

MASTERARBEIT / MASTER'S THESIS

Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of the Master's Thesis

„Transgender community in Austria: Generating a discourse
of recognition“

verfasst von / submitted by

Nada Pajkanovic

angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts (MA)

Wien, 2017 / Vienna, 2017

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

A 066 824

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme as it appears on
the student record sheet:

Masterstudium Politikwissenschaft

Betreut von / Supervisor:

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Birgit Sauer

Foreword	4
1. Introduction	5
1.1 The subject of the research: What am I interested in	6
1.2 Research question	7
1.3 Research design: How I planned to do this	8
2. Context of the research	10
2.1 Defining transgender	11
2.2 Trans in Austria	14
2.3 History of self-organisation	17
2.4 The current transitioning process in Austria	19
3. Research Design	21
3.1 The Theory of Recognition	22
3.1.1 Fraser's account: recognition, redistribution and participation	22
3.1.2 Honneth's review: love, law and esteem	25
3.1.3 Building bridges: from theory to practice	27
3.2 Method: a qualitative study	32
3.2.2 Humanly subjectivity: a concept to consider	32
3.2.1 Collecting data	33
Expert interviews	33
Problem-centered interviews	35
Diversity of the interviewees	39
Overview of the questionnaire	41
Participant observation	43

Documentary movie Female to What the Fuck (FtWtF)	49
3.2.3 Contextual timeline of the research	51
3.2.4 Analysing data	52
4. Answering the research question: You're nobody 'till somebody loves you	53
4.1 Love	55
4.1.1 Nature vs Nurture	56
4.1.2 Living in Austria	59
4.2 Law	64
4.3 Esteem	70
4.3.1 To lead a normal life	71
4.3.2 Working	73
4.3.3 Politics	75
5. Conclusion	79
6. Literature	84
7. Appendixes	87
7.1 List of interviews	87
7.2 Questionnaire	88
7.3 Interview with the directors of FtWtF	90
Abstract	93

Foreword

Taking on the project of finding out about the status of the transgender community in Austria has been a rewarding process. Not only did I become acquainted with trans people in this country, but I was able to understand and learn more about their realities. In addition, I put my research skills into practice and conducted a complete research on the subject I previously had almost no knowledge of. I am grateful to all the people who have talked with me and presented their points of view on the matter. I am also grateful to the organisations and communities that allowed me to take part in their programme. This thesis, I hope, illuminates the state of the current society of Austria in regard to the transgender minority.

When I started thinking about the transgender topic and placing it in Austria as the subject of my Master thesis, in the summer of 2016, I did not know much about the matter. I have not met any transgender Austrians and had had very little idea where to search for them. The summer before beginning my research I had managed to read a few books, mainly by transgender authors, on their experiences. The literature was exclusively from the US and it consisted of Leslie Feinberg's *Transgender warriors: Making history from Joan of arc to Dennis Rodman* (1997) and *Trans liberation: Beyond pink or blue* (1999), Riki Wilchins's *Queer theory, gender theory: An instant Primer* (2004) and Deborah Rudacille's *The riddle of gender: Science, activism, and transgender rights*. (2007). All of the above were a suggestion of a friend of mine, a queer artist from Portland (Oregon), with whom I have spent a considerable amount of time on Skype, becoming informed on the issue. In addition, I watched movies, documentaries and TV shows focusing on trans topics such as: *Transparent* (2014 –), *The Danish girl* (2015), *Dallas Byers Club* (2013), *Beautiful Darling* (2010), *Bad education* (2004), *Boys don't cry* (1999), *Paris is Burning* (1990). I started noticing a slow rise of popular depiction of trans topics in arts and media, mostly in the US.

I knew I wanted to do a case study in Austria, where I currently study, but I struggled defining a research question. As a result of this I decided it was best to learn more about the community by approaching them.

1. Introduction

Identity politics has become a modern topic in current political discourses around the world. It revolves around one's recently found freedom, in modern democracies, to declare one's authentic characteristics and demand fair treatment by the state and the society. Gender identity, as one of the examples for identity politics, has become the focus of public debate. It is a person's deeply felt experience of gender, that encompasses a wide range of gender expressions (The Yogyakarta Principles, 2006, p. 8). One of them, and the focus of the thesis, is transgender identity, which seems to be an emerging subject, especially in popular culture, featured in music, film, television, fashion, blogging culture etc. The United States, leading country to advocate awareness of transgender issues, is placing more public focus on transgender individuals and their values. Similar attention is spreading over Europe.

Gender variants have always existed, in many different forms, being accepted in society in many different ways, ranging from respect to contempt. Deborah Rudacille and Leslie Feinberg have each, in their books *The riddle of Gender* and *Transgender Warriors*, made an attempt of making a historical account of trans people and symbolism which is a fairly difficult task considering that most of the trans people are (and always have been) in hiding. Gender as a term is a relatively new concept, as Rudacille presents it, dating from mid twentieth century with the use of terms such as gender role and gender identity (Rudacille, 2006, p. 105). The relation of sex and gender and the social pressure for their alignment is the root of the problem when it comes to the fear and rejection of recognition of trans identities.

Even with the tremendous progress we have so far made, our society is still very strict about the boundaries between sexes and genders. Our perception is still very much based on physical appearance and gender appropriate behaviour, through which we constantly confirm our gender and declare our sex. Certain names, public spaces, roles in society, emotional reactions, clothes, even colours are assigned to either males, females or to neutral ground, suitable for both. As we interact socially on daily bases, we define people we encounter as either male or female. Even though certain lines have been blurred, there are still specific things that seem unchangeable. For example,

women dressing in socially designed men's clothing have become and an everyday occurrence, a socially acceptable norm, whereas men wearing woman's clothing still represents a bridge to be crossed. As one of the informants, Pales explained to me, this is not exclusive only to cis community: "Even within trans community there are a lot of people who basically tell you that you're not trans enough if you don't have all the surgeries and if you don't do hormone therapy".

The aim of the thesis is to answer the research question: How do recognition and redistribution contribute to the status of the transgender community in Austria? This central European country, a member state of the EU has a population of over eight million people. Since the 1980s, this country has been building a legal framework to meet the needs of its transgender minority. As a theoretical base of my investigation I have chosen recognition and redistribution, and their contribution to the status of this minority. In the light of this emerging trend, the philosophical exchange between Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth revolves around accurately determining what recognition is and in which cases it is to be considered justified. In order to gather data, I interviewed transgender people and observed events that tackled trans issues. Then I analysed the narratives of the collected data and answered my research question.

1.1 The subject of the research: What am I interested in

The temporal and spatial focus of the research is the present situation in the state of Austria, in the year of 2016. This European country, with a fairly stable and comprehensive social system, offers transgender citizens options of legally funded transitioning since the 1980s. The legal framework surrounding trans issues is constantly changing, since transgender individuals and organisations raise their voices about changes that need to be made. As Juno, one of the informants explained how things were when she moved to Austria from the United Kingdom in the 1980s: "I met somebody in Holland, an Austrian woman and yeah, we fell in love, so to say and I came here and Austria...It was very, very conservative. People were running around in costumes, national costumes, there was no graffiti on the walls ... very, very catholic. And my ex mother in law found that even hanging the washing up line was a woman job." A lot has changed over the years, within the society and in the legal treatment of trans people.

This research is conducted in Vienna, where the majority of organisations, events and gatherings are. With the exception of a few transgender organisations such as TransMan, located in Voralberg, and the newly founded Transgender-Center in Innsbruck (TGCI), meetings in self-help groups are held in Linz and Graz.

1.2 Research question

In designing this research I have determined the following as my main question:

How do recognition and redistribution contribute to the status of the transgender community in Austria?

The research is formulated on the basis of, and guided throughout by the two concepts: recognition and redistribution. Theoretical base of this research relies on Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth's political-philosophical exchange *Redistribution or recognition?* from 2003. This very interesting conversation between a theorist and a philosopher conjoins "moral philosophy, social theory, and political analysis in a critical theory of capitalist society" (Fraser, 2003a, p. 4). I aim to argue that the combination of Fraser's and Honneth's theoretical proposals is the best alternative when examining the status of transgender community in Austria.

I conceptualised recognition guided by Axel Honneth's definition of it. His proposed recognition consists of three elements: love, law and esteem. As it will be elaborated later on, in the theoretical part, love represents mutual affection through intimate relationships; law supposes respect through mutually granted equal rights; and esteem assumes competition for professional status within one-sided interpretation of the achievement principle (Honneth, 2003a, p. 142). He defines recognition as self-realisation, and insists that inter-subjective recognition is always in relation to institutionalisation of recognition within a society (Honneth, 2003a, p. 138).

Contrary to Honneth's suggestion that redistribution is causally connected to recognition, and can occur only as a result of inter-subjective recognition, Nancy Fraser proposes something else. She believes that recognition is a matter of justice and the only way to battle injustice is to form a two-dimensional system where recognition and redistribution correlate as two equally important elements, successful only in tandem (Fraser, 2003b, p. 9). Even though I do not take redistribution as an element separate from recognition, as Fraser suggests, I focus on the role that just redistribution plays in the three elements Honneth suggested. Also taken in consideration is the normative core of Fraser's conception is participatory parity, a concept that requires an arrangement that permits all members to interact with one another as peers. This is a universalist norm that encompasses all and presupposes equal moral worth for every member of society. With participatory parity Fraser aims to discredit Honneth's conception of recognition as self-realisation and decouple the concept from psychology.

Through the gathered data, I aim to demonstrate how concepts of recognition and redistribution contribute to the improvement of the status of the transgender community in Austria. The evolution of the legal system and the more frequent and public debates on transgender issues are taken as indicators of such contribution. The more public spaces are open to diverse gender expressions, the more recognised the minority is. As a method of gathering data I have chosen a qualitative one, which I elaborate on in the following section.

1.3 Research design: How I planned to do this

This research is a qualitative one, based on expert and problem-centred interviews, participant observation of group meetings and events in direct connection to transgender expression and issues in Austria, as well as one Austrian documentary movie on the subject. I decided it would be best to gather the perceptions of trans people, on their living conditions in Austria, in order to determine the status of the community in regards to recognition and redistribution. By the transgender community I consider transgender individuals and organisations who are open about their gender identity and expression, and are willing to discuss it.

The informants I interviewed live openly as transgender individuals, and have already gone through transition and the legal change of gender before this year. Their opinions on the quality of life and the present social setting can illustrate the progress through which the state of Austria has gone through in the process of recognition of trans community. They illuminate the evolution in identity acceptance, legal changes towards bettering of transgender lives, and increased presence of trans issues in mainstream social life. Two people were interviewed with the expert interviewing method and their identities have been uncovered. This method is chosen because of the public engagement of the two trans individuals, that raises awareness on transgender topics. Four people were interviewed with the problem-centred interviewing method and their identities have been anonymised. This method is chosen because it allows a dynamic of narrative and focused questions that allows a deeper understanding of the matter researched.

Five interviews were conducted in a local Viennese cafe and one was set up via Skype. All of the conversations have been recorded in their entirety on a mobile smart phone, from which they have been transferred to a computer and transcribed into a text document.

I have observed five events that addressed transgender issues. Be it regular meetings of the local transgender community, film festivals or public demonstrations, these events gathered people of all gender identities and brought attention to transgender topics. The events observed are: three themed TransX meetings, one *Transitioning* International Queer Minorities Film Festival evening, and one demonstration on The International Woman's Day. To document gathered data through observation protocol sheets have been made. Each protocol sheet has the same structure and is filled according to the topics discussed in the events witnessed.

The documentary movie *Female to What the Fuck (FtWtF)* from 2015 has been taken as a source of information. The film, made by two Austrian directors in Vienna, represent a collection of testimonies of five individuals born in a female body and transitioning into their desired gender. The reason why the film is incorporated into the thesis is because it is one of the examples of transgender material publicly visible and open to discussion. I watched the movie directly in the production house and made notes which I later used as material. In addition, I interviewed the two directors and taken their opinions in consideration.

The gathered data is interpreted with narrative analysis. This survey depicts the perception of transgender people living in Austria. They give opinions on living conditions that show how it is to actually live a transgender reality in this country. Chosen to represent a colourful palette of age, profession, nationality and social involvement, the informants represent a quilt of different destinies using the same legal system and operating in the same cultural territory. As described above, this qualitative research is to clarify the role of recognition and just redistribution in regards to the status of the transgender community in Austria. The results of the research are presented in three categories, each answering a sub-research question presented in the table later on. What follows is a contextual frame of the circumstances under which the research was conducted. It presents the reader with the definition of the term transgender that will be used throughout the paper, as well as terms related to it. Then, it presents a historical evolution of transgender identity in Austria and the according legal framework.

2. Context of the research

While having coffee and cake in a local Viennese coffeehouse, a middle-aged trans woman, who has recently transitioned, tries to explain the essence of her identity: “What the most difficult part, as I said, is trying to understand something that you don’t feel yourself”. Juno then proceeds to explain how she tries to take away the fear from people and explain that she is not some hidden menace lurking in the bathroom. A week later, a trans man in his mid-twenties, with whom I had a different coffee and cake said: “No, I’m sure that no-one chooses their gender. You’re just born, I was born without male, you know, parts and I have to change that in order to be balanced because society won’t accept me for who I am, they don’t see me as male”. The riddle trans people find themselves in is quite tricky. Questioning their gender and deciding to make life-changing alterations, in order to finally be able to wake up in the morning and feel at ease within, is a long road with many obstacles. The enigma of sex and gender, as well as biology and social construct, is maybe one that trans people can shed some light on.

The upcoming chapter deals with the definition of transgender and its related terms. It differentiates gender identities and provides insight into current internationally accepted definitions from the

United Nations and the European Union. It also introduces the historical and contextual frame of development of the trans community in Austria. The following depicts the evolution of law regarding gender transitioning in Austria from the eighties until now, 2016. In addition, it represents the principle that the trans community in this country seem to employ when coordinating itself. One such instance is TransX, the oldest existing organisation which has been a valuable source of information for this research.

2.1 Defining transgender

Through time transgender identity has been, and to a certain extent even now, considered a sexual identity and is a part of the famed LGBTIQ group of misfits of all colours of the rainbow. Still present use of the term transsexual, and the fact that many people do not know that this is, in fact, a gender identity, contributes to the general public unawareness of the matter. Simplified categorisation to *born in the wrong body* and stereotyping sexual orientation of trans people are common explanations of the *trans condition*. Similar are state solutions of organised transitioning processes where a trans person is expected to pass into the *chosen* gender and then finally lead a normal life modelled on the example of heterosexual, cis citizens. The seemingly helpful process designed by the state, as a reassurance of recognition, still bares the concealed, and even shameful, characteristic of trans identity. These people are not encouraged to publicly declare nor discuss the matter. There is a history in forced social conformity, where trans people are pressured to appropriate the gender they are transitioning into completely.

Before an overview of how transgender is to be defined throughout this paper, let us consider definitions of other related terms. First of all, a distinction between gender and sex should be made. As the European Institute for Gender Equality defines it, sex “refers to the biological characteristics which define humans as female or male. These sets of biological characteristics are not mutually exclusive as there are individuals who possess both.” (EIGE, n.y., n.p.) As opposed to sex, gender “refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a women or a man in a given context.” (Ibid)

This paper tackles gender identity, a social construct surrounding the biological characteristics of sexes.

