iscte

**INSTITUTO
UNIVERSITÁRIO
DE LISBOA**

Un/hairy resistance: the non-binary body between restriction, refusal, and negotiation.

Catarina Dauzenroth

Master in Psychology of Intercultural Relations

Supervisor:
João Manuel Calhau de Oliveira, Invited Assistant Professor, ISCTE-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

September, 2023

Department of Social and Organizational Psychology

Un/hairy resistance: the non-binary body between restriction, refusal, and negotiation.

Catarina Dauzenroth

Master in Psychology of Intercultural Relations

Supervisor:
João Manuel Calhau de Oliveira, Invited Assistant Professor, ISCTE-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

September, 2023

This thesis is dedicated to all the people who are on the mission or ready to take off to break the cistem.

Acknowledgements

The last two years in ISCTE's Master of Psychology of Intercultural Relations gave me the opportunity to reflect on my own cultural embeddedness and understanding, as well as to understand systemic injustice more deeply. The journey was truly transformative for me, and I am beyond grateful for the insights and experiences that supported my personal and academic growth. Now, shortly before graduation, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all the people who have accompanied me on this journey. I am deeply grateful to my class people and friends for our shared experiences that made these two years shiny ones. I would especially like to thank some people who have been a great support and inspiration to me.

Dear **Dr. Christin-Melanie Vauclair** and **Dr. Ricardo Borges Rodriguez**, thank you for your engagement in creating an encouraging and stimulating learning environment. Dear **João**, thank you for showing me an alternative academic space, for supporting me on my path without judgments, for always being there for my needs, and for supporting me with your knowledge, feedback, and good spirits. Thank you for all the flexibility and help throughout the process and, I must add, in the last days before submission. Without your constant belief that I could do it, I would not have believed in myself. Thank you for letting me grow in this project. Dear **Mama**, thank you for your endless love; thank you for always believing in me, supporting me in the ways that I take, and accompanying my journey with curiosity. Dear **Wolfgang** and **Dieter**, thank you for sharing your life stories with me, for always supporting me, and for your genuine care. Dear **Laurine**, thank you for creating a home together. Thank you for sharing tears, anger, and "vergnügte" moments on this journey. Thank you for letting me experience a space where vulnerability is possible. Dear **Mariana**, I don't have words for your endless support and love throughout this journey and beyond. Thank you for encouraging me and for making me believe in myself in moments when I couldn't. I feel so lucky to experience your presence in my life. Dear **Donna Mafalda**, thank you so much for your generosity and the space to let my mind flow; inspired by your wonderful space and presence. Dear **Inga**, thank you for flying through the endless universes of time and space with me, stopping at the most beautiful planets to explore, take a rest, and just be. I am happy to feel your love on this planet. Dear **Lotte**, thank you for creating memories together and for your constant acceptance throughout the last few months. Thank you, dear **Eduardo and Eugênio**, for welcoming me into your space. Dear **Anna, Rebecca, Ramona, and Lea:** Thank you for always visiting me in the spaces I end up in. Thank you for keeping the connection and being curious to grow together.

Resumo

Os pêlos do corpo têm um significado binário específico de género no contexto ocidental e a sua expressão dicotómica é regulada pelo controlo social pela via das normas de género. Através da lente dos pêlos do corpo, as forças hegemónicas que actuam sobre os corpos vêm à luz. As pessoas não binárias praticam o género para além da ficção mulher/homem e actuam no espaço liminar entre os géneros binários da sociedade hegemónica. Como experienciam estas características corporais de género binário? Não temos conhecimento sobre uma discussão sobre pessoas não binárias e os seus pêlos corporais. Por conseguinte, este projeto de conhecimento pretende explorar as experiências corporais de pessoas não-binárias com pêlos no corpo. Em 12 entrevistas exploratórias e semi-estruturadas, fiz perguntas sobre a sua incorporaçao vivida e percepcionada com pêlos no corpo. Fundamentadas na análise temática reflexiva através da lente da performatividade de género, as entrevistas destacam os pêlos no corpo como governamentalidade, os pêlos no corpo e o policiamento social, os pêlos no corpo como resistência política e os pêlos no corpo queering para reclamar a propriedade do corpo. Este projeto de conhecimento realça a forma como o des/fazer dos pêlos no corpo por parte de pessoas não binárias é constrangido por forças hegemónicas. Também demonstra como o des/fazer dos pêlos no corpo afecta a constituição de subjectividades não binárias e como o des/fazer dos pêlos no corpo pode reduzir o efeito de experiências opressivas. As narrativas são caracterizadas pela multiplicidade e contextualidade das performances com os pêlos do corpo.

Palavras-chave: não-binário, performatividade de género, pêlos no corpo, corporização, galáxia de género, subjetividade

Abstract

Body hair has a specific binary gendered meaning in the Western context, and its dichotomous expression is regulated by social control. Through the lens of body hair, the hegemonic forces acting on bodies come to light. Non-binary people practice gender beyond the fiction of wo/men and perform in the liminal space between the binary genders of hegemonic society. How do they experience such a binary gendered body characteristic? The conversation about non-binary people and their body hair has not yet started, to our knowledge. Therefore, this knowledge project aims to explore the embodied experiences of non-binary people with body hair. In 12 exploratory, semi-structured interviews, I asked questions about their lived and perceived embodiment with body hair. Grounded in reflexive thematic analysis through the lens of gender performativity, the interviews highlight body hair as governmentality, body hair and social policing, body hair as political resistance, and queering body hair to reclaim body ownership. This knowledge project highlights how the un/doing of body hair by non-binary people is constrained by hegemonic forces. It also demonstrates how un/doing body hair plays a role in non-binary subject constitution and how un/doing body hair can be experienced as coming to terms with oppressive experiences. The narratives are characterized by the multiplicity and contextuality of un/hairy performances.

Key words: non-binary, gender performativity, body hair, embodiment, gender galaxy, subjectivity

Index

Index of Tables

Glossary of Acronyms

cis   cisgender

cis-het   cisgender-heterosexual

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The gender binary, a eugenic project, is predicted on cultural extinction, in order for there to only be men and women. We cannot exist. I cannot exist. And yet we do, and yet I do. And yet we have and yet we will. This is our constitutive paradox. They say we are not real. And yet here we are. Breathing. We live impossible lives. Or, rather, we live seemingly impossible lives. It's not that we don't exist. It's that we draw breath beyond the political coordinates of the real that we are exiled from. Outside of the biology that they straight jacket. The history that they name. The grammar that they enforce. *ALOK (2023)*

Being born under the Eurocentric legacy of the fundamental idea of a binary gender, this concept was one of the things that seemed real and at the same time untouchable for me. A fact, nothing to be questioned, nothing to be challenged. A reality outside of that could not be put into words and therefore remained unimaginable for me. Later, I learned that the reality of gender (Butler, 2004) I believed to be given, can be seen as the effect of my own performance itself. A fiction, accordingly. Even though people beyond the binary gender have existed across time and culture (Oyěwùmí, 1997; Thomas, 2007; Stryker, 2008) it is in recent years that we have gained visibility in the western context (Yeadon-Lee, 2016; Nicholas, 2020).

Even though there are attempts to create a more inclusive societal organization with different social and legal attempts in different localizations (Ghoshal, 2020) non-binary people experience invisibility and marginalization within a society shaped by the pervasiveness of the binary gender order (Vaid-Menon, 2020; Spiel, 2021). The gender binary is encoded in the social, political, and institutional organization (Kitzinger, 1999; Dolgin, 2017), thus challenging non-binary people in contexts of education, technology, media representation, or governmental contexts (Spiel, 2021). In academia, non-binary people do not have a huge representation (Yeadon-Lee, 2016; Matsuno & Budge, 2017; Spiel et al., 2019), and when their experiences are talked about, their complex and multiple desires, needs, expectations, and lived experiences are forced into a rigid generalization (Spiel, 2021). This is in line with social science attempts (Baez, 2004), which use the argument of inherent and fixed differences to maintain and justify oppressive social categorizations, and naïve attempts of subject constitution that ignore power relations and norms out of which we become subjects (Oliveira & Nogueira, 2009).

It is through the body, through which these practices of governance are working, that certain rights are attributed or withheld (Hines & Santos, 2018). These bodies include: bodies who are humiliated within election programs of extreme right-wing parties all over the world; bodies who dye in the Mediterranean (Mogstad, 2023), bodies who are denied the right to be recorded on their child's birth certificate (Nadeau & Guy, 2023), and bodies who fight for their legal recognition (Davis, 2017). It is through embodiment that we become (Sullivan, 2013) and it is through embodied experiences that we can explore the lives of those on the margins (Johnson, 2018). And, most importantly, it is through embodiment that we can portray joy, desire, and pleasure (Pitts, 2000).

Bodies have symbolic significance (Shilling, 2012; Pitts, 2000), and different bodily attributes are linked with different meanings across contexts and cultures (Fitzpatrick & Deckard, 2018). This is also true for body hair, which carries complex and profound cultural, social, and individual meanings (Fahs, 2011a, 2011b; Toerien et al., 2005). The expression of body hair shapes the way we are perceived by others and perceive others (Toerien & Wilkinson, 2004; Fahs, 2017) as well as how we perceive ourselves (Jóhannsdóttir, 2019). Under the western legacy, body hair has become a way to distinguish between wo/men (Fahs, 2011a), therefore supporting the ongoing idea of a binary gender organization. Hence, body hair is not only a part of nature but also a cultural meaning attached to materiality. How do non-binary people, people who position themselves outside the idea of wo/men, experience such a binary gendered part of embodied expression within the western legacy? Through centralizing non-binary people's un/hairy embodiment I aim, with the current knowledge project, to contribute to the conversation about non-binary peoples' experiences with body hair, their embodied corporeality's in relation to body hair, the forces that constrain their un/hairy lives, and the spaces that give power to resist the restrictive hegemonic gender organization.

CHAPTER 2

Theoretical Background

2.1.   Non-Binary Gender

In the present knowledge project, I will use the term non-binary to reflect the lived experiences of people who position themselves beyond the binary gender. I view non-binary as a term that provides space and encompasses endless, unique experiences that do not conform with and/or reject the western gender binary of wo/men (Rajunov & Duane, 2019; Slovin, 2020). For some people, non-binary might mean to be a gender other than wo/men, for some it might mean they are not wo/men exclusively (translanguageprimer, n.d.). Some non-binary people might use the term as an umbrella term, yet others might use further descriptions. Non-binary people in the western context often use further terms such as genderqueer, gender diverse, agender, intersex, or trans*, to just mention a few of them (Robertson, 2018). While some non-binary people may see themselves as trans*, others may not feel represented by that label (translanguageprimer, n.d.). There are many non-western non-cis genders (Mirandé, 2016; Clarke, 2019; Cassar, 2023), that are unique to a specific culture (Cameron, 2005), such as two-spirit Aboriginal people, Chuckchi within Siberia, Bakla within the Philippines, Hijra within India, and Quariwarmi within Peru (Stryker, 2008).

Every non-binary person has a unique narrative about their gender in contextual relation to personal experiences, upbringing, socialization, and the specific spaces of dis/advantage they occupy in the world (Matsuno & Budge 2017; Calderon-Cifuentes, 2021; Spiel, 2021). Every non-binary person has different desires and takes different decisions regarding physical, legal, or social transition (Matsuno & Budge, 2017). Non-binary people may use a variety of pronouns, such as they/she/he, xe/xem/xyr/ze/hir/hirs, or others (Feraday, 2016; Clarke, 2019). Yet others may use their name as their primary way of referring to themselves or use any pronouns. In languages without referential gender constructions, pronouns importance might change (Crouch, 2008). Furthermore, pronoun/name preference can change over time (Clarke, 2019). Any pronoun is exclusively for a certain gender, and any pronoun can be used by any gender (McCulloch & Gawne, 2016).

A concept that is developing in the community and is suggested as a helpful way to visually imagine a space beyond the binary is the *gender galaxy* (Shah, 2015). Just as objects in a galaxy are interconnected, gender in the gender galaxy is described as an interplay of

personal experiences and external forces such as social norms and power matrices. Similar to how objects in a galaxy can look alike but be composed of different elements or look different but be made up of similar elements, gender may vary among people who appear similar or may be similar among people who look different (translanguageprimer, n.d.). With the idea of the gender galaxy, we create a space where the endless variety of interpretations, meanings, and understandings of gender, its complexity, contextuality, and fluidity are welcome to coexist (Shah, 2015). Just as an object in space can evolve predictably or the absolute opposite, so can gender. Some people experience their gender as stable or changing in predictable ways, while others experience their gender as fluid, complex, and unpredictable (translanguageprimer, n.d.). The gender galaxy provides the chance to move from an exclusionary space (the gender binary) to an "open, multiple and plastic one" (Shah, 2015), that offers the chance for radical systemic change. This change would benefit not only those who are marginalized but also the collective society as a whole (Shah, 2015). As non-binary people's experiences are multiple and diverse, it is never possible to talk about all the lived experiences within one knowledge project (Clarke, 2019; Slovin, 2020), therefore, this project does not aim to talk on behalf of all of us, but I hope some of the things may resonate with some of you readers.

Outside of the Western gender system, there are multiple understandings of gender (Thomas, 2007; Stryker, 2008; Herdt, 2020) that go beyond the fiction of wo/men, recognizing that the binary gender is neither adequate to represent the complexity of gender nor universally inherent in organizing all societies (Oyěwùmí, 1997). Reducing this complexity to justify social hierarchies is a political process and political choice (Fausto-Sterling, 2000; Fausto-Sterling, 2008; Jordan-Young & Karkazis, 2019; Vaid-Menon, 2020), and was imposed on non-western cultures, especially under colonialism (Oyěwùmí, 1997; Thomas, 2007; Lugones, 2013). Instead of complexity and multiplicity, the hegemonic binary gender system we live in is characterized by its historical roots and ongoing coloniality, ideological biological dimorphism (Fausto Sterling, 2000; Lugones, 2013) and heterosexual and patriarchal gender arrangements (Lugones, 2013; Kurt, 2021).

A theory that supports the idea of gender not as a fixed or inherent category but gender as a social concept and historically developed way of organizing people is *gender performativity* theory by queer-feminist philosopher Judith Butler (1990). Butler's theory is one of the foundations of queer theory and an important part of contemporary feminist theory.

2.2. Gender Performativity Theory

According to Judith Butler (1990, 1993, 2004), gender is a social concept that functions within the limits of a set of societal norms. Gender is a specific interpretation within a specific culture and only possible to understand within cultural and historical contexts, highlighting the idea that established categories do not have an inherent, fixed meaning but are contingent on the frameworks they are embedded in (Fausto-Sterling, 2000; Butler, 2004). It is not an essential, biologically determined characteristic, but an act of doing. Gender, then, is more of a verb, meaning that we are not a particular gender, but we do a particular gender. This doing of gender is characterized by specific and stylized acts. The repetition of specific acts allows subject formation by the acts it performs, shaped by the hegemonic norms of gender and sexuality, reinforcing themselves and reinforcing escorting societal norms. The binary gender norms that developed through gender performativity may be perceived as foundational and essentialist in constituting subjectivities and may be perceived as a "reality", therefore reinforcing the idea of binarism as a fixed aspect of gender. Since one is constituted by norms, they are structuring emotions and desires, and therefore performativity's may feel inherently attached to us (Butler, 2004).

These very mechanisms that constitute the norm in power are also the mechanisms that can challenge that very norm. According to Butler (2004), this transformation can occur when performativity engages in its citational practice. This implies that the cycle of reinforcing and reproducing hegemonic and restrictive gender norms can be interrupted when one decides not to conform. And this non-conformity can have a citational and subversive effect over time. Repetition itself provides the space to break out of and transgress the norm, creating an instability that can undergo the effects through which the norms of sex and gender are constituted (Butler, 1993).

