuality, on the other hand, by the experience of sexuality exercised within the parameters of the sexual market, in which and as a consequence of which, they control the schemes of their own objectification and the objectification of the other, and yet, they are subjects of obtaining sexual pleasure. Through our interaction, These Women questioned the researcher and the street team partners with the "sexual verb", making us aware of our subjective void as to the possibility of thinking and verbalizing the physical language of desire and of female sexual pleasure. This interaction empowered us with a verb and with a public space of expression of our corporeality, deconstructing the symbolic normativity of our apparent and normalized "asexuality", which constitutes the

“sacred body”. They also opened our ability to control our own objectification and to allow ourselves to objectify the other. In this sense, even if the sexual market is centered on heterosexual relations, the fact is that the sexual services provided by these women does not automatically endorse the dominant / subordinate binomial. The sex market can be a context where women have control over the terms in which they allow themselves to be objectified and objectify the other, and in that sense, achieve sexual pleasure without emotional attachments.

Prostitution, in these terms, is not necessarily the reproduction of the power relations that may intrinsically feature legitimate heterosexual monogamous relations. Interestingly, prostitutes themselves regard the legitimate heterosexual relations as embedded in the unequal power of men over women. They often talked about how they would rather be alone than involved in a legitimate commitment with a man where the latter is going to explore, lie and restrict women’s freedom.

“ (...) They put the rest of us through quite an educational process. They asked how what they did was so different from what anyone else did for a living. Some said they liked the work more than other kinds of work available to them. They asked why it was more feminist to work as secretaries and for longer hours and less money. Some said they liked the working conditions; the busted parlor even had a weight room where the jocks worked out while waiting for clients. They demanded that we deal with prostitution as a work issue rather than a moralistic one. (...) Carol Ernst was later tragically killed in an automobile accident. But she was a visionary, and her peculiar combination of feminist and labor politics really left an imprint. She challenged me on my rhetorical use of prostitution to make debating points about the horror of women’s oppression. I used to convince people to feel moral outrage by comparing the situation of women in marriage and similar sexual/economic arrangements to prostitution. Carol argued that I was using the stigma of prostitution as a technique of persuasion, and that in so doing I was maintaining and intensifying such stigma at the expense of the women who did sex work. She was right. I finally realized that the rhetorical effectiveness came from the stigma, and decided that my rhetorical gain could not justify reinforcing attitudes which rationalized the

persecution of sex workers. All of these incidents began to eat away at some of my preconceptions about how to think about power and sex, and the politics of sex.” (Rubin G. and Butler J. 1994:74)

It is not the heterosexuality of the sex act that necessarily determines a gendered relationship of domination and subordination. Indeed, in the perception of These Women it is also the monogamous romanticized and legitimized relationship that limits women's desire and control over their sexuality in their intrinsic connection with the existence or expectation of an emotional relationship.

In this sense, the fieldwork has led me back to an epistemological position in line with Showden's *Theorising Maybe: A feminist/queer theory convergence* (Showden: 2012). On the one hand within the queer theory for not describing women's heterosexuality as automatically reproductive of patriarchal symbolic power. In this sense, we can analyse gender without assuming a priori that this subordination exists in all heterosexuality. On the other, within feminist in the sense that sexual identity is formed through the ongoing enactment of a symbolic interpellation that sustains the self-assertion of THE SACRED BODY regulatory ideal.

The central question then lies in the identification of the subversive or reconstructive practices of the meanings of the sexual act. How subversion is defined and where does one actually engage with it? From the data that emerges from the field work, the subversive practices are at the confluence of three dimensions of analysis: the interactional order, whereas the discourses, the meanings, the frames and faces are being conveyed; the emotional commentaries that emerge from the interactional order to the participants and finally, the effects of those emotional commentaries on the inner thoughts in the “Critique” of the subject with itself that may allow them to gain distance from the symbolic regulatory ideal. And this symbolic power that constitutes subjectivity through interpellation is not only in women; it is important to note that the constitution of the subjectivity of the gender identity is produced and reproduced equally in both sexes and that both subjectivities are constituted within the same normative matrix.

Through street conversations and focus groups, women describe their professional relationships with clients. In view of the deconstruction of the idealized profile of the man / client that came from the observations of the street teams and from the conversations with These Women, the question is: why do men continue to seek the services of sex workers?

6. The Silenced Male

During the street team encounters, there were many dialogues with These Women about their clients. These talks were not initiated by the street team. They were rather spontaneous because we were interacting exactly in their context of sex work.

These Women described a diversity of clients' profiles, in line with my visual experience during the fieldwork. Thus, there is no dominant profile. Clients can be more or less good-looking; young, middle-aged or over 60 years old; from all social classes and education levels.

The client is an inexhaustible source of conversation not limited solely to the description of their physical attributes and distinctive social characteristics, but encompassing the verbal, physical, and sexual interaction they have with sex workers. In fact, These Women do not only describe the rituals involving the clients' initial approach and their discussion concerning the price, place and service to be provided. They extend the content of the conversation to the private dialogues they both sustain inside a car or in the bedroom.

Additionally, These Women reflexively analyse the content of the conversations they maintain with clients and verbalize what, in their understanding, are their clients' pathologies and emotional needs. These Women are skilled in emotional intelligence and it is not by chance they call themselves "psychologists". Their emotional intelligence might be due to the fact that sex work requires an intense practice of observation and interpretation of clients' genuine intentions and desires. Essentially, These Women seek to uncover the clients' true intentions from what is unsaid, from the clients' facial expressions, intonation, body posture and any other signs beyond the conversation form.

It should be highlighted that These Women offer sex work services on the street. Usually, the client's car stops in front of the place where the Prostitute is waiting. The Sex Worker approaches the car and without getting in, she starts a brief dialogue with the prospective client about the general conditions of the service to

be rendered. This means that in street sex work, the initial interactions between the Prostitute and the client are direct and made in co-presence. They discuss the conditions of the service, the price and location. At that moment, These Women additionally assess the client's risk. Through the client's tone, posture and facial expressions, These Women assess their chances of being involved in a situation where they might lose control over what takes place in the context of privacy, and risk their physical integrity.

The streets are different from what happens in a private house, operated by a third person, where the client only makes contact with the Prostitute for the performance of sex work and the Prostitute neither assesses the client's risk nor is she by herself facing the hazard that such an interaction might pose. In the streets, Prostitutes assess the client, make the risk taking decision and bear the consequences (of it), all by themselves as illustrated in boxes 63 and 64.

63. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Jan. 29th 2015, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia street)

“W1: I'm the kind of person that won't go with just anyone, I won't! I look at them and if I don't like their faces.

Researcher: You can tell by their looks

W1: It's been a long time on the job.

Street team partner 1: Observe and

W1: Yeah, I look and

Street team partner 1: and you get his profile. His face says it all straight away!

W1: Right there I see what the person is inside. It's like those glasses”

64. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Jan. 12th 2014, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia street)

“One of the women we talked to said she could tell by their looks if they were going to give them problems, what kind of men the clients who sought them out in the street were. She told us that the other day she was in Iphigenia street and that a coloured man in a car with tinted windows came up, saying strange things like “I never got to see you again” “you stopped going to that place”. She was about to say where she used to go but she reflected for a while and snapped

back, “Where was it you used to see me?” Of course the man didn’t know and then he started saying something she didn’t answer and he was on his way. She said they have to be clever. He wanted me to tell him where I used to go so he could pretend he knew me and so I could trust him. But I stopped short and thought. I didn’t like his tone and asked him a question instead because I felt his intentions weren’t good.”

In their initial interactions with clients, These Women use their practice of rapidly reading the expressions, voice tones, and body language conveyed by clients to assess the risk of private interaction and avoid the potential risk of violence or situations that may escape their control (whether to avoid a robbery or to avoid physical aggression). This expertise in reading non-verbal communication also allows them to react early and assertively to situations of imminent danger.

The endurance of trusting their own assessment and bearing the consequences of their decisions, lead the researcher and the street team partners to deconstruct a naturalized gender identity that Women need protection or validation over certain risk-taking decisions and that in the face of danger Women behave passively.

On the contrary, These Women reveal an aptitude to react to the dangerous situations they face in the privacy of the prostitute/client relationship, which is precisely the opposite of passivity and impotence. These Women report having physical and aggressive reactions, changing their voice to an assertive and authoritarian tone, positioning their body assertively and enacting discursive statements intended to deter clients' behavioural intentions. Some reports the street teams heard made us think that perhaps we would never imagine ourselves, as individuals, sharing the same courage and ability to react against the imminent danger emerging from private co-presence with others (see text boxes 65 and 66).

65. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Jan. 29th 2015, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia street)

“W1: I felt something that was making it difficult for me to breathe and he was driving slowly and looking at me and I thought, “This guy is sizing me up!” but he wasn’t sizing me up as a woman. He was determining what kind of a person I was, whether I was going to be easy. I saw that in his expression. I saw it on his face (the woman exemplifies how the man looked at her). And the guy starts like this (she makes a gesture). I looked at him and said, “Look here, mate. What’s going on?” and he said, “Nothing!” “I’ve only just arrived here. Are you sure you want this?”

When W1 account this last phrase, she was saying it with a tone that implicitly was conveying to the men a warning that she had no money. She mentioned she was stern and that she spoke in a different tone telling him that she thought that he might have forgotten his wallet.

‘W1: The guy was going to mug me! I said, “Just watch it because I think you have forgotten your wallet!” but my voice was completely different like with a warning tone “I’ll smash your face!” ’

66. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Feb. 19th 2015, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia street)

“W12: But it’s still the best place to work. As far as I know, Alcestis District is terrible, this is the best place where. If I stay here till five or six in the morning I can make over a hundred euros. You just have to be patient. How patient do you have to be in your line of work? How many bitter pills do you have to swallow? Probably more than me! Well, then, there you are! People sometimes pretend to be helpless. You’re only here if you want to. If someone is forced to be here, then they should go there, the police station is right over there. Things aren’t so, There’s a good and a bad side to everything. It also has advantages!

Researcher: And you can tell who you should accept or not

W12: I have done this kind of work at night for thirty years! Things still happen. A few days ago, someone pulled a gun at me. It wasn’t his lucky day, because I have a temper, while he wanted money, I couldn’t care less. When he said we were going for a ride, I got hold of the gun and turned it to his leg. Because if I was just a young girl, he would have done what he pleased”

A common association persists, in the public discourse, according to which Prostitutes deal with aggressive or disturbed clients that oppress and repress them. It is true that we heard a few accounts of danger and violence but overall they were rare incidents. The vast majority of interactions between Prostitutes and Clients takes place within a certain "normality". Indeed, if the majority of interactions were not "normal", what Women would subject themselves to the daily risk of their own physical integrity and life? Accordingly, as Merri Lisa Johnson states, "*the persistent link between sex work and danger comes across as natural, but this expectation mystifies the ideological work of the link. It is a load-bearing wall in the social construction of proper femininity*" (Johnson 2006: 178).

Indeed, this ideological association serves only as generator and reproducer of an idealization of Woman as being naturally weaker, submissive, passive or dominated. This ideological association greatly explains the perception installed regarding the world of Prostitution as naturally being the site where this ideal would be extreme due to the constant exposure of Prostitutes to men's sexual domination and violence. However, the fact that These Women are more equipped to respond reactively and assertively to dangerous situations clearly contradicts this preconceived perception, adding the consequent empowerment they prove to have, to defend and protect themselves.

They emphasize that, when entering a car, they can only count on themselves to safeguard their physical vulnerability. The researcher and street team partners' awareness of such ideological identity implies that Prostitutes themselves had to undertake the process of subjective deconstruction of the same ideological identity.

During the street encounters, seldom did we not have These Women complaining about clients who proposed to pay more money if the sex-service was performed without a condom. These women expressed their anger against the customers for even wording such a request. For These Women those requests showed irresponsibility with the aggravation that in practice, for the younger Prostitutes

with pimps, or Prostitutes that are drug addicts, those requests could lead them to actually agree to it. A second order of complaint targeted the usual price haggling. These Women assigned the clients' disrespectful behaviour of bartering over the prices to the existence of Prostitutes who would accept extremely low prices due to the pressure of their pimps, drug additions, or to the fact that they were in situations of economic despair. For These Women it was unthinkable to even enter the car below a certain minimum price. In consequence, the lack of stability in the prices charged by all of them, promotes the conviction in the clients that they can haggle the prices. Some women go further and express that, this way, women do not "value themselves" and "ruin the street", that is, it ruins business and the sex market, when it could be benefiting all of them.