Gender identity is however “understood to refer to each person’s deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth, including the personal sense of body (which may involve, if freely chosen, modification of bodily appearance or function by medical, surgical or other means) and other expressions of gender, including dress, speech and mannerism.” (The Yogyakarta Principles, 2006, p. 8) Similar to this term is gender expression which “refers to people’s manifestation of their gender identity, and the one that is perceived by others. Typically, people seek to make their gender expression or presentation match their gender identity/identities, irrespective of the sex that they were assigned at birth.” (European Commission, 2011, p. 13)

The following table presents the related terms within gender identity:

Term	Definition
Transgender	“Inner perception of a person is not in conformity with the sex assigned to them at birth. (Human Rights and Gender Identity, 2009, p. 3) Transgender people live permanently in their preferred gender. Unlike transsexuals, however, they may not necessarily wish to or need to undergo any medical interventions.” (European Commission, 2011, p.12)
Transsexual	“Transsexual people identify with the gender role opposite to the sex assigned to them at birth and seek to live permanently in the preferred gender role.” (European Commission, 2011, p.12)
Cisgender	“The gender identity and gender expression of cisgender people match the sex they were assigned at birth and the social expectations related to their gender. Cisgender people are considered to constitute the norm within society.” (European Commission, 2011, p.13)
Gender-Queer	“People who, having a combination of masculine and feminine characteristics, are <i>gender fluid</i> and move between genders, and have blurred lines between their gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation.” (European Commission, 2011, p.13)

Term	Definition
Intersex	“Persons whose bodies incorporate both or certain aspects of both male and female physiology, and at times their genital anatomy.” (Human Rights and Gender Identity, 2009, p. 3)

Gender identities should not be mistaken for sexual orientations. Being homosexual, bisexual or heterosexual is considered to be separate and not always correlating to the gender identity. Simply put, trans or a cis person can be either of the three. The focus of this paper is gender identity, not sexual orientation.

The already referenced Yogyakarta Principles, from 2006, are the first official attempt of the United Nations to address sexual orientation and gender identity as basic human rights. The intention was to apply the international human rights law to the issues of abuse of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people. As stated, “sexual orientation and gender identity are integral to every person’s dignity and humanity and must not be the basis for discrimination or abuse” (The Yogyakarta Principles, 2006, p. 6). The European Union has accepted this denotation with the Directive 2006/54/EC from 2006, calling for gender equality and condemning discrimination against persons who have changed sex (Directive 2006/54/EC, 2006, p. 1). Over the course of time different initiatives, resulting in different formal documents, have emerged, most notably the Human Rights and Gender Identity (2009) and Transgender Persons’ Rights in the EU Member States (2010).

Human Rights and Gender Identity stated: “Although the number of transgender persons is small, it should be pointed out that the transgender community is very diverse. It includes pre-operative and post-operative transsexual persons, but also persons who do not choose to undergo or do not have access to operations. They may identify as female-to-male (FTM) or male-to-female (MTF) transgender persons, and may or may not have undergone surgery or hormone therapy. The community also includes cross-dressers, transvestites and other people who do not fit the narrow categories of *male* or *female*. Many legal frameworks only seem to refer to transsexual persons, leaving out a decisive part of the community.” (Human Rights and Gender Identity, 2009, p. 3)

For the purposes of this paper I have taken the already mentioned definitions. However, when it comes to transgender identity, I have not included transvestites¹ and cross-dressers in my research. I have taken in consideration people who identify as transgender or transsexual, who have had some kind of treatment regarding their transgender identity and who are open to discuss it. This encompasses trans men (persons born female, but transitioned in some way to male) and trans women (persons born male, but transitioned in some way to female). Trans persons go through the process of transition (they transition or pass) which means they change some or all aspects of the gender they were born into. From that gender, the one they were born into, they pass to their *chosen* or *real* gender, depending on how they define it. For some the official formulation *chosen* gender does not feel quite right since one could argue that people do not choose genders: “I hate this chosen gender, it’s your real gender but never mind” Juno

2.2 Trans in Austria

The existence of trans people in Austria is not a new occurrence even though the legal framework regarding gender transitioning formed in the 1980s. There is very little information on transsexuality in Austria in the beginning of the twentieth century. Nevertheless there are doctors and activists in the neighbouring Germany who were quite vigorous advocates for understanding and accepting diverse gender and sexual expressions. Rudacille writes about Magnus Hirshfeld, a physician and an activist who worked with cross-gender and homosexual people in the Institute for Sexual Science, which he founded in 1919 in Berlin (Rudacille, 2006, p. 30). At approximately that time Eugen Steinach, a Viennese endocrinologist, worked on gender variations in animals. He surgically implanted gonads into animals abdomens and found they effected their sex expression. “The female implanted with the male gland will always be male with all of his characteristics; and the male implanted with a female generative gland will develop into a full-fledged female. By implanting a male and female generative gland simultaneously ... Steinach produced hybrids (hermaphrodites).” (Rudacille, 2006, p. 70) His disciple, German born American, Harry Benjamin wrote the first book on scientific treatment of transsexuals including sex-reassignment, called *The*

¹ Cross dressers and transvestites are “people who live permanently in the gender “opposite” to that on their birth certificate without any medical intervention and all those people who simply wish to present their gender differently.” (European Commission, 2011, p. 5)

Transsexual Phenomenon. He built a clinical practice based on Steinach's theory and advocated hormone treatment in sex-change transition (Ibid p.71).

The history of transgender in legal public records in Austria started not so long ago, with the first known law from 1983, which ensured the right to change gender (TransX e, n.y. n.p.). Followed by laws that regulated name change, Austria started regulating the transition process of transgender people. The so-called *Transsexuellen-Erlass* is an edict consisting of individual legal editions from 1980-2010. The landmark year of 2010 changed the requirements for transition in a way that from that year, forced sterilisation, the real-life test and divorce were no longer required for legal change of gender.

Sadly, it was (and in some countries still is) the practice of the state of Austria to put social pressure on trans people to conform to the binary gender system. Before 2010, trans people chose between their fertility and their sex change. Certain parallels can be drawn from the experiences of intersex people, but even though they fight for the same kind of acceptance, they are treated differently by the society. Because the gender variance is inscribed in their bodies, in other words visible, they are not deemed mentally ill, like trans gender people who are diagnosed with a gender identity disorder.

Forced sterilisation was a practice that entailed hysterectomy and vasectomy within transgender persons who wanted to legally change gender in their documents. For instance, Perssons, one of the protagonists in the documentary *Female to What the Fuck (FtWtF)*, talks about the frustration and anger he struggled with because he had to choose between his fertility and gender in his passport. Real-life test is a practice that entailed trans people to pretend to live in the chosen gender without starting hormone therapy and other medical procedures, in order to make sure they are willing and ready to take on the transition. This proved very difficult, since without hormone intake the physical appearance stays the same, and therefore makes social conforming harder. Divorce in married individuals who want to start transitioning was mandatory.

Transgenderism is classified as a mental illness in *The International Classification of Diseases*, by The World Health Organisation, and *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, by The American Psychiatric Association. Austria has accepted the classification but does not require it for the name-change. The diagnosis of a mental disorder is often perceived as degrading and discriminatory to transgender community. In recent years, an international network of transgender

organisations has been set up to eliminate the diagnosis of “gender identity disorders” from the international diagnosis catalogs. Instead, the diagnosis of gender-dysphoria is proposed. Austrian trans organisations have made similar informal initiatives.

Present classification calls for the state to fund the recovery process. De-pathologising of the transgender phenomenon may cause some stir in the public discussion whether funding of a life-long medical treatment is justified. One could argue that the state funding is necessary for all trans people who themselves cannot afford the needed medical care. One should keep in mind that this is a minority that is more likely to need medical assistance throughout their lives and therefore needs the state to cover all, or parts, of it. To some diagnosis serves as a guarantee that the state will protect and assist trans individuals, but for others the diagnosis itself is discrimination.

The International Classification of Diseases by The World Health organisation from 1992, also known as ICD-10, classifies transsexuality as a gender identity disorder under the code F64. It states: “Transsexualism – A desire to live and be accepted as a member of the opposite sex, usually accompanied by a sense of discomfort with, or inappropriateness of, one’s anatomic sex and a wish to have hormone treatment and surgery to make one’s body as congruent as possible with the preferred sex.” (ICD-10, 2016, n.p.) Actions to eradicate transsexualism from the directory of mental and behavioural disorders are being made and are supposed to become active in the year of 2018, when the new ICD-11 is supposed to be published. Similar discussion is enveloping in Austria. According to TransX, it is therefore important to develop lines of argument against the health insurance funds at an early stage to ensure the financing of gender-based medical treatment.

According to the web-site of TransX, the basis for the financing of medical treatment within the framework of the sex exchange, which is financed by the health insurance funds in Austria, is not the diagnosis F64.0 set in the ICD-10, but a suffering caused by the life in the wrong sex. This is represented in the two decisions by the Supreme Court of Austria: 10 ObS 2303 / 96s, 12.09.1996, about the cost of psychotherapy and 3 Ob 570/95, 12.12.1995, on the imputability of the costs for the assessment of maintenance payments caused by transsexuality. In both instances transsexuality is defined as “as a claim to sickness treatment according to § 133 ASVG, when the inner tension between the physical sex and the mental identification with the other sex has such an expression that only through the elimination of this tension does severe symptoms of psychological Diseases

are alleviated or alleviated.”² (Rechtsinformationssystem, 1996, p. 1) One could interpret that transsexuality is to be regarded as a disease, but that severe mental illness, such as depression or anxiety, can be triggered if the chosen gender identity can not be lived.

Statistical information on the number of trans people is notoriously unreliable. It is very difficult to keep track of trans people for many reasons: fear of violence and mistreatment, shame and denial, no wish to publicly out themselves, etc. Since Christine Jorgensen, the first widely-known American trans woman, and her public transition in 1952, the number of trans people seeking some kind of treatment and daring to be publicly open about it has certainly risen, but not enough so that we could have an accurate statistic of a percentage of the population in questions. Some sources, like The Transgender Law and Policy institute, a non-profit organisation from the US, estimates that two to five percent of population is transgender. The number of them who come out publicly and seek treatment is even smaller.

Finding an accurate number of trans persons in Austria is difficult. If one is to employ the two to five percent report, that would mean that there are 170000 to 425000 trans Austrians out of approximately eight and a half million, which is not a negligible number. In the interview by Peter A. Kobath in 2007, for *CliniCum*, a medical journal, Eva Fels, the founder of TransX, estimated that there are around 100 sex-change surgeries per year in Austria (Kobath, P.A., 2007, n.p.).

2.3 History of self-organisation

As a result of a belated formation of the legal framework on the subject of transgender and transsexual, one could argue that self-organisation, through different kinds of society clubs, was the only support system transgender individual can get in Austria. The associations, uniting all or a specific group of trans people, fought and still continue to do so, for a better status of transgender community. The evolution of the legal framework regarding transition and name-change serves as

² Transsexualität ist dann als einen Anspruch auf Krankenbehandlung gemäß § 133 ASVG auslösende Krankheit zu werten, wenn die innere Spannung zwischen dem körperlichen Geschlecht und der seelischen Identifizierung mit dem anderen Geschlecht eine derartige Ausprägung erfahren hat, daß nur durch die Beseitigung dieser Spannung schwere Symptome psychischer Krankheiten behoben oder gelindert werden.

an example. Associations, such as TransX, have continuously worked on betterment of the status of trans community in Austria.

In addition to the already mentioned oldest organisation TransX, there are: TransGender, Trans-Austria, Transmann Austria; alongside some LGBTIQ organisations: Courage, HOSI, WAST (Thema Transgender, n.y. n.p.). They all offer a variety of legal information and tips, as well as meetings, counselling, membership, etc. Apart from organisations specialising in trans issues, a variety of cultural programmes revolve around queer issues (transgender included). One such example is the observed film festival, *Transition, an International Queer Minorities Film Festival*, that presents the public with a wide range of movies, workshops and lectures on the subject.

Throughout my research I focused on TransX, the oldest still existing organisation, founded in 1995. It is open to all transgender, transsexual and gender fluid people, as well as individuals who are interested in the subject. I attended themed meetings, held in the space of Lilla Tipp, a collaborative LGBTIQ organisation, since they have no spaces of their own. TransX meets on weekly bases, organising themed events approximately twice a month. The meetings are opened, mediated and closed always by the same person, the founder of TransX. There I was able to get to know more about the subjects trans community in Austria finds relevant, as well as to get an idea of the number of people who attended and the diversity of the members. I noticed that the meetings are mostly attended by trans women and the number varies on the topic of the gathering.

After establishing a working definition of transgender and the related terms for it, from the internationally acclaimed sources, the reader could get an idea of how the phenomenon of transgender has evolved through time in Austria. It is evident that trans community in this country is self-made. Organised within themselves, fighting for improvement of their status they are visible only to people interested enough to ask. Mostly located in Vienna, they branch out to other regions of the country. In the following part, I will present the research design of the project, consisting of theory and method. Theoretical dispositions of Honneth and Fraser will be discussed followed by detailed insight into the information and the methods of gathering it.

2.4 The current transitioning process in Austria

The transition consists of three steps: Psychotherapy and diagnosis, hormonal therapy and the sex-change surgery.

The process starts with the general practitioner who refers the person to psychotherapy. This transfer is necessary in order for the therapy costs to be refunded by the health insurance. For hormone and operative treatments that a person may need, a psychotherapeutic diagnosis is required. After a maximum of ten therapies a good therapist should be able to make a statement regarding the diagnosis. Therapy is needed in order to rule out other problems the person in question may have (such as fetish transvestitism, homosexuality, schizophrenia, personality disorder, etc). As it is advisable to choose a psychiatrist who has experience in the field of transsexuality and can write a psychiatric indication initiating hormone therapy, TransX offers a list of them (TransX d, n.y. n.p.). However, it is not always the case that a person finds a therapist right away.

According to the recommendations for the treatment process Transsexual from 1997, trans persons in Austria are to undergo at least one year of a 50-hour-long psychotherapy before starting the official hormone intake. In the revised treatment recommendations from 2014, no hour limit or even an explicit obligation for psychotherapy is given. On the basis of the diagnosis, the specialist has to determine whether and to what extent a medical, clinical-psychological or psychotherapeutic treatment of coexisting mental and / or social disorders is indicated (TransX d, n.y. n.p.). This amounts to considerable costs for a person, being that the health insurance refunds only a 10 to 20 percent of costs. For example, as stated on the website of TransX, therapy costs between € 60 and € 160. On request, the health insurance funds provide a subsidy of € 20 to € 30. There is also the possibility to have the therapy completely financed by the health insurance company. However, there is a limited quota, which is divided between individual therapists. In order to benefit from a fully funded therapy, it is necessary to find a therapist who still has a place free, which may not be easy.

In addition to psychotherapy, one needs a report from a psychologist as well. Then, a specialist of choice summarises all the reports and initiates further treatment. This is usually a psychotherapist, but can also be a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist. The treatments results in a clinical psychological diagnosis, which is at this moment *transsexuality – gender identity disorder*. With the transfer by the therapist, medical insurance covers the costs. The report covers personality test, intelligence and mental resilience. If everything *fits*, the specialist summarises the persons ICD-10 diagnosis for transsexuals.

Before the hormone treatment starts one must undertake a range of tests and risk screenings, like urological or gynaecological exams, an intersexuality exam if necessary, and endocrinological or cytogenetic studies. If and when one decides to start hormone treatment, one's specialist once again summarises the statements and the results of the examinations in a so-called *Hormone report*. This confirms a person's stable desire to live in the *chosen* gender and to take on medical treatment. With this release the health insurance companies pay for the costs of the hormone treatment with a transfer from the doctor of person's choice.

At this point, with the hormone therapy, one should also start the so-called "everyday test": completely living and working in the gender one wishes to pass into. This helps the person to find out whether they really can and want to live that reality. It is suggested to continue psychotherapy in this often critical phase, which rises the costs substantially. Before the law revision from 2010, transgender persons were obligated to do an everyday test without hormones, in order to be sure in their decision. In addition, discrepancy between the appearance and the sex of the person in the documents can cause insecurities which makes this period rather sensitive. If necessary, the chosen therapist can issue a confirmation of transsexuality.

After taking on hormone therapy, it might be time for a person to change their first name, if they have not done so already. The Austrian law no longer restricts the change of name on legal documents before starting hormone therapy.

After one year of hormone treatment and the *everyday test* one can consider sex-changing surgeries (mastectomy, hysterectomy, vaginoplasty, phalloplasty). This requires a psychological or psychotherapeutic appraisal as well as further psychiatric examination and once again the person's specialist of choice summarises the results. Collected findings and expert opinions, which are

covered by the health insurance, lead to the approval of a sex-change operation. In some cases, person is allowed to do a mastectomy without hormone therapy, but it is left to the therapist to decide under which circumstances.