Even though the binary view on the human body and gender is not a universal truth or essential biological fact, as, among other things, evidenced by the existence of intersex people (Kitzinger, 1999; Butler, 2004) it is incorporated into our social, political, and institutional spheres (Dolgin, 2017; Kitzinger, 1999). Politically, certain genders are seen as real while others are not. Butler emphasizes that this is a political issue of survival, as people who are accompanied by their own sense of unreality and the violence they face can spend their lives in suicide mode (Butler, 2004). Therefore, it is critical to develop laws that create legitimacy for gender complexity. It is important to mention, though, that legal changes do not necessarily lead to better conditions or positions of subjectivities, as seen in Spivak's analysis of the

subaltern (1988) or when legal recognition for trans* people does not necessarily lead to legal recognition of non-binary people (Hines & Santos, 2018).

Non-conforming or subversive gender performances are met with violence and punishment to perpetuate the hegemonic gender structures and re-signify them accordingly (Butler, 2004). Hegemonic ways of power, such as gender organization, heterosexism, racism, sexism, and ableism, permanently devalue subjects that do not fulfill the required markers (Butler, 1997). People who are seen as deviating from the requirements of a binary gender image and the heterosexuality that accompanies it are at risk of being, for instance, pathologized as sexually deviant and faced with discrimination (Oliveira et al., 2009). If every subject is also constituted by the prevalent oppressive structures (Butler, 1997), what are the social and institutional structures constituting non-binary subjectivities nowadays?

The current hegemonic gender system has a significant oppressive impact on non-binary people (Robertson, 2018). Performativity shows that it is not only laws, rules, and policies that constitute "regular" people, since the norms governing regulations go beyond the institutions that enforce them (Butler, 2004), but based on them, it is legal institutions that shape everyday realities. This is apparent in them having the power to assign individuals to a particular gender category at birth, despite anthropological and medical studies showing the inadequacy of such models (Greenberg, 2002). Moreover, institutional power is visible in how the legal systems of nation-states regarding public gender recognition differ (Goshal, 2020). This institutional regulation extends to various areas, for example, sports, where authorities limit their knowledge of human diversity in relation to testosterone (Jordan-Young & Karkazis, 2019), justifying their participation conditions and reinforcing the binary body (Pape, 2019), as can be seen in the case of Dutee Chand, who was banned from participating in international sprinting because her body produced "too much" testosterone. The challenges non-binary people face due to hegemonic binarism may include difficulty in understanding one's gender, invisibility, and misrecognition (Matsuno & Budge, 2017; Robertson, 2018), as well as restricted access to institutions that are structured by binary gender (Robertson, 2018). Despite the increased visibility of non-binary people (Yeadon-Lee, 2016; Nicholas, 2020), the ubiquity of the hegemonic gender binary (Keyes, 2019; Spiel, 2021) shapes the everyday realities of non-binary people.

In the social sphere, the hegemonic binary becomes apparent, for instance, when non-binary people encounter challenges related to binary-gendered bathrooms (Cavanagh, 2010; Matsuno & Budge, 2017; Frank, 2020) or when they create precarious spaces for trans*/non-binary people who menstruate (Frank, 2020). Language is another domain where non-binary people often experience stress due to constant compulsive misgendering (Matsuno & Budge,

2017; Dev et al., 2021), especially in languages that use referential gender. This extends to the design of web forms that do not properly accommodate non-binary people (Spiel, 2021), forcing non-binary people to misgender themselves (Keyes, 2018; Spiel et al., 2019). The binary is also visible in policy enactments, such as mandatory binarity in child naming or name changes, particularly in the Portuguese context, where names can leave no doubt about an underlying binary gender (Roseneil et al., 2017; Hines & Santos, 2018). Non-binary gender is structurally silenced and erased in everyday life (Hines & Santos, 2018; Dev et al., 2021). Gender essentialists often react negatively to those they perceive as non-cis (Skewes et al., 2018). As illustrated in Alok's quote (ALOK, 2023), non-binary people in binary gendered cultures face constant discrimination and marginalization (Herdt, 2020; Truszczynski et al., 2022). Discriminatory events for non-binary people occur daily and range from microaggressions to verbal harassment to physical assault (Truszczynski et al., 2022). According to Butler (2004), such violence occurs as a mechanism to perpetuate hegemonic performatives based on a desire to maintain the binary gender order. They states, as soon as a person critically enacts a legible stylized opposition, "*violence emerges precisely as the demand to undo that legibility, to question its possibility, to render it unreal and impossible*" (Butler, 2004; page 35).

We can see how gender is made real through institutional forces (Draz, 2022), and cis-binary performatives are treated as the norm (Sumerau, 2019). As Butler (2004) is stating, the question of who is real and true is a question of knowledge and a question of power (Foucault, 1997). Whoever has the power can decide "the truth", and therefore shape the social world. Institutions bearing "the truth" enable the constitution of certain subjectivities within structural and material contexts through institutional forces. We are constituted by norms that are not our making (Butler, 2004), and that are guarded by forces in power. They provide us with scripts to enact a viable personhood, constituting our subjectivity. Non-binary people may conform to binary hegemony and avoid social punishment (Stryker, 2000), leading to their absorption by the language and infrastructure of the hegemonic cis binary (Spiel, 2021). Like homonormativity, a facet of heteronormativity that implies that queer people reinforce and comply with heteronormativity to avoid the widespread violence of becoming unrecognizable or illegible to these norms (Oliveira et al., 2013; Lasio et al, 2020), the same sort of trap is offered to non-binary persons.

Besides all the attempts of hegemonic society to keep its form, non-binary people may have the desire to escape those norms (Butler, 2004), and to "*breath beyond the political coordinates of the real*" (ALOK, 2023). One might not agree with the expected enactments of movement, gesture, speech, and gender (Butler, 1993), and one might not want to adapt body

language, movement, communication, and expression to the restricting hegemonic accepted performances (Bennet Leighton, 2018), without them, the body is rendered as "wrong". One might want to reclaim autonomy over one's own body, which is marked by social injustice (Pitts, 2000; Clare, 2001). Even though bodily autonomy is a lively paradox (Butler, 2004), the body is the space where governing norms are done and therefore can become undone, where the constituting norms can be broken (Butler, 1993), with the same mechanisms that uphold them. Gender essentialism works to erase non-binary people, creating spaces where understandings of gender coexist and clash, necessitating constant negotiation, which shapes our everyday experiences (Spiel, 2021).

Gender as a historical category goes along with understanding gender as a way of culturally configuring the physical body (Butler, 2004). The social, cultural, and political (oppressive) structures are incorporated and expressed in and through our physical bodies, finding shape in diverse corporeality's (Adelman & Ruggi, 2016), which means that the form our physical body takes shapes the experiences we have in the world. Through the physical body, we're able to analyze how cultural binaries are enforced through social institutions such as sexuality, nuclear family, and patriarchy (Turner, 2008), which therefore also shape our subjectivities. Let's have a closer look at the body and the resistance forces that are embedded within.

2.3. The Body

The body is a space of cultural meaning and norming (Johnson, 2018), a space in which cultural ideas are linked to the materiality of the body, with these meanings varying across time and space (Gill et al., 2005; Johnson, 2018; Islam, 2022). Like gender, the body cannot be understood outside of its specific and historically contextualized interpretation (Butler, 2004), and obviously they are inherently linked (e.g., certain genital associated with specific idea of gender). Societies develop ideal forms of bodies (Shilling, 2012) that are mediated through public discourses (Fitzpatrick & Deckard, 2018). Therefore, narratives about appropriate body expressions reflect current societal structures that may lead people to work with their bodies to conform to these expectations. The work that people put into adapting their bodies to achieve the ideal image of a particular role (Fitzpatrick & Deckard, 2018) is referred to as *body projects*. Particularly in capitalist modernity, the body has become a site of projection of social values (Turner, 2008; Reischer and Koo, 2004), self-representation (Featherstone, 1991), and self-reflexivity (Crossley, 2006; Shilling, 2012; Bojorquez-Chapela, 2014;). It has become a place

where people engage and work, which they modify, and through which they seek to create a coherent sense of individual self-identity (Turner, 2008; Featherstone 1991; Shilling, 2012; Gill et al., 2005). Repeated enactments of hegemonic body ideals can reinforce them (Gill et al., 2005). Bodies, then, are a doing (Butler, 2004), and body norms are the effect of its repeated doing (Butler, 1993).

Body projects can represent submission to hegemonic ideals (Gill et al., 2005), but they can also reject the hegemonic body norms of hegemonic culture (Pitts, 2000). Instead of supporting them, people might engage in modifications that make visible signs to resist assimilation into hegemonic society, thus disrupting the power relations that determine what forms of expressions are deemed appropriate. Bodily modifications can be a way to break down rigid cis-het subjectivities (Klesse, 2007), and a political practice to reclaim body ownership (Pitts, 2003), queer the body publicly, challenge hegemonic assumptions, and resist oppressive structures. This was especially demonstrated in body modifications such as tattoos, branding, or piercing (Pitts, 2003; Klesse, 2007). Women, for instance, symbolically reclaimed their bodies from experiences of violence, such as rape, and resisted gender oppression with the use of non-western indigenous body modification practices, such as piercing (Pitts, 1998). Reclamation of body ownership can also unfold in the changing perception and construction of unalterable body characteristics that are used by hegemonic society to make one feel abject and "wrong." For example, Eli Clare (2001) tells us how Clare learns to admire the own disabled body and gradually dismantles the social narrative, deconstructing hegemonic ideas of ableism. Resistance through body projects comes up against limits, not only due to the physical limitations of the body but also because resistance only as a private practice will not change the underlying powerful mechanisms that lead to oppression (Pitts, 1998). Clare (2001) also notes that we must locate social injustice in the world as body-centered experiences that are paired with the external forces of oppression.

Furthermore, the complexity of power mechanisms in capitalist, sexist, transphobic, postcolonial, and racist societies can lead to the reinforcement of certain hegemonic discourses while combating others (Klesse, 2007). With its body modifications, the queer subject can resist hegemonic body norms (Pitts, 2003) and create a sense of belonging (Johnson, 2018), while at the same time risking creating restrictive norms in which bodily expressions that do not directly and obviously contradict "normative ideals" are considered "politically suspect" (Sullivan, 2013).

Our bodies exist in space, and according to spatial body norms, certain bodies provide access to certain social spaces (Islam, 2022). This can be seen, for example, in the body

modifications of Indian women who use the potential of body modification, its plasticity, to fit into the service economy of the middle and upper classes to gain access to paid jobs. How bodies and space interact is also illustrated by Ahmed (2006), who discusses how some bodies are extended by a (public) space while others are not. To illustrate this abstract idea, let me give an example. A person applying for a volunteer position at a festival must indicate their gender and is presented with the options of "m/f." If this person positions themselves in one of the two options, they would be extended by the space. On the other hand, a person who does not position themselves in either option would not be extended by the space. According to Ahmed (2006), bodies are extended through public space when they fit into hegemonic discourses. People's experiences in (public) spaces are therefore very diverse, which can be related to the argument that the current hegemonic context privileges (bodily) representations of binary gender, heterosexuality, and certain forms of pleasure over others (Pitts, 2000). These bodies can feel comfortable and "sink in" (Ahmed, 2006). Oppressions also shape our bodies through emotions (Johnson, 2018; Ahmed, 2006), being extended through a space or not is associated with feelings of dis/comfort.

Gender as a norm with social power is one of the ways that shape and produce the embodied subjectivities that are deemed acceptable in space (Butler, 2004). Ahmed (2006) argues that repeated moments of being shown by the environment as not fulfilling hegemonic narratives, a challenge to people's queerness in a non-queer world, can be perceived as bodily injury. Depending on the body we inhabit, people experience oppression in different ways, and the ways oppression can mark and rob a body are endless (Clare, 2001). Intersecting life realities can lead to particularly oppressed/liminal experiences, such as those of a black non-binary person (Nicolazzo, 2016), or a disabled queer person (Clare, 2001).

Liminal experiences refer to the concept of liminal spaces (Turner, 1974), which defines spaces "in-between" fixed points of classification. For example, in the ambiguous space between wo/men. Robertson (2018) argues that non-binary people are located in liminal spaces. These liminal experiences go along with discrimination from hegemonic systems (Nicolazzo, 2016), and being invisible in hegemonic spaces. Liminal spaces are characterized by a lack of access to defined spaces and systems. At the same time, liminal spaces also allow us to deconstruct the hegemonic notions of society, since they are the spaces where ideas beyond the binary are placed that can be negotiated with hegemonic ideas (Roberston, 2018). Permanent negotiation and renegotiation can be pretty exhaustive, though.

Butler (1993) argues that the production of hegemonic forms of gender and heterosexuality is accomplished through bodily practices that place the body at the center of

creating superiority over people outside the gender binary or other forms of oppression. This constitution of the subject in and through embodied acts makes the body not only a central mechanism of oppression but also the center of potential resistance, demonstrating once again how mechanisms of performativity can be used to rearticulate established hierarchies. So, the utopia of making more bodies extended and feel comfortable in space could become a reality.

2.4. Body Hair

Body hair as part of the body can have many different cultural meanings. Working with body hair is a practice reported in different versions, at different times, and in different contexts (Herzig, 2015; Toerien & Wilkinson, 2003;). In addition to beauty norms such as whiteness, thinness, youth, heterosexuality, and ability (Fahs, 2017), the hegemonic white cis-het framework also establishes some body hair rules for people living under its legacy that are mainly binary-gendered.

Currently, cis women under the western legacy are expected to be primarily hairless (Tiggemann & Hodgson, 2008; Fahs, 2017; Grossmann & Annunziato, 2018), while hairy male bodies are associated with masculinity (Boroughs et al., 2005; Toerien et al., 2005) and remain an accepted embodied masculinity (Braun & Clarke, 2019b), even as bodily changes become more common in cis men (Terry & Braun, 2016).

Along with their binary expressions, body hair is associated with different cultural meanings. Cis women who violate the norm of body hair are considered less sexual, less attractive, less sociable, less positive, less happy, and more aggressive (Basow and Willis, 2001), while they are considered dirty (Fahs, 2011a; 2011b, 2017; Jóhannsdótir, 2019), unclean, and "gross" (Fahs, 2017), leading to questioning of their femininity, sexuality, and hygiene standards (Fahs, 2011a; 2011b; 2017). Cis men who depilate their body hair (Fahs, 2011a; Fahs, 2013), in turn, face homophobic reactions and comments about their gender expression, are considered "unnatural" with their body hair, and face social sanctions related to their sexual identity. There is debate about whether the norm is changing that expects cis men to be partially shaped or hairless in some areas (Boroughs et al., 2005; Terry & Braun, 2016), but it remains the case that cis women's bodies are unacceptable when unmodified (Terry & Braun, 2013), while cis men tend to masculinize their depilation (Fahs, 2011a) or, for example, associate hegemonic masculinity with a certain type of head hair (Ricciardelli, 2011).

In the above examples, it becomes clear how culturally and socially hegemonic binarism is linked to the materiality of body hair. It is through the regulation of body hair that it takes

explicit shape. Through body hair, we can explore the mechanisms of oppression of the contemporary frame, such as reinforcing heterosexuality and cultural notions of binary gender (Fahs, 2011b). Extensive beauty work signifies internalized social control mechanisms (Fahs, 2011b), to maintain a cis-het appearance. Therefore, women's hair removal is a sign of ongoing gendered social and political control (Toerien & Wilkinson, 2003; Fahs, 2011b; Herzig, 2015).

Furthermore, the depicted and reinforced distinction between "fe/male" bodies allows for interpretations of prevailing biological dichotomies. Ideologies about biological and anatomical differences can in turn be linked to the policing of other eugenic projects. In the ideology of white European thinkers of the 19th century, the opposite anatomical difference between the fe/male categories was a sign of a more civilized race (Thomas, 2007) and in line with this argument, different body hair was used as an argument to emphasize the superiority of the white race (Herzig, 2015). Herzig explains the aforementioned prevalent associations with body hair as disgusting and gross as a cultural association whose origins lie in racist thinking, as body hair was associated with racialized people, who were portrayed as animals.