Those two complaints were confirmed during the Sex Workers' Focus Group by the participating women, who stated that men feel empowered to haggle over the price and request services without a condom when the interactions are between them and women. On the contrary, when the sexual services are provided by men or transsexuals, clients do not dare to interfere either with the terms in which the service will be done or with the price of the service.

Despite the fact that clients interact with Prostitutes in ways that indicate their perception of them as being fragile, susceptible to pressure and manipulation, These Women with whom I interacted, showed control over the terms under which they perform their sexual services, rejecting clients who do not accept the price they set or clients proposing higher prices in return for not using a condom (see Text Box no. 67).

67. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Sex Workers' Focus Group (June 12th 2015)

W1: I've also worked in an apartment where men also work and they work a lot more...

W7: And they make the same money

W1: They make more money because they set a price and it's that price only, whether you are old, young, tall, short and clients pay and that's it.

Researcher: Isn't it the same with women?

W1: No

W2: They have different prices...

W7: To make some money, they go down...yeah

W2: If they see you do drugs, they try to bring the price down.

W3: Women's clients take advantage of the fact that they're women

W2: Of their vulnerability and women's needs

W3: I can see that. It doesn't happen with us.

W2: It's a different kind of pleasure

W3: It's a different kind of pleasure.

W1: I agree. For example, now he (W3) works in an apartment and sets a price because they have a set price. Suppose it's 50€, and there's no bargaining.

W3: No bartering.

W1: Because his client knows he is talking to a man. He may be transformed because they transform themselves and they're beautiful women, but they're talking to a man. And then there's something else: if there's a commotion, everybody will know the client is homosexual.

W3: Yeah.

Researcher: And you think they barter more with women?

W1: They do.

W3: And they're much more polite, much more polite while with you they're different. They go way too far...

W1: They might even threaten to attack women physically

W2: They force women to accept lower prices because they know they don't do it for pleasure but for the money.

W3: For the money. Men take advantage. They take advantage.

W2: I'll give a bit more if you stay longer with me; I'll give you a bit more if you don't wear a condom; I'll give you a bit more if... But with transvestites, that doesn't happen.

Researcher: In your line of work, you feel there's that kind of manipulation.

All: Yes.

W2: We don't just feel it; it's real.

W6: You tell them a price and they say another one. And another woman further down has greater need, and she'll give them a better price.

W1: He doesn't go with you because he likes you. It's because it's a physiological need or then he's a pervert. Then if she charges, for example, I charge 10 €, and

she charges 5€ and the other one doesn't charge anything, then he'll go with the other one.

W2: Her need is the same as ours ... and she does the same and they have pleasure.

W6: The other day, a man I don't know, I told him the price and he said he only had 5 € and I said, "Then stick those 5€ where the sun don't shine and jerk off..." "You're rude." "I'll give you fucking rude." That's when I lose my temper...

W1: Because if a woman doesn't have an urgent need of money and she'll only go for that price, she'll do two or three or those...

W3: But sometimes you have needs.

W1: ...that like to go with her because they are friends or for some other reason. Or then she doesn't go out and the one next to her is going out all the time.

W2: When that happens, we immediately say, "Hmmm"

Contrary to the general perception that These Women are fragile and vulnerable and that the Prostitution context is one of men's domination, the reality is quite distinct with Prostitutes showing they are in charge of the rules they set for the delivery of their sexual services.

These Women described the codes of interaction they enact in order to meet the clients' expectations about who they want them to be. This does not necessarily mean that they strictly comply with those codes in every case. In fact, it is precisely the fact that they can, with their self-awareness and their behavior, comply with or distance themselves from the interactional codes, which reveal their normative character.

And they do so with an almost methodical use of the codes of seduction and conversation that they understand fit the clients' context and needs. These Women rarely forget they are in the context of sex-work. By using their emotional intelligence, These Women identify at a deeper level what the clients' underlying needs are in order to correspond and consequently benefit economically from that interaction. These Women analyse the patterns they encounter in their interactions with clients to interpret the behaviours that they identify as

belonging to the "male gender" with a keen level of abstraction and generalization.

According to These Women, when they approach the client, it is important that they look good, with a smile and light spirits, and use sweet vocabulary; they address the clients with expressions such as "my dear", "my love", "sweetheart" as illustrated in text boxes no. 68 and 69.

68. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Jul. 10th 2014, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia street)

“W1: Yeah, but it’s different here. For example, a client pays for her to do it and if he wants it done here, it’s the client that take it. But there are also ways of doing it. For instance, a client stops there and if you’re like hummm, he’ll be scared, but if you’re gentle and careful, then it’s a different way of dealing with him. Sometimes I go just because she’s kind, because of hers expression (as if she was the client)

W2: It’s true.”

When they enter the car, they talk with gentle manners.

The first aim sought by this ritual is to relieve the tensions that may have arisen in the previous discussion and negotiation about the work to be performed. The second purpose is to dissipate, in the client’s mind, any sign allusive to the fact that the prostitute has accepted to enter the car due to money.

69. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Jun. 5th 2014, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia street)

“Then she said that one of her friends had gone with another woman who worked in the area because she was cheaper. But then he rang her and confided, “Well, the woman didn’t even know how to do a proper blowjob and, as soon as they met, she immediately asked for “her money” and that’s it. She said it’s like that now and that you get what you pay for. Not her, though. First, she doesn’t do it if she doesn’t feel comfortable, they go to the bedroom. And then she never speaks of money inside the bedroom. The only time she mentions money is when

cars pull over and they speak. When they're in the car or in the bedroom, she takes off her glasses and puts them down and he then puts the money under the glasses. There's no talk of money. And with clients, she talks about everything, politics, economy and so on. The other day a client told her he was an engineer and she answered, "Oh, sweetheart, then it's one more for my collection." She always talks to her clients with words like "sweetheart" and uses formal language. She talked about the crisis and that some of her friends had emigrated or lived farther away or couldn't afford to come more often."

Once inside the car, in the private interpersonal dimension of those meetings, These Women enact a role in order to create an atmosphere of intimacy and confidence with the client (see text box 70).

70. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Jan. 29th 2015, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia street)

"W1: I've been with men who can't perform initially and then we talk and then they can.

Street Team Member 1: You give them space so they feel...

W1: comfortable, exactly. Well, I prepare the scenery. When I don't know the person, I build up confidence. It's good even for me because if I get there and it's a lot of trouble, I'll be there much longer. So I work on it with talk till we get there and then he is ready for the job. See? They're afraid.

Researcher: Do you feel they're afraid?

W1: They're very scared of me. Well, I don't know but they are! There are men who don't even go with me. A guy told me, "I've known you for so long and only now can I go out with you because I was afraid" and I said, "Look here, love, it's completely the opposite.". The way I am, I'm a bit haughty, I look a bit overbearing, but I'm not. For example to go somewhere I have to brainwash them till we get there and only then are they completely relaxed."

Their dialogue is aimed to transmit to the client that the Prostitute will pay attention to him. At that moment, only the client is of interest, and the woman is there totally and exclusively available to listen to him (See text box 71).

71. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Jan. 29th 2015, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia street)

“W1: And then I hear them say a hundred times, “You’re not what I imagined!” They’re much more relaxed and so they start talking about their lives. You should never talk about their wife and children before you’re with them. It’s only after that. Besides, they talk about all their family after that: their wife, their children and they enjoy it, but it’s only after. It has to do with the way I am, my work techniques, see? I talk after that and only then do I enter that kind of intimacy.

Researcher: Why is it intimacy?

W1: I only talk about him, when I get out, I talk about him only. I turn to him when we leave because he also wants to talk about the other part, but I can’t talk about that part before, only after otherwise I might upset him.”

These Women assign their behaviour of paying attention to the client, (giving attention to the client), and proving that they care about the client" as their working techniques, a performance that they have to deliver when they meet the client. For These Women, the man is just a client. They have no particular interest in him as an individual. They simply perform the symbolic ritual of pretending that they have that interest. Together with other rites, such as the type of clothes they wear or topics of conversation corresponding to the client’s interest. In other words, while for the Client the interaction was satisfactory because they consider it was pleasurable for the Prostitute as well, for the Prostitutes they simply enacted a performance from the minute they entered the car.

Prostitutes’ behaviour is interpreted under the frame of the sex market. Consequently, what concerns These Women is to retain control over their objectification and the objectification of the client, who is in most cases perceived by them as a mere consumer of their sexual services. Differently from the perspective of These Women, clients do not only interact with them as Sex Service Providers.

In the client’s eyes, when the Prostitute enters the car, already performing the rites described above, the context or symbolic frame of the interaction transmutes

right away into something that is much more than the mere provision of sex services. This transmutation of the frame occurs through the personalized performance led by Woman “to be attentive to the client” and “show that they are interested in the client”.

The techniques and rites of interaction performed by These Women serve to disassociate their business interaction from the formula "sex in exchange for money" fuelling the client's illusion that the nature of that interaction is more than purely commercial.

Notwithstanding these performative techniques and the higher effectiveness achieved in creating this illusion, it is still quite surprising for some of These Women that clients behave as if they were not aware that Prostitutes are just making money. Clients are convinced and deluded when they think that their interactions with them may even correspond to the interactions they would have with other women in the world of the Public Symbolic Law. As if clients, from the moment the car door closes, began to interact with Prostitutes beyond the frame of the client / service binomial and within the canons of the man / woman binomial.

One of These Women with whom I interacted in the streets explained how she refuses to meet the clients' illusionary expectations and/or correspond to the rules and rites of interaction. She expresses great impatience with clients, because they are constantly demanding from her rites of interaction which she has no interest in performing since they are not genuine. In fact, for this particular Prostitute, who maintains an affective relationship with her husband in the public symbolic world, the enactment of such rituals disturbs her because it leads clients to believe that she is emotionally available, a circumstance she repudiates for reasons of loyalty and respect she feels toward her partner, as illustrated in text box no. 72.

72. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Jul. 10th 2014, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia street)

“W1: Look, we go to the guesthouse and I don’t even look at them. They say, “Can’t you remember me. I’ve come here a few times” And I think, “But how can I remember you if I don’t even look at your face?” I don’t look at anybody’s face. I only think how much I’ve made and how much I still need to make to go away. And the man says, “Oh, you’re so nice and calm, so easy” and I think, “Of course I am. I’m not even listening to what you’re saying.”. The other day a man passed by me and said, “Hi, you all right?” but I’d never seen him in my life and then the man came over and said, “I’ve bumped into you about three times at the bank, in the street, and I said hello and you didn’t answer. You only talk to me here. Oh you’re nice and slow.” And I think: “Yeah, I’m nice and slow. You don’t even know what I’m thinking.” I don’t look at the face of none any of them and I don’t make friends with anybody except those I see are single and want to find a girlfriend or are going to get married.”

In sum, These Women clearly separate the commercial from the personal and emotional interactions, regardless of there being sexual intercourse in both. According to them, the clients are the ones who do not distinguish and insist on extending the symbolic contexts of interaction beyond the mere provision of sexual services, namely by believing and convincing themselves that they are not paying to have sex. Ironically, it is precisely the payment that constitutes the sine qua non-condition for Prostitutes. For the clients, the interaction is established with contours that are more similar to the ideals of an affective and heterosexual relationship, as experienced in the public symbolic reality.

Even at the beginning of my fieldwork, whenever the conversation with These Women slipped into their relation with clients, I was quite surprised that the descriptions would often not entail an incidental encounter between two strangers but rather a continuum of encounters that Prostitutes would maintain with clients over time (see text box 73).