3. Research Design

The research design of this project is, as mentioned in the introduction, an attempt to operationalise Fraser's and Honneth's theoretical presumptions on recognition as justice and/or self-realisation. Faced with a challenge of observing and interviewing people from the trans community in Austria I found the two authors to be the best sources of support in structuring my questions and conclusions about the material I had gathered. The contextual circumstances of the present time, the current political discourse in Austria, as well as my own upbringing outside of it, all shaped this survey. The theoretical framework built upon the presumptions Fraser and Honneth elaborated on in their political-philosophical exchange are the core tools with which I observed the current situation in the case of the mentioned country.

I regard the joint effort of Fraser and Honneth in the already mentioned book *Recognition or Redistribution?* to be a comprehensive and fairly accurate presentation of the core elements of the concepts in question. Honneth's definition of recognition as love, law and esteem, together with Fraser's focus on recognition, redistribution and participation, were indispensable bases for examining the status of the transgender community in Austria.

After discussing the theoretical framework of the research, the method part will follow. In this section I will present the methods of data collection, these being expert and problem-centred interviews, participant observation of events and a documentary movie *Female to What the Fuck (FtWtF)*. I will also consider subjectivity from my point of view, as a researcher, followed by a contextual timeframe of the research, where I explained how and when I did what I did. Lastly, I will present the chosen method for analysing data, the narrative analysis.

3.1 The Theory of Recognition

As the concept of recognition and respect in social life gains in popularity, many groups of people, with different authentic characteristics, call for modification of state organisation. On the account of deserving equal opportunities, they attempt to make changes to benefit their needs. It seems that the transgender community fits perfectly into this model since it seeks revision of the binary system to an extent that would allow them to live normal lives. Normal life in this context is a life where a person freely exists, expresses oneself and is able to pursue the career and lifestyle of one's choice. Most of my initial research literature, written by predominantly American and queer theorists, as well as conversations with trans people in Vienna, led me to believe that the contemporary society is not entirely aware of the existence of transgender identities, what it actually is, and what do these people need. This is where I thought Fraser and Honneth's joint efforts can be used to better understand the impact of a lack of recognition on a particular minority .

3.1.1 Fraser's account: recognition, redistribution and participation

To consider social justice in the previously mentioned book by Fraser and Honneth, one must consider social recognition and social redistribution. As two claims are meant to ensure just cultural identification and economic redistribution, they are often thought of as separate, or subordinate terms, which should be dealt with in separate recognition and redistribution focused strategies. As Fraser describes, they assume different conceptions of justice (socio-economic and cultural), different sorts of remedies for injustice (economic reconstructing and cultural change), different conceptions of collectivities that suffer injustice (classes and status groups), and different understandings of group differences (unjust political economy and value hierarchy). What Nancy Fraser proposes is a joint account of the two claims, as the most effective way to battle social injustice.

First things first, let us consider recognition, as it is the target to answering the research question of this study. Recognition is a well known category of Hegelian phenomenology of consciousness, that

recently gained in popularity with the emergence of the “identity politics”. It is also a starting point for Nancy Fraser to introduce her account of social justice. “In this tradition, recognition designates an ideal reciprocal relation between subjects in which each sees the other as its equal and also as separate from it. This relation is deemed constitutive for subjectivity; one becomes an individual subject only in virtue of recognising, and being recognised by, another subject.” (Fraser, 2003a, p. 10) As one can notice, recognition here is a subjective process of establishing oneself in one’s eyes as well as being accepted by others as equals. This is what neo-Hegelian theorists, such as Axel Honneth, call self-realisation. As Fraser explains Honneth’s view of recognition: “being recognised by another subject is necessary condition for attaining full undistorted subjectivity. To deny someone recognition is to deprive her or him of a basic prerequisite for human flourishing. “ (Fraser, 2003a, p. 28)

Fraser disagrees with the notion of recognition as a category of self-realisation set by Honneth. She believes, amongst other things, it can contribute to confusion as to what are justified and unjustified claims for recognition. In Honneth’s model of recognition as self-esteem everybody would hypothetically have the right to pursue their own convictions. This could lead to conflicts over the right to pursue happiness, freedom and ambition, since it would be hard to determine who has the right over who. Fraser, therefore, is more interested in finding ways of making the common values of humanity progress, rather than personal characteristics of individuals. She proposes the idea of the relation between recognition and redistribution as a two-dimensional system of justice. “Instead of aligning redistribution and recognition with class politics and identity politics respectively, I shall treat each folk paradigm as expressing a distinctive perspective on social justice, which can be applied in principle to the situation of any social movement.” (Fraser, 2003a, p.12) And Fraser does exactly this, through examples, which she places in the conceptual spectrum of recognition on the one hand and redistribution on the other hand. She demonstrates how most people (or groups of people) are affected by injustices of both natures. She identifies these groups as two-dimensional, because they are the combination of exploited class and despised identity.

Alongside race, sexuality, and even class, she names gender as a typical two-dimensional example: “Gender serves as a basic organising principle of the economic structure of the capitalist society. On the one hand, it structures a fundamental division between paid ‘productive’ and unpaid ‘reproductive’ labor, assigning women primary responsibility for the latter. Gender is not only a class-like division, but a status differentiation as well. Gender codes pervasive cultural patterns of

interpretation and evaluation, which are central to the status order” (Fraser, 2003b, p. 20). One can notice a cultural pattern of value that privileges masculinity.

To remedy problems caused by parallel misrecognition and maldistribution, Fraser suggests “to develop an integrated approach that can encompass, and harmonise, both dimensions of social justice” (Fraser, 2003b, p. 26). In that way, she explains, a conception of justice that accommodates both claims for social equality and recognition difference (class and status), with democratic engagement, as the tool to tackle maldistribution and misrecognition.

Because Fraser considers recognition to be a matter of justice, she proposes we treat it as an issue of social status, instead of a matter of self-realisation. Institutionalised patterns of cultural value should be constituted in a way to allow full partner status in social life. To whom should this be allowed? We now come back to distinguishing between justified from unjustified claims for recognition, which was Fraser’s point of criticism of Honneth’s theory. She proposes a model where claimants must show that the social changes they seek will in fact promote parity of participation (be it in recognition or redistribution claims). This reflective concept Fraser proposes, takes democratic engagement as the base. “In the democratic perspective, justice is not an externally imposed requirement, determined over the heads of those whom it obligates. Rather, it binds only insofar as it addresses can also rightfully regard themselves as its authors.” (Fraser, 2003b, p. 44)

Fraser offers four advantages of the justice model over Honneth’s self-realisation model. Firstly, it permits one to justify claims for recognition as morally binding, something Honneth’s model does not presuppose. Fraser introduces the norm of participatory parity which “can justify claims for recognition as normatively binding on all who agree to abide by fair terms of interaction under conditions of value pluralism.” (Fraser, 2003b, p. 31) Secondly, this model locates the wrong in social relations, not individual or interpersonal psychology, which strengthens its normative force. Thirdly, it avoids the view that everyone has an equal right to social esteem. And lastly, it integrates claims for recognition and redistribution strengthening the two-dimensional system. The normative core that is participatory parity “requires social arrangements that permit all (adult) members of society to interact with one another as peers.” (Fraser, 2003b, p. 36)

For participatory parity to be possible Fraser states that two claims must be satisfied: objective and intersubjective condition. The objective condition must ensure participants independence and voice,

while intersubjective condition supposes that institutionalised patterns of cultural value express equal respect for all participants and ensures equal opportunity for achieving social esteem.

What are the advantages of the status model suggested by Nancy Fraser? The author presents a status model, as an adequate one, in determining justified claims under the conditions of pluralism. It can, according to Fraser, correct the wrong in social relations as opposed to individual, personal relations. It proposes the model of equal opportunity for everyone to pursue social esteem, rather than give equal rights to it. As it perceives recognition as justice, it gives it a chance to be integrated with redistribution in fighting against injustice.

Since the mentioned book, *Redistribution or recognition?*, is an exchange of thought by two prominent theorists of Critical theory, it is valuable to consider Axel Honneth's view of Nancy Fraser's account. In the following part, three key points are taken as valuable in answering our research question.

3.1.2 Honneth's review: love, law and esteem

Honneth opposes Fraser and insists that recognition must be a united framework for consideration of justice. From his point of view "distributional injustices must be understood as the institutional expression of social disrespect - or, better said, of unjustified relations of recognition" (Honneth, 2003a, p. 114). Three points of Honneth's critique of Fraser's proposal are to be taken into consideration: overgeneralisation of American problems, need for recognition in the political public sphere above all, and the importance of intersubjective recognition.

The first of Honneth's remarks was that Fraser's account focuses on typically American problems, that may not resonate in the same way as on European soil. For example, it seems that in recent years the "identity politics" have played a more pivotal role in the American society, than in Europe. Honneth argues that other problems, such as labour policies, social welfare and ecology, have been more in focus. In connection to this argument, trans problems as well have been differently defined in different countries.

The second point that Honneth made, in defence of his unified concept of recognition, is the need for political recognition of the problem to make it relevant, and later to deal with it. The problem that lies when recognition and distribution are set as equal is that only the already socially accepted problems are dealt with, leaving many other issues hidden and therefore impossible to handle. As Honneth referenced Bourdieu's work *The Weight of the World*, a lot of social problems are not recognised by the political public sphere, which is a relevant form of social conflict. Instead, "a sort of perceptual filter ensures that only those problems that have already attained the organisational level of a political movement are taken seriously in moral terms." (Honneth, 2003a, p.119) By his estimation, in accordance with Bourdieu, only a small number of social movements get to be picked out, recognised and treated as social movements worth endorsing. The question that follows is: How is a social issue to claim any just distribution if it has not been recognised as a social issue? To recognise it, as the author suggests, a social movement has to occur, and in order for it to happen, groups of individuals struggling socially must rise and make the public register their problems. In this way, by ignoring the multitude of everyday hardships that are not recognised as relevant social issues, Honneth points out that Fraser left out many of the social struggles that occur under margins.

Lastly Honneth differentiates three spheres of recognition; love, law, and esteem, that further demonstrate that inter-subjective recognition is always in relation to institutionalisation of recognition within a society. "This means that subjects in bourgeois-capitalist society learned – gradually, and with many class- and gender-specific delays – to refer to themselves in three different attitudes: in intimate relationships, marked by practices of mutual affection and concern, they are able to understand themselves as individuals with their own needs; in legal relations, which unfold according to the model of mutually granted equal rights (and duties), they learn to understand themselves as legal persons owed the same autonomy as all other members of society; and, finally, in loose-knit social relations – in which, dominated by one-sided interpretation of the achievement principle, there is competition for professional status – they in principle learn to understand themselves as subjects possessing abilities and talents that are valuable for society." (Honneth, 2003a, p. 142) The right to legal equality, an element that Fraser seems to have left out, represents a key characteristic of capitalist societies that her theory applies to. The struggle over appropriate interpretation of this principle is the principal pillar based upon which we access the right and wrong distribution of power and wealth.

Both Fraser and Honneth present us with valuable and relevant arguments for their theories. Combined together, which is an attempt throughout this research, they consist of a fairly comprehensive framework for examining the newly established need for recognition, and handling the “identity politics”. Fraser’s account that proposes careful conducting of both recognition and distribution, offers a practical solution for integrating minorities, of all kinds, into the public political court. On the other hand, Honneth presents us with a deeper investigation of what recognition is, depicting it as a inter-subjective act of registering someone as present and equal. The depth of our soul and individuum, from which the recognition must come, seems to be necessary in order to place someone in the public political spectrum and distribute rights to them accordingly.

3.1.3 Building bridges: from theory to practice

One of the trickier tasks of every research is finding the right way of operationalising a theory intended to answer the given research question. The creative part, and oftentimes a painstaking road, is the process of breaking down a theory into elements that could be applied to a certain context and interpreted as a valid way of thinking. Theoretical assumptions in social sciences are notoriously difficult since their object of desire, the human behaviour, is a slippery phenomenon difficult to define or predict. What follows is my opinion on how the above discussed theory can be applied in the case of researching the status of the transgender community in Austria.

I find Fraser’s and Honneth’s account to be fairly meaningful in describing the need of transgender persons to be seen as an existing group of people, with a specific gender expression that in no way impairs their ability to fully participate in social life. The act of recognising them could bring trans issues in the public light, and change the prevailing opinions that deem transgender expression as shameful and unnatural. I consider Fraser’s proposal, for redistribution to be regarded as a separate and equally important element of social justice, quite accurate in remedying iniquity in society. On the other hand, I find Honneth’s statement, that inter-subjective recognition is always in relation to institutionalisation of recognition within a society, to be paramount to just redistribution.

The reason why I chose Honneth's definition of recognition is because it depicts the core values of the concept in question. I agree with Honneth's presumption that recognition comes from the individual who opens up to the notion of others that are different but equal to him. Without it, state organisation of just distribution is highly unlikely to exist. His simple, yet powerful differentiation of three elements covers well, in my opinion, both personal and public spheres of social life. Nevertheless, Fraser's point of view that demands separation of just redistribution from recognition, with the norm of participatory parity, as one of the two equally important elements is paramount to answering my research question. Focus on distributional problems that the trans community might encounter in Austria may shed light to solutions of the issues of misrecognition. Even though I will not attempt to argue whether redistribution indeed deserves such an powerful status, I do feel it is worthy of focused consideration, especially in explaining the inner workings of state organised funded assistance, for instance the state funded transitioning process.

When Fraser defines gender as one of the typical two-dimensional examples, she discusses the organising principle applied to all societies, that consists of paid and unpaid labor, deeming women as the ones of lower social status. One can question binary gender setting in regards to the emerged trans and queer identities, using similar analogy. The status of a person is greatly related to her or his social esteem which begs the question if transgender persons have equal opportunities to pursue it, as their cis peers do. In addition, transgender individuals are principally reproductively challenged if not disabled, which also poses the question of their validity in, one might say, larger sense of the human species.

Throughout my research, I examine what trans people in Austria think of the country's cultural values, legal and economic structures in regards to their gender identity. I seek their opinion on the level of recognition of their binary non conforming gender expression and if they feel robbed of good education or career opportunities. With gathered information I attempt to define and place transgender identity in Austria in regards to Honneth's love, law, esteem trinity and Fraser's two dimensions of status and class, powered by participatory parity.

To investigate the relation between dimensions of status and class, in order to place them in a context is, as it so often happens, difficult. Since they are aligned differently in different cases Fraser leaves open the question of whether the two dimensions are of equal weight. To make things more complicated, no one is a part of just one such dimension. A trans individual can be a woman,

migrant, member of the working class and homosexual at the same time. Intersectionality kicking in leaves that individual burdened with more than one type of struggle to live with. Even though I do not intend to take on intersectionality as a focus of my research, when investigating recognition status in Austria, I tried to introduce variety by interviewing trans people of different backgrounds. That way I constructed an idea of how accessible the state organised transition process indeed is.

The first of Honneth's remarks on Fraser's account was, as mentioned previously, focus on typically American problems. Accordingly, one of the issues throughout my research was the predominantly American outlook on trans issues, and the depiction of the state of trans communities in the USA. Even though the material served as invaluable source for my research, the obvious problem was the fact that this survey is not taking place in the US. The reality of European transgender communities is somewhat different, especially in Austria, a country one could perceive as fairly developed and homogenous. Without large scale debates, protests and campaigns marking trans liberation, Austria has managed to organise a relatively comfortable environment for the community in question. Let us consider brutality towards transgender people as an example. The brutal beatings and killings of homosexual, trans and queer people, followed by the Stonewall uprising in 1969, for gender and sexuality liberation, have happened in the United States. Even though similar brutality has happened all over Europe as well, no similarly symbolic rising has happened as a result. Since then, violence towards trans people have been a significant topic in the US, but similar public discourse seems to have not happened, or not of that significance in Austria. When asked if they have ever been discriminated or abused based on their gender identity, Austrian trans people that have been interviewed, or observed, in the course of this research, have said that they have not. This does not mean that this kind of violence does not happen in Austria, merely that it has not been an issue among my group of informants. Even though the answer may be a result of shame, or the hiding aspect of this community, it seems that brutality as a problem is not as pronounced in Austria as it is in the US. This is surely a result of many factors such as size, cultural background and homogeneity of countries, but it serves as an example of how to evaluate theoretical focus and context in order to bring out issues that are of importance for the specific case. Honneth's remark served as a guiding tool in this research to prevent from overgeneralisation of American problems.