Racist, superior, or classist thinking about hair is still prevalent and takes shape in certain body hair projects. For example, for white, heterosexual, middle-class men, going to the barbershop is a reflection of white, superior, and professional masculinity lived and presented through body hair care (Barber, 2008; Ricciardelli, 2011). This phenomenon is also described by Frank (2014), who states that depilation serves to show class privilege by reflecting the time and money spent on grooming and consumption. In addition, hair grooming can serve to show that men have control over nature through depilation (Frank, 2014).

In these examples, it is clear that working with body hair can also serve to conform to certain ideals that can benefit one's own coherent sense of self within the governing frames (Featherstone, 1991). Ricciardelli (2011) notes that through their work and thus perceived improvement in hair style, men felt they could enhance or sustain their current lifestyle and express their sense of self (Gill, 2003). Through (body) hair work, then, symbols of race, class, sexualization, and gender are embodied, and it becomes clear how these very symbols are reproduced through the performance of certain body hair work (Barber, 2008).

In these examples, it becomes clear how cultural meaning gets materialized in body hair and how body hair is used to conform to and carry these hegemonic ideals forward. This makes body hair and the embodied experiences with it a carrier of knowledge about the current power structures and how they shape our everyday lives. In combination with the role bodies play in experiencing, upholding, and breaking certain cultural norms, I see body hair as part of the body as an important lens for gaining insight into embodied experiences. To date, knowledge projects

representing the lived experiences of non-binary people have been very limited (Matsuno & Budge, 2017), and to our knowledge, the conversation about non-binary people and body hair has not been started yet. Because body hair is a highly binary construct, I think it is relevant to explore the experiences of body hair for non-binary people and its role in non-binary subject formation. Therefore, I want to start the conversation about body hair and non-binary people with questions about: How do non-binary people perform with their body hair? How do they experience their embodiments with body hair? What is the relationship that non-binary people have with their body hair? What role does body hair play in non-binary subject formation? Dear ones, please feel welcome to join me on this journey, and let's go.

CHAPTER 3
Methods

3.1. Objectives

The aim of this knowledge project is to get insight into the experiences of non-binary subjectivities with body hair through the lens of (gender) performativity (Butler, 2004; 2022). The specific objectives were as follows: (1) explore how non-binary performatives and embodiment are lived and perceived in relation to body hair; (2) explore the relationship non-binary subjectivities' have with their body hair; (3) explore how body-hair projects may constitute non-binary subject formation; and (4) get insight into how non-binary people make sense of the phenomenon of un/doing body hair.

To understand people's views and perspectives, a particular focus was placed on how people deal with body hair in their daily lives. Through all these objectives, the aim was to unpack the meaning of body hair for non-binary people and to engage in deep conversations about body hair and its role in non-binary lives.

You may be wondering why I use the term *knowledge projec*t instead of *research projec*t. This is rooted in the principle that my aim is not to describe people objectively from a neutral point of view, but to co-create knowledge with each other. I consider the people I interview not only as participants, but as the ones who have the knowledge that is necessary to create the work. I am aiming for an epistemological shift by changing the epistemological status of each of these entities. I don't want to research each other, as this already implies asymmetrical power relations, especially in positivist knowledge acquisition where the researcher takes a neutral role, leading the conversations, or in institutions that determine the form in which a knowledge project must be structured (e.g., how a thesis needs to be structured). My goal is to build connections with people that allow us to co-create knowledge. I aim for tender conversations with people that enable the creation of collective knowledge spaces and thus claim space in society. In the collective creation of (queer) knowledge, I see an opportunity to create power to disrupt cis- and heteronormative knowledge production. By valuing the fluidity of our experiences, I am not calling for a conclusion, but for different moments of an ongoing conversation.

3.2.   Participants

For this project, I interviewed 12 non-binary people using a semi-structured interview approach. The participants described their gender as queer/non-binary ($n = 1$), non-binary/genderfluid ($n = 1$), trans*/non-binary ($n = 3$), non-binary ($n = 2$), non-binary, agender (n = 1) genderless ($n = 1$), non-binary, intersex ($n = 1$), agender ($n = 1$), agender & intersex ($n = 1$). A detailed self-description of people's gender can be found in Annex D (Table 3.2). Participants were aged between 22 and 29 ($M = 25.5$, $SD = 2.58$). The participants' nationalities were German ($n = 5$), Portuguese ($n = 3$), Brazilian ($n = 2$), Turkish ($n = 1$), and American – United States ($n = 1$). At the time of the interview, people geographically lived in Portugal ($n = 8$), Ireland ($n = 1$), and Germany ($n = 3$). Participants were working ($n = 6$), studying ($n = 4$), or both ($n = 2$). In the interviews participated 10 white people, two people of color, and 11 able-bodied people and one disable-bodied person. Table 3.1 gives a more detailed overview of the participants.

Table 3.1

Introduction of People telling their Stories

Name	Age	Country of Origin	Occupation	Gender	Pronouns	Race
L.	23	Portugal	Working Student	queer, non-binary	they/them	white
Duda	26	Germany	Student	non-binary, genderfluid	they/them	white
Billy	29	Germany	Dancer	trans*, non-binary	they/them	white
Mo	25	Brasil	Chef	non-binary	they/them	black
Alli	30	Georgia, USA	PHD Student	genderless	she/they	white
Emmet	24	Türkiye	Student	non-binary, intersex	he/they	non-white, brown
Koda	25	Germany	Student	trans*, non-binary	no pronouns	white
Sasha	25	Germany	Psychologist	agender	no pronouns	white
Jun	29	Brasil	Blogger	non-binary, agender	any pronouns	white
Flor	25	Portugal	Intersectional Activist and Educator	agender, intersex	they/them	white
Lucas	23	Portugal	Copy-center Operator and Artist	non-binary	they/them	white
Micah	22	German	Student & Teacher	trans*, non-binary	he/they	white

Note. These information only represent a snapshot at the moment of the interview and may have changed in the meantime.

3.3.   Materials

To take off on the adventure of deep-diving into the experiences of body hair by non-binary people, a qualitative Big Q approach (Kidder & Fine, 1987) – to avoid analytic foreclosure and limited interpretation (Clarke & Braun, 2022) - was chosen. My goal was to engage with the data in a non-positivist way (Braun & Clarke, 2023), while focusing on feminist, queer, and anticolonial values.

According to Clarke and Braun (2022) a qualitative approach emphasizes the significance of meaning, acknowledges context-dependency, and recognizes that truth is embedded within specific situations, as well as allowing for multiple truths to exist. As far as we know, the phenomenon of „experiences, embodiment, and meaning of body hair for non-binary people" under a performativity interpretation lens remains largely unexplored in existing literature. Therefore, employing a qualitative approach meets the exploratory nature of the conversations and allows for rich and in-depth insights (Clarke & Braun, 2022). Since I view gendered norms and the experience of gender as embedded within a specific geographical, historical, and cultural context (Fausto-Sterling, 2000; Thomas, 2007), gender performativity theory (Butler, 2004; 2023) is the best practice to understand the discourses on body hair in non-binary people. It allows us to acknowledge that meanings are formed through historical processes and social interactions (Butler, 2023; Wigginton & Lafrance, 2019), as well as contextualize phenomena (e.g., gender) in an interdisciplinary way. In this epistemological context, I find the concept of constituting gender through the continuous repetition of normative patterns within a citacional practice (Butler, 2004) to be highly compatible. During my knowledge project, I use and value relationship with the topic, something appreciated within qualitative knowledge production (Clarke & Braun, 2019a; 2022; Braun & Clarke, 2021; 2023; Nadar, 2014). My embeddedness and reflexivity were for example visible when people asked me about my own connection to body hair, as well as in the post-interview emotions that I documented with research journaling, a method to engage in reflexivity (Clarke & Braun, 2022). Moreover, I could use certain examples of my own experiences within the conversations that facilitated the further flow.

Using a queer-feminist approach in research aims to disrupt prevailing methods of knowledge production (Oliveira et al., 2014; Wigginton & Lafrance, 2019). Engaging in a feminist research praxis involves, for example, aiming for more democratic conversations without researcher being construed as leading or directing the way (Hesse-Biber, 2012; Nadar, 2014). I have also tried to express this in the way this master thesis has been written, namely in

the first person, to avoid a positivist and apparently neutral role of the researcher. This is also part of the possibilities opened up by a feminist form of inquiry, which is more open and democratic, which is also expressed in the technique of writing, that does not require a neutral, absent conception of the researcher, detached from subjectivity.

This approach was evident in the feedback I received from the interviewees, as they perceived the interviews more as friendly conversations rather than conventional research interviews. Moreover, in queer theory, it is essential to actively challenge and dismantle hegemonic power structures and fight for structural changes that foster a world free from oppression and exclusion (Muñoz, 2009; Robinson, 2022), therefore inclusive of anti-racist, anti-colonial, and anti-imperialist perspectives. In the present project, this approach manifests in several ways, such as embracing a fluid and dynamic research process that involves constant interpretation and reinterpretation, starting anew, and thinking again.

One-to-one semi-structured interviews were chosen, incorporating an open-ended and in-depth question and conversation approach. This particular approach was selected to grant participants the opportunity to actively influence the direction of the interview and shape the discourse based on their unique perspectives (Kauffmann, 1996). By adopting this way of interviewing, unexpected topics and themes were allowed to surface, avoiding any preconceived notions solely imposed by myself. This means that although I prepared a semi-structured interview guide in advance, I remained highly flexible in adapting and exploring emerging themes organically while following the narrative chain of the interviewees. This organic and interviewee-driven interaction can be seen in the following example: in the first version of the interview guide, the topic of sexuality was completely missed out, and the first person directly feedbacked me in a very funny way, and sexuality was further integrated into all the conversations. Through the interview process, this approach was very fruitful, with the interviews developing into the direction of comprehensive interviews (Kauffmann, 1996). Throughout all the conversations, my focus was on formulating questions based on the interviewees' narrative flows rather than rigidly adhering to my pre-planned questions that might not have been relevant to their experiences. This approach was inspired by Ferreira's work (2014), who also states that asking a question to one person doesn't mean this question needs to be asked to all the other people as well (e.g., asking about unhoused situation to people that never experienced that situation).

The initially prepared interview script can be found in Annex B. The interview questions were developed in English and afterwards translated to German to leave the choice of language to the participants. Questions targeted experiences and meanings of body hair, focusing on the

performative aspects of body hair in daily life and specific situations throughout their life trajectories. While uniquely adapting and expanding the conversations to the narrative flows, these themes remained the core elements. After all interviews, participants were asked for feedback and their feelings after the interview. Most of the participants shared that they were happy to have had the space to talk about their bodies and their body hair and that they found the conversation inspiring.

3.4.   Procedure

The ethical approval for this study was given by the Ethical Commission of the ISCTE Lisbon University Institute (Parecer 01/2023). I reached out to participants via snowball and convenience recruitment, mainly using Instagram as a space to call for participation. This process enabled the expansion of the participant base beyond my original contacts (Goodman, 1961).

The study inclusion criteria were (a) participants should be older than 18, (b) participants should self-describe as non-binary; and (c) be able to speak either English or German. The interviews took place between February and June 2023. The interviews lasted between 35 minutes and 1 hour and 42 minutes. Participation in the study was possible either in person ($n = 8$) or online ($n = 4$). I considered the conversations to meet the objectives and requirements after 12 interviews, so I stopped further data collection, although people continued to show interest in participating.

3.4.1 Procedure Presential Interview

Participants were given the freedom to choose a location for the interview where they felt safer and more comfortable. This included settings such as a coffee shop, a park, a viewpoint, or their own home. Prior to each interview, participants were provided with an informed consent form in accordance with Article 13 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). They were given the option to receive the consent form in either English or German; however, all chose the English version (see Annex A). Before starting the actual interview, I tried to create a comfortable, friendly, and non-hierarchical atmosphere between the interviewee and myself. For instance, we had a chat about non-related topics, wherein I also showed vulnerability in the sense of openly sharing my thoughts. At the start of each interview, I verbally reminded participants that their participation is voluntary, and they could choose to end the interview at any point without providing a justification or facing any further consequences. I also asked for

their consent to audio-voice record the interview. To initiate the interview, I explained the purpose of the research and my personal interest in the topic. After that, I asked for demographic questions such as age, current occupation, nationality, and current geographical location. Additionally, I invited participants to describe their gender in their own words. The conversation then shifted to the topic of body hair, with the initial question always being, "Do you remember when you first became aware of your body hair?". The subsequent course of the interview unfolded organically, and I just followed the narratives and trajectories shared by the participants. Upon completion of the interview, I provided participants with a debriefing sheet (see Annex C), summarizing the exploratory nature of the study and expressing my gratitude for their time and willingness to share their experiences. I made verbatim transcriptions of the audio recordings for further analysis.

3.4.2 Procedure Online Interview

To accommodate geographical limitations, I also conducted some online interviews for people who were outside of Lisbon, as foreseen in the ethics committee application. For these virtual interviews, I sent the consent form via email in advance of the scheduled interview. Participants were given sufficient time to read, sign digitally, and send the consent form back. I encouraged participants to choose, if possible, a private room with minimal potential for disruptions during the online interview. Similarly, I ensured to be in a private room and used headphones to maintain a focused and undisturbed environment. I used the online platform teams to conduct the interviews. The online interviews were live-recorded. As with the face-to-face interviews, I reminded participants of their voluntary participation, the option to stop the interview at any point, and asked for their consent regarding the recording. The subsequent procedure of the interviews mirrored that of the in-person interviews, following the same structure as I explained above. Immediately after the online interview, I sent a debriefing email to the participant.

3.4.3 Data Anonymization

People opposing hegemonic gender norms may face social punishment (Butler, 2004), expressed in various forms of violence. To ensure a safer and more respectful space, participants in this project had the freedom to decide which name they wished to use for anonymizing their data and were free to sign the bureaucratic papers with their name, as seen on the table of participants. This approach aimed to prioritize the participants' agency and autonomy.

3.5.   Analytical Approach

A deductive, reflexive, six-phase thematic analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2022) was conducted using a (gender) performativity (Butler, 1990; 1993; 2004) lens. This approach was consistent with the exploratory nature of my knowledge project and allowed for the application of queer-feminist values. Throughout the process, I used a mixture of electronic and paper materials, which I found helpful in generating new reflections and facilitating my ongoing shifting between phases (Terry et al., 2017). After transcribing the data verbatim, I considered Clarke's & Braun's (2022) guidelines and engaged in intense familiarization with the data. I engaged in listening to the recordings and/or reading the transcripts in rotation, curious and full of questions for the narratives. Using the lens of performativity theory, my analytic ear was deductive, with space for inductive observations. At this stage, I was experiencing emotional reactions to the narratives and was aware that parts of the narratives were consistent with my own experiences. These emotional reactions slowly shaded away as I moved into the second phase, coding. I marked relevant passages with short notes (e.g., biological family as space for social policing). In total, I went through four rounds of coding. In order to work through the interviews systematically and thoroughly, I alternated the order in which the interviews were coded during these four rounds (1. beginning to end; 2. middle to end; 3. middle to beginning and end; 4. end to beginning). In this process, I went from many codes to minimizing codes, reviewing their uniqueness, merging codes, deleting codes, and marking codes that were not yet defined. Within these four rounds, I could feel and see myself moving from a more semantic coding to a more latent approach. At this stage, I was aware of the intertwined meanings that underlie body hair. While coding and with particular attention in and after round four, I was trying to identify patterns based on shared ideas, meanings, or concepts, and thus moved on to generating initial themes, the third phase of analysis. To familiarize myself and code the interviews, I used the comments function in Word. I created an electronic table with all the codes created and the associated interview abstracts. When I decided to move forward with generating initial themes, I printed out the electronic version and used the paper format to create mind maps that allowed me to visually and tactilely gather the data around the candidate themes. Taking them off the laptop helped me let my thoughts flow, facilitating the interpretation. "Letting things go" visually (Clarke & Braun , 2013) helped me transition to phase four, where I reviewed and further developed the themes. In this fluid process, I entered phase five, in which – with the help of my supervisor – I finally named the themes and organized them around core concepts

that I felt best represented the rich knowledge underlying the narratives of the people I interviewed. Following this process, I began to write up the analysis, which is presented below.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis

Just as non-binary subjectivities are themselves infinitely diverse, so are their embodied experiences with body hair. Within their various experiences, they share certain aspects of their non-binary, un/hairy corporeality. The themes that recur in the narratives are: (1) body hair as governmentality; (2) social policing; (3) body hair as political resistance; and (4) queering of body hair to reclaim body hair autonomy. In what follows, I will present them in a meta-narrative way, using selected quotes to clarify and demonstrate the core theoretical propositions. The narrated experiences do not represent linear experiences. They are characterized by changing dynamics and multiplicity and are highly contextual. Therefore, I would like to invite you to travel with me through the fluidity of un/hairy embodiments. Trigger Warning: As expected, we're going to meet a bunch of oppressive forces on our way.