73. Text Box: Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Dec.13th 2013, Day,
Medeia/Andromeda Quarter)

“We went on talking (...) Then J. comments on her clients and on a specific client who is a policeman who comes over once in a while and tells his fellow policemen to carry on because he has something to do and his colleagues know what it is and they know J. They tell her she has cast a spell on the captain. It’s interesting, when J talks about him and tells stories about his work, her relationship with the senior officer, who is younger and has to show his face, some episodes, which reveals confidence and intimacy between the two. It’s not just a physical and sexual relationship; it also involves trust because the officer tells her episodes of his life at work and criticizes his direct superior. According to the officer’s colleagues and the women who are there, the officer really likes J. Meanwhile one of J’s clients, a regular, comes up from behind, which startles her and doesn’t even care if we’re there: they just move on to the bedroom and then it’s just me and I. and J’s girlfriend.”

This initial surprise became a recurrence in the conversations I had with the different women during a year and a half of street team encounters. After all, the interactions with the clients involved complex and deeper dynamics than a mere sexual encounter. The surprising element, with which the researcher and the street team partners were confronted, was the existence of ongoing relations between Prostitutes and their clients. Moreover, a relation that involves much more than a mere sexual encounter because its participants, mainly the client, draw the fulfilment of intimate, psychological or emotional needs from it. On the other hand, few Prostitutes achieve self-satisfaction with those “commitments” in which, due to their duration and regularity, even outside the frame of a legitimate relationship, they are able to create bonds of mutual complicity and feel they are cared for. As to clients’ regularity, Prostitutes classify them as Newcomers, Frequent/Regular or "Friends". There are still some Prostitutes who have a higher level of Client distinction that comes down to those that “they like the most”. The distinct classifications are based on the gradual intimacy that comes from regular encounters and the different degrees of Prostitutes’ personal involvement in those encounters.

How do These Women describe their clients' behaviour? According to them, there are clients who engage in the sex work encounters by bringing the gestures, words and moods of a romanced and seductive nature into the interaction, as if the Clients were interacting with them and aiming for them to fall in love, as illustrated in text box no. 74.

74. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Oct. 23th 2014, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia street)

W11: I think they think we're different from the women they have at home, that we're going to be nice and sweet all the time.

W10: I tell them, "When I go home, I put on my pyjamas just like them, I get headaches, my period, like every other woman, I don't like to cook, do the washing-up. It's the same drag as everybody else, and they think we're different! They think that when they open the door every day.

Researcher: will find you like this?

W10: Like this! I'm going to tell him, "Come here my beautiful, wonderful love", see? Because when we start to nag and argue with them, they no longer want the relationship they believe they have.

Researcher: They think they have a relationship?

W10: They think they have a relationship.

W11: There was one who stalked me to my doorstep. My husband had to teach him a lesson and then he stopped!

Street Team Member: It's quite opposed to the image we have, that for them the idea of separating feelings.

W10: They're the ones who feel the most, the most romantic, even being married there are men who are completely lonely, and why? Because they set up a wall between them and their wives like this.

These Women are constantly stressing this mismatch between the romantic adorns that clients convey throughout the interaction and the real substance of what is going on. Prostitutes even claim that this separation always has to be in their minds because, even if the client shows personal qualities that would cause them to become emotionally involved, they just have to remember what are they doing in the sex market, to remember their veiled pathology (See text box no. 75).

75. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Oct. 16th 2014, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia street)

“W10: All those who come here start, I say, “Sorry, I don’t get involved with clients!” and they go, “Why? And I, “I’ll explain” and they, “I don’t get it!” I say, “We’re the drug you want and need and we make money out of that, like a dealer that sells heroine, right? We sell ourselves, we’re coke for you! And you’re addicted, honestly, you’re all sick, you’re beyond treatment. But the dealer hasn’t got a very comfortable life but if he has enough money, he can get out of it, but you can’t! A junky will try to fulfil his addiction anywhere. We make money. But I live with a man I know is addicted to fucking whoredom and when I get home he’s going to cheat on me?”

(...)

W10: And men come here, they’re just shit. But some are intelligent, apart from the fact that they’re handsome or ugly, here you find handsome men, ugly men, all sorts of men. But that doesn’t mean they’re not good people deep down inside. There are men here you can really talk with. They’re funny, you can talk. “With this person I could even go to a disco, or to a café, out for dinner; I could take him home with me, introduce him to my family”, but when you’re reminded of what he’s doing here, you go, “No, forget it! Not worth it!”

(...)

W10: I mean, everybody thinks it’s the men who don’t want to marry prostitutes. It’s the opposite: prostitutes don’t want to marry their clients because usually the prostitutes who get married, who have a relationship with their clients, suffer.

(...)

W10. Everybody is worried about prostitutes. Nobody should be. Prostitutes are women who just have a product. One day they might benefit from that. They’re healthy; they know what they’re doing’

W10 continued to state that prostitute is just a woman who uses her body while society should be worried about clients because the clients are psychologically sick. For W10, Clients have no structure with real life, because for them the street is life when the street is not real, it has nothing to do with the reality of their lives. She ended by saying that clients are completely addicted, that they don’t

mind spoiling their relationship with their wives, their mothers or someone's life so they can sustain their addiction. According to her they are just as addicted as someone who does crack, cocaine, pot. For W10 It's a problem but nobody seems to be worried about clients, hookers are the ones that are awful when they are just women using something that's theirs to make money.

She added that moreover, prostitutes can be in both worlds: they can be on the streets and at home and be with their husbands and children. It's their life. They're here, but away from here, they don't cheat; they're housewives, mothers and that. For W10, nobody pays attention to the really sick.

The conversation continued and W10 stated 'W10: I solve what I can. There are lots of clients to whom I talk to, to see if I can help, but most of them... They're hopeless!' ”

Clients deceive themselves when they trigger emotions and feelings in an interaction that does not correspond to the reality of the intentions and desires of Prostitutes. Prostitutes manage to play the game of clients' expectations, the game of seduction because they are aware that those are performances clients seek to meet their needs. In fact, These Women classify this typology of clients as addicts who alienate themselves with the stimulus of conquest, even though the whole symbolic spectrum of the surrounding context points in the direction of a commercial transaction. All of these emotional grounds baffle Prostitutes. According to them, these clients imagine that they are perfect women, different from the ones – wives - they have at home: they are always affectionate, their figure is always physically attractive, and they will always pay attention and listen to them. There are clients who fall in love. There are Clients who want to marry Prostitutes. There are clients who use the term "to make love" or who express an inner desire to please the Prostitute sexually and clients who blur the distinction between These Women's professional performance on the streets and their real selves (see text boxes no. 76 to 78).

76. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Oct. 30th 2014, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia street)

“W10: This woman doesn’t want me, but that sexy mama, who was the one I chose, it wasn’t the world, but it’s life. Because relationships are chosen by life. All of a sudden you’re living with someone, you meet a friend’s friend.”

W10 continue saying that differently from relationships chosen by life, on the streets the men feel “This one was the one I stopped for and chose” and they imagine that Prostitutes are the women that when he comes home they are smiling, happy, the house is tidy. So, when they get home they find their wives with steamed up faces feeling they could wring his neck, and they don’t understand why, because for the client he gave his wife no reason for it, he doesn’t see it. He doesn’t see that he came home late. W10 added that the men don’t see that they are spending money on prostitution that they should be spending at home. If his wife wants something they say there’s no money but he spends money on a blowjob, on sex. For W10 clients don’t see what they are doing is wrong, by the contrary:

“W10: Men are sure that everything they do is really right. I don’t know a single man that comes here and feels remorse, who says, “I’m not doing the right thing!

W11: I’m wrong!

W10: There’s not one that says he is wrong! It’s always like, “The world doesn’t like me!”

W11: “She’s wrong!”

W10: “She won’t give me this, she doesn’t treat me properly.” It’s always someone else’s fault.’ ”

77. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Oct. 2nd 2014, Night, Helen Street/ Iphigenia street)

“ W10: A client who lives in my street and has found out where I live, has had the nerve to ring my doorbell during the day. How dare they? If they’re here, they come to me in the street and ask me for my phone number and I say, “I won’t give you my phone number because I don’t like giving it to anybody!” that means I don’t want to be disturbed any other time.

(...)

W10: The other day when I was at home, at about 2 p.m., the bell rang. That day I didn't answer the door. It was the lady, and the lady said, "There's a gentleman there calling you!" "Calling me? But who?" She said, "I don't know. He said a name. He called you T. said that he was looking for T." "Looking for T?" I thought, "Somebody from the streets!" That bugger is going to pay! I went out with my bonnet on my bonnet will scare anyone!

(...)

W10: He said, "Ah, T., I saw you going in there and I came to see you" and I said, "But how do you know I live here?" He said he saw me going in there, and I asked, "But have you been stalking me?" He said he hadn't, that he lived in Baixa-Chiado, passed by here and saw me stop here. I said, "You saw me stop and so you think that gives you the right to come and ring my bell? Can you see me standing out there working in the street? You can't, can you? Then don't ring my bell again!" I told him, "When I'm up there, during my work schedule, go there and seek me out, because next time it's my husband who's going to answer the bell! "Here in my house there's no hooker! Is that clear?" "

78. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Oct. 30th 2014, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia street)

"W10: They're the same.

Researcher: You know them, don't you? There are no new people here.

W10: No.

W11: And no new clients either

W10. Nothing gets new, everybody gets old.

W11: I think they pass by and look at us the same way, they never change! And we do the same to them, "They're always the same, nothing changes!"

Researcher: You know them.

W10: It's a marriage, dear!

W11: It's as though you married them

W10: Every day, once or twice a week you have to go with the same one and do.

W10: I suppose they say, "Gee, I've got to go and see my wife up there" He says, "I only go with you! I don't go with anybody else!"

W11: I don't want her to see him going with me.

W10: There are love arguments here and you turn to them and say, "Sorry, today's not a good day! Today you're taking too long! I'm losing my patience. Leave me at my spot again and tomorrow we'll go out again!" Marriage squabble!

W11: Usually they ask me, "Today I'd like to go with you but are you in a good mood? Do I? I'm working!" And he says, "I can see you're not in a good mood. Doesn't matter, I'll come by another day!"

W10: Today do you want to go with me? He looks at you like, "Well, then, love?"

W11: What really kills me, if it's my job and if you're paying, do you need to conquer? You just liked the product", "How much?" "It's so much!", "Then let's go! End of story!"

W10: In this job, men are very romantic, women aren't romantic at all, women are the most boorish creatures I've ever known in my life. Honestly. It's like, "You want to, don't you?" when she is willing when she isn't, look get lost!" Men aren't like that, a man might not be in the mood, but you go there, "Your eyes are so beautiful!" men are very romantic.

(...)

W10: They want to go in, they want to see you with a nice smile, to look at you with his bad teeth and say, "Oh my, your smile is so special!" Do you know something? You feel like being with him! "Would you like me to turn on the heat?", "No, darling, I'd like you to give me the money and let me not do anything. Can you do that?" and he says, "No", "Then shut up".

(...)

W10: Their understanding is like this, men live with passion, what they want is to come here, fall in love. Then it's logical when they sober up, they see they came here just to pay and play the fool, then they go home and fall in love with someone else. That's why I don't like to do clients I already know. I only like to do new clients because they think we're about to date them. They actually think they're intimate with us, that they can talk.

W11: "Is it possible to drive you home, stay there together and make the most of the moment?" "But what moment?"

W10: Look, I've never had so many serious marriage and relationship proposals. Honestly, it's marriage, for real! The people who come are with you

and say they're actually looking for someone like you, that he can't sleep any more that he told someone about you. Really marriage!

On different occasions These Women claimed that, when they are with them, some clients take the opportunity to talk about their everyday life contexts. On those occasions, in the intimacy of the car or the bedroom, clients talk calmly and spontaneously about their public symbolic life, their fears, and their private intimacy. In those moments, the client assumes the emotional illusion that they are interacting with a Woman - not with the service provider - who is really taking the time and demonstrating interest in their personas, although, from the point of view of the Prostitutes, they are enacting the techniques mentioned above to create the atmosphere of trust while becoming the custodians/ confidants of the clients' secrets and burdens, as text boxes 79 to 83 below illustrate.

79. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Dec. 18th 2013, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia street

“W: Oh boy, there was a guy I left at 7 a.m. I was here all night. The weather was lousy and at 6 a.m. I got a client, a handsome young guy, boy, the guy started to talk, talk, talk and he spilled his guts. I started to talk. Look, I've got a son and there are lots of young guys that come here and I honestly don't know what they're doing here. At their age they should be seeing girls, doing things, they're all, most do drugs. They can't have an erection. Men aren't aware that they no longer have a clue. Most men are sexually impotent. Those that come here are the worst, those that fuck the least, I can't even laugh really what they come and do here really and the young man started to tell his story: that he liked a girl – he showed me the picture – and what not. The young man started to tell me such a terrible, terrible story and started crying and crying and crying. I got out of the car down there – the girl that was nearby asked me what had happened because I was crying and crying and crying. I was in shock with what happened and with that story. What can I do? It's that case, we see so much stuff and we feel our hands are tied.”

80. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Feb. 12th 2014, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia street)

“She also mentioned that some men come to talk.”

81. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Nov. 27th 2014, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia street)

“W12: Lots of people can learn from our experience. Because we see the world in a much deeper way. I mean, we see all kinds of people. Sometimes I go for a blowjob and I spend an hour talking. I love talking about everything with people. I love to learn even Portuguese and world history. I love it, I love it. I love to talk and to learn. Every time I spend an hour doing a blowjob, I don’t regret it because I get something out of it.

Researcher: And is the person nice to you?

W12: Yes, definitely. While I’m there, I don’t even notice how fast time passes away. Sometimes we don’t even know the person and dawn has broken and we didn’t even notice it. We were there talking about everything and it’s nice. Not all people, but it’s like that.

W12: Yes, definitely. Some clients are close. We stay for a long time and they love being with me to talk. Sometimes it makes us feel well that someone likes to be with you to talk about life. There’s a young man here who pays just to talk. I need to talk, I need to speak. There’s another one that come to talk and he says his wife is very strong and beats him up. I don’t know whether he’s wacky, or telling the truth.”

82. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Feb. 5th 2015, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia street)

“Street team partner: You also listen.

W1: I talk, listen, because there are a lot of people here who don’t come for the sex, they want to talk.

Researcher: Is it really?

W1: They need a bit of affection, a hug, they don’t come here for you to get there, “Done, take off your briefs!” while they fiddle with their mobile phone. No, I get into the car. I have clients here whose life I know all about, all of it! There are many quite a few that like to talk and want me to talk and ask, there are many

that say, “Show me pictures of your daughter! Oh, she’s beautiful. What’s her name? Would you like to see mine?” See? I get in the car and ask, “How is what’s-his-name? That’s why I win my clients over. I’ve got one that’s rung me every day for years. And they text us. At Christmas my mobile phone reached its message limit twice. I have clients and friends. Then I have those I like a little more. Obviously. But most of them are friends. We eventually develop a friendship. Yesterday a friend of mine came here — he always gives me forty euros and pays for the room — yesterday he gave me seventy euros! He got a good deal so he gave me seventy euros for the baby. Well, it’s that relationship, he showed me his girlfriend’s pictures, his ex-girlfriend’s, he told me she had got herself an Indian boyfriend and dumped him, that she’s seeing an Indian now, this and that and I listened to it all!”

83. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Sex Workers’ Focus Group (June 12th 2015)

W1: Holy moley, but there are men who come to prostitutes to talk, to complain about their wives, their children, their mother-in-law... (voices concur in the room)

W2: And sometimes they’re the ones who pay the most

W6: True.

W1: I’ve made a lot of money by just listening.

W2: Me too. Just listening. I made great friends, good people.

W1: Do you know why? Because we don’t know the other side. We don’t know their wives or their children and they can speak openly with us...

W3: Yes, of course.

???: Because they can’t talk at home.

W1: It’s not only at home. It’s with a friend too because his friend might tell another friend, and his wife or family might get to know and we won’t tell the family

W6: We don’t know their families

W1: We don’t know their families. We’re there. They pay so much an hour and there they are...

W3: And they want to get it off their chest...

W1: And they want to get it off their chest and we listen

Researcher: What do they talk about?

W1: They talk about a whole lot of things, about everything

W3: Loneliness, their lives... that they're not happy

W5: Yeah, hmm, hmm

W3: That they aren't happy

W2: Their weariness...

W1: They talk about their problems at home: his children who are over the hump, that his wife is now fat and used to be thin when he first met her and that he doesn't love her any more but there's the furniture and the family...

W3: That's right.

W1: That the wife is no good in bed; she doesn't know a thing; she talks nonsense; they say all sorts of things about their wives, that their wives are good for nothing but they have lived with them for thirty years...

W3: And why? Because of marriage...

W1: And the furniture, the cars, their bank account.

W3: Of course

W1: That is what? Is that Life?

W2: This is what Life is not.

W1: Am I not right?

All of them: Yes, you're right.

W1: They don't have a life.

W2: They are oppressed by that... that routine... and everything, and by the family and when they catch someone who... can see your other side...

W1: Yeah

W2: And many of them, spill out their guts... well, there you are...

W1: Because we can understand... I mean, we don't understand a thing; we're making our money...

W3: Our money. Of course.

W2: Because we are good because we stop and listen. That is what women at home don't do

W1: We play the role of a psychologist

(...)

W1: Take me: there was a time when I made a little money and would go and make a deposit at the bank and I really thought it strange that the bank manager looked at me, well... I knew he knew that I led a certain kind of life, it

wasn't convenient at that place because it was close to the bank. Everything was fine and then he met me at another place. Someone called out my name and I said, "Look, I'm sorry, I'm not going with you because I know you" and he said, "But I just want to talk". I can tell you the man's life was in tatters. I squandered the man's money away for a year so he could tell me all about his life. And there was never anything between us. A beautiful, handsome man. He needed someone to talk, someone to go out for dinner with and he spent long hours telling me his life. Would anyone imagine this? I don't think so."

Sex Workers maintain that clients manifest a desire to talk about the worries of their symbolic lives: their good or bad relations with their wives, their children, the regrets about their sexual life with their legitimate partners, work issues and all sorts of problems that affect them. Besides the abovementioned issues, Sex Workers say that clients may also share their vulnerabilities concerning a physical feature of theirs that causes self-embarrassment and low self-esteem in the intimacy of the one-to-one encounter. According to These Women, in those circumstances clients feel they will not be able to please a woman sexually or that they will not match the expectations that the potential partners may have about them. As Prostitutes create the conditions of empathy, non-judgment, and trust in their interactions, clients share that they feel marginalized or differentiated in terms of their required manhood attributes. As they do not feel they have to live up to others' expectations in those encounters with Prostitutes, they allow themselves to acknowledge their vulnerability as illustrated in text box no. 84.

84. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Feb. 5th 2015, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia street)

"W1: And he was happy, yet it was nothing extraordinary, because he had no dick, there are many who have very small shlittles and in front of a woman they feel embarrassed. Here they don't feel compelled to give a woman pleasure, because I'm not here for them to give me pleasure

Researcher: They feel free, don't they?

W1: Exactly, and so they feel more comfortable because here we don't judge whether they have a small dick like this, or whether it's withered, Yet, if they go with a woman, like you, it's like a date "What if I fail, what if I can't... my dick is

so small... and there it is... and she will even leave! Isn't it? I won't be able to give her any pleasure, and that. I have a client here who has two testicles and they're huge. He went with me once, twice and the third time he said, "Have you noticed I have a problem?" And I said, "Yes I have, darling and so what? What's the problem? There are so many problems, love, if only you knew the problems I see" and he said, "Oh, is this normal, then?" and I said, "Yes!" It's not but it's OK. "That's a problem men have, every man with testicles has problems. It has to be treated, it's fluid retention" And he said, "Oh, yes, it is! That's right!"

In all these cases, women focus on the client, on what he wants to disclose, by paying attention to them and giving them feedback of normality and acceptance, which makes them feel that they can entrust them with their intimacy. On the other hand, this open communication is not only due to the way These Women use their emotional intelligence, both in the practice of the interactional ritual to appear to have genuine interest in the client, and to identify the client's emotional needs in view of the answers that most likely will allow him to feel secure.

The exposure of the clients' intimacy, the readiness with which they unveil it, means that for them, even if unconsciously, what they say therein is not likely to cross the line that divides that world from their Public Symbolic Reality. All vulnerabilities are unlikely to be unmasked or transposed into their daily life and affect their symbolic *sacred self*. Their intimacy is revealed but under the protective shield of the hegemonic social characterization of Prostitution and Prostitute. The greater the public invisibility assigned to These Women or Prostitutes' identification mark as marginal, the greater the social protection granted to clients' secrets, shared in contexts that are external to the Symbolic World and are very unlikely to cross or overlap it.

The clients' disclosure can be grouped as follows:

1. Sexual Order: Conquest and Seduction; Fear that their physicality does not fulfil manhood standards.
2. Relational Order: Communication with women, family and work problems, love crises.

3. Others: Feelings of sadness, anguish, loneliness.

Concerning the disclosures made under the sexual order, Prostitutes' clients are addicted to the conquest and romance drive. Some men want Prostitutes to like them as individuals and others aim to receive validation that they have given sexual satisfaction to Prostitutes. These Women also say that after ongoing interactions with the same man, they suggest that the following sexual relationship could be free of charge as if the encounter would entail much more than mere sexual services.

This behavioural pattern is related to the need, and consequent illusion those men have, to suppress the commercial nature from that interaction. Accepting the sexual interaction for what it is - the exchange of sex for money - would mean that the client would have to become aware of his own objectification, of assuming his "self" in its exclusively functional and commodified dimension. In fact, it is not the individual that matters. For Prostitutes the client represents the money they will obtain.

Additionally, paying for sexual intercourse is understood by symbolic men as humiliating because the interaction did not result from their personal and subjective attributes to conquer women's affection. To fully assume that the woman is only there because he pays for her to be there is to subvert the order of domination to the extent that the woman is placed outside the matrix of emotional control, fragility and consequently submissiveness.

The clients that are characterized as addicts are emotionally dependent on the expectation that this achievement will result in women's genuine affection, an attempt to meet the symbolic expectation to be appreciated, recognized, and successful. Their addiction fulfils their need to maintain and project for to themselves and others an image of achievement and success through These Women's expression of affection towards them.

Further, These Women also explained that clients reveal feelings of embarrassment and shame about their physical features which they are at ease to

express to them. The fear of not corresponding to manly images and expectations as endorsed by the Symbolic Law. Moreover, clients feel empowered to speak about themselves outside the *sacred self* content which they have to display permanently in their interactions in the Symbolic World.

The self-censorship the clients internalize of failing to meet a given male heterosexual normative ideal becomes easier to reveal first, to women and second, to women who are socially and morally estranged, making it easier to detach themselves from it as non-existent because its disclosure was made to someone they have no obligation to recognize in their legitimate symbolic interactions. Revelations about the non-correspondence to a certain normative ideal of the heterosexual masculine gender, conveyed to someone who does not correspond, to the normative ideal of the feminine heterosexual gender due to their Prostitution context.

The failure to lay bare their need to project an overvalued image of themselves is a generative product of the fear of not corresponding, in the Public Symbolic World, to that idealized image that constitutes their subjectivity. The need to share and talk about their physical complexes is the generative product of the fear of not corresponding to manly normative ideals in the Public Symbolic World. The need to share and talk about problems at home, with the family and children is the generative product of the fear of showing that they are fragile and powerless to deal with family matters in the Public Symbolic World, which would undermine their idealized role of always presenting themselves as control holders.

The simple need to communicate matters, to talk about oneself and what one feels is the generative product of the fear of showing what one really thinks and feels in the Public Symbolic World. In essence, it is the need to share the emotions of vulnerability that are not easy to express in the Public Symbolic World without jeopardizing the image of the *sacred self* in relation to which men themselves feel an idealized connection, an emotional attachment to their normative ideal.