The second of three points Honneth presented, in regards to Fraser's account, is the need of political recognition of an issue as the first step towards solving of it. To stress the point again, only a relatively insignificant number of social struggles is officially recognised as social movements,

which leaves a quantity of them under the margins and virtually impossible to reach by redistribution, simply because the majority is not aware of them. The task of this research is to, taken all previously mentioned into consideration, examine if trans issues in Austria are recognised as problems, or marginalised out of focus. The hiding characteristic of the transgender community is evident in the way the interviewed and observed, informants expressed their wish to not be represented or discussed publicly, in fear of being depicted wrongly, as per usual.

The third remark Honneth made on Fraser’s theoretical proposal was the importance of intersubjective recognition as the base for institutionalised recognition in a society. As explained in the research question three chosen areas, representing love, law and esteem, are taken as important rites of passage to becoming an equal peer in social life. The first is identity acceptance, the second is the process of legal change of gender and transitioning through Austrian health system, and the third being the process of pursuit of social esteem.

The aim of this research is to examine the theoretical propositions of Fraser and Honneth in relation to the status of the transgender community in Austria. In order to do that the three elements of love, law and esteem as well as recognition, redistribution and participation are taken in consideration. With this I aim to align the two concepts of recognition: as self-realisation and as justice. To simplify the process with which I aim to answer my research question I have presented a table.

Recognition as self-realisation	Topics covered with interviewing and participant observation	Recognition as justice
Love	How can the awareness of the existence of the transgender community help their status in the Austrian society?	Recognition
Law	What can the state organised process of transitioning and legal change of gender say about recognition of the trans community in Austria?	Redistribution
Esteem	How can labelling transgender individuals as equal peers in competition for social esteem help the community’s status in Austria?	Participation

The data has been collected through expert and problem-centred interviews as well as through participant observation. Interview guides and protocol sheets consist of topics that I find relevant in examining the concept of recognition in the case of the transgender community in Austria. They

have been chosen because they can be interpreted as important rites of passage to becoming an equal peer in social life. These are:

- *Awareness and acceptance of transgender identity in Austria* investigates how are trans people treated by their predominantly cis community. Focus lays on experiences trans people have with their cis family, in their immediate groups of friends, colleagues or coworkers, in regards to the proper use of pronouns, lack of gender neutral toilets and similar instances.
- *State organised process of transitioning and legal change of gender* explores encounters trans people have with the legal and health care system in the country. Trans people give their opinions on how accessible and well organised the systems are. Focus is on the status trans people need to obtain, in order to officially transition. Some of the examples are: diagnosis reports from multiple sources, constrictions in choice of a new name, a timeframe of minimum one year for the transition, requirements for state funding of hormone therapy and surgery.
- *Pursuit of social esteem* reflects a person's wish to further one's education and employment prospects. Focus is on potential obstacles trans people may face in building their professional careers such as forced outing and discriminatory treatment when seeking a position or equal pay. In addition, opinions of trans people on the current political system are considered. This is in regard to voting, presence of trans topics in politics, lack of representation and such issues.

The theoretical part presented above aims at presenting the reader with Honneth's and Fraser's view of recognition. It is the union of their theoretical propositions that I find relevant in answering the research question of this paper. Honneth's division of recognition to love, law and esteem, as well as Fraser's view on recognition, redistribution and participation, form a comprehensive framework for inspecting the status of the transgender community in Austria. The following part will describe the method of the qualitative study employed including collecting of the data, analysing it, as well as the part dedicated to the subjective stand of the researcher and a contextual timeline of the research.

3.2 Method: a qualitative study

For the purpose of my research I used the fourth edition of Uwe Flick's *An Introduction to qualitative research* (Flick, 2014). This textbook helped me define my research question, build my research design, and served as a check list for proofing the progress of my working process. As my main interest was the perception of trans people, of their living conditions in Austria, I found that the best way was to design my research in a way I could gather information from interviews and observation. I optioned for a qualitative research method because I believe that limited local and situational narratives are more helpful in answering my research question. I find that in order to find out how it is to live in Austria as a trans person, it is best to gather a variety of opinions from different contextual scopes. For this reason I interviewed six people from different social backgrounds and nationalities asking them about their transitioning process and overall quality of life in Austria and witnessed five events exclusively dedicated to trans issues. I have recorded and transcribed the interviews, anonymising the informants. In addition, I have observed a documentary movie from 2015, about the transitioning process of women in Austria. The movie followed stories of six trans women, all describe in the following. Furthermore, I observed five events that tackled trans issues. Three of them were themed evenings of TransX, one of them was a queer film festival and one of them was a demonstration on The International Woman's Day. As I understand the downsides of qualitative method, being the small number of informants, the issues of generalisability and the researchers subjectivity, this account represents the state of the trans community and its perception of its place in the Austrian society at a certain point in time.

3.2.2 Humanly subjectivity: a concept to consider

For all the interviews I have conducted, I received verbal consent. I approached people in different ways, in trans meetings, via e-mail, through Facebook, introducing myself, my project and clearly stating my aims. When I explained focal parts of my research I then asked for interviews. I made certain to state beforehand that their identity would be protected with a pseudonym and the information they gave me would be used only for the purposes of writing my Master Thesis. I tried,

to the best of my knowledge, to treat all the informants equally in regard to their role in uncovering the solutions to my research question. Analysing the received data, I did my best to do justice to the participants and to remain as objective as possible, restraining from personal evaluations. I understand that the chosen method involves me in the process and that I inevitably leave a mark of my own opinion, especially through participating observation and field notes. I did my best to maintain a certain distance, gradually and continuously checking my conclusions and going through the guide lines from the mentioned text book, to ensure objectivity and neutrality of my stance.

3.2.1 Collecting data

To explore the living conditions of trans people in the mentioned country I decided to gather data from different sources in different ways. This chapter is divided in four parts representing four different methods of data collecting: problem-centred interviews, expert interviews, participant observation and a documentary film called *Female to What the Fuck (FtWtF)* from 2015. All four methods are qualitative and directed toward answering the same research question, shedding light to the status of the transgender community in Austria. The informants interviewed with a problem-centred method have been anonymised, as well as the people present at the observed events. The identities of the informants interviewed with the expert method is uncovered, as well as the identities of the protagonists in the documentary movie. They are introduced with simple definitions of the methods, followed by description of the informants, events and observations, and concluded with explanations as to why they are relevant to the theory employed.

Expert interviews

As some of the trans people I met are active in the Austrian academic or cultural community, with their work that features gender related topics, I interviewed them as experts on the subject. I asked them how they perceived the trans community in general, and how they, thought their work,

resonated to the wider audience of both trans and cis persons. For this reason I chose expert interviewing as the appropriate method for gathering information about the subject. I have interviewed two experts whose identity I have uncovered, since I referenced their work as a relevant feature in demonstrating public space for advocating trans issues. The two expert informants are both Austrian trans men, one in film making and the other in social sciences. They are presented in the order they were interviewed.

- *Nick Prokesch* is a 30 year old film maker and an artist from Vienna. After completing the Academy of Fine Arts he started making graphic design and films of different forms, *Femme Brutal* being the most famous one. He is currently working as a researcher and a graphic designer in a local firm for development and dramaturgical support of film production. In addition to that he has a collection of comics on Tumblr, where he often time uses clever irony and sarcasm to introduce queer subjects. As I watched the documentary movie *Female to What the Fuck (FtWtF)*, which will be discussed separately later on, in which he was one of the protagonists, I contacted him and enquired more about the film work he does. I was given his contact from SixPack, a non-profit organisation through which I was able to see the mentioned documentary. We met at a cafe of a local cinema in Vienna where he told me about his transitioning process, his part in the mentioned documentary, and his upcoming project that tackles the subject of transitioning. Even though he would not consider himself to be an activist, his body of comics and film projects often resonates trans and queer matters.
- *Persson Perry Baumgartinger* is a social scientist, lector, trainer and coach. He is also a trans man and one of the protagonists in the mentioned documentary *Female to What the Fuck (FtWtF)*. After finishing Applied Linguistics at the University of Vienna (Angewandten Sprachwissenschaft) he started his PhD in the same field. In addition, he has worked as an associate at the Graduate School *Gender as a Knowledge category* at the Humboldt University in Berlin where he resided at the time I contacted him for an interview. We set up a Skype meeting one evening in mid November 2016. He told me about his involvement in raising awareness on trans issues and pointed out to his written work where he had researched and analysed different aspects of trans living. I got to read some of the suggestions like his new book that came out in the beginning of 2017 titled *Trans Studies: Historische, begriffliche und aktivistische Aspekte* which is considered to be the first comprehensive introduction to the subject in the German language (Baumgartinger, 2017). Apart from that he has actively worked with a colleague Vlatka

Frketić, on projects published on *Diskursiv*, an online association introducing queer matters into the social context, very smartly put in German: “Verein zur Verqueerung gesellschaftlicher Zusammenhänge” (Diskursiv, n.y. n.p.). One such publications which caught my eye, where he researched the status of trans persons on the Austrian job market, focusing on different difficult aspects of employment process trans people encounter when pursuing their career.

I used expert interviews to generate theory about trans issues from “reconstructing the knowledge of the various experts” as Flick puts it (Flick, 2014, p. 166). For that reason I asked one of the experts: *With the film art that you make, do you expect to move, raise awareness, or help people to learn something on the subject? Or do you do it for yourself? or Can you tell me something about your upcoming project which is about transitioning, if I understood correctly?*

Employing this method of interviewing, I had the possibility to inquire about the general state of art, or academia, and see the tone it has taken when discussing trans living in Austria. I also had the opportunity to be present for some of the events and get my hands on some of the material (movies, PhD dissertations and books) which I considered to be the present voice of the trans community. The problems that arose from interviewing experts were doubts if I can call someone an expert. To resolve myself of this doubt I used the definition by Bogner and Menz presented in Use Flick’s handbook: “Expert knowledge does not only consist of systematised and reflectively accessible specialist knowledge, but it has the character of practical knowledge in big parts ... experts have the opportunity to assert their orientations at least partly. By becoming practically relevant, the experts’ knowledge structures the practical conditions of other actors in their professional field in a substantial way” (Flick, 2014, p. 166).

Problem-centered interviews

The other type of interview method I employed is the problem-centred one. It was, as Flick defined it, suggested by Andreas Witzel and “developed in the context of biographical research interested in professional biographies of different groups of people” (Flick, 2014, p. 162). The reason I chose to employ this method of interviewing transgender individuals is to get to know more about the

community by inquiring more about the biography of certain members. I interviewed four people with this method, three trans women and one trans man, three Austrians and one British. They are presented in the order they were interviewed.

- *Pomona* is a 58 year old trans woman, born and raised in Vienna, Austria. She has only recently started her transitioning process, due to great dissatisfaction with her biological gender. After prolonging the transitioning process for almost twenty years, and due to the inability to feel comfortable and successful in building romantic relationships with other people (of both genders) she decided, a year ago at age 57, to start the change. Since then, she has legally changed her name and documents, found a girlfriend (also a Viennese trans woman) and is spending time travelling around the world as a retired electrician. She has not undergone any sex changing surgery and is currently self medicating her hormone intake, that she has obtained for a cheaper price, without prescription in Spain. I met her at one of the group meetings and held an interview with her afterwards. She expressed great content with her new lifestyle and was open to telling me about it. Her story is an interesting and valuable asset for answering the given research question because she represents a middle-aged person who is not interested in full transitioning, especially not through the state-organised and funded process. She takes advantage of certain aspects of it, but proceeds to make her own way into her newly found lifestyle. Her opinion on what a woman is, what transgender means and her disinterest in politics is a compelling example of what an Austrian person feels, going through such an immense change that late in her life.
- *Juno* is a 57 year old British woman, living in Vienna since the eighties. She is an industrial engineer, currently changing her career path and becoming a self employed adult trainer. She fully transitioned last year, when she underwent vaginoplasty and optioned for breast implants. Although she knew since she was transgender since she was teenager, she prolonged her transition by getting married, moving to Austria and fathering a child. Only recently had she decided to take the big step of changing her gender and is very satisfied with the outcome. I met her at one of the group meetings, where she offered advice to other people and told her story as an example of what to do and what to avoid while transitioning. We met at a cafe where she told me her outtake on the current situation in Austria and the world, in regard to transgender people. Her story is significant for me, because it represents a highly educated and very well socially situated migrant who found her life in Austria and decided to make the transition in it. Her detailed explanation of the transitioning process organised by the state, through which she passed into a

woman is a valuable depiction of the present situation and opportunities for trans people in this country.

- *Pales* is a 23 year old trans man from Voralberg, currently living and working in Vienna. He started his transition at twenty, after a long period of dissatisfaction with his body and fear of hurting his family. Working at a kindergarten at the time, he organised the coming out process with his boss, who helped him introduce his gender change to the children and their parents. Still working at the same kindergarten, accustomed with his life in Vienna, with a significant circle of friends of all gender variations, he occasionally attends group meetings, where we met. I interviewed him over coffee and a walk one brisk day at the beginning of winter, where he explained the joys and challenges of transitioning. To talk to him was a refreshing insight in the trans male group of people, oftentimes avoided in portrayals in popular culture. His testimonial was an input into lives of trans men, a group that was in the minority in the trans meetings I attended. Uncovering the complex process of transitioning from a very girly-girl into a man and still balancing the pedagogic aspects of his work life was an interesting perspective into trans issues.
- *Venus* is a 24 year old trans woman, from the outskirts of Vienna, who started her transition when she was 19. I meet her at a coffee house, as one of my colleagues suggested her as an informant. We met at a cafe where she told me about her transitioning experience in such an early age and her trip to Thailand to have the vaginoplasty done. Out of all trans women I have met in the group meetings and through contacts, she looked the most like a woman, speaking in socially constructed terms of appearance and behaviour. This could be because of her early transition, the high pitched voice and her overall good mimicking of female movements and statue. Whereas others seemed visibly challenged when it came to posture, leg crossing and keeping your skirt in place, Venus seemed to have *impeachable* female behaviour. She lives with her girlfriend and another roommate in the city and is considering enrolling into high school, since she has not completed it yet. In the meantime, she is a self proclaimed “kind of a sex worker” who sells nude photographs of herself on the internet. She talked to me about sex work, trans in pornography, the Austrian health system and the American presidential elections. With excellent English and flare for sarcasm, she explained that it is up to each and every one to make it work. Her story was valuable to me as an example of a significantly different trans woman than stories from other women I had previously interviewed. She was young, confident and open about her feminine

character, giving a different, slightly non-conforming attitude towards the state-organised transitioning process.

A problem-centred interview is conducted by using an interview guide with questions formulated to bring specific topics to discussion and narrative stimuli to collect biographical and chronological account of certain situations or processes. “Four central communicative strategies in the problem-centred interview are mentioned: the conversational entry, general and specific prompting, and ad hoc questions” (Flick 2014, p. 163). I found this type of interview the most appealing for my research topic because it enabled me to initiate conversations on the four topics I had already decided to focus of my research on and to ask the interviewees to tell me specific parts of their transitioning process or life periods that would bring light to specific details that could be interesting. Then, I would use ad hoc questions in cases where some things seemed to be interesting and relevant to finding out more about some aspects of living as a transgender person in Austria. In that way I would go through each of the four topics (identity, health system, education/employment, and political participation), not always in the same order, depending on the informant, making sure that there was space for the informant to draw my attention to other possible aspects that I had not foreseen. As an example from my questionnaire, in regards to the health system of Austria, I centred the problem by asking *Would you say that the “treatment” of transgender people in the Austrian health system is well conceived, organised and conducted?* In this way I initiated the topic of the informant’s contact with the Austrian health system. To get a better understanding of the aspects of transitioning that the informants found good or bad, I asked for a narrative: *Could you tell me about your experience of transitioning? What was the procedure you had to go through to legally transition? And tell me how you feel about it.* If, during our discussion, something of the process was not clear enough to me, or some things that the informant did not go into detail about (and I found could be relevant), I would ask additional questions. For example: *Could you tell me more about the online test you did on the website of TransX? Where is it exactly on their website?*

I found this method of interviewing to be of great help, because I felt freer to switch between types of questions and also gave space to interviewees to tell me their story. The freedom I had was also the main problem I encountered when using this method of collecting data, were the unsystematic change from questions to narrative sometimes left me in doubt if I have had executed it in the right dynamic. What I did to try to solve the problem, was focus on the topics and as I listened the person I interviewed, I tried to check if the narrative was relevant to my research question. By learning

about the personal stories of trans people in Austria, told to me through this method of interviewing, I was able to make out a collage that depicts the status of community in this country.