4.1.   Theme One: Body Hair as Governmentality

In centering non-binary people's experiences with body hair, I consequently bring their embodied experiences of oppression by power matrices into focus. In the first theme, I identify body hair as a form of governmentality (Foucault et al., 2008) used to discipline non-binary bodies to conform with a colonial/modern cis-het project. Governing people's body hair appears to ensure the continuation of white-colonial and western/Eurocentric legacies (Thomas, 2007; Lugones, 2013). In the expected hegemonic performances with body hair, we can see the ongoing legacy of gender norms within the Eurocentric colonial/coloniality |(Lugones, 2013). Within the reiterated repetitions of these body hair performances (Butler, 1990), as well as in the consequences of re-signifying them, the ongoing legacy of categorical and hierarchical organization implies body hair as an instrument of systemic oppression. Body hair itself becomes the governmentality of a colonial/modern cis-het project.

One mechanism of body hair as governmentality is the subscription of binary gendered body hair norms. Within the framework of binary, oppositional, and hierarchical social categories (Brown & Gershon, 2017), mechanisms such as shaming body hair as disgusting or gross serve as tools to preserve its continuation. Through repeated performances of binary gendered body hair expressions, they can be made to appear naturally given by an unquestioning audience and support the idea of biological dimorphism. This is especially

reflected in narratives of retrospective experiences and of cis-het friends or family members in which, for example, a cis-women would never hook up with a cis-man if the cis-women would have any body hair. Body hair as a governing actor of white cis-het ideas is introduced very early in people's lives, making it a very powerful accomplice in maintaining the power of oppressive forces.

> Being born with a vagina it was super early because like everyone around me who were women, or having vaginas used to shave all their body hair, like their legs that you couldn't; you couldn't see like any, any type of hair. You had to shave it anyway and like armpits and stuff like that. And I think I just grew up into that. I don't think it was something that was like put on me, it was just around. So, I just felt used to that and I think I must have been around - I don't know, 12 maybe? When you start like entering puberty and everyone around you is talking about that or concerned about that. And I think that; that's when I started like shaving and caring about [what] other people think about my body. I think that was like the first moments I was "OK, So I have this body and people are telling me it's ugly, and I need to take it [body hair] out of my body somehow. [Jun]

Through socialization via demonstrated forms of body hair expressions and the accompanying direct instruction on how to deal with body hair, these binary-gender ideals of body hair remain present, even when people position themselves outside of the cis-het framework. Billy expresses this very clearly when they explains how they read people mostly in a binary gendered way: "*It's like for me, I tried to interact with the world from a non-binary perspective, but I still feel how I still wear binary glasses. And like, I can't take them off there.*" Throughout the interviews, binary gendered explanations for the presence or absence of body hair reoccurred, revealing internalized binary gendered views. In particular, binary gendered associations with certain types of body hair, such as L. is explaining that people "*to portray more masculine features, not only but also more androgynous features - these people would present leg hair* ". However, this idea is also opposed by some people who have a problem with this binary meaning, as can be seen in Sasha's quote: "*that somehow having body hair is an expression of masculinity, which I would actually have a problem with*". The prevalence of gender binarism in body hair is evident not only in internalized and externalized thoughts and meanings but also in embodied behaviors that reflect internalized binary gendered body hair norms, such as when Mo shaves out of fear of not being liked: *"I remember when I met that person, that I shaved everything, because I was just concerned the person wouldn't like me because of that. And it wasn't that long ago, so maybe sometimes I still have that thing."* The

continued governing control that non-binary people experience through their body hair demonstrates how forms of power are incorporated in our bodies.

Through body hair, the hegemonic system of power influences not only our bodily expressions but also the way we relate to each other. Through binary body hair expressions, the idea of biological body dichotomies is supported, which in turn supports the argument that heterosexuality is the norm. When people deviate from this norm, they remember that stereotypical explanations such as "*the hairy lesbian*" [Micah] are common reactions.

Body hair not only supports heterosexual ideologies but also determines within the cis-het framework who is and is not considered a lovable person. Norm-conforming subjectivities are considered lovable, whereas non-conforming subjectivities suffer from self-doubt, which oftentimes leads to increased effort and modification – "*I tried to be hyperfeminine*" [Billy] - to be compliant. The expression of body hair becomes an indicator of whether someone will like or love us in the future and represents a powerful mechanism that leads people to conform to hegemonic ideals of body hair. I mean, who wouldn't do that if having a proper styling of body hair becomes an aesthetic criterion from where people develop their affect? Through body hair governmentality, it becomes visible how the cis-het forces work to make non-binary people doubt themselves, their bodies, and their body hair.

> I was thinking like I'm not man enough. Hmm. I'm not worthy enough of finding a girlfriend because I thought I was gonna find a girlfriend back then. So, I thought that nobody would like me without me going through puberty because I would be still a child and I didn't want to be a child. [Emmet]

This way of thinking is more present in times when people find themselves in cis-het dynamics. Detaching from their norms and engaging in a queer way of living and connecting changes the way people think about and relate to body hair, as well as the desires with which people want to be loved and how they talk about the way body hair should be included in these dynamics. But even when non-binary subjectivities disengage from the cis-het framework, they must deal with heterosexism, as evidenced by the time it takes to accept one's non-normative body hair expressions (longer than to accept it on other bodies) – especially in sexual/intimate relationships. Doing body hair beyond the binary is not so easy, as governmentality through body hair works even across the borders of the cis-het framework.

The notion that body hair is associated with maturity was also expressed in the interviews. People in the present knowledge project recalled that the act of shaving body hair is the ultimate sign of maturity, so they waited for the moment when they could shave their beard or leg hair to finally be grown up. Some people didn't grow leg hair, and they would

pretend to shave to avoid being seen as "immature" by their peers. Body hair governmentality controls the idea of maturity through body hair management according to cis-het ideals.

Since the colonial/modern cis-het-capitalist project is based on the ideas of white supremacy, superiority, and hierarchies (Lugones, 2013; Kurt, 2021), these concepts are clearly portrayed in body hair, making body hair a tool of the governmentality of white supremacy.

Well, usually – and, and this is terrible – but usually, like random people do it [touching head hair] a lot. People feel confident to do it, like on the first second they meet you on the street. In Spain, this happened a lot. In Madrid, when I was living there, people used to touch my hair a lot and after touching my hair, which is like something you just; you just don't do that. And after touching my hair doing those questions or saying, "oh you look good, but you also would look good with straight hair". [Mo]

In the illicit and dehumanizing act of touching another's hair, white people's sense of superiority is clearly visible. This white supremacist behavior continues an unsolicited comment referring to the white beauty norm of straight hair, implying that straight hair is the goal to reach for one's own head hair. Governmentality through body hair operates on multiple axes of oppression, making embodied experiences with body hair the bearer of knowledge about intersecting structures of oppression and needs to be understood through such complexity.

The governmentality of body hair is also linked to the ableist society in which we live, as reflected in the suppressed autonomy of disabled people in relation to body hair modifications. Micah's narrative mirrors how the needs and desires of disabled people who need assistance are not taken into account, resulting in either people's entire bodies being shaved for the sake of practicability for the caretaker or not caring for body hair at all because it would be too much of a hassle. In this approach to body hair for disabled people, it becomes clear how disabled bodies are seen as abject bodies, and body hair as governmentality is one way to send the message that disabled bodies are not accepted in an able-bodied society. Micah's narrative also shows how ideas about body hair modification in hegemonic society are based on abled-bodies, making body hair accomplice of governing able-bodidness as the norm.

It's interesting to be disabled and hairy. Because if you can reach every part of your body, and you don't need to be cared for, perhaps you simply have a different perspective than people who don't have this luxury, which in this case really is a luxury. [...] perceive disabled people as human beings. And not just see them as things or as the people that just must be looked after. But just simply start to see them as human beings with needs and desires, and that includes grooming and body hair, just like with any other person. [Micah]

In the embodied experiences of body hair, the oppressive matrices of society become clearly visible. Body hair is a mirror of the current societal framework; its form of power is incorporated in body hair. Through body hair, we see the operating principles, namely: ongoing colonialism, cisgenderism, heteronormativity, racism, capitalism, ableism, and how body hair is used as a tool to govern their persistence. Body hair governmentality tries to ensure that the current societal framework does not provide spaces of multiplicity in place of binaries and hierarchies. By extending the binary notion of gender and their body hair expression beyond white cis-het beauty norms, non-binary people experience the limits of white cis-normative gender ideas and white cis-het beauty norms. Therefore, non-binary people find themselves in the space "in-between", leading to individual and subjective as well as collective experiences of liminality.

4.2. Theme Two: Social Policing

As seen in the theme above, body hair as governmentality seeks to support existing oppressive forces so that they persist. To achieve this goal, non-binary people are confronted with mechanisms of social policing and find themselves in spaces of limited agency. In what follows, I will highlight the social policing and gender regulation that un/hairy non-binary bodies face.

4.2.1. Policing in Social Institutions

Family, school, and work/economy as social institutions (Nickerson, 2023) serve the hegemonic culture to propagate its roles, rules, and expectations and therefore play a major role in policing the "appropriate" appearance of body hair. Throughout the life trajectory of people and across many different social situations, social policing of body hair is told in the form of comments, stares, jokes, or shocks when other people see our un/hairy bodies.

From early childhood through the time of the interviews, the biological family serves as an "agent of normalization" (Foucault, 1990) of certain body hair modifications. Their policing practices manifest in jokes and comments, in binary gender associations, and in (indirectly) calling people ugly, disgusting, or smelly, to the point of devaluing their appearance in relation to the hierarchical idea of class.

> I had a lot of people resisting to my decision, especially my family. They were my; even today they do it. It's been six years or something and they still are like "you have the legs of a man" and they make; they react in a very expressive way about it and they make fun and they said that I'm going to smell bad and you know these things. [Lucas]

Luca's quote shows how the becoming of the un/hairy body places non-binary bodies in a publicly vulnerable position where body hair is subjected to violence in the form of social policing, derived from hegemonic norms. Not only in biological family contexts but in all kinds of social institutions, for example, everyone I interviewed is permanently exposed to comments that reflect the binary-gendered meaning of body hair. Sentences like "S*he has said so many times that she considers my leg hair to be masculine* […]" [Duda] or "*Oh my gosh, if you have body hair in your armpits, you're; you're a man or stuff like that*" [Jun] can be repeatedly found throughout the interviews.

In younger age, school – in addition to family and friends - serves as a space where especially fellow students' police your un/hairy appearance. Negative comments about teachers' body hair or direct jokes or comments about one's own appearance with body hair, as well as experienced peer pressure to conform, led young people to comply for fear of not being accepted.

> For years I had a very complicated relationship with my head hair, because until I went to secondary school, I had pageboy head, so relatively short hair. I thought that was great, was really cool. Then I came to secondary school and then suddenly all the girls had long hair and then I just - so out of peer pressure and, well, I want to be accepted somehow at this new school - I then started to grow my hair long and they were actually quite nice. So objectively speaking. Only my problem is that I have fine motor impairments due to my disability, which means that I've always needed someone to do a braid for me, to do my hair, to put my hair up, whatever, and that's why it was really bad for me to have my hair down, because then all I had to do all the time was wipe it away, just wipe it away, just wipe it away when it fell in my face. [Micah]

This position is taken over by the work context later in life. In order to police non-binary embodiment in the work context, mechanisms similar to those in the biological family are narrated. Being made fun of, being made into a cartoon, and being made to question whether non-binary people's existence can be wider and therefore is real creates spaces of insecurity and makes people hide their un/hairy bodies to create acceptance and security in a cis-het environment. Even without having had discriminatory experiences in a specific workplace, people already have the feeling that certain body-hair expressions are not going to be tolerated, and therefore non-binary people hide them to appear more conforming to cis-binary ideals. In the interviews, I heard how people – after social policing or to prevent it - adjust their bodily movement patterns by, for example, not raising their arms so that armpit hair is not visible or sitting in positions that shift focus to other parts of their bodies. Another common tool for

creating invisibility, and thus safety, is to wear clothes that hide certain parts of body hair. The work context also uses the policing mechanism of excluding non-binary people from access to work - and thus to financial security in a capitalist system - if they don't fit into hegemonic ideas. Access to financial security is limited to people who conform to certain forms of body hair aesthetics. Body hair expressions that don't fit this norm are systematically regulated and labeled as abnormal and abject, so that they are denied existence in certain spaces.

> The owner of this school that I was working in, she didn't appreciate my body. She didn't appreciate my gender expression generally, because I was already out there as non-binary. I was very open about not being CIS or straight or neurotypical, all of these things I was already very clear on, you know, this is not who I am. But then she was worried about the parents of these children and how they were going to react to me. […] You know, so my boss was very adamant that yeah, you cannot have like showing body hair, you have to basically CIS-play as a woman. […] She would ask me to like for example, shave my beard specifically and not have it showing. She asks me to wear long sleeves or not have shorts because of; my arm, I never shaved my arms. But my legs there would be like "oh you should shave your legs". Or not wear like things in where you could see like my armpit hair, because I also don't take that out, unless it's bothering me on a practical sense. So yeah, none of that. No body hair showing. […] And I need to be able to be inside the system, otherwise I'm going to go and be homeless again and, and I already know what that's like. It's not very fun and yeah, so a lot of fear-based actions. I was trimming a lot more. And I was trying to maintain this, what I at the time perceived as a professional work, which now I really think this is absolute bullshit. [Flor]

Not fitting into hegemonic society can have existential consequences, as seen in Flor's example, where they had to adapt their body hair appearance according to the hegemonic culture in order to keep their job for fear of becoming homeless again. Social policing of body hair works excellently because it uses people's dependency on the very same system that also channels their expressions in a normalized way. The regulated body must constantly negotiate between conformity and rejection of social policing. Flor is dependent on paid services in this situation, which is aligned with capitalist interests. This is an example where we can again observe the interplay of projects of oppression. Restricting people`s access to certain services limits the agency of non-binary people in their body-hair expressions and demonstrates how social policing and regulation are inscribed in the systemic structure. Dependence on access to health care or other institutional services serves as a strong mechanism to let people hide their

body hair, as can be seen in Jun's statement, where they tell how they hides their body hair in places of authority:

> Not because I care, but like because the way people will change the treatment about me. I think it's the same thing with like a gender performance in like places where I don't feel safe; if people realize I'm a non-binary person, how would the treatment change*?*

Narratives about social policing of body hair in non-binary people interact with other axes of oppression, such as race. For example, policing of body hair in black and brown bodies manifests, among other things, in comments on non-straight hair, making people question the beauty of their non-straight hair, resulting in the use of many chemicals to make hair straighter, trying to create conformity with white-Eurocentric beauty ideals, and avoiding social policing.