Prostitutes make their own analysis of the causes and dynamics underlying the clients' needs. In their perspective men do not sustain with their legitimate partners a real intimate relationship. The perception of sex workers about "Other Women's" happiness is that it is a vivid lie, based on falsehood, infidelity and secrecy. According to These Women it is the experience of a façade or fantasy, sustained on what the "Other Woman" assumes as a legitimate relationship: economic means and status of social respectability. According to These Women neither the client nor the "Other Woman" are happy; they pretend they are. What, in their view, is lacking in the legitimate relationship is the expression of what one really feels and thinks - which means that the legitimate relationship is deprived of the true sharing of vulnerability, since it is precisely this sharing of the truth that each one carries within themselves, which creates a truthful bond, connection and intimacy.

For Prostitutes, the ideal of intimacy or true relationship with the other is experienced when there is a truthful, unrestrained dialogue between the couple about their sexual desires, vulnerabilities and fears. Consequently, the lack of dialogue generates monotony, repetition, shame and embarrassment that eventually takes control of the relationship and creates barriers that become insurmountable and inaccessible to both participants. These barriers are then sedimented by an experience of relationship sustained by the social order, namely through its legal and social markers: children, loans, mortgages, home, furniture, car, family expectations, etc. All the markers that in the hegemonic narrative are necessary for the symbolic existence of a partnership are verified, but according to sex workers' perception it is not a genuine relationship because their participants do not engage in acts of caring for both intimacy. Therefore, by failing to fulfil the basic need for communication and dialogue about what they really feel, think and desire, over time the apparent symbolic relationship transmutes into feelings of deep solitude. It's like having a relationship that socially marks both members as intimate but once inside the walls of their bedroom they confront themselves as strangers, unable to communicate what really resonates within each one. A barrier made of shame, guilt and fear of not matching what both assume as an expectation of the self, of the other and of the interaction between the two, as exemplified by text boxes no. 85 and 86.

85. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Sex Workers’ Focus Group (Jun. 12th 2015)

“Researcher: And do you think their wives are happy?”

W1: Their wives have one feature...

W2: They’re happy because they don’t lack money...

???: They pretend to be happy.

W1: Because they don’t lack money, they have a Mercedes at their door, they have a housekeeper, they go to the hairdresser’s, they tell their bizarre stories at the hairdresser’s because if you speak to beauticians and hairdressers, they’ll tell you they have money for all of it but the rest is missing, and they might even pay a dude to go to bed with them because the guy at home is no longer interested in that...

(laughter)

W3: Yes

W1: They couldn’t care less because they’re not interested in them either; it’s only to keep up appearances...

W3: But it’s because of this world; this world is very complicated, isn’t it? Of this world that is like... They live in... live in... live in loneliness... and they’re sad inside, see?; they’re not unhappy and that’s why they look for people like this, don’t they? In our field. (...)

Researcher: Why are these people like this? Why does this happen? Have you ever thought about it?

W2: Because they don’t have a tolerant atmosphere at home.

All: Because they’re unhappy

W3: First they’re happy but with time...

W1: They’re fed up.

W2: It’s a front... their lives...

W5: They live of appearances.

W5: Many marry for convenience.

W1: And in that case it makes no difference whether you’re rich or poor; it’s just a written contract. But there’s something else: certain people have a problem in their minds; there’s something in their minds that doesn’t work properly; we now see paedophiles and that... that’s a disease, something that happened

during their childhood, well I don't know, I'm no health technician to be able to explain that... but it can be associated to some psychological problem too...

W3: It's also male hormones.

W1: Well, I don't know...

W2: I think it's lack of openness, lack of openness at home, with his wife; they no longer trust...

W1: I believe there are men who got married to seem acceptable to the family. Because they don't like women; they're homosexual.

Researcher: Did you mean they don't communicate?

W2: Yes, lack of openness, because eventually, for example in an intimate experience, there are varieties and when you stop doing the things you like with the person you like, it gets duller and duller and you start hiding, and there you are, that lack of communication; I stopped liking this and started liking that; no, they don't talk and a wall is set up with his own wife, see?, that...

W3: They must also have an inclination that they have; they have a penchant.

W2: Yes... and sometimes they don't choose... yes, I think so.

W3: If they're looking for something, that's because they have an inclination... I mean in my field, not yours, mind you! If they choose me it's because they must have a certain spark, it might be small but it's there...

W1: Today homosexuality is more acceptable but it's still not on...

W2: But it's only acceptable if you share with...

W3: I'm not thinking of your field, I mean mine.

W2: That's a different speciality (and laughs)

W3: A certain part isn't, because at home they like to fiddle with their weenies, or a toy, things like that and they look for...

W2: The fantasies they're embarrassed to have with their wives

(...)

W3: They're ashamed, they don't come out... they haven't come out when they go with you...

Another woman: They don't come out.

W2: They're not free about what they feel, they're not free about what they feel, they hide the feeling...

W3: They're not free and there's something else, sweetie... when they to a guesthouse with me, they walk a kilometre behind me, and they're on the phone;

they're not talking to anyone, they're faking and when they get to the door of the guesthouse, they do this (he mimics someone who is embarrassed looking over their shoulders all around — embarrassment, and they laugh at Paula's mimicry) It's as though it were a crime...

W2: But it's all out to be seen (laughs)... they won't come out

W3: They're embarrassed... they won't come out...

W2: They don't acknowledge the pleasure they have...

W3: Then they go in, open up and they're like ballerinas.

W2: We're more uninhibited...

W3: Society is a bit...

Researcher: So, what you're telling me is that men are frustrated and only overcome their inhibition with you lot, and women don't talk about their bodies and their stuff either.

W1: No, most of them don't...

W2: I think they're afraid of talking about feelings, it's more about feelings; they're reluctant to reveal what they feel...

W1: I believe there are women who never took off their clothes in front of their husbands. I believe there are women who never had an orgasm with their husbands, they don't know what it is, they know nothing about it... They might never have seen a naked man because it's shameful... (all laugh)

(...)

W2: I'm even surprised that their wives have never seen them naked because the first thing they do as soon as they go in and lock the door is take off their clothes.

W3: But some... (imperceptible)

Another woman: It's true

W1: But at home they don't do that, darling.

W2: Obviously

W6: There they have more respect

W1: More respect

W2: They even sit down to get their pyjamas on. (They laugh and take on a mocking tone)

W6: There they are more careful."

86. Text Box – Field Work Diary, Street Teams (Jan. 29th 2015, Night, Helen Street/Iphigenia street)

“W1 was telling about an episode where a couple wasn’t sharing with each other their intimate concerns, what they really felt and thought:

Researcher: And nobody talked about it.

W1: There was a little monster there between them disturbing their relationship. A monster that was growing! They were having intercourse and that little monster was right there. Because of that, because of monsters in relationships and it grows! It grows and it’s all a question of time till it takes over the relationship.

Researcher: They don’t even talk about those things with their girlfriends.

W1: And it would only be a question of time till the monster sapped the relationship; it grows and grows and then it doesn’t come alone, others come in its wake.

Researcher: There are misunderstandings...

W1: Other monsters come after that one, and then others. He gets upset about that.

Researcher: He thinks it’s because of that, then she thinks it’s because of that.

W1: And it grows branches and eventually the little monster eventually undermines it all and the relationship comes to an end, even if not because of that, it ends. It’s the relationship that ends! That’s exactly how it is!”

What is aired in street conversations as well as in the sex workers’ Focus Group regarding the façade relationships between legitimate women and clients is that, for These Women, in the intimacy of that legitimate relationship, the satisfaction on the part of the "Other Women" over their social status, economic tranquillity and respectability in relationships is a compensatory mechanism or a mere substitute for the lack of real articulation and expression of their sexual desires. It is the exchange between the non-intelligibility of the expression of the sexual desire of the feminine gender under the cloak of a fantasy that their social relation is. Fantasy because it is a relation intrinsically without intimacy, which is replaced by the dynamics of the living together, to have children, to share daily life, heritage and descent. However, the component of sexuality bound to intimacy as

truth of itself and of itself and as truth of the one over the other does not integrate the existing scope of the relationship with the partner.

From the above data, we conclude that what induces the clients they identify in their reports to seek sexual services is the need to achieve in that specific context, the desire to be desired, the desire to be accepted, the desire to express their vulnerability and emotions.

The social order suppresses in Men the possibility of self-recognition and consequent public assertion of their failures, their frustrations, their vulnerabilities and other fissures that might occur between their daily life and the idealized expectations of Men's archetype. Clients, in the symbolic world, are deprived of a communication platform that allows them to articulate and express their vulnerabilities and feelings without this disrupting the projected expectations of their social self.

Simultaneously, "Other women" are deprived of having access to the recognition of their sexual desire and of articulating, thinking and expressing it.

For Prostitutes, communication problems occur within the dynamics of heterosexual monogamous legitimate relationships, where each partner becomes more attached to convey a *sacred self*, constituted by the public order, than to unveil their inner selves. In sum, the normative order of social interaction has managed to colonize the most private dimension of the interaction between two human beings. And it is this colonization that sustains the existence of the sexual market.

If the present research began with the deconstruction of the monolithic social identity of Prostitutes, in the present chapter we have just deconstructed clients' monolithic social identity.

If the answers that are sought in most researches about sex work are intended to point out the main reasons why women go into prostitution contexts, fewer are the works that, by distancing themselves from a framework that naturalizes

heterosexual sexuality as the producer of dominant men versus dominated women, question the constitution of masculine subjectivity. The present chapter shows that the relations – both the client and the prostitute maintain – might distance themselves over time from the disseminated idea of being simply contingent encounters for exclusive physical and sexual intercourse to be interpreted as aiming at the satisfaction of emotional needs produced and generated by the symbolic power that constitutes masculine heterosexual subjectivity.

Considering that these relations of divestment of men's vulnerabilities and fulfilment of intimate needs endure in time while remaining invisible to the Public Symbolic World, it makes me question whether the persistent invisibility of These Women's narratives as well as Prostitutes' public characterization as marginal, does not emerge exactly from the same hegemonic law aiming to reproduce the symbolic masculine regulatory ideal. Moreover, if the social resistance to recognizing Prostitution as Sex Work is not aimed to maintain a elusive reality, which by allowing an escape valve to men's inner vulnerabilities, provides grounds for the symbolic masculine regulatory ideal to remain out of trouble.

One might also add that these relationships occur in contexts where both Prostitutes and clients are from the beginning in the immediate co-presence of one another and assess the risk and take the risks associated with it. I question if the intimacy These Women talk about can be fulfilled when services are provided in closed houses, in clubs or in contexts where the commercial character of the service is unambiguous, where interactions are withdrawn from this imminently personal involvement and control. On the Streets, These Women's physical insecurity is exchanged for clients' emotional needs, both are deliverers and keepers of the others' vulnerabilities, thus, disclosing the profound human nature that such interactions may entail.

7. Encounters with the Outsides of one's Intelligibility

The present work sets its empirical grounds on the disruptive effects that occurred in the interactional normative order, during the encounters among the street team partners, the researcher and sex workers.

The interactional order is not made up solely of an exchange of linguistic signs verbally expressed. It bears body rituals, face expressions, tones and inflexions of voice which, in compliance with a certain normative order, are supposed to be conveyed according to a certain context and interactional frame.

Subsequently, participants become attached to a certain interaction, and portray their role in it, according to the emotional substance that arises during its course. A participant's emotions are produced in the course of interactions, and they are vulnerable to other participants' exchanges. Emotions are also a distinct level of receiving information about not only the participants but also how one participant relates to the others and to him/herself during the time they maintain their co-presence. Most importantly, emotions are carriers of information that escape one's control. Very often people express how they feel angry or amused about a certain interaction without being able to link it, intellectually and in the immediacy, to a certain external causation or trigger event.

Naturally, if one embodies certain emotional feedbacks and usually responds in accordance with a certain interactional normativity, whose context and frame and content self-replicate over and over, nothing significantly disruptive accrues to her/him. The same happens if one plays the interactional game in a way that matches their expectations, their sacred self or idealized self or if the interactional frame and signs exchanged in it match the terms from which their subjectivity has been produced. In such cases, reflexivity will fold upon the life events that come from the usual order and will not tangle with the inner structures and normativities that constituted and still do their subjectivity.