Diversity of the interviewees

Throughout this research six transgender persons have been interviewed. While searching for the informants I decided to try to accumulate a diverse group of people in order to investigate if the system provided by the state of Austria, regarding transition and public awareness is the same or different for different groups of trans people. The first thing I learned, when I started searching for trans people, is that even though being transgender is a defining characteristic in a person's identity, all trans people do not immediately fall into the "same basket of eggs", who vote for the same leftist parties, or perceive gender as a social construct. And, since the focus of my research was to investigate the living conditions of the mentioned group in Austria, I optioned for different informants. For that reason I decided on the following categories:

- *Age difference* – In order to grasp the different eras in which people transitioned. I have interviewed two people between the ages of 50 and 60, two persons over the age of 30 and two persons in their twenties. This gave me a range of opinions about the role of the state of Austria, and the conditions under which these transgender persons lived.
- *Age of transitioning and the type of transitioning* – I found it important to investigate the perception of people in regards to their ages when transitioning. I found substantial differences in perception of gender identity, need for recognition, and disposition towards the state of Austria between people who have had transitioned at different times of their lives. I interviewed three persons who transitioned right after turning 18 or in their early twenties, one of them in his thirties and two of them who transitioned in the age between 50 and 60. The age difference disclosed a contrast in perception of transition and how much hormone therapy and surgery the informants considered being enough, to fully transition.

- *Social status* – By this I mean the level of education, hence the employment prospects. I found out that there is a big difference in the amount of information trans people have about their community, the understanding of what transgender means, and what trans issues deserve more public attention. It also provided me with an insight if the social system of Austria is indeed accessible for all. Four of them have advanced education (in social sciences, film making, engineering, pedagogy), one of them has a trade (electrician) and one of them has only primary education (and considers herself to be “kind of” a sex worker).
- *Nationality* – I set out interviewing Austrians as my main focus, but with time I optioned for additional interviews of non Austrians to draw parallels on the living conditions and the transitioning regulations in different states. This gave me the idea of how comfortable and safe it is too live as a transgender person in Austria. Five of them are Austrians, while one of them is from the United Kingdom.

Specific characteristics of the informants (presented in order they were interviewed) are presented in the table below:

	Nick	Pomona	Juno	Pales	Persson	Venus
Type of interview conducted	Expert	Problem-centered	Problem-centered	Problem-centered	Expert	Problem-centered
Age of the informant	not applicable	58	57	23	41	24
Nationality of the informant	Austrian	Austrian	British	Austrian	Austrian	Austrian
Age when the transition began	not applicable	57	55	20	not applicable	19
Have they participated in the state-organised transition process?	Yes, using hormones and psychiatric and psychological treatment	Only in part, for legal change of the documents. Gets hormones from Spain.	Yes, the entire transitioning process	Yes, the entire transitioning process	Yes, the entire transitioning process	Yes, using hormones and psychiatric and psychological treatment
Have they had transition surgery in Austria?	No, San Francisco	No surgery	Yes	Yes	Yes	No, Thailand

Education	Film maker	Electrician	Engeneer	Pedagog	Linguist	Only primary education
Occupation	Film maker	Unemployed	Self employed	Kindergarten teacher	Lecturer and writer	Self employed sex worked
Do they express interest in political discourse and voting?	Yes, votes and prefers a party	No interest	Yes, but unable to vote in Austrian elections	Yes, votes and prefers a party	Yes, chooses the least bad option	No, expresses disbelief in the system

Overview of the questionnaire

The questionnaire has been formulated in four topics (derived from the three key points of love, law and esteem, suggested by Honneth and recognition, redistribution and participation by Fraser) in order to draw attention to specific parts of social life that I felt are of immense importance when it comes to recognition of a group of people. The four focus topics are:

- *Identity issues* – Focus here is finding out about how the interviewee identifies gender wise, and how he/she perceives the trans identity or community in Austria. In this section I start with the specific question: *How would you define yourself?* and move on to more general questions: *How supportive would you say your environment (family, friends, colleagues, co-workers) is of your gender expression?* or *How it is to live in Austria as a transgendered person? Have you any experience living in other countries, from which you can draw parallels?* If the interviewee mentions a specific problem, I investigate further, for example: *How important is proper labelling in your opinion?* In this section I investigate if there is general acceptance of trans identity in everyday cis mainstream life. Since I am interested in the concept of recognition as a starting point to respect, I ask informants: *How would you describe the need to be recognised and respected as a transgender person? What is recognition to you and what are key aspects? Which part in your opinion would need improvement or change?*

- *Health care system* – In this part I try to investigate how satisfied the informants are with the accessibility and overall organisation of the health care system in Austria regarding the transitioning process. I start with an open question: *Would you say that the “treatment” of transgender people in the Austrian health system is well conceived, organised and conducted?* From there I ask the interviewee to tell me his/her story of transitioning in a chronological way and naming all the steps: *Could you tell me about your experience of transitioning? What was the procedure you had to go through to legally transition? And tell me how you feel about it.* If clarification is needed I ask: *When did it start? What steps did you have to take? How did you find the necessary information and care?* If I see fit I ask theory driven questions like: *Transgender people are diagnosed with “Störung der geschlechtlichen Identität”– Gender Identity Disorder. What are your thoughts on that?* In asking for their opinion, I investigate if the theories they present me with could be interpreted as the socially constructed mainstream theories of the time they live in. In this way I notice a difference between the older and younger informant’s opinions.
- *Education and employment* – This part aims to see if transgender Austrians face difficulties in building careers? In this section I ask specific questions targeting possible discrimination, for example: *Would you say your school/employer(s) have been supportive of your gender identity?* or *Have you ever been discriminated at work? (verbally, by mobbing, outed, felt uncomfortable with the choice of toilets)* If the opportunity arises, I ask theory driven questions like: *Do you feel you needed to work harder than your other “normal” peers in order to gain respect or prove that it id doesn’t matter that you’re trans?*
- *Political parties and party affiliations in trans people* – In this section I attempt to see if the voting and political involvement of the transgender community is in any way influenced by their gender identity? I ask specific questions such as: *Do you vote and if you do, is it connected to you being transgender?* or *I read that the SPÖ Frauen have organised something for the International Transgender day of Visibility on Mach 31st and also the SoHo (LGBTI-Organisation der SPÖ) advocates tolerance and acceptance. Do such actions resonate to you? Do you get involved in any way?*

As I close the interview going through all four topics, I usually asked more questions about cultural portrayal or web material they might identify with or like. This way I tone down the discussion and ask for cultural references that might be of use to see how the understanding of what transgender is,

is formed. The questions are like: *Do you have a personal hero, activist, public personality or political party that inspires you and helps you through tough times?* or *Do you think that the portrait of transgendered persons in mainstream entertainment is realistic?*

The trouble I faced writing the interview questionnaire was the doubt of choosing the right questions and formulating them in a comprehensible way. I found that even though I had planned a scheme of how the interview should go, it did not always happen in that order. Some people had more to say on some subjects and nothing to say on others. I found it the most challenging to recognise when to switch subject or introduce a more specific question to “dig deeper” into the issue. The questionnaire scheme is presented in the appendixes. Questions in *italic* are the ones posed to experts, to incorporate their work and emphasise their opinion on the subjects.

Participant observation

Since I needed to make contact with trans organisations and people, in order to ask for individual interviews, I attended TransX meetings and other cultural events that tackled trans issues. On these occasions I witnessed debates on important trans issues and have decided to include these events into my data collection.

As Flick defines direct participation, referencing Norman K. Denzin, it is one of the elements of observation. Alongside interviewing and document analysis, this field strategy helps the researcher inspect the problem in depth. As Flick suggests it “this method is often used for studying subcultures” (Flick, 2014, p. 226). I found this to be particularly suitable for my focus group, a hidden trans community, consisting of people who are trying to live their lives and not be solely defined by their gender expression while doing it. In observation of the chosen meetings I was able to see the dynamics of the discussions, the frequency and spaces in which they are held.

Searching for events that tackled these four topics I attended three TransX meetings and a screening of the “*TransX Istanbul*” documentary movie from 2014 followed by the Q&A time as a part of the

Transition Queer Minorities Film Festival 2016. Additionally I participated in a demonstration on The International Woman's Day. In the following part the five instances are presented in the order they were observed.

The first time I went to a trans meeting was at the beginning of November 2016. It was a TransX themed evening, on the subject of the effect of using hormones in the transitioning process. The room, on the first floor of LillaTipp, was filled with people, approximately forty, who at that moment seemed to be predominantly transgender. As I came into the room I felt everybody's curiosity, since I was not one of the regulars there. An hour long lecture was organised by the TransX members, presented by Georg Kranz, a neuroscientist at the Medical University of Vienna. He prepared a Power Point presentation of the research he was a member in, on the subject of following transgender people before taking hormones and differences to their brains compared with cisgender males and females. The group was very attentive and seemed interested in the subject, occasionally asking questions. At the end of the lecture and the discussion, I got a chance to introduce myself and my project, and ask for interviews. That resulted in a couple of people approaching me and setting up a date. I interviewed Pomona that day. I found this event to be a valuable source of information for two reasons. Firstly, it was an initial personal contact with the community and the way they appeared and appealed to me proved to be crucial for further research processes. As I was welcomed warmly and allowed to sit and take part in their meetings, I decided to use the method of participant observation, something I originally had not intended to do, since I came in search of personal contact and the prospect of an interview. This event introduced me to a wide palette of thematic and highly relevant topics that TransX organises twice a month. It enabled me to understand which topics were important in the community and how to approach them in my questionnaire. Secondly, the subject of the meeting, which were differences between cis and trans brains, displayed the type of the topics transgender community was curious about. An organised lecture, with a highly educated professional explaining the intricate ongoings of his medical research was proof that the community was welcoming and interested in learning more about different kinds of aspects of their trans life.

Trans X Istanbul is a 2014 documentary movie by German filmmaker Maria Binder, that I had the pleasure to watch as a part of *Transition, an International Queer Minorities Film Festival*, held in Vienna between 10th and 18th of November 2016. It follows Ebru Kırancı, a trans woman and her friends, trying to survive in the Turkish capital. The movie depicts the difficulties of everyday life

such as being unable to rent an apartment, walk down the street freely or confront their families about their gender identity. The audience watching the documentary in a local Viennese cinema seemed to vary in gender and sexual non conformity. I noticed people who I assumed were some kind of queer based on their appearance and public display of affection. Everybody seemed attentive and eager to engage with the filmmaker and the heroine of the movie during Q&A. The subject of this paper has little to do with the situation in Turkey in regards to transgender matters, but I found the screening of the movie at an international film festival dedicated to queer minorities in Vienna to be of great importance to me, as it seemed to bring the trans and queer issues into the lime light and have them be discussed publicly. The screening was followed by a Q&A session where both Maria and Ebru talked about their life stories, the process of making the movie and the prospects of their future. I found the entire event to be a very well organised to raise issues of trans identity and make it a safe place for all interested to engage in discussion.

The second time I went to TransX for a meeting was in the beginning of December 2017. This time the subject was threats and fear related situations which women find themselves in, and ways to deal with them. The gathering was, as always, opened and closed by the founder of TransX and moderated by one of the members, a trans woman who prepared related topics to be discussed. This time the number of members present was significantly smaller, and predominantly female, whom the subject primarily concerned. With the exception of one trans man, there were approximately ten women. The moderator started talking about dangers women face, naming examples of victims in Germany. She talked briefly about self defence methods before she asked the group to share their experiences. At the beginning it was mostly quiet and a couple of women stated they have not encountered similar threats. However, as the discussion progressed, women started naming examples of strange looks and insulting remarks they experienced. I found this meeting to be of significance to my research because it helped me find out more about the uncomfortable incidents trans people have experienced and are not willing to discuss so lightly. Related to this topic, when individually asked if they were ever discriminated or insulted in any way, most of the informants I interviewed said no. However, at this meeting, I witnessed an open debate on the subject, where a couple of trans women described instances when they felt insulted in public spaces. Moreover, they engaged in debate whether it would be appropriate to say the threats came mostly from migrants of islamic background. I observed the dynamics of the discussion and could notice a wide range of opinions on the matter of violence.

The third time I visited TransX was mid of January 2017, for a meeting on surgery experiences trans people had prepared to share. This time there were around forty people, mostly trans females, some of them accompanied by their cis friends or family. The meeting was a mix of three trans women detailing their transitioning process intertwined by comments, questions and exchanges with other members. Additionally, two young trans men talked about their mastectomy experiences. The trans woman in charge of the meeting moderation this time, kept the dynamics of the event focused on experience exchange. The question that arose was an important one: What is necessary to pass and how much hormone therapy and surgery is sufficient? They shared personal stories minding the practicality and purpose of the meeting. The members reviewed psychologists, psychiatrists and surgeons in Austria, Germany and Thailand discussing costs and paperwork. Also, the aftermath of the operation was discussed including the need to carefully operate one's newly found sexual awakening as a different gender. I found this meeting important for examining the status of the trans community in Austria because it showed me the openness of people to help others by explaining very private and oftentimes painful and disappointing aspects of their transition. It also introduced me to the relatively small web of professionals handling the transitioning process in this country.

On March the 8th, 2017 I participated in a demonstration organised for The International Woman's Day in Vienna, organised by a group of different marginalised minorities. The subject of the demonstration was the exclusion of marginalised minorities in public spaces. One of the organisations involved was QueerBase, a LGBTIQ Support organisation for Refugees in Austria. It included trans woman as a speaker who talked about intersecting execution, discrimination and marginalisation of trans and queer women. The demonstration was organised at the Stadthalle, on a loud intersection of three different trams and an underground train. It had some technical difficulties and started quite late in the evening, when it became cold. I met three trans women from TransX, wearing transgender flags and makeup. Apart from the technical delay, the atmosphere of the demonstration was friendly and calm. After representatives of the five organisations finished their speeches, we as a group, marched to the Museums Quarter, after which an afterparty followed. I found this event relevant for my research because through it I experienced trans activism and visibility in public.

I chose the events above described events because I believe they best portray the types of surroundings, and audience, involved in the present transgender reality in Austria. They encompass

a wide palette of cis, trans, queer and other persons gathering to discuss, inform themselves, and be a part of the change of public’s opinion towards trans (and more generally queer) topics. For a better overview I have sorted out the basic information on the events in the following table.

	Organisation of the event	Date of the event	Name of the event	Trans Issues discussed
1.	TransX	07.11.2016.	Wie wirken Hormone auf unser Gehirn?	The effects of taking hormone therapy as part of transitioning process, on human brain
2.	Transitioning, an International Queer Minorities Film Festival	17.11.2016.	<i>TransXIstanbul</i>	Living conditions of transgender people in Istanbul
3.	TransX	05.12.2016.	Bedrohung und Angst	Open discussion on safety measures women can take to defend themselves, with examples from personal experience
4.	TransX	18.01.2017.	Operationserfahrungen	Trans women and men talking about their experiences with surgeries related to their transition, exchange of advice on the matter
5.	Multiple organisations including QueerBase	08.03.2017.	Take Back the Streets – Jeden Tag 8. März	Demonstration of inclusion of non-binary, intersex, genderqueer, trans and cis women for The International Woman’s Day

Advised by Flick’s handbook, I constructed a Protocol sheet template, in which I described the events, the context, and the acts that I found relevant to answering my research question. I took notes during the meetings and transferred them onto protocol sheets as soon as possible after the events. To formulate a protocol sheet template, with help from Flick’s handbook, I took the following dimensions:

- *Space* – Where something is and how public is it? Even though all of the events were public I find that trans meetings are less accessible than film festival screenings and Q&A time, performances etc. Here I tried to touch the infamous “hiding” characteristic of the trans community, that I feel is very important in their identity expression.