> One of the questions I get a lot still is: Why don't you straight your hair? Why don't you - Which I know it's a pattern for like "why don't you become more beautiful according to the norm? To the white, heteronormative norm". […] [And] my flat mates would like, bring their things to straight hair and say like "oh can we play, can we straight your hair". Like if it was a funny thing to do. [Mo]

Controlling the body hair of black and brown people is structured through adequating their body hair to the ideas of the colonial project, which is overall visible in racist comments, that "exoticize" and "orientalize" non-white people.

At the societal level, the acts of policing, regulating, and limiting non-binary embodiment with body hair can be expressed in the devaluation of their appearances, in the creation of self-doubt, in self-questioning, and in the denial of access to spaces and services. This policing leads to a constrained agency in body hair expressions. The experience of agency limits is something that varies with the spaces and contexts people are in, the spaces of privileges they occupy, and the resources (mental and physical) people have. Do people feel comfortable and safe expressing themselves? Do people have the capacity to endure violence that may go along with expanding their agency? Oftentimes, people frame their decisions to show off with/without body-hair as an active decision, along the lines of *"Am I in the mood for looks, or do I just not have the capacity for that right now?"* [Sasha].

4.2.2. Policing on the Personal Level

Besides external policing, people also need to deal with internal policing. The cis-het project did a very good job in people internalizing its oppressive structures. Foucault's (1995) resource to Betham's panoptics on prisons seems reasonable here. This *dispositif* installed in circular towers implied that anyone could be observed from that central point. The detainees never know

when they are being watched and end up surveilling and controlling their own behavior according to the norms of the prison. This helps to understand how norms came into being part of one's subjectivity. Therefore, people narrate how they must deal with gender norms and the shame attached to them; they literally must undo their socialization (Butler, 2004). It takes a while to re-narrate the ideas that people have been aware of since early childhood, especially because expanding cis-het expressions is accompanied by policing feelings of shame and/or discomfort after a certain point. Each person has their own journey of acceptance and exploration of body hair, which shows the individual meaning that certain parts of body hair have for each person. While for some people it takes a long time that their discomfort with armpit hair vanishes, for other people that's the case with leg hair, and for yet other people this is the case for beard or head hair. Even though people may connect these feelings with oppressive forces and binary heterosexual ideas, the effects remain even after distancing oneself from them. Distancing oneself from this policing takes work and time, as can be seen in the quote of L., where they reflects how they still sometimes feels insecure when people give them oral:

Like one year ago, I would be conscious about, like why are they doing this [putting hair on genitals away], is it because they don't like hair, so they're putting it away, so yeah. […] but still sometimes maybe it picks up for like one second or two. Now it gets really rare, but still, it comes up for one second or two.

Or in Billy's quote, reflecting on how they imagines being read as a man and how that would change their personal experience with body hair, picturing internalized binary policing and regulation.

There's always this tension between of like I know it's there and I enjoy it, but if it's getting too long, like then there comes this part of like "OK, like people who read me as a women, will be confused or disgusted by having a bit of beard hair" so if it's too long I get uncomfortable about it so it's like always like I can allow myself to have a bit of hair here, but not too much. Whereas I feel like if I would be read as a man, I would be a way more like not giving a shit. So that's like for me a very confusing area. But yeah, I like to see it. Like for myself, I feel like if there would not be like this external environment, I would be so happy about it.

In the above, I have shown how certain mechanisms of the cis-het project try to regulate and enforce specific normative body hair performances by policing and limiting non-binary peoples body hair expressions.

4.3. Body Hair as Political Resistance

In themes one and two, we saw how body hair are subjected to hegemonic ideologies and how they are positioned between particular dichotomies (non-black/Black and brown; abled/disabled; female/male; cisgender/non-binary). As political power matrices such as cisgenderism, heterosexism, and whiteness shape embodiment with body hair, body hair themselves are inherently political. With our un/hairy bodies we exist in the social sphere, subjected to (political) regulation. At the same time, body hair is also a potential site where we can resist these very regulatory projects, a site where political opposition can take place and thus become a site of political negotiation or political refusal. The norms that govern the dominant, politically shaped culture can be called into question with body hair embodiments that resist normative expectations.

The participants interviewed share the view that body hair is seen as a site of reading and being read and can therefore be used to convey certain values and statements. Since people are (unconsciously) aware of the political aspect of their bodies, body hair is incorporated into their political sense of self, making body hair a reflection of their social values. Consequently, people are mapping other people's body hair to values, statements, meanings, or group belongings. Aware of the projective meaning that body hair has, people use their un/hairy bodies to claim statements and communicate their values, doing the political matter of body hair.

> Well, [body hair stands for] human rights, trans rights, women rights. Black lives matter. Everyone lives matter, but whites. I'm just like, I'm here for all the rights and all the power to the people that it doesn't have. [Mo]

People are also very aware that their own bodies are being interpreted, especially in ways that put them into categories where they don't belong, portraying the political arena in which we perform. This interpretation of un/hairy non-binary bodies can lead to people avoiding certain spaces in order to avoid being marked as someone they don't want to be marked. In this example, it becomes visible how deeply entangled governmentality, policing, and the political matter of body hair are. This relation between the un/hairy body and certain public spaces shows how political definitions shape the "deviant" bodies that are suspended from spaces and connect body hair to the political matter of spaces itself. As body hair are done, so are spaces, and through the un/hairy non-binary body, we can see with which political attitudes places are constituted.

But when people know how to read body hair, it can also create a tender connection, as seen in intersex people who recognize each other by the growth pattern of their body hair, as stated by Flor:

> […] and then other people who are intersex and are able to see that [my] pattern of growth is very similar to their own, which is in itself specific and they're able to recognize that through how my hair is growing up, that's also very special as well and I feel that as well.

Visibility in that case creates a very special moment of political meaning, as intersex people's narratives are accompanied by experiences of involuntarily undergoing surgery or hormone treatments to conform their bodies to the gender binarism. To be able to exist with their hair and to be recognized as such can be equaled to the political matter of existence.

4.3.1. Breaking the mind-body split

The white Eurocentric legacy is characterized by its dichotomies that create clear divisions between discursive categorizations and enable identification through differences, such as the idea of "us" and "them", as well as the legitimization of borders. A prevalent binarism in the western legacy is the mind-body split that creates a boundary between me and myself (Adelmann & Ruggi, 2016). People in the present knowledge project use their body hair to reconnect with themselves and thus break the mind-body dichotomy, thereby turning body hair into a political tool to resist another established binarism. People are actively engaging with the diverse textures of their body hair, with how they feel when the wind passes through them, and with how transforming the shapes of body hair also transforms sensory experiences with them. People use body hair to actively listen to their body's signals, such as, how do body hair change when I am scared or excited? Also, body hair is used by people to ground themselves in situations of distancing or anxiety. Reconnecting with oneself through body hair is a political matter that breaks the stability of dichotomies. Considering how much body hair can communicate with us, the very idea of restricting people's body hair expression becomes a political matter of restricting access to one's emotions, which serves the mind-body binarism. These experiences of connectedness are also extended beyond the connection with the self to the connection with others. By connecting and remembering other people based on the feeling of their body hair and by tenderly meeting and touching un/hairy bodies, I also see the possibility of addressing the "us" versus "them" binarism. Or creating forces of resistance through connections, such as when intersex people are able to recognize each other, creating space for the imagination to be expanded rather than restricted.

I could reconnect to the idea I had of me as a kid; being just like part of this ecosystem and part of nature and I could embrace everything about how I look, and how I felt and how it; what kind of textures it has and the different roughness it has; and how it's sometimes soft, sometimes thick and; and how it feels when I touch it or when other people touch me. How it feels when it's out and I can feel that the; I don't know – the wind goes through it. So, for me it's a very sensorial thing and I really appreciate this, and the different stages of it. [Flor]

4.3.2. Who gets in contact with my body?

People use body hair as a filter system to decide which people are allowed to enter into a closer connection with them. Acceptance of body hair is a prerequisite for intimate encounters and self-protection. People are aware that they only want to enter into intimate/sexual relationships with people who accept their body hair and that they are happy to identify negative attitudes early on so that they can keep "bad" people away from them.

If it's a problem for them, it's something they have to like deal with themselves and I don't need them near me, because this is the way I am and like if you discuss it or something – good for me – because I don't have to like be around people like that. [Jun]

Here we can talk about the political matter of "who do I allow to come into contact with my body"? In a society where non-binary bodies are marginalized and oppressive forces make them doubt their selves, where they experience harm based on their bodies, this political matter of who I allow to come into contact with my body means creating safer spaces based on their own desires without being rendered as "abject", where it is not their un/hairy bodies that are "wrong", but the system that judges them.

4.4. Queering Body Hair to reclaim Bodily Autonomy

Each single person reports a moment when they began to actively question prevailing body hair norms. This questioning is initiated either through insight into feminist theory, a radical change of geographical location, or exposure to non-normative body hair expressions. This questioning leads to a moment where the automatic repetition and adherence to hegemonic body hair expressions are broken, allowing most subjectivities to begin a process of experimenting and exploring their body hair expression. Especially non-normative body hair performances lead to certain effects, such as people questioning their own performances, thereby revealing the mechanism by which performativity produces "reality", as well as the possibility of changing that "reality". Non-binary people recall specific situations in which non-normative body hair

performances by people enabled them to question and change their own performances, and their performances in turn led other people to question hegemonic ideas of body hair. By opposing normative body hair performances, performativity itself is at work, contesting hegemonic reproduction, opening up space for hegemonic ideologies to be questioned and transformed, and changing their regulatory mechanisms.

Each person talks about the liberating feeling that comes with working beyond oppressive body hair norms and the space for exploration it provides without the fear of looking "bad" according to hegemonic norms.

> [...] and then I tried many colors, and I would never have dared to do that with long hair. Unless I had dyed my hair darker, that is, black, or brown. I would never have bleached my hair, for example, like that, because then I was always so scared, "But what if it looks terrible and the hair is totally broken?" And [then] I was like, "OK, I'm really putting all kinds of colors in my hair, the hair is really dead at some point, I'm going to shave it back off and it's going to grow back," that was kind of really good. [Koda]

4.4.1. Opposing governing norms as liberation

With incredible agreement, most of the subjectivities interviewed stated that all their body hair work is autonomous and independent of the governed and oppressive norms of the hegemonic society. This shows that at the time of the interview, people occupied a social position that allowed them to refuse the norm. Body hair alterations were considered to be made for reasons of one's comfort (e.g., armpit hair too long and sticking to one's T-shirt), practicality (e.g., haircut suitable for everyday use and not having to spend hours styling every day), health (e.g., trimming instead of shaving), and one's aesthetics. One's aesthetics can refer to how long people want to have their body hair, and some have also thought about and/or tried dying leg or armpit hair. The idea of expressing one's aesthetics is especially present when dealing with head hair, where one often has more freedom to experiment with different haircuts and colors. Although for some people it's very important to maintain a certain haircut in order to have the feeling of having "*arrived on my journey*" [Sasha], all represent head hair as a space where exploration and fluidity are possible. Any alteration is narrated as based on one's own intrinsic motivation and is not (anymore) dependent on looks or comments from people who promote hegemonic body hair expressions.

> I don't do anything for my chest because it's not that much and I quite like it [...]. I haven't cut myself - that's something [laughing]. But I am not using any razors closer to there [ass]. Oh, sometimes - I think twice a year - I use a removal cream for my ass so

that's it yeah, I just get some fresh air [laughing]. And I do it only for myself not to be able to show people. Like, I'm not doing it to prove something to anyone on Grindr, for example. Yeah, yeah. [Emmet]

The motivation to engage in body hair transformations goes beyond the desire for mere independence from governing forces. Body hair is seen as a resource to resist white cis-hetero dominance culture and create a counter appearance. Non-binary people have and give the impression that body hair is perceived as liberating in opposition to the norms that force people to conform in the name of cisgenderism, heterosexism, racism, and ableism, and that these expressions serve to reclaim some authority over one's body (hair).

For some people, queering their body hair means, among other things, abolishing hegemonic body hair expressions and changing their body hair in ways that run counter to prevailing norms; for others, it also consists of additionally resisting binarism in other ways to promote fluidity, multiplicity, and desire. Even if they are not unaware of the signals that a norm-deviant body hair expression sends, people reclaim their body hair not only in the sense of resisting visual body hair norms but also resisting the idea that bodily expressions must lead to a certain categorization. Hence, people see body hair as part of the body of the human species, diverse as bodies themselves, and question the (lack of) choices one has in dealing with one's body hair. The focus is on challenging the normative assumptions they associate with body hair. This is evident in statements such as that any gender can have any hair, that people should have the freedom to deal with their body hair the way they want, and "*if you have body hair or not; it's cool either way*" [Jun]. And especially that people are liked as people regardless of their body hair and are beautiful beyond their body hair.

and somehow realizing […] that beauty norms are also totally social constructed norms and that somehow in the end it [body hair] is not what makes a person beautiful or not beautiful. [Koda]

4.4.2. Creating space for the un/hairy body to breathe

In a society that works to suppress, police, and regulate non-binary subjectivities, un/hairy non-binary people create their own spaces where they can be without punishment and feel safer for a while. We could say a queering of hegemonic spaces. As part of their body hair work, people begin to actively seek out and create environments where there is less risk of being hurt. This includes distancing themselves from people and spaces with oppressive habits towards body hair. In the interviews, it was repeatedly said that people who have issues with body hair are very distant from their own reality. This creation of safer circles is also visible in moments

when non-binary people are confronted with cis-het hegemonic behaviors related to body hair in spaces where they did not expect it.

> then I recently had this experience that I was at a sex party and that a person I absolutely did not know commented on my pubic-hair, and that was; that felt extremely inappropriate of course, and it was also a surprise for me. Because that was the first time that I was out of this safe circle, and I would not have thought that another person would even have the cheek to comment on something like that and that surprised me very much [...]. [Duda]

In the interviews, it became clear to me that people choose their friends and peers wisely and create spaces where expression and exploration are not only possible but also encouraged. In these spaces to breathe, people support each other, and this creates space for people to explore their own body hair expressions. People can feel united in their (authentic) performances. People create spaces where they have their own authority.

Creating spaces to breathe doesn't just show up in the friends we choose. It can also mean actively changing the city you live in. In Sasha's statement, we can see that Sasha is actively shifting from a geographic space that enforces hegemonic ideas of gender and body hair embodiment to a geographic space where Sasha's embodied expression is more accepted, where Sasha can breathe from oppressive norms.

> here are more queer, young students somehow, that's just a different scene somehow and here you can feel much freer and more comfortable and here I'm not confronted all the time with any people, and I do not have to hold back all the time now in the respect [of showing body hair]. [...] at some point it was just no longer bearable to live there simply - and we have then changed. We have simply really changed the environment actively for us, because it just no longer yes has not been enough for us. And we just also did not want to change. [Sasha]

Whether the space is a group of friends or a geographic location (the two are inherently intertwined), it becomes clear that spaces we spend time in are an extended, embodied experience. Does the space appear accessible to us? Does it deny us access? Is our un/hairy body seen as something abject, or is our un/hairy body accepted? Norms that surround us shape how we feel (Ahmed, 2006). If these norms make us the abject body, these feelings are likely to create stress. By creating spaces to breathe and queering the spaces they are in, non-binary subjectivities actively create situations to rest in. This is a phenomenon that can be extended to digital space as well– people choose which people and content to follow, making their digital

feed as unharmful as possible, and making the digital space a space where they can see a change regarding body hair norms happening.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

The aim of this knowledge project was to explore non-binary people's body hair performatives, their subjective embodied experiences with them, as well as the meanings they make about body hair. Furthermore, I wanted to get a rich and deep insight into the relationship non-binary people have with their body hair and how body hair is involved in non-binary subject constitution. Last, I wanted to explore how non-binary people make sense of un/doing body hair. In the following, I first will highlight the key ideas presented in the narratives, and then I want to discuss how the present project contributes to the ongoing conversation about body hair and (non-binary) embodiment in relation to body hair.