When the researcher and the street team partners started the rounds and began interacting with sex workers on the streets, overlapping the frame and context of

our ordinarily life interactions, that circumstance produced a surprising, uncontrolled and upsetting emotional reaction in all of us.

The resistance to greet them with two kisses and hugs; the unsettling body discomfort felt in sex workers' co-presence; the embarrassment and even fear of being spotted by someone we knew; the unconscious practice of changing clothes before running out to the street and the interactional avoidance of looking at clients, was felt during those initial street interactions.

The emotional commentaries were perceived by each of the members as something they were rationally not supposed to feel: the body discomfort was unintentional and clashed with each one's normative ideal self - of being an individual without prejudice, rationally portraying a certain "care-giver" role which is socially valued.

A fundamental awareness occurred: it threatened and discredited the assumption that we had projected of ourselves and our identity. Thus, the emotional feedback did not rationally correspond to what one is supposed to feel in accordance with a certain idea of the self. Our idealized projected self was somehow confronted with another self. The former although valid in other contexts, was incapable of being sustained therein. Secondly, the body discomfort was felt connected with the fact that in that geographic space one could easily be seen by someone who is part of one's "normal" interactional order, who could jump into that specific interactional context and whose interpellation would bring each one of us to the why and who questions that we desired to avoid.

Thus, the researcher and the team partners personally experienced the risks of overlapped interactional orders.

The fact that the risk provoked apprehension means that both interactions are not supposed to overlap simultaneously in public. Our concern would not be how to interact with them, but how we could interact without fearing the misperception of our social identities, because both interactional orders are carried publicly in a frame of "normality". The risk of that misperception caused

the embarrassment which is connected with unfulfilled relevant expectations, which are of a moral nature and connected with the social identities of those present.

Furthermore, the interactions with the Women on the street would inevitably, although not only, cover sexual topics, disclosed in what at the beginning overwhelmed the team partners and the researcher for their strangeness, intrusive character, shameful indiscretion and use of rough language. Moreover, the fact that, as we were complete strangers to sex worker, that circumstance was not an impediment for Women to talk about men and sex, with all kinds of words and descriptions. Having women talk about those issues with such knowledge and personal experience was completely new. For the street team partners, as well as for me, our immersion into a sexual discourse, totally apart from the structured accounts we had always heard and thought, introduced and discussed with the same tone and ease as one discusses the most trivial aspects of daily life: children, housekeeping, health, financial distress, clothing, gossip, hair and dress style etc., had a disruptive effect.

If initially the first clashes with the rudeness and crudeness of the conversations provoked a linguistic shock and even a certain sense of violence in us, with the gradual exposure to those interactions, the researcher and the street team partners moved emotionally from a state of violence into perplexity, from perplexity to a feeling of lightheartedness and finally from that to a feeling of release and linguistic empowerment.

The emotional commentaries that were felt by the street team partners during the course of their interactions with sex workers were assumed as objects of their inner talks. And that happened precisely because they had produced a disruptive effect on the individuals' previous sense of "normality": both concerning ideas and discourse, and their idealized self. On the one hand the disruptive effect entailed the questioning of one's subjectivity, on the other, it entailed the questioning of the hegemonic discourse.

The inner talks evolved around two nuclear questions, both of them having the emotional commentaries that were felt during the interactions as their starting

points: the first connected with the “Ideal Self” and the social roles instantiated during our interactions, and the second connected with preconceived ideas, beliefs, a certain social identity and social context.

In the first occurrence, the questions one poses are:

- Why did I feel that way? If I was enacting the role of the “care giver” on the streets through those interactions,; if I believe in a Self who conveys a humane , generous, unprejudiced self, why should I feel uncomfortable, ashamed, embarrassed just because they overlap the usual frame of my normal interactions, an overlapping that I want to avoid?
- Why did I feel overwhelmed with sex conversations with the participants’ terms and signs that were being exchanged about that particular topic?
- Why did I feel empowered and felt a sense of release afterwards?

Through this first set of questions, one operates the process of “critique” of their subjectivity and more importantly of the normative regulatory ideal that constitutes subjectivity. That operation was only possible as the effect of a social gathering that disrupted the normative order of our everyday life interactions.

Summarizing, that deconstruction process of each one’s own self idealization, allowed us, the researcher and the street team partners, to acknowledge the following:

1) We acquired the awareness that our symbolic self, as emancipatory and the non-reproducer of the dominant matrix of power relations, is an illusion. We were still enactors of the public order and of dominant power relations where the symbolic dichotomy between Care Givers and Prostitutes and the invisibility of the latter is still unduly entrenched in our subjectivity, in ways that are so deep and profound that we had no awareness whatsoever of it except when confronted therein, on the streets with those women.

2) We experienced the dissolution of the symbolic border line that divides the visible and invisible worlds. We were being participants of an interactional order where both worlds and their codes were enacted simultaneously, where frames

overlapped and linguistic signs and gestures co-existed and could be intercepted, crossed and mutually contaminated. Thus, our emotional commentaries were the expression of the symbolic division of both worlds that is part of us.

3) The dialogues about sexuality, the shameless interpellation we were being addressed with, throughout the street encounters revealed the possibility to talk about pleasure and sexual desire among women with the same disregarded moral value and emotional romance as when talking about other aspects of daily life. We became aware of our previous condition of not being able to think, to use crude, shameless, real words when engaging in dialogue about our sexuality unless using a frame of emotional and romanced love. The logic of the hegemonic discourse lay in the difference between the physical sexualized discourse of the prostitutes' narrative and the romantic asexuality of our subjectivity and their inherent tension: the tension between the social identification of a "prostitute" with the social identification of the "other Woman".

4) Interactions on the streets flashed the street team partners with the possibilities of exposing their feelings and vulnerabilities regardless of what others might think, judge or say. It marked the possibilities of exposing our emotional truthfulness no matter how vulnerable we would become to the Generalized Other. The emotional commentaries felt by the street team partners and the researcher are relevant as connected with a fracture over our previous ongoing internalized dispositions indorsed through our symbolic interactions and our ideal Selves. Thus, those emotional comments allowed for the inner structures that constitute our gendered selves, which we were not aware of, to become the material for our inner conversations.

The second set of questions one poses relates directly to preconceived ideas about social identities and contexts that previously marked our naturalized, absolute and normal perception of reality and of who others are and are expected to be:

1- How come we and those Women are so alike?

2-How come what they say provides me with distinct layers of understanding of myself and others?

3-How come sex workers' clients are as ordinary as the individuals with whom we interact every day?

4- How come women are so empathetic, knowledgeable and self-assured?

5-How come I feel so well and enthusiastic about these interactions and become emotionally attached to them?

Through this second set of questions, we distance ourselves from the hegemonic discourse and disrupt the previous conflation between that discourse and reality and we restructure our position regarding it. (What follows?):

1) Every day sex Workers cross the hegemonic symbolic line that forecloses their social identity as Prostitutes (to invisibility).

2) Sex Workers controlled the terms of their own objectification and were aware of its codes. They were not slaves of any idealization of physical beauty.

3) Sex Workers can have sexual pleasure in un-romanticized relations.

4) Sex Workers enact their performance without needing a safety net from third parties to assess and decide the risks.

5) Sex workers are emotionally intelligent using that intelligence during their interactions with clients and they talk about their emotions, facts and situations without fear of being judged for that.

6) Sex workers can enact assertive or aggressive responses in the face of danger.

7) Sex workers reveal that they are not oppressed during their activity and most of the time maintain control over it.

8) Clients' profile is prolific and could match any man from the street team members' everyday life.

9) If for Sex Workers men are seen as Clients under the interactional frame of the Sex market, for men, from the moment the car door closes, they instantiate an interaction that overthrows those limits to become perceived as a normal interaction between a man and a woman.

10) Techniques and rites of interaction performed by women disassociate the interactional frame from the mere "sex in exchange for money". Men do not want to maintain the awareness of being engaged in bought sex.

11) Clients reveal behaviors of conquest and seduction; they reveal the fear that their physicality does not match manly expectations; they use their interactions with sex workers to communicate worries as well as other aspects of their everyday life and to share feelings of sadness, anguish and loneliness.

12) Confidentiality and the exposure of intimacy on the part of clients, with the ease with which they do so, means that for them, albeit unconsciously, what they say and how they portray themselves is not likely to cross the line and that they will not be unmasked in the Public Symbolic World. They are free to share their vulnerabilities without fearing that this information or knowledge will affect the *sacred self* that they protect in their legitimate relationships.

13) Interactions with Sex Workers were carried out within a joyful, pleasurable and caring environment. Those interactions were unchained from the usual normative order that ties everyday interactions.

The deconstruction process mentioned above was only possible because it had a previous object to be deconstructed. An object concerning previous understandings of the reality of sex work and sex workers but also a previous understanding of how one feels and does its subjective self: considering the previous preconceived ideas of prostitution as it is portrayed in the news and was held by the street team members as a depressed, sad, obscure, oppressed, dirty, deviant, violent environment where women are portrayed as addicts, victims of coercive sex and mainly as "minors" in need for a structured social other to regain their lost dignity; considering the previous preconceived ideas of clients as

middle-aged uneducated men, , with distinct cultural backgrounds and with depressed marriage relationships; considering our initial endorsement to play the “care-giver” role throughout our interactions as if no other possible interactions would be possible to be enacted under those social identity markers; considering the idea of paid sexual intercourse as the exponential embodiment of women’s total submission and domination by men’s physical will and desires without any other layer besides the physical and sexual satisfaction of men.

There was nothing, from those preconceived ideas, that could apparently connect our identity selves with that outer-world, meaning a connection with the ones that lived outside the boundaries of our socio-economic and educational context. Before we would think that we had a legitimate, dignified sexual life and we were participants of heterosexual relations whereas our bodies were not made of mere chalkboards for others to write on. So it seemed and still does.

The symbolic line of discourse sets the limits of visibility. The women are relinquished to become visible and have a voice. The non-recognition of these sex workers and sex work as part of the Symbolic Law and its public invisibility leads these women to struggle to live a double identity within themselves and materialize their double life every single day, in fear of being discovered with the social consequences that they presume they would suffer - becoming definitely outcast. It is not only society that enforces a one-dimensional portrayal of prostitution by assuming their identity as a marginalized group and rejecting visibility to any others., In order to interact in the public symbolic realm, women themselves enact the reproduction of the symbolic law.

But their invisibility is also sustained not only because they lead a different sexual life from the legitimate one but because they belong to an elusive reality bearing the secrets concerning the heterosexual monogamous relationships and gender identities of “clients” and “other women” that are part of the exclusionary dimension of the public symbolic discourse instantiated in the everyday lives interactions.

In their institutional form, the street teams instantiate, with their performance, the narrative discourse that portrays this one-dimensional vision of Prostitutes as living immersed in a marginalized and outcast reality and to whom it will always be necessary to preserve a hopeful look for a possible social reintegration. That being the case, the mere exchange roles by the participants deters any possibility of self-disengagement from the normative regulatory ideal. As a care giver, that interaction puts me in the face of a reality to which I do not belong and have little or nothing to do with.

Their invisibility protects and is protected by women's sexuality being a non-subject, as long as the exterior and symbolic signs of the individual's life portrays or deliver legitimized sexuality or, at least, do not publicly contend with the symbols of legitimized and validated sexuality.

Their invisibility sanctions the normative and symbolic interactional order to gain and enforce its control over the most intimate interactions, the ones that occur inside a bedroom between its participants. Their invisibility allows clients to overcome their own unfulfilled human needs driven by a repressive gender archetype. Their invisibility allows the reproduction of women's fantasy of romanticized love and the Inseparable and mutual constitutive link between emotional bonds and sexual pleasure. Their invisibility allows the reproduction of women's portrayal as defenseless and sexually oppressed. Their invisibility reproduces the linguistic void of women's sexual self-talk and self-expression and their symbolic prohibition to control the codes of their own objectification.

Through the observations and discourses that came from the encounters that occurred between prostitutes and the street team, it was possible to disrupt the ontological aim of a hegemonic narrative that, not only establishes the exclusionary limits of who Prostitutes may actually be but also the inclusionary limits of who Women are.