- *Action* – What kind of an event is it, what is going on and how is it developing? Here I mind the number of members present, the topic chosen and the discussion that is initiated.
- *Goal* – What important issues were discussed? How and what can I make of the event? I try to observe meetings that I find will help me in better understanding aspects of trans reality. The practical information exchanged during the meetings, as a support strategy within members, helped me get acquainted with the system trans people go through when they start the process of transition.
- *Feeling* – I try to capture my personal experience as a white, female, cis, immigrant student, encountering issues I am not used to hearing about in everyday life. Even though I try to remain as objective as I possibly can, I am aware of certain boundaries I have to mind each time I come to a conclusion.

Openness is paramount to this method, as I am present at the gatherings and must be available to all influences. I sit outside the circle of the debate, or the Q&A time after an event and observe the situation. I take notes on the topics I find relevant which I later transfer into my protocol sheets. I rarely speak in these occasions, but when I do, I ask questions that would help me better understand the discussion. For example, at the second TransX meeting I attended, I asked if the discrimination the women experienced (in form of strange looks, occasional sexual remarks or hand signs) is characteristic only to women or could trans men notice the same treatment. Since there was only one trans man present, he elaborated on the subject.

The difficulties I faced with this method of data collection was a cliché one, being the problem of my subjectivity. I struggled in differentiating my personal impression and presumptions with the actual development of things. To solve this problem, I checked and double checked my conclusions in regard to questions: How is this relevant to answering the research question? How did I come to this conclusion? In what other ways can this be interpreted? Am I right to suppose that this is a trans characteristic? Could I come to this conclusion in investigation of a cis group? The criteria I used to evaluate something as relevant are similar to the criteria I employed with interviews. I focused on four topics: identity, health system, education/employment and political participation.

Documentary movie *Female to What the Fuck (FtWtF)*

On the suggestion from a friend, as a source of information, I found out about the documentary movie *Female to What the Fuck (FtWtF)* from 2015 by directors Cordula Thym and Katharina Lampert. I got a chance to view the film in the offices of Six Pack, a Viennese non-profit organisation that works on connecting current films and video productions with relevant international festivals. They allowed me to take my time, pausing and taking notes throughout the viewing and introduced me to more work on queer and trans subject. The documentary made an impression on me since it was the first personal material, from Austria, I had encountered. It follows six stories of people being interviewed about their gender non-conforming realities. They were all born women and have become something else in the process. I used the interviews of the informants as testimonies that add up to the six interviews I conducted.

I present this movie as a separate source of information since it represents a collection of testimonies, all relevant to answering my research question. I have contacted some of the protagonists for individual interviews and managed to realise them. In addition, I have reached out to the two directors for an interview as well, which enlightened me on the reasons for making the movie and expectations that follow, as the documentary has now been released. In the following part I briefly present the protagonists, followed by the interview with the directors.

- First of the experts I interviewed was *Nick Prokesch*, a Viennese trans man I noticed while watching the mentioned documentary. The reason I contacted him was his unburdening presence in the film. As he tells his story, through the course of the movie, we follow him to San Francisco, where he does part of his transition. He talks about initial confusion, where he thought he was a lesbian at first and feelings of connection to both the transgender and queer community. “Nobody has monopoly on *normal*” he states as he laughs.
- *Dorian Bonelli*, at the time the movie begins, is a trans boy studying at the Viennese Academy of Fine Arts, on the brink of transition. He explains his fear towards hormone therapy, the unknown and the unpredictable. He tackles the important question whether medicine really is the answer, and what is so wrong with non conforming to the binary system. Dorian thinks that queer is

maybe a better term than trans, because it defies the limits of the binary system. Through the course of the film, he graduates, takes on hormone therapy and undergoes a mastectomy. In the last scenes he emerges as a smiling young man, content with his choices.

- *Gin Müller* is a theatre and performance artist, and also a lecturer at the University of Vienna, at the Faculty for Theatre, Film and Media. He originally initiated *transgender moves*, performances with transgender, transsexual and intersex persons, to bring awareness and more visibility to trans issues on stage and in the society. His pieces can be seen at Brut Wien, a coproduction house and space for Austrian and international theatre, performance and dance scene. During the movie Gin is still in the process of transition and “expects no trans paradise when it’s over”. One of the problems he discusses is that in the system of the University of Vienna he is still listed as Regine Müller, his birth name. This poses a difficulty in the process of his transition and shows the official, inflexible stance of the University. He talks about understanding the importance of divided space for men and women through the binary system as a result of oppression, but concludes that that system has to be changed because it is simply not working.
- *Mani Tukano* wishes to be referred to as “it”. It sees it’s identity as a gender synthesis. Mani explains that after going through phases of different genders, it identifies itself as transsexual and finally feels comfortable with the pronoun “it”. Mani points out the discomfort people feel when they need to refer to it as “it” and feels it is more disrespectful not to honour it’s wishes. Mani went through an ordeal of changing it’s name to a gender neutral one. Since it needed to prove that Mani is indeed a unisex name, as obligated by the Austrian law, it managed to obtain certificates from Canada ensuring the gender neutrality of the name. As it lives a peaceful life in a small village and tends to it’s garden and house, Mani feels the constant struggle to explain and defend it’s identity.
- *Persson Perry Baumgartinger*, one of the experts I later approached for an interview, talks about the legal ordeal he went through his transition, which left him sterile, something that he struggled with for a while. He talks about the evolution in the Austrian law and how it is now much easier to go through the transition. Even though he is a trans man, he does not completely feel comfortable with that categorisation, since he is against identification of any kind.

- Ashley *Hans Scheire* is multi gender. According to their passport they are a female, which they said sometimes helped them get a job. For them trans is a fluid identity category which reflects in their reluctance to fully transition. They took hormones for seven years and then stopped. Since they have had no surgery, they leave the possibility of passing again, to live as an old lady, open. Since the movie came out, when they were referred to as *he* (Hans), I inquired about them and have found out that they are currently living as a woman named Ashley.

As mentioned earlier, I reached out to the directors of the documentary and ask about the reasons behind the movie, the timing and the creative process that occurred. The two women were kind enough to oblige me, with an interview obtained via e-mail. I find it relevant to include in full form because it heartily depicts the current state of collaboration between different LGBTIQ minorities and the contextual perspective in which trans people in Austria live today. The interview is in the appendixes.

3.2.3 Contextual timeline of the research

For the purposes of a better understanding of the research process I have enclose a contextual timeline of it. It is there to shed light on the challenges I faced, projects I succeeded and failed to complete and a timely depiction of how it really looked like to start from knowing no-one who is transgender in Austria to writing about the status of this community. Personal remarks are incorporated throughout the timeline to show how I tried to distinguish a boundary between my personal impressions and required neutrality of my stance as a researcher.

Finding transgender people to talk with in Austria, reaching places and meetings and openly asking people for their time, was a lengthy process. As I started by writing e-mails to organisations, which had very little effect, I proceeded with telephoning them. I was told to send material via e-mail and that they would get back to me, which almost never happened. When I decided to go in person to the trans meetings, and ask for a couple of minutes to tell them about myself and the research I planned to conduct, I finally got some positive feedback. That is when I got to make appointments with people and get tips and recommendations. I have found that non-visibility or secrecy of trans

people can be a hindrance in getting interviews. Apart from that, I found the interviewing process to be fairly easy to organise and execute.

As far as participating observation is concerned, I had the fortune to be kindly received by TransX. This was not originally what I intended when I first came to one of the meetings. Because of the openness of the members to me and in regard to topics they discussed, I thought best to include this method of data collection. As explained in the previous part, I would come to the meetings and quietly observe the development of discussions. Not long after, trans related online material, arts and media projects and people related to trans activism started popping up. I was given suggestions and connections to people quite easily. The only issue I encountered was occasional reluctance of people to take part as informants. Given that the interview consisted of four quite personal, and potentially difficult topics, I understood the unwillingness of some people.

3.2.4 Analysing data

In order to make the collected material meaningful and relevant for answering the research question, I have decided to employ narrative analysis as a method. One can argue that people organise and bring meaning to their experiences through constructing narratives. In order to investigate the status of the transgender community in Austria, I thought it would be best to go through the narratives of the members of the mentioned minority. That is why I interviewed and observed them. In order to define narrative analysis and find a meaningful way to organise collected data, I used Uwe Flick's *The sage handbook of qualitative data analysis from 2013*. As Flick references Murray in his textbook, "narrative allows us to define ourselves, to clarify the community in our lives and to convey this to others." (Flick 2013, p. 146) As storytelling is fundamental to human experience, it is the narratives through which we connect events and emotions and interpret them in a meaningful way. I find this to be particularly relevant for this research because it allows me to analyse the narratives of informants, transgender individuals telling me stories about their lives. Through it I aim to understand the complexities of personal and social relations transgender people live with. Since I employed problem-centred method of interviewing with most of my interviewees, I have a collection of narratives from people about their transition

process and their relation to the cis society. Apart from the interviews, I observed group meetings of transgender people exchanging their experiences with transitioning process and daily interactions.

I have organised the collected data (transcriptions and protocol sheets) by dividing it into topics that correlate to ones presented in the section concerning the research question. I have categorised the stories from trans people by breaking down the elements of love, law, esteem, recognition, redistribution and participation. Each category represents a collage of different experiences in similar instances, for example a variation of experiences with sex changing surgery and opinions of the competence of Austrian surgeons. In order to answer the research question, the categories are analysed all together in relation to the overall status of the transgender community in Austria. The result of my research provides an interpretation of the impact recognition and redistribution have on the status of the minority in question.

As Flick states “the act of interpretation always involves a degree of appropriation”, I tried to be aware, to the best of my ability, on the imprint I left as an interpreter (Flick, 2013, p. 141). Since I inevitably shaped what came to be known as somebody’s experience, I tried to keep in mind the research question and the aim of the research, to avoid inflicting my personal opinion on the matter.

The method of the qualitative research conducted was presented in this chapter. It presents, through the researcher’s interpretation, the informants’ responses and the events observed. It provides the reader with an explanation of the methodological process used in answering the research question. What follows subsequently are the results of that method.

4. Answering the research question: You’re nobody ‘till somebody loves you

This section summarises all of the above mentioned and depicts the state of the transgender community in Austria in the present time, 2016. The interviews and the participant observation, used as methods of data collection, are going to be sorted into three topics relevant to Honneth’s and Fraser’s view of recognition. Those are Honneth’s three elements of love, law and esteem, as well

as Fraser's recognition, redistribution and participation. As presented within the table earlier, the selected topics are to be examined in order to answer the main research question. Each topic consists of one question, that can serve as a sub-research question. In the following they are presented, enriched with testimonies from informants, and my observations as a researcher.

In the first part I will examine the acceptance of transgender identity in Austria through the opinions of the informants. They spoke of the acceptance in their family and immediate community, as well as what they think transgender is, and what kind of recognition it requires. For this section Honneth's first element of love is employed, as well as Fraser's view on recognition.

The second part deals with the transitioning process organised by the state of Austria. The process consists of the legal change of identity and the medical procedures some trans people need. In this section informants speak about their experiences with the state and the medical system, offering their remarks. This section is analysed through Honneth's second element of law and Fraser's view on redistribution.

Finally, the third part tackles a person's pursuit for social esteem reflected in education, career building and taking part in the political elections in Austria. The informants offer their experiences regarding their careers and the process of choosing of political representative. In this section I have used Honnet's third element of esteem and Fraser's view on participation.

The result of the research should serve as an insight into the lives of a limited group of openly transgender people who shared their experiences with me for this research, as well as trans people who engaged in the TransX meetings I have attended and observed. In addition, I have taken the testimonies of protagonists of the already mentioned documentary movie as timely and contextually relevant.

4.1 Love

In order for a minority to be included in the social system and appointed resources accordingly, it needs to be recognised. This means, according to Honneth, lifted up above the margins (Honneth, 2003a, p. 119). The public needs to be aware of the existence of transgender identity, and community, in Austria, in order for it to tackle its issues. Simply put, the society needs to know what transgender is, how to refer to a transgender person and what do transgender people need.

This part represents what Austrian trans people think of their position in the society. As mentioned, it correlates with Honneth's first element of recognition, love. It is, as stated earlier, important to recognise someone as existing within intimate relationships entailing love, like friendship, companionship and family ties. As Honneth criticised Fraser's theoretical proposition, stating that a large number of minorities are invisible to the public, and therefore unreachable to redistribution, one could argue that love, coming from intimate relationships, can raise the minorities problem from the underground onto the public plato (Ibid).

With this in mind I asked my informants what they thought of the quality of life in Austria, the feedback they get from others in their immediate community and if they have been so far discriminated against regarding their transgender identity. I asked them what they think recognition is and what they feel should be done to raise awareness of the public about the trans phenomenon.

The guiding question for this part is, as specified in the table: How can the awareness of the existence of the transgender community help their status in the Austrian society? The following presents how they described what trans is, and what recognition of it is. This is then brought into relation with the theoretical framework of Honneth and Fraser.

4.1.1 Nature vs Nurture

The debate whether gender is biologically and/or socially constructed seems to often be the base of all discussions in regards to the trans subject. The struggle of being certain in one's conviction about what it makes a man or a woman are difficult to describe and prove. "Yes, gender is in a way a social construct, but it's also in your brain. Society tells you the way that your gender has to work and of course, most people want to work the way that their gender works because otherwise they're not treated the way they want to be treated" said Pales to me. As defined earlier, sex represents biological characteristic of a person, given at birth, whereas gender represents identity, something that one builds around one's reproductive and sexual reality. Or, more poetically put "gender is meta-sex. It is the cultural tapestry that we weave from the fundamental facts of our biological characteristic" (Rudacille, 2006 p. 16).

When it comes to gender, baffling questions keep piling up. Where do the social constructs come from? Why did we construct exactly these roles for men and women? Could the biological differences be the ones that prompted such expectations for the two genders? Further more, why are only two genders allowed? Had perhaps the fear of extinction evoked such social constructs, built to ensure constant procreation? In this instance Rudacille argues: "though the way we express gender is clearly influenced by culture, gender identity itself seems far too deeply embedded to be purely an artefact of culture." (Rudacille, 2006, p. 21)

Numberless questions arise from there: What is the relation between biological characteristics and social roles we assume? Why do we divide our societies into two (and only two) gender groups with a huge burden of social expectations and responsibilities when it comes to life and more so, a respected one? One could argue that the biological differences of sexes and their role in procreation is in direct relation with the social construct we have so far fashioned to drive our societies. Furthermore, one could argue that we constructed our societies this way to ensure the existence of our species, by mirroring the *natural* roles of males and females in producing offspring. In today's over-populated reality and environmental decay, we no longer need to provide a steady streak in natality. Simply put, not everyone needs to bring a child into this world so that we, as a species, won't die out eventually. Thus, it is maybe time to change the social construct. This is where it

would perhaps be wise to consider experiences of transgender and gender-fluid people. Pales told me over coffee: “I think the right way would be to that everyone can be themselves in every way they choose and be accepted. That is the main goal. Because we’re doing the transition in order to be ourselves. If I have to fit a certain stereotype in order to be male and I have to act overly male in order for others to accept me, then I’m playing a role once again and that’s not what the purpose of this thing was you know?” Maybe trans people shed light on the relations between gender and sex, as Juno said: “And if you are cisgender it’s impossible really to understand what it means to be transgender. Because you’re at home with what’s in there (points to the head) and what your body looks like; you say ok, this is normal.”