The key interpretations I have made in the last few pages show how I have identified body hair as governmentality of a colonial/modern cis-het project. This is reflected in the ongoing binarism associated with body hair expressions (internalized as well as external reactions), it's complicity in the maintenance of heterosexuality, the role it plays in upholding white supremacy, and the idea of abled bodies as the norm. By making body hair complicit in the maintenance of the heterosexual matrix through gender norms, the governmentality of body hair supports a certain idea of family and acceptability within a capitalist society. It becomes apparent how body hair supports governing and naturalizing specific ideologies, such as ongoing colonialism, cisgenderism, heteronormativity, racism, capitalism, and ableism.

Non-binary people inhabit the boarders of binary dichotomies, being in the liminal space outside of conformity but affected by the forces that seek to regulate and enforce un/hairy performativity according to hegemonic norms. Non-normative body hair expressions allow us to break through the fiction of binarism and challenge established systems of power, but they also lead to embodied liminal experiences that can be accompanied by the discomfort and violence that liminal spaces hold for their inhabitants. Furthermore, in the last few pages, we have been able to see how people who do not fit into the body hair norms of the colonial/modern cis-het project are socially policed in the name of whiteness, cisgenderism, ableism, and heterosexuality. Social institutions such as family, school, the workplace, and friends use comments and jokes to make people uncomfortable with their un/hairy body. Exclusion from access to spaces such as work, and authorities shows the structural dimension of this policing. Policing occurs not only on the social, but also on the personal level. In thinking about the

forces at work in and through our body hair, as well as how body hair can be used to resist those very same forces, I have interpreted body hair as political resistance. People use their body hair to reject and/or negotiate normative expectations.

Furthermore, non-binary people use body hair to show their values, to break the mind-body split that is prevalent in societies living under western legacy, and to filter people based on their attitudes towards body hair. In performances that defy prevailing norms, non-binary people experience a feeling of liberation, a process I call queering body hair, through which people reclaim bodily autonomy that has been systematically denied them. This is supported by queering and creating spaces to breathe (physical, emotional, digital, geographical) where non-binary people can un/do their body hair with reduced fear. By focusing on the embodied experiences of un/hairy non-binary people, the present knowledge project extends the existing conversation on body hair by not only illuminating the mechanisms that render certain un/hairy bodies as abject or "wrong" (Adelmann & Ruggi, 2016), but also by focusing on how un/hairy transformations can transform the subjectivity of non-binary people from a space of oppression towards a space where liberation seems imaginable.

As part of body hair as governmentality, a strong gender binarism has been narrated, consistent with previous projects on body hair that have highlighted the gender binary of body hair modifications (Fahs, 2017; Grossmann & Annunziato, 2018; Tiggemann & Hodgson, 2008; Braun & Clarke, 2019b; Terry & Braun, 2016). The impact that this gender binary has, even when people position themselves outside of the cis-het framework, gives us insight into how power structures are embedded and incorporated into the body (Fahs, 2011a;2011b; Foucault, 1995), and how they constitute us even though we diverge from them (Ahmed, 2006; Butler, 2004). Social policing of body hair is a recurring theme in the ongoing conversation about body hair (Basow and Willis, 2001; Fahs, 2011a; 2011b, 2017; Jóhannsdótir, 2019) and the mechanisms of body hair policing in the narratives of cis people are also prominent in the stories of non-binary people. What the embodied experiences of un/hairy non-binary people add to this conversation, I would argue, is an illustration of Butler's (1990) argument that gender is a doing, a practice within limitations, and further, that this practice of gender can be transformed through reiterated alternative performances.

I argue that un/hairy performatives create and amplify liminal experiences for non-binary people. These experiences are shaped by cis-het ideas, according to oppressive structures working through body hair across binary genders (Fahs, 2011b). This is particularly evident in the experiences non-binary people have in the workplace and in institutions where they must constantly renegotiate (Robertson, 2018) their un/hairy performatives. Limited access to social

institutions with un/hairy performatives demonstrates how non-binary bodies are located in liminal space and how body hair serves as a marker to locate non-binary people there. Un/hairy non-binary bodies cannot "sink in" in (public) spaces. In line with Ahmed's (2006) argument of the experience of bodily injury when persistently shown not to conform to hegemonic narratives, I argue that the liminal experiences non-binary people have with their body hair support persistent discrimination (Matsuno & Budge, 2017; Dev et al., 2021; Spiel, 2021) in hegemonic society by denying non-binary people to feel comfortable and safe with their hair.

However, in addition to negative liminal experiences, non-binary people also use the power inherent in liminal spaces (Robertson, 2018) to act with their body hair beyond the binary and refuse to conform. Through un/hairy performatives, non-binary people expand the frame of gender, and by un/doing body hair beyond the binary (Butler, 2004), they use the mechanism of performativity itself to break hegemonic performances. Therefore, in my view, the un/doing of body hair becomes the un/doing of gender, and un/hairy performatives become a potential site for politicization (Butler, 2004). Because non-binary subjectivities are inherently political (Nicholas, 2020), body hair cannot be without political meaning. By resisting hegemonic norms, narratives reveal that body hair also represents a space of (political) resistance.

The narratives of non-binary people show how power functions as a series of repetitions, wherein in each repetition there is the possibility of oppression but also of resistance (Foucault, 1978). Subsequently, repeated un/hairy non-binary performatives function as power, with the possibility of oppression or resistance in any un/hairy performance. This comparison highlights the intertwined forces that lie in and operate through body hair. This makes it possible to explain the strong overlap of themes one, two, and three. "body hair as governmentality", along with "social policing" and "body hair as political resistance" reflect the mechanisms of power in our hegemonic society. Governmentality is accompanied by policing to keep the established order; this irrevocably leads to resistance from subjectivities who are uncomfortable in the hegemonic power structures. Through body hair, we see how complex structures constitute our embodiments.

I would like to propose that, in addition to liminality, the relationship non-binary people have with their body hair is characterized by an empowering transformation. In line with conversations about reclaiming body ownership through body modification (Pitts, 2003), reclaiming the modifications and meaning of one's body hair creates the space to reclaim body ownership. This allows non-binary people to focus on desires beyond the hegemonic, established ones when working with their body hair. From being something disgusting, ugly, too little, or too much, body hair transforms into something valuable, desirable, and beautiful.

Through un/hairy transformations, there's a transformation in non-binary subjectivities happening. Subjectivities constituted by shame for their body hair turn into subjectivities constituted by joy and celebration of the "abject" body hair.

I propose further that the sense non-binary people make in their un/hairy performatives is nothing less than the possible healing of oppressive structures. Oppressive powers reside in bodies (Butler, 2004; Ahmed, 2006) and are according to the narratives and experiences stored in our body hair and their embodiments. I suggest the interpretation that working with body hair expressions supports non-binary people to engage with their experiences as oppressed bodies and bodies on the margins of hegemonic power structures. Drawing on the idea of trauma-informed somatic practices (Caldwell, 2016; Bennet Leighton, 2018), I suggest that non-binary people were able to go through stages of healing through their body hair, which is considered important for transformation and resistance to traumatic oppression. People enter contact with their own body hair, which is not only a process of healing but also political resistance in the struggle against the western-established mind-body split (Adelmann & Ruggi, 2016).

I want to point out that this process does not mean that it is safe for non-binary people to express their body hair. Some people have capacities and privileges that allow them to present their un/hairy bodies in a safer way, while others cannot. For some, this is contextual; for others, it may not be possible at all. The experiences of non-binary people in the current project are also dependent on their intersecting lived realities. But for all interviewees, working with their body hair created space for addressing oppressive forces in the body and opened up a space where healing from oppression could become an imaginable possibility. According to Ahmed (2006), pleasure allows bodies to take up more space. If we find pleasure in our un/hairy performatives, this might lead to the occupation of spaces, extend our bodies, and, in turn might make spaces feel more comfortable. Our un/hairy transformation might transform the public space itself. By creating spaces to breathe, people actively create spaces where their bodies are not rendered abject and where they challenge the hegemonic powers that constitute our bodies. If we are constantly acted upon in and through others (Butler, 2004), spaces to breathe show the chance to take advantage of this interdependence and connect in our vulnerability to center our queer, embodied desires. Within these spaces, an alternative image of togetherness is created. This togetherness can never be outside the framework of prevailing norms, as their very existence creates the alternative itself. But spaces to breathe show that the notion of an alternative embodied experience is possible. In constant repetition (Butler, 1997), we can see

how body hair turns from a place of insult into a source of pleasure, so that body hair - in constant repetition over time – can take on new meaning.

The narratives highlight that body hair modifications for non-binary people are particularly used to (political) resist the hegemonic cis-het hegemonic culture (Pitts, 2000) and, when possible, to queer the body publicly (Pitts, 2003). However, it is questionable whether this is accompanied by body hair projects of submission (Gill et al., 2005) to a newly established dominant norm in queer spaces. In the narratives, I recognized what Nikki Sullivan (2013) referred to as the "politically suspect," relating to a lack of confidence in bodily expressions that do not directly and obviously contradict "normative ideals." Respondents reported being confused or finding it strange when other (non-binary) people did not wear a certain type of body hair or being annoyed (or to some degree angry) that they could not show body hair to make their statement against prevailing norms. This idea is also visible in the narratives where non-binary people are very concerned (especially about their head hair) about not looking queer enough or not being read as queer, which shows that in our search for comfort, we can also feel uncomfortable in spaces characterized by the denial of public comfort (Ahmed, 2006). So, what happens to the un/hairy non-binary people who do not embrace aesthetic liberation in the form of resistance to what has been imposed on them? Are the norms of recognition again not in their favor (Butler, 2004)? In the liberating power of body hair performatives also lies the possibility of creating oppressive norms within subcultures (Johnson, 2018).

The notion of clear categorization is an aspect of the colonial legacy (Thomas, 2007; Lugones, 2013) in which people are categorized and thus hierarchized based on certain bodily expressions and types. These performances, perceived as liberating, risk repeating the colonial legacy of fixed identity politics (Klesse, 2007) that must be expressed through the body and are taken as the basis of categorization. As Klesse (2007) noted, body modifiers who seek to deny certain hegemonic norms may simultaneously reinforce others. And I certainly would agree with Klesses statement that this shows the complexity of power relations in a capitalist, (hetero)sexist, transphobic, postcolonial, and racist society. At the same time, people use (and need to use) certain social markers to identify other queer people, which provides a certain level of safety in a world that is not made for queer people. In all its coexisting ambiguities, I think this paragraph shows an important point very clearly: there is an urgent need to create a society where non-binary people have the right to feel comfortable, where there is no need for categorization to feel safe, an urgent need for the gender galaxy.

Another point to mention in the context of un/hairy embodied resistance is its limits. Following the arguments of Pitts (2003) and Clare (2001), breaking through the system and its

oppressive forces cannot be a purely private practice. It requires systemic change that makes un/hairy body-centered experiences (Clare, 2001) more comfortable and safer (Vaid-Menon, 2020). Yet it is clear in the narratives that body hair as political resistance has an effect beyond the individual. The citational practice of performativity (Butler, 2004) is evident in the people who question and change their own actions through encounters with non-conforming body hair performances. Therefore, I argue that un/hairy performances can lead to individual and collective empowerment that can lead to collective action for change.

Since the notion of autonomy in the un/hairy embodiment recurs throughout this analysis, I would like to discuss the notion of autonomy in relation to body hair itself in some detail. As Butler (2004) shows, bodily autonomy is itself a living paradox. In their introduction to Undoing Gender, Butler states that bodily autonomy is a complicated thing because choosing one's "own" body means navigating between norms that have been established in advance. I would argue that this can also be seen in body hair. The claim for autonomy in un/hairy non-binary expressions is characterized by its opposition to the hegemonic body hair aesthetics and meanings about body hair that have been predetermined. Accordingly, the autonomy claimed for body hair is defined by its relationship to the previously established rules for body hair. Since our autonomy in relation to un/hairy body hair expressions is rooted in the existence of these pre-established rules, our body hair autonomy is always shaped by the norms it seeks to resist. The notion of autonomy is related to the neoliberal belief in doing things of one's own free will (Rose, 1999). Therefore, it would be very interesting to analyze conversations about un/hairy non-binary performatives under the lens of neoliberal identity politics.

5.1. Strengths and Weaknesses

Opting for semi-structured interviews and reflective thematic analysis allowed me to bring sensory and imaginal input (Johnson, 2018) into the conversation about non-binary people and their embodied experiences with body hair. As a hairy, non-binary person, I have a deep personal connection to the topic, which I think paved the way for tender conversations that allowed people to feel more comfortable disclosing information to me. Although I shared some realities with the people I interviewed, my whiteness was evident in conversations with non-white people, which I do not believe led to full disclosure. I would say that the (partial) tenderness I was able to generate is a strength of the present project because it also allowed me to actively engage with the narratives and therefore also actively engage with the underlying theory, rather than holding onto already established ideas.

The queer-feminist way of knowledge production that I have chosen allows us to represent different realities beyond the fixed constitution of the subject (Oliveira & Nogueira, 2009). In the narratives about body hair, it became clear that this approach enabled the representation of the contextual and power forces through which subjectivities come into being. I think we should opt for radical tenderness (Kurt, 2021) in queer-feminist knowledge production within psychosocial knowledge acquisition.

In addition, I think a biographical interview approach could have deepened the understanding of performativity, its effects, and embodied transformations in relation to body hair, as conversations over a longer period of time could have brought specific transformations to light.

Through my snowball system of recruiting participants, I was able to very quickly find people who wanted to talk to me about body hair, but at the same time, this prevented me from entering spaces with different belief systems. Given the multiple cultural associations attached to the same materiality, it would be very enriching to gain insight into how non-binary people deal with body hair in a broader cultural context.

Another point I would like to mention is language. Some of the interviews were conducted in English, which in most cases was neither the native language of the interviewees nor mine. However, since most gender-related discussions in social media are conducted with English words, I had the feeling that the English interviews were more fluent, whereas in German words were often missing. Being in the Portuguese context, it would also be very interesting to speak to people in Portuguese, embedding the narratives in the unique historical and cultural context.

5.2. In/Conclusion

As can be seen above, body hair can serve as a site of resistance to oppressive structures. Both in counter-hegemonic expressions and in explorations of their multiplicity. As mentioned before, body hair experiences are inherently diverse, representing intersectional knowledge about oppression and containing information about hegemonic governmentality. At the same time, non-binary body hair expressions are carriers of knowledge about desires that extend hegemonic systems of power, and they are a site of resistance to that very power. According to Butler (2004), the social norms that constitute our existence are linked to desires that are not rooted in our individual personhood. I think that body hair enables us to re-narrate the desires

dictated by hegemonic norms, that body hair enables us to focus on desires that are queer, that are in opposition. Body hair enables us to live our queer/non-binary un/hairy desires.

One question I asked most of the participants at the end of our conversation was, "What is the most important thing you would want to tell other people about body hair?" Now that I'm in the final days of this project, I've been thinking about this question and wanted to draw a conclusion for myself as well. And I would say that body hair is not an either/or, but a both/and. It's a tool of oppression in many ways. It's a tool of liberation. It is a space for performativity/performance to counter the binary gender legacy and, at the same time, a space of performance for the underlying structures, such as ongoing colonialism. It's a picture of the past (with all its oppressive forces) and it's a space for the future, where we can imagine working towards changing oppressive patterns. I feel like the conversation about body hair can continue in many different forms, in many different places, and with many different questions. For now, I'd like to suggest taking a little break on one of the wonderful planets in the infinite galaxy we all fly through. And the feeling that remains with me is the thought that we are wider and that we are real. And even if we are told that we are not real, we are.

With our un/hairy non-binary bodies, we are real, and we are ready to claim that reality.