At first, the rupture presents itself as an emotional affluence, which is beyond the control of the participants involved, when this emotional affluence interrupts the

participant's expectation of his own conduct and the conduct of the other. This rupture must make visible the terms of a regulatory ideal of gender whose invisibility was maintained by an interactional order that reproduced and generated it, since this invisibility obliterated its regulatory character by giving it a natural or essential appearance.

This proposes a second challenge: how to identify a subversive interaction? And how to distinguish or identify a practice as subversive? In what was possible to analyse with the present work, the practice is subversive if disrupts the subject on an interpersonal level, triggering emotional commentaries and reflexive thought over certain discourses of truth. The Prostitutes who have addressed their families by declaring what they do for a living subverted the invisibility generated by the symbolic line and felt relieved about it. The Woman that stand up in the theatre stage and declared herself as Prostitute subverted the invisibility generated by the symbolic line and felt as her life has just started again. The street team partners reflections about themselves and mostly important their distinctive declarations about how they have changed due to the street team's experience and how their awareness and conscious is currently being enacted by them throughout their interactions with others means that their interactions with prostitutes were subversive. In all cases these examples, one has brought oneself consciously inside itself and simultaneously outside one's relation with the gender normativities that forms its own sense of identity.

The possibilities for the subjectified subject to trigger the *politics of truth* and *operation of critique* of both the external and the inner normative gender structures lies in the everyday practices of the interactional normative order and how that usual and unaware flow of exchanged signs might be interrupted or broken, generating the emotional commentaries that becomes part of one's inner talk. At first, the disruption presents itself as an emotional abundance, which is beyond the control of the participants involved, when this emotional affluence interrupts one participant's expectation of his own conduct and the conduct of the other.

This disruption must render visible the terms of a regulatory ideal of gender whose invisibility was maintained by an interactional order that reproduced and generated it, since this invisibility obliterated its regulatory character by giving it a natural or essential appearance.

What social context is likely to favour the disruptive effect of encounters to bring back conditions for politically significant acts and discourses?

The researcher and the street teams partner's gender selves is structured by the gender normative matrix which their encounters with women living in the world of prostitution, immersed in practices of *conter matrix*, has triggered specific interactions that made possible our operation of *critique*.

Further research would better identify the specific conditions of encounter to trigger that critical process.

In addition, it is important to question everyday life opportunities for disruptive encounters to happen.

The encounters described in the previous chapters were first made possible by the street teams of the Catholic congregation of the Oblate Sisters of the Most Holy Redeemer, and subsequently by the researcher and the street team partners' engagement in those encounters.

The power effect of Prostitutes' one-dimensional symbolic identity and the Women's vow of silence as to their relation with that identity marker constitute the social condition for barring the opportunities for those encounters to occur.

Thus, the empirical explorations of the intersections between discourses, interactional normative orders and reflexivity ask for further research about the social power relations that stop certain encounters from happening while enhancing others to become the hegemonic colonizers of the interactional normative order.

Furthermore, the present research begs further analysis of the possible relevance for sex workers' awareness and reflexivity derived from their interactions with the street teams and a deeper investigation of the Nun's institutionalized subjectivity by exploring their relations with the Spiritual and Sexual Symbolic Discourse.

8. The Disruptive Effect

For the researcher and the street team partners, the interactional dimension of the street team's encounters interrupted the natural and ongoing flow of their social interpellation as women and their awareness of how gender was done and being done by their own enactments. The invisibilities of discourse and the possible interpellations that can subvert the effects of the symbolic power coexist in the same way as the hegemonic discourse does.

The inseparability between gender and gender identities is not static but it is a process that is constantly re-cited. These re-citations are produced and reproduced in the interactional order. And it is precisely in the interactional order that the possibility of a subversive re-citation takes place. It is precisely in the encounters, which disturb the normalized normative order, that the effects of power are curtailed.

The present work propose to describe three different yet correlated and mutually supportive dimensions of normative social and cultural structures: the discursive dimension; the interactional dimension and the intrapersonal dimension. The first one is engaged in chapter 3 regarding the public narrative concerning Prostitutes and Nuns, as well as the pre-conceived ideas which were carried by the researcher and street team partners before starting the street teams' work. This dimension is also analyzed in chapter 5 and 6 in relation to Prostitutes and Client's unidimensional social identities. The interactional dimension is provided in chapter 3 as well as through the use of the text boxes which illustrate the fieldwork as a continuum of social encounters. Finally, the intrapersonal dimension is analyzed through the researcher and street team partners' emotional commentaries and the description of that impact on one's reflections and sense of being.

These three dimensions coexist and intermingle, and they reinforce one another. They inherently exclude a view in which at a precise moment of one's life, one dimension takes the lead as the causation of all the others. In the contingency of one's life, all three dimensions are present and jointly enforce the hegemonic

symbolic power of the systems of sex and gender. That is why the three dimensions are transversal and tackled throughout the above chapters. The present work exemplifies how the three are interrelated.

A human being is born within social and cultural discourses and interactional normative orders that were not of his/her choosing. The reference to the researcher and the street team partners' sacred self; the face and line we are used to convey in our social gatherings; the pre-conceived ideas we were not aware of carrying; a certain way of interacting with one's self, one's body and one's asexual discourse, are all constitutive of one's inner structures. Because we are not aware of them, it becomes quite impossible to submit those inner structures to one's inner scrutiny.

Archer's analytical dualism seems to be irreconcilable with Foucault's assertion of human subjectivity as produced and brought to existence, as such, by the enactment of power, and with Butler's affirmation of the non-existence of a "free spirit" beyond discourse. Such affirmations would preclude the hypothesis of a subject's emergent properties apart from the social and cultural ones.

However, it is precisely what these three authors unveil with regard to the subject's agency that brings them theoretically closer. Foucault turns towards the ethics of the self, or the care of the self, as a practice for self-transformation, which entails a doer rather than a doing. In her later writings, Butler stresses the ethical concern for a liveable/grievable life in what may seem the foundation for a distinct concept of what being human is about. The foundational principle is based on the human original condition of total vulnerability towards others and the opacity of one's account about his/her constitution as an "I". For Archer, human reflexivity is a relational and practical process that constitutes an individual's emergent properties, a doing in which society and oneself become the object of the inner talk, rather than a theoretical principle or essence about what "human" is. Reflexivity, as a human practice and a technique of the self, can also be asserted from Foucault's later work. Reflexivity in Butler is at the core of the process by which power generates subordination. But if Butler, in her formulation of agency, concedes the iterability of discourse and its vulnerability for becoming

re-cited in unintended ways and terms that mitigates its enactment, it is possible of an intrapersonal reflexive process that can take the troubling effect of subversive re-citation as the object and content of a subject's inner talk, as much as the enactment of power generates reflexivity.

There must be a doer to enact the process of reflexivity regardless if the content of the inner talk is generated by the symbolic power of discourse or constituted by the unintended subject's awareness of its subversive re-citation in a certain moment and time.

87. Text box – Field Work Diary: Poem “Naive Dialogues with my self”

(Second Part – Oct. 2014)

“(…)

Me: But it's only a name. You can fill it in, use it with the biography you decide to have and use.

Me: I'm Gabriela Sofia but I'm also Gabi, Bi, Gabas, well... multiple individuals.

Me: Names that came up in the course of life.

Me: Yes...

Me: So you started off from something that was given to you when you were born, that you seized as yours, as something essential, but that you managed to transform by using the same letters or only some: Gabriela, Gabi, Gabas...

Me: This is interesting.

Me: It's subversive.

Me: That's right, being subversive with my own name.

Me: Being subversive with life itself. You have multiple identities, by using the same words you can always reconstruct them, reformulate them. But for that you need a mechanism that will allow you to do so.

Me: What mechanism, then?

Me: Distance. You need to distance yourself from yourself, look at yourself from the outside and use other people's eyes in a new perspective like what happens in some dreams when we can see ourselves as though we were someone else.

Me: What do you mean?

Me: Easier still: the mechanism is Doubting: doubting who we are and to doubt, we need to be others, lots of others.

Me: Strange...

Me: What?

Me: That that mechanism doesn't make me anxious. Because that implies relentlessly questioning and being available for reconstruction, willing to leave everything behind, even what I believe is my essence, my identity, till I feel ok about myself again.

Me: Exactly! That's why you don't feel anxious.

Me: Why?

Me: Because it's exactly the mechanism that is your essence"

Gabriela Farinha

Thus, reflexivity is the relational or interactional process by which the self takes itself, others and widely the cultural and social discourse as an object of its inner talk. The possibilities of self-rearticulating, decentralization or deliberative action comes in all three authors through the process by which an individual can relinquish – which does not mean to reinvent - his/her identity as an “I” for what it is: a relation with a hegemonic normative symbolic discourse instead of assuming identity as a determined, naturalized and fixed category.

But one will have to admit that an emergent property of human beings like reflexivity is not enacted out of thin air but emerges together with an individual's emotional and linguistic apparatus, whose intelligible boundaries constitute the “I” that reflects. Consequently, the process of reflexivity is originally prevented from wondering about certain possibilities, thoughts, and emotions. Chapters 3 and 4 illustrate the researcher and the street team's unawareness of certain inner structures of their gender selves.

The subject who is produced through subjection is not produced instantly in its totality. Instead, it is in the process of being produced, it is repeatedly produced through the ongoing enactment of the symbolic power of discourse into one's doings, into one's everyday lives. The materialization of the regulatory ideal is not static but, as Butler states, is rather a citational process. Thus, its instantiation produces and is produced by one's doings. Likewise, its subversive recitation and

rearticulating to fully call into question its hegemonic force has to happen in one's doings.

Reflexivity, as the intrapersonal dimension of the present work analysis, as described in chapter 3 and 4, is a mechanism that can potentially be enacted by every human being, but its enactment or content or effect is exposed to the same vulnerabilities of Power itself: it is not only generated through and within the power of symbolic discourse but also through and within the subversive re-citation of discourse that calls into question its hegemonic force. The content of our conversations with Prostitutes, as well as our interaction with them on the streets consubstantiated, for us, a subversive re-citation of our gender doings.

Prostitutes addressed the researcher and the street team partners to position themselves differently in relation to the hegemonic normative symbolic discourse and made us assume our gender identity more as a regulatory ideal than a determined, naturalized or fixed category. The disruption or subversive re-citation occurred within the interactional order.

The content of one's everyday inner talks is taken from the actions that constitute the interactional normative order of everyday life. The conversations and emotional commentaries, which arose as a consequence of the researcher and the street team partners' interactions with Prostitutes, became the material for our inner talks. Thus, the interactional dimension is the ground for symbolic interpellation because there, in the co presence and social gatherings with others, one grasps the normative order that binds individuals with common and unconscious symbolic hegemonic meanings. It is where symbolic discourses maintain their regulatory force through the ongoing and casual interpellations – re-citations, occurring in everyday lives. The subject is formed through and within the power that regulates its doings, by the symbolic power that is enacted in the most common and automatic sequence of acts.

Consequently, the content that arose from that interactional experience was submitted by the researcher and the street team partners to their inner conversations allowing us to become aware and question our inner structures.

Furthermore, the practice of Critique that occurred, caused by the disruptive effect of those interactions, led all of us to take a distinct stance regarding the symbolic hegemonic discourse.

In sum, the interactional order provides the fruitful grounds for performativity because its doings sustain a normative order whereas participants enact the embodied symbolic script and role without awareness that they are being done instead of being doers. And the symbolic script and role instantiate the normative and regulatory dimensions of the hegemonic discourse grounded in the matrix of established power relations. The three dimensions are, at a certain moment and time, conflated into a systematic machine of power reproduction, whereas the hegemonic discourse constitutes the normative grounds of everyday life interactions and all together generate the subjective “I” that reflects, becoming the latter a product but also a producer and reproducer of those power relations, through their interactional re-citations with others and consequently firmly sustaining the wider hegemonic symbolic power of discourse.