As I walked into a room full of trans women for the first time, on a TransX meeting, I couldn’t help but notice certain aspects of their behaviour and air that didn’t resonate female to me. Their posture, the way they crossed (or didn’t) their legs while wearing a skirt, tone of their voice and hand gesticulation, were all the kinds of things my grandmother thought me were not *ladylike*. Even though this shouldn’t make them any less women than me, someone who had the (mis)fortune of having such a *lady* for a grandmother, one could argue that their mannerism and appearance deems them to a socially grey area. While interviewing informants who passed earlier or later in their lives, I noticed a big difference in their physical appearance and behaviour. For example, Juno, who passed at the age of 57, looks significantly different from Venus, who passed at 19. Juno has undergone full sex-change transformation, but still has facial hair, deep voice and somewhat manly posture. On the other hand, Venus has a bare face, widened hips, higher voice and grew her own breasts with the help of hormone therapy. She, by social standards, looks more like a woman.

The issue lays, one could debate, in the fact that we reinforce the social construct without noticing. This makes it difficult for some people to refer to a trans person correctly, because they cannot, or will not, accept the need for a revised social norm. In such instance, a gender fluid Mani wants others to refer to it as *it*. Some people find it uncomfortable because they feel they would be insulting it.

It brings us an uneasy feeling to encounter someone who is not a *normal* gender. The fear that we oftentimes experience is the uncertainty of the base our society is built upon. As Juno said: “So you have to take the fears away from the people and that is something I do”.

The level of acceptance of trans identity varies from the process of transitioning to the moment a person fully passes as the other sex or gender. Socially appropriate physical appearance helps trans people to get recognised. More simply put, if a trans person conforms to the already constructed social behaviour of a man or a woman while passing, the more likely the person is to encounter recognition and acceptance. The way we register male and female behaviour is deeply imbedded in our beings, that we find it, sometimes hard to refer to someone by the gender they wish to be referred to, solely on the fact that we are not used to it. As Nick told me: “People just call me *he* because I have a beard and I look like a guy, you know and, so I don’t have to ask anyone anymore, if I would now ask them to call me *she* to respect my history (laugh) I don’t think they would do it easily.”

Through the course of interviewing trans people, they kept reminding me that there is no way for me to understand the type of situation one finds him or herself in when they feel they’re in the *wrongly gendered* body. Pales said to me: “My body is wrong, not my mind. It should be classified like that. And also not everything about my body is wrong, just certain parts.” As Susan Stryker has talked about gender privilege: “*normal* people don’t ever think about gender in the same way that white people don’t have to think about race. Transgender people question basic gender assumptions in the same way minority groups examine assumptions about their oppression.” (Stryker cited in Rudacille, 2006, p. 19)

This brings us to question the process of fully passing. Even though this is a genuine wish for many trans people, a part of trans population wants to remain outside of the binary division and evoke change in the way we perceive gender and sex in regards to social organisation. Such as Mani and Hans (now Ashley), who are later going to be described, some people open the gender boundaries. One could argue that this group of people is the most visible. As Pales said: “For me, personally it’s important to pass because I have so much dysphoria and if I don’t pass my dysphoria just goes up, but there are people who don’t feel that way and I think that’s great because I think those are the ones that represent our community and that are visible. Because once I’m on testosterone for a couple of years, no-one from the outside will realise that I’m trans, but that’s nice for me because I can look like just any guy. But, on the other hand, the community loses the visibility and I think it’s important that we have that and I have huge respect for all of the people who are non binary and who just do their thing and are themselves.”

4.1.2 Living in Austria

When asked how it is to live in Austria as a transgender person, almost all informants said it was pretty good. Pomona said she is well respected: “I got the feedback, it’s much better now, it fits better”. Or Pales, who said: “Well in relation to other places it’s great. We have rules like health care system ... We have a more open society than in other places, but there is still a lot that is not perfect.” Pales is talking about the state-organised transitioning process that funds medical treatments and procedures of people who meet the requirements. Much debate has been circling around the state-organised process. For some, this is just another way of forcing trans people into conforming the binary social construct. For others, it is well conceived. The process has changed throughout the years, and for the better. Before 2010 Austria required sterilisation of people who legally wanted to change gender. That is what Perssons talks about in the documentary *FiWiF*. Even though this is no longer the case in Austria, other issues still remain. For example, as it will later be described, it was difficult for some to go through psychotherapy required to take on hormone therapy.

When Pales mentioned a more open society than in other places, he meant the existing public space to present and discuss trans issues. The documentary movie, made by two directors in Vienna, alongside other observed events serve as an example. It brings the visibility, and therefore accessibility, of the trans topics. As Pales continued: “The thing is that those things are really great, but they’re not promoted in the way that reaches a lot of people because all those LGBT ... they’re spread all over Facebook, but you only get them if you liked those certain pages and ... and I’m like bombarded with that stuff now, because I’m trans, but my friends who are not, they never hear about that. So I think, they should be spread, it should be promoted more They are definitely doing stuff, but most people never hear about it.” That goes to show that only those who are interested in making contact and make an effort of informing themselves, are the ones to whom the community is visible.

To define recognition of trans gender identity in Austria, I asked the informants what it meant to them. Juno said: “What is recognition? That people treat me as the woman I am. That people treat

me with respect that I give them. That I can do my work the way I want to. That I can go into different places and have no troubles. That I can go on holiday and no-one is going to make my life difficult, not the way I am. So, that I can simply live my life as I really am.” She feels she can do so, since she has her own company and is able to support herself. Things she mentioned, such as to be treated with respect and to go to different places without having troubles, are basic rights implied for her cis peers, but somehow not for all trans people. They need to reassure others that they are *normal* and deserve *normal* treatment and equal rights.

One could argue that trans people want what cis people already have, implied equal treatment. Regardless of their conforming or non-conforming to the binary system of the modern democratic society, they seek the respect and recognition all cis people presumably have. “Transgender community goals are basically, put in a nutshell, is to live your life the way that other people live theirs. That’s basically the goal. That we’re accepted as constructive part of community, society. That we are, we can find your roles within the society and earn money and live the way we want to with who we want to yeah?” Juno added. Trans citizens, like cis ones, need to organise a way to provide for their livelihood, which is not an easy task considering the inner dramatic experience they go through transitioning accompanied by social stigma. The fact that they have to coordinate their transitioning process to fit their career pursuits can be interpreted as an obstacle to full self-realisation. It could be argued that the cis society needs to be more considerate to the dramatic life-changing process their trans peers go through. Persson mentioned: “You have to show it with the gestures, you have to fulfil this ... box. For some people, in some situations is really exhausting and ... also, you need a lot of energy just for that, but you have to live your normal life, you have to get money, you have to go to university or work or both probably or whatever (laugh). You have to be friendly to everybody because trans people are very often seen as very aggressive like, other minorities are. It’s just, you’re just exhausted and angry.”

For some transgender people, proper labelling is a crucial step towards recognition. Pales said to me: “I think it’s very important to, like, use the right pronoun and stuff because my main dysphoria is the pronoun. So, I feel worse about being called *she* than I feel about my body, for example. It’s different for everybody, but for me the pronoun is really really important and I know they’re important for most, so yeah ...” When it comes to correctly referring to someone, cis people feel uncomfortable when the pronoun they use doesn’t match the socially appointed physical appearance of the person. Throughout transition transgender person might encounter different reactions because

the physical appearance changes with hormone intake. On the other hand, depending on the type of relationship trans person has, different people are going to have to make different efforts in correctly referring to the person in question. Nick told me: “It really depends and it’s different if it’s a coworker that knows you like for a week ... it’s easier for them to switch pronouns than my parents, you know, who know me for thirty years and have their own version of me in their head.”

According to Honneth’s view that love is one of three elements of recognition, mutual affection and concern coming from intimate relationships results in one’s understanding of self and one’s needs. It is interesting to ponder the process of recognising the changing identity of someone with whom one is in an intimate relationship with, be it consists of family, friendly or romantic ties. The already formed idea of that person, as Nick said, in our heads needs to change. As mentioned before, this does not always correlate with the socially appropriate physical appearance of the gender the person is passing into, which makes the process of recognition even more complex. This is even more tangled considering that some people do not want to fully transition into a specific gender as we know it.

The relations reflected from intimate associations build public opinion and evoke change in the legal framework that tackles transgender issues. That way the Austrian system has evolved. As Persson said: “There is a very, still, pathologic and exotic picture or image of trans people in the media for example ... To recognise trans people is to recognise there is a never ending, everywhere, ongoing intersecting transphobia all the time.” That is reflected in a large number of instances where a person needs to state their gender publicly, like on the university’s virtual platform or in the toilet.

When asked if they face discrimination in their every-day life, the informants mostly named instances that they defined as not that serious. For example, Venus told me how she feels: “I would say pretty much, living like every other woman. I mean, sure, before I passed I had the odd comment out of a bunch, but that was like one time in entire year. So, I wouldn’t describe it as something threatening or problematic ... At best I had a problem with my father, but he was always a bit against everything that was counter establishment, if I have to phrase it that way, so trans was the least of the issues”. These instances can be hard for people to bare while going through the transition.

On the other hand, Pales had an incident on the underground train: “One time when I was on the train with my mum ... and I had formal ID, I hadn’t had my name changed and like the guy who, you know checks the tickets, he just looked at my ID and looked at me, my ID and then me. And then he was turning at me and he said: Have a good day ladies, like that. So, that sucked ... but I have friends who were like, discriminated against and also one was beaten up. Yeah. I’m just lucky I guess.”

Juno had two similar experiences: “One was at McDonald’s at Mariahilfer Strasse just before Christmas they had a little old man from Pakistan, or India it must have been, that showed me to the men’s. And I looked at him and said: Just because I’m tall doesn’t mean I’m not a woman (laugh) ... Aha ok! And in the underground station in the Volkstheater some Turkish guy wanted me to go into the men’s ... what the hell do you think you’re doing? No no ... Otherwise I had no problems to the right toilet. Sometime in the last year I’m teaching some kids, they’re apprentices so I said ok do you have any questions ... um Juno do you go to the ladies or to the gents? I said I go to the ladies ... I thought it was sweat (laugh) and then I explained them about everything and they loved it, and it’s good.”

Instances of uncomfortable situations Juno and Pales encountered are the result of people not referring to them correctly. Their documents and physical appearances, as discussed earlier, did not match the socially appropriate gender identification, so people did not react correctly. It could be argued that these instances would decrease in numbers if trans issues would be discussed more frequently in the mainstream media and social discourse. Regardless the possible disapproval of some, being informed about how to refer to trans individuals could change the reality. Public manipulation of the opinion about the transgender community could change the way people react when meeting them.

Something closer to insult happened to Pomona: “No, there’s some looks from macho men ... it happened that I go in the subway and some people make signs like (shows a sign simulating sex) ... And I laugh at it (laugh), laugh at this, yes, but my girlfriend she was angry, two days, three days and she don’t want to be in Vienna but I take it for fun, I laugh at this.”

On one of the meetings of TransX, about dangers woman encounter, I noticed a dynamics of talking about violence and handling insulting situations. At first no one shared their negative experiences

and some of the women even stated that they have never had such experiences. Then, one of the ladies told a story about a strange look she got from an elderly gentleman in an elevator once, but could not define it, since he has not done anything else. Soon afterwards, women started opening up and naming similar instances, where they felt uncomfortable, but not threatened. With the exception of one young trans woman, who told a story of a man asking her for sexual favours in the underground train, no one had any violent experience. One could argue that people hide traumatic and negative experiences because they want to avoid feeling ashamed or pitied, but throughout the research I have not encountered any person that has been assaulted in Austria for being transgender.

Violence towards transgender persons indeed does exist. The most recent example, published on the web-page of TransX, was a Turkish trans woman, who was strangled at her own home on January the 28th, 2015 (TransX c, n.y. n.p.). Because the entire community lacks visibility and that cases of discrimination and violence simply fail to reach the public news in Austria. The question of how to get the marginalised minority to become visible and voice its opinion on possible injustices that suffers is a tricky one. Formally, the transgender community exists in Austria and advocates change, but trans identity is notorious for its secrecy. One cannot know, with certainty, how many people suffer injustice that prevents them from coming out and publicly stating their identity.

One could conclude that transgender individuals can lead a pretty undisturbed life in Austria. This is not to say there is no violence or discrimination of the minority in this country, but simply that the informants I interviewed expressed satisfaction with their lives. As Juno said: “It’s always a two ways street. If you’re homosexual, migrant, if you’re transgender, if you’re another colour, if you’re anything! It’s always a two way street. I have to come to you and you have to come back, so interaction. But you could do it good and you could do it badly. That is up to each individual.”

Despite the obstacles trans people face, when asked how they feel about their transition, all the informants unanimously agreed that it has changed their life for the better. For example, Venus said: “I think the best way to describe it is, for the first time in my life I feel normal in a way. I don’t wake up and immediately feel like I’m wrong in some way. Sure, I still feel incomplete in some ways and some days simply because my hair looks like shit or I slept to little, but I still have the space level of normality and I wouldn’t trade that for anything in the world.” Similarly, Persson said: “I love it being a trans person, it’s a really great experience and it’s very important in my life. It’s one of my most important experiences I had until now”.

From the above mentioned it seems that transgender persons from this research are recognised and accepted in their families, communities and the public system. The support they get from their parents while transitioning can serve as an example. Even though the situation was not so good ten years ago, significant progress has been made. They have, and continue to seek proper labelling and advocate against discrimination.

To answer the previously set question for this section, one could argue that the awareness of the existence of the transgender community could contribute significantly to solving issues they may have, with the help of the public. It also means that a large number of trans people would have the opportunity to come out without fear that it will affect their lives.

4.2 Law

This part addresses the transitioning process a transgender person goes through, which consists of the legal change of name and gender, and medical treatment a person might seek. Even though it is up to every individual to decide how, and in what way, the transition is going to happen, there is a legal framework, set by the state to control and fund this occurrence. A person needs to fulfil certain requirements in order to change their name and/or start any of the offered medical assistance in the transitioning process.

In this part I will review the steps in the mentioned process and present the opinions trans people I interviewed, had on them. In connection to Honneth's second element of recognition, law, and Fraser's case of just redistribution, I will observe how the situation has developed in Austria and what trans Austrians think still should be done. The guiding question for this chapter is: What can the state organised process of transitioning and legal change of gender say about recognition of the trans community in Austria?

The ongoing global debate about whether transgender condition should still be classified as pathology has recently been sprung in Austria. Eradicating transsexualism from the mental disease

directory is the ultimate goal. As much as it is important to properly address the problem trans people face (which many of them claim has nothing to do with their mental state), it can be argued that this diagnosis to be a kind of a safe haven, a legal resort that would protect trans people from abuse and allow funded treatment. The initiatives in motion propose further funding of sex and gender change alongside a different diagnosis – gender dysphoria. The opinions of trans people on this subject vary greatly. Some of them refuse to accept the diagnosis as valid, while some of them are in accordance with it. For example, Venus said: “Well, it’s basically the problem with the brain. We have medical brain scans of trans people that show that the part of the brain that correlates with self-identity is more aligned with the opposite gender. So, I would call it a disorder or a disease. Not in a bad way, or in a negative way, but it’s simply problem and transitioning is the best known cure for it.” On the other hand, there are trans people who don’t believe in such a diagnosis. Nick told me: “That’s a notion that I absolutely refuse, that there’s anything wrong with me, like, or with any other trans person”.

In order to discuss the status of the transgender community in Austria, one must consider the transitioning process this state has secured for people who wish to pass into a different sex. TransX offers a detailed explanation of the process, with lots of useful tips and links to legal documents (TransX b, n.y. n.p.). As mentioned earlier, the transition consists of three steps: psychotherapy and diagnosis, hormone therapy and the sex-change surgery. Not all trans people go through all of the three steps. In Austria, one has a choice of how and in what way they want to transition. Since 2009 legal change of one’s gender, status and name, entails no severe medical procedures (Ibid).

One can conclude that certain progress has been made in the direction of recognition of transgender individuals through law, and certain distribution of resources has been made to meet their needs. What follows are opinions of informants on their experience with the legal system.

What seems to be the first issue in the transitioning process is the lack of psychologists and psychotherapists who are specialised in helping people through their transition. Choosing a good practitioner with whom one has a good and trusting relationship is difficult for everyone regardless the problems, especially on the brink of transition into a different gender. Also, the connection between practitioners seems to be weak. Only a handful of doctors, working in organisations dedicated to helping transgender people, like Courage or TransMann, psychotherapists and psychologists are aware of the need to be connected. As Pales said: “It would be great if your

psychologist could give a name of a psychiatrist where you can go and some just know where you need to go ... some don't even know how hormone therapy works, so they can't help you in your process ... your therapist is supposed to recognise the fact that you're trans and help you in your process of finding yourself, but there are a lot of therapists who tell you, oh you're not trans, we need to give you pills and we need to give you pills and help you. A friend of mine was told you need to have sex in order to figure out your identity because I don't think you're this and that."