References

Adelman, M., & Ruggi, L. (2016). The sociology of the body. *Current Sociology*, *64*(6), 907-930.
https://doi.org/10.1177/001139211559656

Ahmed, S. (2006). *Queer phenomenology: Orientations, objects, others*. Duke University Press.
https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822388074

ALOK [@alokvmenon]. (2023, August 19). *"we live impossible lives." from hamburg queer international film festival 2022*. [Instagram reel]. Instagram.
https://www.instagram.com/reel/CwGoRHiqOXS/

Baez, B. (2004). The study of diversity: The "knowledge of difference" and the limits of science. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *75*(3), 285-306.
https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2004.11772257

Barber, K. (2008). The well-coiffed man: Class, race, and heterosexual masculinity in the hair salon. *Gender & society*, *22*(4), 455-476.
https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243208321168

Basow, S. A., & Willis, J. (2001). Perceptions of body hair on White women: Effects of labeling. *Psychological Reports, 89*, 571–576.
https://doi.org/10.2466/pr0.2001.89.3.571

Bennett Leighton, L. (2018). The trauma of oppression: A somatic perspective. In C. Caldwell & L. Bennet Leighton (Eds.), *Oppression and the body: Roots, resistance, and resolutions* (pp. 17-30). North Atlantic Books.

Bojorquez-Chapela, I., Unikel, C., Mendoza, M. E., & De Lachica, F. (2014). Another body project: The thin ideal, motherhood, and body dissatisfaction among Mexican women. *Journal of Health Psychology*, *19*(9), 1120-1131.
https://doi.org/10.1177/1359105313484783

Boroughs, M., Cafri, G., & Thompson, J. K. (2005). Male body depilation: Prevalence and associated features of body hair removal. *Sex roles*, *52*, 637-644.
https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-005-3731-9

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). One size fits all? What counts as quality practice in (reflexive) thematic analysis?. *Qualitative research in psychology*, *18*(3), 328-352.
https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2020.1769238

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2023). Is thematic analysis used well in health psychology? A critical review of published research, with recommendations for quality practice and reporting. *Health Psychology Review*, 1-24. https://doi.org/10.1080/17437199.2022.2161594

Brown, N., & Gershon, S. A. (2017). Body politics. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, *5*(1), 1-3. https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2016.1276022

Butler, J. (1990). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge.

Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of sex.* Routledge.

Butler, J. (1997). *The psychic life of power: Theories in subjection*. Stanford University Press.

Butler, J. (2004). *Undoing gender*. Routledge.

Butler, J. (2023). Categories by which we try to live. *European Journal of Philosophy*, *31*(1), 283-288. https://doi.org/10.1111/ejop.12843

Calderon-Cifuentes, P.A. (2021). *Trans Discrimination in Europe. A TGEU analysis of the FRA LGBTI Survey 2019.* TGEU. https://tgeu.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/TGEU-trans-discrimination-report-2021.pdf

Caldwell, C. (2016). The moving cycle: A second generation dance/movement therapy form. *American Journal of Dance Therapy, 38*(2), 245-258. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10465-016-9220-6

Cameron, M. (2005). Two-spirited Aboriginal people: Continuing cultural appropriation by non-Aboriginal society. *Canadian Woman Studies/les cahiers de la femme*.

Cassar, C. (2023, April 24). *Non-Binary Gender Identities in Different Cultures*. https://anthropologyreview.org/anthropology-archaeology-news/non-binary-gender-identities-in-different-cultures/

Cavanagh, S. L. (2010). *Queering bathrooms: Gender, sexuality, and the hygienic imagination*. University of Toronto Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0829320100000739

Clare, E. (2001). Stolen bodies, reclaimed bodies: Disability and queerness. *Public Culture*, *13*(3), 359-365. https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-13-3-359

Clarke, J. A. (2019). They, Them, and Theirs, 132 Harv. *L. Rev*, *894*. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3270298

Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2013). Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners. *SAGE.*
https://api.pageplace.de/preview/DT0400.9781446281024_A24016291/preview-9781446281024_A24016291.pdf

Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2019a). Feminist qualitative methods and methodologies in psychology: A review and reflection. *Psychology of Women and Equalities Section Review*, *2*(1), 13-28.
https://doi.org/10.53841/bpspowe.2019.2.1.13

Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2019b). How can a heterosexual man remove his body hair and retain his masculinity? Mapping stories of male body hair depilation. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *16*(1), 96-114.
https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2018.1536388

Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2022). Thematic analysis: a practical guide. *SAGE.*

Crossley, N. (2006). *Reflexive embodiment in contemporary society: The body in late modern society*. Open University Press.

Crouch, E. (2018). Being non-binary in a language without gendered pronouns–estonian. *Deep Baltic*.
https://doi.org/10.2478/v10196-011-0003-4

Davis, D. A. (2017). The normativity of recognition: Non-binary gender markers in Australian law and policy. In *Gender panic, gender policy* (Vol. 24, pp. 227-250). Emerald Publishing Limited.
https://doi.org/10.1108/s1529-212620170000024014

Dev, S., Monajatipoor, M., Ovalle, A., Subramonian, A., Phillips, J. M., & Chang, K. W. (2021). Harms of gender exclusivity and challenges in non-binary representation in language technologies. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2108.12084*.
https://doi.org/10.18653/v1/2021.emnlp-main.150

Dolgin, J. (2017). Discriminating gender: Local, medical, and social presumptions about transgender and intersex people. *Sw. L. REv.*, *47*, 61.
https://scholarlycommons.law.hofstra.edu/faculty_scholarship/1210/

Draz, M. (2022). Realness as Resistance: Queer Feminism, Neoliberalism, and Early Trans Critiques of Butler. *Hypatia*, *37*(2), 364-383.
https://doi.org/10.1017/hyp.2022.3

Fahs, B. (2011a). Breaking body hair boundaries: Classroom exercises for challenging social constructions of the body and sexuality. *Feminism & Psychology, 22*(4), 482-506.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353511427293

Fahs, B. (2011b). Dreaded "otherness" heteronormative patrolling in women's body hair rebellions. *Gender & Society*, *25*(4), 451-472. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243211414877

Fahs, B. (2013). Shaving it all off: Examining social norms of body hair among college men in a women's studies course. *Women's Studies*, *42*(5), 559-577. https://doi.org/10.1080/00497878.2013.794058

Fahs, B. (2017). The dreaded body: disgust and the production of "appropriate" femininity. *Journal of Gender Studies*, *26*(2), 184-196. https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2015.1095081

Fausto-Sterling, A. (2000). *Sexing the body: Gender politics and the construction of sexuality*. Basic books.

Fausto-Sterling, A. (2008). *Myths of gender: Biological theories about women and men*. Basic Books.

Featherstone, M. (1991). *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*. Sage.

Feraday, C. (2016). For lack of a better word: Neo-identities in non-cisgender, non-straight communities on tumblr. *Ryerson University*. https://doi.org/10.32920/ryerson.14648067

Ferreira, V. S. (2014). Becoming a heavily tattooed young body: From a bodily experience to a body project. *Youth & Society*, *46*(3), 303-337. https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118x11427839

Fitzpatrick, M., & Delia Deckard, N. (2018). The Common Sense Cut and the Gendered Body Project: Constructing Existing Norms around Genital Cutting in US Media. *Humanity & Society*, *42*(3), 275-296. https://doi.org/10.1177/0160597617716966

Foucault, M. (1978). The History of Sexuality: Volume One. *Penguin.*

Foucault, M. (1990). *The history of sexuality: An introduction.* Vintage.

Foucault, M. (1995). Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison. *Vintage*.

Foucault, M. (1997). *The politics of truth*. Semiotext(e).

Foucault, M., Davidson, A. I., & Burchell, G. (2008). *The birth of biopolitics: lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-1979*. Springer.

Frank, E. (2014). Groomers and consumers: The meaning of male body depilation to a modern masculinity body project. *Men and Masculinities*, *17*(3), 278-298. https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184x14539509

Frank, S. E. (2020). Queering menstruation: trans and non-binary identity and body politics. *Sociological Inquiry*, *90*(2), 371-404. https://doi.org/10.1111/soin.12355

Ghoshal, N. (2020, September 8). *Transgender, Third Gender, No Gender: Part II. Rights Perspectives on Laws Assigning Gender.* Human Rights Watch. https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/09/08/transgender-third-gender-no-gender-part-ii

Gill, R. K. C. (2003). A genealogical approach to idealized male body imagery. *Paragraph*, *26*(1-2), 187-197. https://doi.org/10.3366/para.2003.26.1-2.187

Gill, R., Henwood, K., & McLean, C. (2005). Body projects and the regulation of normative masculinity. *Body & society*, *11*(1), 37-62. https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034x05049849

Goodman, Leo A. 1961. «Snowball sampling». *The Annals of Mathematical Statistics 32* (1): 148-170. https://doi.org/10.1214/aoms/1177705148.

Greenberg, J. A. (2002). Deconstructing binary race and sex categories: A comparison of the multiracial and transgendered experience. *San Diego L. Rev.*, *39*, 917. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.480882

Grossman, S. L., & Annunziato, R. A. (2018). Risky business: is pubic hair removal by women associated with body image and sexual health?. *Sexual Health*, *15*(3), 269-275. https://doi.org/10.1071/sh17154

Herdt, G. (Ed.). (2020). *Third sex, third gender: Beyond sexual dimorphism in culture and history*. Princeton University Press.

Herzig, R. M. (2015). Plucked. In *Plucked*. New York University Press.

Hesse-Biber, S. N. (Ed.). (2013). *Feminist research practice: A primer*. Sage Publications.

Hines, S., & Santos, A. C. (2018). Trans* policy, politics and research: The UK and Portugal. *Critical Social Policy*, *38*(1), 35-56. https://doi.org/10.1177/0261018317732880

Islam, A. (2022). Plastic Bodies: Women Workers and Emerging Body Rules in Service Work in Urban India. *Gender & Society*, *36*(3), 422-444. https://doi.org/10.1177/08912432221089637

Jóhannsdóttir, Á. (2019). Body hair and its entanglement: Shame, choice and resistance in body hair practices among young Icelandic people. *Feminism & Psychology*, *29*(2), 195-213. https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353518815706

Johnson, R. (2018). Queering/Querying the body: Sensation and curiosity in disrupting body norms. *Oppression and the body*, 97-111.

Jordan-Young, R. M., & Karkazis, K. (2019). *Testosterone: An unauthorized biography*. Harvard University Press.

Kaufmann, J.C. (1996). *L'entretien comprehensive* [The comprehensive mainte- nance]. Paris, France: Éditions Nathan.

Keyes, O. (2018). The misgendering machines: Trans/HCI implications of automatic gender recognition. *Proceedings of the ACM on human-computer interaction*, *2*(CSCW), 1-22. https://doi.org/10.1145/3274357

Keyes, O. (2019). Counting the Countless: Why data science is a profound threat for queer people. *Real Life*, *2*.

Kidder, L. H., & Fine, M. (1987). Qualitative and quantitative methods: When stories converge. *New directions for program evaluation*, *1987*(35), 57-75. https://doi.org/10.1002/ev.1459

Kitzinger, C. (1999). Intersexuality: Deconstructing the sex/gender binary. *Feminism & Psychology,* 9(4), 493-498. https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353599009004016

Klesse, C. (2007). Racialising the politics of transgression: Body modification in queer culture. *Social Semiotics*, *17*(3), 275-292. https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330701448561

Kurt, S. (2021). *Radikale Zärtlichkeit–Warum Liebe politisch ist*. Harper Collins.

Lasio, D., Oliveira, J. M. D., & Serri, F. (2020). Queering kinship, overcoming heteronorms. *Human Affairs*, *30*(1), 27-37. https://doi.org/10.1515/humaff-2020-0003

Lugones, M. (2013). The coloniality of gender. In *Globalization and the decolonial option* (pp. 369-390). Routledge.

Nadar, S. (2014). "Stories are data with Soul"–lessons from black feminist epistemology. *Agenda*, *28*(1), 18-28. https://doi.org/10.1080/10130950.2014.871838

Nadeau, B.L., & Guy, J. (2023, July 21). *Italy starts removing lesbian mothers' names from children's birth certificates*. CNN. https://edition.cnn.com/2023/07/21/europe/italy-lesbian-couples-birth-certificates-scli-intl/index.html

Nicholas, L. (2020). Introduction to the Special Issue: Positive non-binary and/or genderqueer sexual ethics and politics. *INSEP–Journal of the International Network for Sexual Ethics and Politics*, *8*(SI), 3-4.

https://doi.org/10.3224/insep.si2020.01

Nickerson, C. (2023, May 12). *Social Institutions In Sociology: Definition & Examples.* SimplySociology.

https://simplysociology.com/social-institution.html

Nicolazzo, Z. (2016). 'It's a hard line to walk': Black non-binary trans* collegians' perspectives on passing, realness, and trans*-normativity. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *29*(9), 1173-1188.

https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2016.1201612

Matsuno, E., & Budge, S. L. (2017). Non-binary/genderqueer identities: A critical review of the literature. *Current Sexual Health Reports*, *9*, 116-120.

https://doi.org/10.1007/s11930-017-0111-8

McCulloch, G., & Gawne, L. (Hosts). (2016, Dezember 13). Pronouns. Little words, big jobs (No. 2) [Audio Podcast Episode]. In *Lingthusiasm*.

https://lingthusiasm.com/post/154520062361/lingthusiasm-episode-2-pronouns-little-words

Mirandé, A. (2016). Hombres mujeres: An indigenous third gender. *Men and Masculinities*, *19*(4), 384-409.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X15602746

Mogstad, H. (2023, May 25). *Why doesn't Europe grieve deaths in the Mediterranean? The uncomfortable reality is that to Europeans, not all lives are equal.* AlJazeera.

https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2023/5/25/why-doesnt-europe-grieve-deaths-in-the-mediterranean

Munoz, J. (2009). *Cruising utopia: The there and then of queer theory.* New York University Press.

Oliveira, J. M. D., & Nogueira, C. (2009). Introdução: um lugar feminista queer e o prazer de confusão de fronteiras. *Ex aequo*, (20), 9-12.

Oliveira, J. M., Pinto, P., Pena, C., & Carlos, C. G. (2009). Feminismos queer: disjunções, articulações e ressignificações. *Ex aequo*, (20), 13-27.

Oliveira, J. M., Costa, C. G., & Nogueira, C. (2013). The workings of homonormativity: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer discourses on discrimination and public displays of affections in Portugal. *Journal of Homosexuality, 60*(10), 1475–1493.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2013.819221

Oliveira, J. M., Da Costa, C. G., & Carneiro, N. S. (2014). Troubling Humanity: Towards a Queer Feminist Critical Psychology. *Annual Review of Critical Psychology*, *11*, 59-77.

Oyěwùmí, O. (1997). *The invention of women: Making an African sense of western gender discourses*. U of Minnesota Press.

Pape, M. (2019). Expertise and non-binary bodies: Sex, gender and the case of Dutee Chand. *Body & Society*, *25*(4), 3-28.
https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034x19865940

Pitts, V. L. (1998). Reclaiming the female body: embodied identity work, resistance and the grotesque. *Body & Society*, *4*(3), 67-84.
https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034x98004003004

Pitts, V. (2000). Visibly queer: Body technologies and sexual politics. *Sociological Quarterly*, *41*(3), 443-463.
https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1533-8525.2000.tb00087.x

Pitts, V. L. (2003). Reclaiming the female body: Women body modifiers and feminist debates. In *In the Flesh: The Cultural Politics of Body Modification* (pp. 49-86). New York: Palgrave Macmillan US.
https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403979438_3

Rajunov, M., & Duane, A. S. (Eds.). (2019). *Nonbinary: Memoirs of Gender and Identity*. Columbia University Press.

Reischer, E., & Koo, K. S. (2004). The body beautiful: Symbolism and agency in the social world. *Annu. Rev. Anthropol.*, *33*, 297-317.
https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.33.070203.143754

Ricciardelli, R. (2011). Masculinity, consumerism, and appearance: A look at men's hair. *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue canadienne de sociologie*, *48*(2), 181-201.
https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1755-618x.2011.01261.x

Robertson, N. (2018). The power and subjection of liminality and borderlands of non-binary folx. *Gender Forum, 69*(6), 45-59,75-76.