However, if one takes the subject’s identity or subjectivity as determined by discourse, discourse is nothing if it is not operated through the interactional normative order. And if the language frame, in which no one escapes, is where subversion and agency come along, that subversion or agency are operationally activated through the same interactional order. Moreover, if one accepts reflexivity as an emergent power of the individual’s subjectivity through which they can take society’s language, norms and themselves as objects of their inner talks, the content of the act of doing reflexivity is enmeshed with how one lives his/her everyday life through and by their interactions with the world and others.

Thus, it is by the cause/effect of the interactional order, how one may be undone by others and how encounters have a potential disruptive effect over one’s inner dispositions, discourses and structures, as illustrated in chapters 3 and 4 above, that the substance for reflexive thought can be enhanced.

9. The Relevant Noun

I could not finish the present discussion without also addressing the inner dialogue I held with myself during the process of writing this work in what concerns the researcher's dilemma in choosing the appropriate terminology for referring to the women I interacted with.

I have to admit that before the data analysis, I would not have, as I do not have now, doubts in rationally sustaining the use of Sex Work and Sex Workers instead of Prostitution and Prostitutes. The use of "Sex Work" addresses a political frame for recognition of sex workers' political, economic, labor and safety rights in what concerns and relates to what they do for a living. Its use also entails the underlined social struggle for legitimization as well as a separation between an identity and a professional activity.

While I was immersed in the activity of data analysis, I began to wonder about the content of each signifier and their distinctiveness, if any. The question that came to my mind was: how different is the effect upon the Symbolic Hegemonic Discourse between someone's self-referencing him/herself as "I am a Prostitute" or "I am a Sex Worker"? Naturally I was thinking about the concrete situations I have described in Chapter 3, where the Women, in the interactional symbolic order, embraced and upheld their identity marker "I am a Prostitute" regardless of the stigmatized, dense burden conveyed by that particular social marker and facing the risks of such interpellation. Would it have had the same subversive effect if they had declared "I am a Sex Worker instead?"

During the fieldwork, seldom did the women self-identify as sex workers. It is true that these women were not engaged in collective action for the political recognition of their rights in the midst of the Portuguese abolitionist policy. Sex work is a goal to achieve, not a legal reality. Therefore, the referent is not part of the interactional daily life vocabulary while Prostitution and Prostitutes is. During my interactions in the streets the self-referent owned and used by the women was Prostitute. However, no doubts remain that Women's discourse and

perception associate the word with labor activity and all the features of a job or service provider as demonstrated in chapter 5 above.

At the same time, women mention the way the wider social discourse portrays Prostitutes as being much more than simply an individual who sells their body to make money. So, both terms “Prostitution” and “Sex Work” identify the exact same reality, i.e., a woman who professionally practices a sexual activity in exchange for payment.

What is the difference in the concrete situation of fact that justifies the existence of two nouns: Prostitution and Sex Work, both used to designate the same reality? One could argue that Sex Work emphasizes, by the use of the word “work”, the “doing” of a service provider, untying the person from their professional activity. Sex work, as the word “work” entails, refers only to those who have chosen to join the sex industry without force or coercion. Regardless if it was a first or last choice, it was still a free choice.

Sex Work and Prostitution coexist at the point of “work”: market, client, negotiation and retainer for services to be provided, delivery of services, payment, control, risk assessment and decision. However, in the case of Sex Work, the above points exhaust their full meaning and the dilemma is more concerned with whether its use only makes sense when sexual work is legally recognized or if it should be used despite its legal recognition since the practice fulfills the requisites of being called work. In Prostitution, on the contrary, the meaning entails much more than work.

As explored in chapter 3, the noun in the symbolic discourse constitutes an identity marker, the “I” of the Prostitute, the “I” of a woman subject to oppression, victimized, addicted, with a fractured personality, marginalized and so on, whose fragile physical condition together with personal, family, social and economic backgrounds, led them to a state of affairs - force/coerce situation – of getting into the abusive and oppressive sexual market. Likewise, Women who “are” prostitutes are women whose marginalized features are, thus, entrenched in their

personality and life as the only explanation for continuing to perform that activity.

Therefore, the symbolic discourse appeals to an identity marker that links the activity of Prostitution with Women who are personally fractured, outcast and marginalized. If the downgraded identity marker attached to the term was solely connected to the exchange of sex Services for money, thus, the term Sex Work would also be permeated by the stigmatization of the sort that Prostitution involves. If it is not the association with money that is targeted by Prostitution, then its stigmatized effect is linked with the use of women's sexual body. The hegemonic unacceptance of sex for money endorses a symbolic discourse that portrays the sale of one's sexual activity as being the same as the sale of one's personhood.

While reaching this point of reasoning, I imagined the situation in which a single Woman, living by herself, freely decides to engage in a sexual activity where she has Sex with different partners only for her own pleasure. Would it be publicly exposed as it happens with on-the-street Sex Work? Would she be considered a Prostitute although she did not match the other referents? Would she be considered as a deviant or disturbed individual although she acted, thought and lived her life "normally"? Finally, could it even be socially imagined that a woman, living in the domain of the symbolic discourse, undertook such behavior in the first place? The Women with whom I interacted both in the streets and in the Focus Group admitted they could achieve sexual pleasure in some interactions with clients, i.e., sexual intercourse stripped of any emotional attachment and relationship expectations.

Transgender women with whom I have interacted were even more affirmative in stating that they love what they do and even outside the sex market, they would continue to have sexual intercourse with occasional and distinct partners as long as they continue to get sexual pleasure out of it.

Another question that arose in my inner talks and was brought about directly by Prostitutes was the following: marriage or any other legal form of a legitimized

heterosexual relationship takes for granted the practice of sex between a man and a woman. Imagine that the couple's sexual pleasure is a void in the sense that neither of them achieves it. Although the woman is not sexually fulfilled, she still likes her partner and wants to preserve their bond for the sake of the emotional attachment, children or even her social status and perception. This woman would have sexual intercourse with her partner in a mechanical way like Prostitutes. The difference is the content of the reward for engaging in that mechanical activity. In the case of "Other Women" the reward is the maintenance of the legitimate bond with their partner. For Prostitutes the reward is money.

Moreover, Women regardless of the spectrum of the symbolic division line where they stand, might have had, at some point in their biographies, occasional sex from which they took more or less sexual pleasure or engaged in sexual intercourse in a mechanical way. Thus, the hegemonic unacceptance of sex for money is not the cause but a consequence of something else.

Simultaneously, the hegemonic discourse reproduces the regulatory ideal as far as women's sexuality is concerned. As asserted in chapter 3, the regulatory ideal portrays the natural identity of women's sexuality as "asexual" and "sacred, both in relation to the sexual discourse and in relation to their sexual body.

The social construction of Women's body and sexuality is, thus, endorsed to be lived by and through: emotional attachments and legitimate monogamous heterosexual relationships. That is the reason why the hegemonic symbolic discourse associates Prostitution with a market where Women's personhood is being sold because it is an activity that involves a part of women's body and women's sexual identity, which the symbolic hegemonic discourse insists on spiritualizing. The interactions with the Women on the streets, whose emotional commentaries I have already mentioned in chapter 4 and 5, exposed the researcher and the street team partners to the normativity of the abovementioned intersection between Gender and Sexual behavior.

The Women with whom I have interacted, call themselves Prostitutes at the same time as they convey emotional intelligence, control, awareness, reflexivity, risk

assessment and decision making in their activity. Moreover, their daily lives, families, social and economic concerns are not that different from the ones of any other woman. They cross the symbolic line every single day although in the Public Symbolic Realm they do not disclose the self-referent Prostitute, afraid that by doing so they will bring upon themselves, in their interactions with others and with wider society, the downgrading effect of the noun, which does not include or represent them.

If in their daily lives these Women openly declared that they were Sex Workers, the fact that they were using a noun which immediately untangles their doings from their beings, would not have the potentiality to bring awareness of a hegemonic symbolic discourse that aims to control women's sexual discourse and sexual body.

Differently, by declaring that they are Prostitutes, the women whose examples I described in Chapter 3, took ownership and embraced that injurious and stigmatizing social identity marker and projected it upon their recipients. By doing so, they have broken the pact of silence, declaring their symbolic truth in relation to the hegemonic social identity marker by stating "I am a prostitute"; they have exposed and become vulnerable to other's responses putting themselves at risk; they have disclosed it under interactional normative contexts in which they jeopardize the sustainability of their sacred self as it was until then, conveyed to others.

By uttering "I am a Prostitute" both in a context of a performance of art and within the family, the noun was re-cited by someone who does not match the one-dimensional identity and in the context where that re-citation is normally disavowed and silenced. It is the subversive re-citation that forced the recipient to become aware and recognize their public existence and pushed the boundaries of the symbolic noun further out in order to integrate women who are like any other women but simply have decided to use their sexual activity for money. The inclusion within the noun of these Prostitutes exposes the unnatural character of the regulatory ideal, which has a detrimental impact on the power effect of

hegemonic stigmatizing identities whose purpose aims at controlling and regulating women's sexual behavior.

Having my gender self “undone” as a consequence of my interactions with These Women who have brought my awareness to the unnatural regulatory ideal of women's sexual identity, shouldn't I try to reproduce, with the present work, their subversive re-citation by using the noun Prostitute? Or should I subscribe my political standpoint for Sex Work legal recognition and exclude, right from the beginning, the stigmatized noun?

This dilemma was felt during all my writing period. During that time, I allowed myself to freely use interchangeably both terms Prostitute and Sex workers as well as “These Women”, and postpone the final decision regarding the relevant noun to the very end of the writing process. As the impasse is still current and will probably continue, I have decided to accept the dilemma and lay it bare to the reader.

10. Epilogue

150 years ago, Antonia de Oviedo Schöntal, governess/preceptor of the Spanish Queen's daughters, took a decision: to leave her socio economic high status and embrace a project where she would interact with Prostitutes. The decision was not taken lightly as it would entail a life changing event, risks and concerns for her social reputation and economic subsistence.

In letters⁸ sent to Antonia, Pedro María Rubio on May 10th 1864 and António María Rubio on May 27th 1864, two close and dearest friends of Antonia, both appealed Antonia not to take the decision to devote herself to the project of opening a shelter for Prostitutes. In Antonio's letters, if Antonia accepted to embrace the project, she would face serious dangers:

1. She would find herself involved in the political games which crossed and intermingled with the Clergy;
2. She would risk Poverty;
3. She would be giving up her freedom to decide otherwise in the future;
4. She was risking, seriously and irremediably, her social reputation *"Allow me to tell you that the **practical union between sinners and penitents, nuns or sisters, and the lady, who is neither one nor the other, is not easy to achieve.**"* (Rubio 1864: 477) Thus, he warns that if the project fails, its execution would become inevitably attached to Antonia's name.
- 5- Her involvement with "Magdalenas" (Rubio 1864: 477) would bring her emotional displeasures and grieves.

In reply to her friends' refusal to support, Antonia writes back, on May 15th 1864, saying: *"In any case, knowing my lords so well, you will not be surprised to learn that, reading all the rest, my eyes filled with tears, and I wept bitterly. (...) The disapproval of friends as you are, in a thing in which I am not only decided but also compromised cannot be but painful for me (...) Meanwhile, my dear friends, if I cannot challenge these objections right now, since I do not know them, **I can***

⁸ Letters were translated by the Researcher from the Portuguese language to the English language.

say that I find it difficult for you to make any, that I have not thought of it from the beginning, and long before I shared with you this subject. (...) It was not, therefore, due to an inspirational enthusiasm that led me to this. I did it, after having considered the project well. The inspiration consisted in addressing to you, which I have executed on the 1^o of May. I do not understand the delay of my letter. I expected the answer impatiently, not to make a decision, since this was already taken. It was urgent that decisions were taken, without delay (...)” (Oviedo 1864: 469-472)

A deeply reflexive thought and a subsequent decision that was taken 150 years ago, by a woman, considered socially neither a penitent nor a nun, to risk everything to embrace a life project with and for Prostitutes was the original driving force from which the Catholic Congregation of the Oblate sisters of the Most Holy Redeemer was created. That reflexive thought and decision made possible that 150 years later, the researcher could dress on a blue vest and engage in a 2 year process of street encounters, from which the researcher found herself immersed in a deep reflexive inner talk unveiled in the distinctiveness of her current interactions with herself and others.

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