Robinson, B. A. (2022). Non-binary embodiment, queer knowledge production, and disrupting the Cisnormative field: Notes from a trans ethnographer. *The Journal of Men's Studies*, *30*(3), 425-445.
https://doi.org/10.1177/10608265221108204

Rose, N. (1999). *Powers of Freedom*. Cambridge University Press.

Roseneil, S., Crowhurst, I., Santos, A. C., & Stoilova, M. (Eds.). (2017). *Reproducing citizens: Family, state and civil society*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315673110

Shah, C., Merchant, R., Mahajan, S., & Nevatia, S. (2015). *No outlaws in the gender galaxy*. Zubaan.

Shilling, C. (2012). *The body and social theory*. Sage.

Skewes, L., Fine, C., & Haslam, N. (2018). Beyond Mars and Venus: The role of gender essentialism in support for gender inequality and backlash. *PloS one*, *13*(7), e0200921. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0200921

Slovin, L. J. (2020). What grade are you in? On being a non-binary researcher. *Curriculum Inquiry*, *50*(3), 225-241. https://doi.org/10.1080/03626784.2020.1754730

Spiel, K. (2021, June). " Why are they all obsessed with Gender?"—(Non) binary Navigations through Technological Infrastructures. In *Designing Interactive Systems Conference 2021* (pp. 478-494). https://doi.org/10.1145/3461778.3462033

Spiel, K., Keyes, O., & Barlas, P. (2019, May). Patching gender: Non-binary utopias in HCI. In *Extended Abstracts of the 2019 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 1-11). https://doi.org/10.1145/3290607.3310425

Spivak, G. C. (1988). Can the subaltern speak? In C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the interpretation of culture* (pp. 271–313). Macmillan.

Stryker, S. (2000). My Words to Victor Frankenstein. *Above the Village of Chamounix Performing Transgender Rage. Kvinder, Køn & Forskning,(3-4)*. https://doi.org/10.7146/kkf.v0i3-4.28037

Stryker, S. (2008). *Transgender history*. Seal Press.

Sullivan, N. (2013). Transmogrification:(Un) becoming other (s). In *The transgender studies reader* (pp. 552-564). Routledge.

Sumerau, J. E. (2019). Embodying Nonexistence. *Body Battlegrounds: Transgressions, Tensions, and Transformations*, 177. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv16759ws.27

Terry, G., & Braun, V. (2013). To let hair be, or to not let hair be? Gender and body hair removal practices in Aotearoa/New Zealand. *Body Image*, *10*(4), 599-606. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2013.07.001

Terry, G., & Braun, V. (2016). "I think gorilla-like back effusions of hair are rather a turn-off":'Excessive hair'and male body hair (removal) discourse. *Body image*, *17*, 14-24. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2016.01.006

Terry, G., Hayfield, N., Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2017). Thematic analysis. *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research in psychology*, *2*, 17-37.

Turner, B. S. (2008). *The body and society: Explorations in social theory*. Sage. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446214329

Turner, V. (1974). *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*. Cornell University Press. https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501732843

Thomas, G. (2007). *The sexual demon of colonial power: Pan-African embodiment and erotic schemes of empire*. Indiana University Press.

Tiggemann, M., & Hodgson, S. (2008). The hairlessness norm extended: Reasons for and predictors of women's body hair removal at different body sites. *Sex Roles*, *59*(11), 889-897. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-008-9494-3

Toerien, M., & Wilkinson, S. (2003, July). Gender and body hair: Constructing the feminine woman. In *Women's Studies International Forum* (Vol. 26, No. 4, pp. 333-344). Pergamon. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0277-5395(03)00078-5

Toerien, M., & Wilkinson, S. (2004). Exploring the depilation norm: A qualitative questionnaire study of women's body hair removal. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *1*(1), 69-92. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088704qp006oa

Toerien, M., Wilkinson, S., & Choi, P. Y. (2005). Body hair removal: The 'mundane'production of normative femininity. *Sex Roles*, *52*, 399-406. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-005-2682-5

Translanguageprimer. (n.d.). The Trans Language Primer. Full Index. Translangaugaprimer. https://translanguageprimer.com

Truszczynski, N., Singh, A. A., & Hansen, N. (2022). The discrimination experiences and coping responses of non-binary and trans people. *Journal of homosexuality*, *69*(4), 741-755. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2020.1855028

Vaid-Menon, A. (2020). *Beyond the gender binary*. Penguin.

Wigginton, B., & Lafrance, M. N. (2019). Learning critical feminist research: A brief introduction to feminist epistemologies and methodologies. *Feminism & Psychology*, 0959353519866058.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353519866058

Yeadon-Lee, T. (2016). What's the story? Exploring online narratives of non-binary gender identities. *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social and Community Studies*, *11*(2), 19-34.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353519866058

Annexes

Annex A: Informed consent

This study is part of a research project taking place at **Iscte – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa**.

The study aims to explore the role of body hair in non-binary people. Your participation in the study - which is highly valued as it will contribute to the advancement of knowledge in this field of science - consists of one interview that will last for approximately 45 – 90 minutes. In this interview you will be asked questions about your gender, your body hair practices and body practices in general. Furthermore, there will be questions about your own experiences with body hair in different contexts, your emotions and feelings regarding body hair, and the role of body hair in your gender process.

Iscte is responsible for the processing of your personal data that are collected and processed exclusively for the purposes of the study, legally based on Article 9(2)(a) of the GDPR.

The study is conducted by Catarina Dauzenroth *(cdhaa@iscte-iul.pt)* who you may contact to clear up any doubts, share comments or exercise your rights in relation to the processing of your personal data. You may use the contact indicated above to request access, rectification, erasure or limitation of the processing of your personal data.

Your participation in this study is **confidential**. Your personal data will always be processed by authorised personnel bound to the duty of secrecy and confidentiality. Iscte assures the use of appropriate techniques, organisational and security measures to protect personal information. All investigators are required to keep all personal data confidential.

In addition to being confidential, participation in the study is strictly **voluntary**: you may choose freely whether to participate or not. If you have decided to participate, you may stop your participation and withdraw your consent to the processing of your personal data at any time, without having to provide any justification. The withdrawal of consent shall not affect the lawfulness of processing based on consent before its withdrawal.

Your personal data will be kept for a maximum of two months. Anonymity of your data is assured in the whole process and the study's results.

There are no expected significant risks associated with participation in the study. Iscte does not disclose, or share with third parties, information related to its personal data. Iscte has a Data Protection Officer who may be contacted by e-mail: *dpo@iscte-iul.pt*. If you consider this necessary, you also have the right to submit a complaint to the Portuguese Data Protection Authority (CNDP).

I declare that I have understood the aims of what was proposed to me, as explained by the investigator, that I was given the opportunity to ask any questions about this study and received a clarifying reply to all such questions. **I accept** participating in the study and consent to my personal data being used in accordance with the information that was given to me.

Annex B: Materials

Questions English

- Can you describe how and in which Situation you became aware of your body hair?
- Can you tell me a moment (if there has been one) where you realized that you want to work on your body hair outside of the binary norms?
- Can you tell me a story about how you experience your body hair when you're with friends, your family, or with other people that I didn't mention?
- Which role does body hair play for you personally in relation to your gender at the moment?
- How did or do you experience the relationship with your body hair during your gender process?
- How do you feel when you're faced with body hair norms and how do you handle such situations? Can you tell me a story about your reaction?
- What role play body hair in your sexuality (if there is sexuality in your life, with or without other people)?
    - How do you feel about your own body hair in sexual interaction?
    - If you're sexually interacting with other people - how do you feel about body hair at people you're sexually interacting with?
    - Did the role of body hair in sexuality change for you?
- We were mainly talking about […] body parts. Let's think about the parts we haven't discussed yet, for example: feet hair, arm hair, back hair, eyebrows, ear hair, head hair, leg hair, back hair, hand hair, … Whatever else comes in your mind. If you think of them – what thoughts or stories come into your mind?
- How important is body hair in your whole bodily practices, that you engage in?
- In your opinion – what role have body hair in the non-binary culture?

Questions German

- Kannst du mir erzählen, wie und in welcher Situation du auf deine Körperbehaarung aufmerksam geworden bist?
- Kannst du von einem Moment erzählen (falls es einen gab), in dem dir klar wurde, dass du deine Körperbehaarung nicht anhand binärer Vorstellungen gestalten magst?
- Kannst du mir eine Geschichte darüber erzählen, wie du dich mit deiner Körperbehaarung in Begegnungen mit befreundeten Menschen, deiner Familien, oder anderen Leuten fühlst?
- Welche Rolle spielt Körperbehaarung momentan für dich persönlich in Bezug auf dein Geschlecht?
- Wie empfindest du Körperbehaarung in deinem Genderprozess?
- Wie fühlst du dich, wenn du mit Körperhaar-Normen konfrontiert wirst und wie gehst du mit solchen Situationen um? Kannst du mir eine Geschichte über deine Reaktion erzählen?
- Welche Rolle spielen Körperhaare in deiner Sexualität (wenn es Sexualität in deinem Leben gibt, mit oder ohne andere Menschen)?

- - Wie empfindest du deine eigene Körperbehaarung in sexuell intimen Momenten?
  - Wenn du sexuell intime Momente mit anderen Menschen teilst: wie empfindest du deren Körperbehaarung?
  - Hat sich die Rolle von Körperbehaarung in Sexualität für dich geändert?
- Wir haben hauptsächlich über [...] Körperteile gesprochen. Lass uns einmal über Teile sprechen, über die wir noch nicht besprochen habe. Zum Beispiel: Fußhaare, Armhaare, Rückenhaare, Augenbrauen, Ohrenhaare, Kopfhaare, Beinhaare, Rückenhaare, Handhaare, ... Was immer dir sonst noch einfällt. Welche Gedanken oder Geschichten kommen dir in den Sinn?
- Wie wichtig sind Körperhaare in deinen alltäglichen Pflegeroutinen?
- Deiner Meinung nach, welche Rolle spielen Körperhaare in der non-binary Kultur?

Annex C: Debriefing

Dear Person,

Thank you so much for having participated in this study. As indicated at the onset of your participation, the study is about the experiences of body hair in non-binary people and aims to deepen the understanding of the meaning, importance, role, and relationship of body hair in non-binary people. More specifically, this study tries to explore how body hair play a role in gender dis/identification process, how body hair plays a role in performing your own body and how body hair are used to express gender and is used to un/do gender norms. The study that you're participated in is an exploratory one, so you joined the adventure of exploring body hair in non-binary people, a topic that is not deeply researched until now. Therefore, this study has no expectations for the result, but is looking forward to dive into your life trajectories, and the stories you shared.

If you have any question, comments that you wish to share, or interest in receiving information about the main outcomes and conclusion of the study, feel free to contact me any time: Catarina Dauzenroth (cdhaa@iscte-iul.pt).

Once again, thank you for your participation.

Annex D: Self-description Gender (long version)

Table 3.2

Self-Description gender

Name	Self-description gender long
L.	*I like to see everything as queer - to use the word queer for everything because it's a very umbrella - very like umbrella term - but also very political word. It's ambiguous but at the same time it's like reappropriating a word that was used as an insult before and still sometimes today – uh - and it is not closing me in one category necessarily. So, I'd like to use that word mostly - queer - but I see myself as like in a non-binary part of the spectrum.*
Duda	*Non-binary; but also, genderfluid, but as a main identity non-binary. And as dynamics of this identity genderfluid.*
Billy	*Trans, non-binary.*
Mo	*OK, so I am nonbinary. And that means that I do not identify as male or female, but it is a fluid situation also because I'm feeling like I lean more to male. But right now, non-binary, yes.*
Alli	*Gender is hard for me to describe right now. I used to want to be a "boy" and didn't like my body. Then I realized it was more of not liking how society saw me as a "girl". Now I've sort of reclaimed feeling empowered with femininity. But I don't think I really feel like a woman. At the same time, I don't feel non-binary, and also don't feel like a man. But I still have some issues with my body that I'm trying to work out and for now I think of myself as genderless and am comfortable with she/they pronouns.*
Emmet	*I took this course of Gender and Culture and I read a paper there and it was about intersex, intersexuality. And then there was a table, explaining common intersex conditions. And I realized I had one of them. And I even got the surgery when I was six years old. I do remember the surgery, the procedure and afterwards everything. Relatives coming to our house and checking on my penis and I just learned this when I was 22. [...] First, I wanted to reclaim my identity; what is gender anyways, what is binary anyways? And just because I present a male or more masculine figure and people perceive me as a male, mainly a gay man, which I'm not. I'm neither of those, technically. I identify as bisexual and I identify as more on the non-binary aspect, not only because I had this intersex condition, but also when I identify as male, I*

Name	Self-description gender long
Emmet	*I feel like I'm getting some type of gender norms onto myself and I don't want to have them so…*
Koda	*I describe my gender, well, maybe it's still an issue that's kind of always changing. I would also say very fluid, but I think most of all I would say I identify as a non-binary trans* person. And that just involves a lot of things for me, yeah. Also understanding that there's nothing that's kind of fixed and rigid, but um, yeah, it's kind of fluid.*
Sasha	*The term where I feel most represented is agender. So simply no gender.*
Jun	*I consider myself as a nonbinary person. I just like the umbrella term because then I don't have to think about it a lot. But if I had to think about it, I think I would consider myself agender. Yeah, I think that's it.*
Flor	*I grew up with this idea that I had this tree, and it was kind of like a sister to me. And so, my perception of nature and my perception of myself are very connected. And I felt like as I was growing and as I was seeing this tree in particular grow, but also all the environment around me I could feel connected. And I would, I would visualize my growth in this way of rooting into reality. And when this tree grew more and started lifting all of these tiles from our yard, I could feel like, OK, wow, look at this, the power of growth. And I could feel represented very much in this in this tree. I think definitely my gender is very connected to this idea of nature because then I remember when I started going to school, so around 3 or 4? I had this realization that people have genders or or that people think they have genders. For me this was wild. OK, boys can do this thing and then girls can do this other thing. And I was always also much bigger than most kids. I was taller and I was wider and that was generally perceived differently already. I had a lot of different features even as a child and later in puberty I figured out the words because I'm intersex so that was a whole thing, that I could not also perceive myself physically in either binary gender. So, for me it was very much like "oh this doesn't make any sense, why are you trying to tell me that I am this?" But then I was also not the other option available, so it was a bit confusing, I guess, as a kid to; to go through that. And yes, so this was around 3-4 years old, super early. So, I think I've always been*

Name	Self-description gender long
Flor	*aware that my gender was not binary, but I didn't have the words to define that. […] and then there I found agender before I found non-binary and so that always makes sense and I think that's what sticks with me most […]. And recently I started meeting other agender people and incredibly we have a very similar experience. So, I was like "OK this is great, this is exactly what it is". This is my gender. Yes. Yes. So, I think it's, for me, strange because normally I think most kids have this experience that they can find other people from their gender around them or role models or things. And I only have this into adulthood. So, for me it's this. It's a whole different way that your brain processes this. And so, for me, I; my peers were nature elements. So often I'm like, yeah, my gender is like a tree. Not that people would not understand without all of this context, but yeah, for me this this makes sense, the depth of my agender.*
Lucas	*So, for me, non-binary, it's really not identifying with any of the binary genders that are predefined culturally and as a - not only as something that I feel within myself, but as a political act as well. So yeah, I don't feel like the – how do you say- when people have dysphoria - I don't feel very dysphoric. I feel dysphoric with this society, with this culture, but I don't feel within my, my body. It's just that I express in multiple ways.*
Micah	*I would actually classify myself as non-binary/transmasc. The only thing I really know is that I'm not CIS, and I'm definitely not a woman, so there are nuances there; I think you still have to distinguish between what I have to say in the medical field for physical transformation. Or what I need to say when I'm in public to make it easier for people. And what do I say in the context of other trans people who just have an idea that gender is something that goes beyond trans men or trans women. So, I feel at home in that space beyond the binary.*

Note. Gender is fluid and might have changed in the meantime.