Psychotherapy is intended to "improve the psychological and social situation (...) and strengthen the patient's identity" (TransX d, n.y. n.p.). Transsexuals should convince themselves and the therapists that their undoubted desire for gender-matched surgeries has existed over a long period of time. This does not mean that one has to disguise or deny their uncertainties and doubts about their future, because that is where a substantial value of the therapy lies. The therapist serves as a companion to help a person to determine their way and solve their problems. This may not always be the case. As Pales said: "And in order to get these letters you need to be so self confident and to prove to everyone, yes you want them and whatever. And I think that's very emotionally draining "

As Juno explained: "Usually it is doctor at Courage yeah? You pay your money, you sit there an hour and he says yes or no. After a while you get to know who is who so there's some things to look out for. There's things you ... but we know who is really transgender and who isn't. When you have this, then you go start hormone therapy."

When asked how they feel about the obligatory psychotherapy and counselling, most of the informants agreed that it is a much needed step. Venus for example said: "In my opinion it's an absolutely brilliant idea. It shouldn't be that long, but there should be definitely a required minimum of hours. From my experience, when I started therapy, I didn't start it with the mindset, ok, I already know I'm trans and I just want the confirmation so that I can carry on. I really wanted to be sure I was trans, I didn't want to rush into a life-changing medication based on my own feelings that could be the result of some sort of schizophrenic delusion ... So, I'm really grateful for the required amount of time because it really gave my therapist time to tackle every single aspect of me being trans". Therapy offers time for self-reflection, but also provides the family and friends of the person to come to terms of the change that might occur. Juno agreed: "You also have to give your surroundings, your family, the people who are dear to you time to adjust."

Hormones that a person takes during the transition process are sex-hormones, oestrogen and testosterone. As TransX suggests, pharmaceutical forms available in Austria are: tablets, plaster, gel, injections (TransX a, n.y. n.p.). Different forms are taken differently. The tablets are prescribed daily whereas plasters, gels and injections are taken less often. As Venus told me: “My hormone therapy right now is pills, oestrogen pills and progesterone pills. But, I would love to switch to oestrogen injections, because instead of swallowing pills daily I only would have to do that every two weeks, but they are just not available anymore, here in Austria...They just are not produced anymore. And while I completely understand that you can't just force a company to make space for medication, I just wish there was ways to subsidise the import of injectable oestrogen. But, I realised for such a small minority of people it's not lucrative and doesn't really work.” One could argue that there is a need for closer following of the latest medical trends and finding a way to make them accessible and affordable to the people. Even if the transgender minority is small, that doesn't mean the individuals in it don't deserve the best possible treatment.

Pomona, is the only of the informants who decided to take measures into her own hands and buy hormones in another country without a prescription. Her opinion on the matter shows that not all trans people trust the medical system and are prepared to go through it. She told me: “I would suggest people who want to do this sign a paper, they do this on their own responsibility and then get this thing ... I have done somethings on my own responsibility, I fetched hormones from the ... from Spain ... like this, *Meriastra* 2mg, cost 2 euro 75 and no prescription ... I got 13 packages for the next year.”

As explained earlier, one can change their name at any point of their transition, regardless the time they started hormonal therapy or had any surgeries done. That way, Venus changed her name: “I had the diagnosis from the therapist and then I just requested a formular and that's it. If you have the diagnosis, you basically request it like any other name change. But, if you present it with the paper of your therapist, they basically just cancel the fees and you don't have to pay for it.” This seemingly simple procedure still poses certain obstacles. Austrian law requires one to choose a gender appropriate first name, from a directory of names that lists female, male and neutral options. Simply put, one cannot just choose any name they want to be called. The name needs to be in the directory and in accordance to the gender the individual lives in. Otherwise an additional document needs to be provided certifying that this name is appointed to certain gender in certain country. Mani, for example, had to get a certificate from the Canadian consulate stating that its name is

gender neutral and given to males and females in Canada. To avoid complications some trans people choose a gender neutral name from the given directory. Pales explained to me: “So for example Sam, I know is a gender neutral name. So I have a couple of friends who are named Sam (laugh). Because, for some reason, I don’t even know why, my friend couldn’t change his gender and he just changed his name and then he got a second first name, so a middle name which was a male one. Because you can get, your middle can be any, just your first name needs to be gender neutral. The second name can be chosen freely.”

Sex-change surgery sparks different reactions in informants that were interviewed and observed during a themed TransX meeting on that subject. Not all of them went through with it, nor do all of them want to. The information regarding this subject was gathered from the TransX themed evening and the interviews with the informants. In the meeting, dedicated solely to this subject, the members jokingly divided themselves into two groups, the ones who went to Thailand and had the surgery done there, and ones who stayed and had it done in Austria. Venus went to Thailand and had the surgery when she was 19. She said: “The option costs roughly the same and offers less quality. The option here basically requires you to have electro hair removal on your genitalia before the surgery which roughly comes out to 6000 euros, while abroad you don’t need it. On top of it, here you basically have no labiaplasty with it, so, you just have a weird nobbing looking clitoris and a dry hole basically, while Dr XXX in Thailand developed his own technique, umm ... in the late 2000s. Um, well, it is just amazing, it lubricates, it works perfectly fine, basically from the price it comes down to the same. You have a month to spent abroad which can be annoying for some people, but if you have the time it’s pretty much the same cost and ways better.”

Juno had her surgery done in Vienna, at the age of 55: “In Austria surgeons that do this are doctor XXX and doctor YYY. I chose doctor XXX because he has more experience. This is in Vienna, in Rudolfstiftung ... He needs three and a half hours to carry out surgery, wheres YYY needs six to eight hours. So I thought in my age, six to eight hours, no thank you! And I smoke as well, so. And, to be quite honest no-one goes for ... That was back in, when was it, September 2015. So, I’m quite new. And of course you have to continue hormone therapy for the rest of your life, otherwise you slightly go into depression if your hormone levels. I also had breast surgery back in April this year and I had a second corrective surgery in September. Basically I’m finished as far as I see it. The social security paid for ... so Vienna social security pays 20 percent of the psychotherapeutic treatment.”

It seems that the requirement for such a lengthy therapy offers time to individuals who want to discover and be sure about their identity. If played by the rules, one could compensate a large percentage of costs from the health insurance, which shows certain regard of just distribution of resources. These individuals are also legally protected to a certain point and guaranteed funds for their needs.

One could argue that certain redistribution is necessary in regard to better educating medical staff on how to appropriately help people who wish to start gender transition. More specifically, better specific education of psychotherapists and psychologist is needed alongside possible connection of the two. Additionally, further improvement should be done in the direction of approval of hormone therapy as well as eligibility for surgical procedures. The variety of hormone products in different forms should be revised so that it best fits the needs of people taking them, considering that hormone therapy lasts a lifetime. Surgical procedures, by only a few doctors in Austria are, as seen from the informants' testimonies, are not as advanced as elsewhere.

The state holds the monopoly on shaping and execution of transition transgender people go through. The rules imply only a selected number of doctors who have the power to allow and control medical treatment. Even though for some, the transitioning process in Austria was satisfactory, some have experienced regret. On one of the TransX meetings observed, on the subject of sex-change surgery, trans women told their experiences. They warned others of the risks and possibly unsatisfactory results. The decision of undergoing a serious surgery in order to trade one perfectly functioning organ for a possibly nonfunctioning one is very difficult. Some trans women at that meeting talked about reconstructing surgeries they had to undergo because their genitals simply didn't work. As mentioned previously, Venus optioned for a surgery in Thailand, because of statistically better results. Similarly, Nick went to San Francisco, because he didn't trust the one doctor that was operating at the time in Linz. Question of sexuality and finding one after such a life changing surgery is one of the connected issues. As trans women at the meeting discussed how they managed to become sexually active after genital change and how long it took them, it became clear that this decision is not taken lightly. The options for sex-change surgeries, presented by the state are less than stellar. This, of course, entails the question of status and the ability of the individual to afford medical care that is not funded by the state.

To answer the previously set question for this section, one can conclude that the state of Austria is considerably changing its legal framework to cater to the need of this minority. Even though this process is not flawless, the policies are changing and resulting in quicker and cheaper effectiveness. Certain funds are dedicated to this minority in order for it to become fully prepared and functional member of society.

4.3 Esteem

This part is dedicated to the life of a transgender person after they had transitioned. Spending a lot of time, energy and money into gathering and presenting paperwork followed by life-altering surgeries and a lifetime of hormone therapy, all lead to the moment where a trans person is supposed to *finally* start living a satisfied life. As Juno mentioned: “First of all that the transition is the thing that is interesting but for us the transition is the most painful part, but the trouble is that after transition it’s boring (laugh) because we live normal lives ...” Just like Persons said, transgender people are presented as exotic. The recent trending of transgender phenomenon through popular culture can serve as an example, but the reality they live seems to be the similar to their cis peers.

As transgender people are citizens of Austria, and have to work and earn money like anyone else, they seek the best opportunities for education and employment. This part represents what they think of their position and how they have so far encountered any kind of hinderance by their community or the state of Austria. The guiding question here is: How can labelling transgender individuals as equal peers in competition for social esteem help the community’s status in Austria?

This part relates to Honneth’s third element of recognition, esteem. Pursuit of happiness, in form of ensuring good education and career path, are crucial for building one’s self-esteem. In addition, as Fraser stressed the importance of participation, one is a full and valid member of society if one can take part in the political process of the country. Voting in Austria, and being influenced by gender identity in doing so, is one of the things I examined. Powered by a published study by

Baumgartinger, I asked questions whether the trans community in Austria is, in any way, hindered in its pursuit for social esteem and functioning as a valid and productive member of society.

When asked if and how being transgender affects a persons education and employment Venus told me: “Well, most certainly, but as with any other disease that is long term and affects your life, it just delays education or causes problems with education. I had to drop out of school due to depression and the dysphoria but, now it doesn’t affect me anymore.” Realising and accepting one’s transgender identity can be hard personally as well as socially. This minority oftentimes suffers depression and anxiety, connected to the reluctance to be accepted or come out publicly. Each of the informants interviewed had certain problems with their identity. This can, as with Venus, reflect on one’s pursuit for social esteem, especially with young people who need to find their place in the society as adults. As Pales concluded: “And considering suicide rate I can tell you, you know, you’re taking time away from people because, we really feel like, we’ve spent so much time of our lives as someone we are not, like, you never know hen life is gonna end.”

4.3.1 To lead a *normal* life

The way a person perceives their place in the society is directly connected to the feedback they receive from the community they live in. General discontent, denial and depression are common emotions that trans people feel while growing up. Discrepancy between what they feel they are, and what the society feels they usually delays the beginning of the transitioning process. What follows are the opinions of the informants about the realisation of their gender.

- Pomona – “I looked at my dissatisfaction with my original gender, my male gender is old, is very, very old and 10 years ago I searched in the internet and so I found “Trans X” and ten years ago I had contact to other transexual persons and I found “Trans X” in the internet I went few times to “Palmenhausrunde” and but this ended after a few weeks because I was not sure and I was sure about my in between identity but I did, I was frightened before this before the big steps like surgery and hormones, I was frightened and so I didn’t resume with this ... and then it ended slowly and then came ten years with a few very bad experiences with hetero world and with

women ... very, very, bad, bad and sad experiences ... I went to small Turkish clothing shop and I said: I want to buy a dress for my girlfriend, she's a big woman she is about my size ... and he twinkled with the eyes (twinkles himself) and let me test (laugh) and it fit, I took it, I tried to wear to wear jewellery yes, I go on the Hannovermarkt I sit in the restaurant there, people go there, everyone saw me, I felt good, good looks from the other, so I got used with the female role ... I have done this about a year then I, one time I got hormones from the internet and then I met my girlfriend I am together with her since a year minus one month (laugh), 11 months yes ... and we want to stay together and she travels around the world and I go with her in Spain I could buy hormones without any problem."

- Juno – “I knew when I was about three or four that I was transgender, I didn't know what it meant, I knew I was different. Um, and I behaved differently in primary school. My father was homo and transphobe. So, he carried out corrective measures and I learnt to observe boys my age and tried to act like them. Then, when I was about 19, the BBC sent out a documentary about transgender people and I suddenly realised what I was. I just wanted to run. I knew what it meant to my family if I told them. And, I met somebody in Holland, some Austrian woman and yeah, we fell in love, so to say and I came here and Austria was very, very conservative. People were running around in costumes, so it's, national costumes, there was no graffiti on the walls, very, very catholic. And my ex mother in law found that even hanging the washing up on the line was a woman job. Ok, so I thought. I even grew a beard at the time, fathered a son, so I'm now a grandmother. And I did my best my role as a man in this country. Because at that time transgender people were, as far as could see, they had two options: either become a civil servant, or prostitute ... or they killed themselves.”
- Pales – “It was very lengthily because I have suppressed a lot of my feelings because I ... my mum had always wanted the perfect girl and I didn't want to disappoint her and I think that's the reason that I suppressed a lot of my feelings for years and I tried very hard to be female and figuring out that I was not was painful because I felt like I let her down.”
- Venus – “At first it was when I was eight-ish ... I don't know, I just started to feel more and more uncomfortable in my body and trying to tuck my penis back in and ... all that stupid shit basically, that people do... and I felt really uncomfortable and I never could point my finger to it until with eleven or something I stumbled upon other trans people and from there on I kinda

slowly figured it out and ... then I repressed it for a year of two, which didn't really help it, mentally, but yeah, with eighteen I decided to come out to my parents and then I started medication on my, pretty much a month after my eighteenth birthday ... Ummm, surgery shortly before my twentieth birthday”

These testimonies depict the hindering effect the social construct of modern democratic society has on transgender people. Each of the people interviewed had problems with coming out to their family, and felt scared, ashamed, guilty etc. One could argue that transgender kids need safe and accepting space and feedback from their family and friends in order to avoid the emotionally painful coming out and transitioning later on in their lives.

4.3.2 Working

Frketic and Baumgartinger, in their study *Transpersonen am Österreichischen Arbeitsmarkt* from 2008, examined the relation between transgender identity and employment perspectives in Austria (Frketic and Baumgartinger, 2008). As a result of an online research formulated from opinions of 87 people, half of them did not live in their chosen gender all of the time. From that group 46 percent of them named employment as a reason (Frketic and Baumgartinger, 2008, p. 14). Today, eight years after the study, I asked my informants if they had any problems regarding their education or employment. None of the informants within this survey have had any problems related to them being transgender. Venus told me: “Even before I changed my documents, I had a job interview and they were a bit confused ‘cause there was a male name and sort of a woman in front of them. And ... they just pretended like the name on the paper was wrong, so they didn't mind I was trans at all, and indeed offered me the job in the end. So, I don't see any discrimination.” She is a self-proclaimed sex-worker who sells pictures of herself on the internet. As to why she thinks that so many transgender people choose that line of profession she said: “Partially because, due to the mental problems transition brings with it, at being trans brings with it, you often miss out on education. So, selling your body is sometimes the best way to earn a living. Other than that, for me, personally, it's kinda self gratitude ... in terms of, I don't tell anybody that I'm trans, so the feeling

that I get is I've completely and fully passed. From my feet and toes, so I'm sure that for some trans people, this is also a way that they feel desirable ... Umm ... and the third reason: it pays."

It is difficult to generalise employment prospects of transgender people, and even more difficult to determine how being transgender influences one's choices when it comes to pursuing social esteem. Discrimination against employing trans people and favouritism of cis applicants is hard to prove. Even though the informants from this research didn't have particular problems when it came to making a living, this doesn't mean all Austrian transgender citizens live the same reality.

One of the informants, Pales, had a positive working experience, since he came out and transitioning while working as a kindergarten teacher in the same kindergarten. He said: "My boss is very, very, very openminded and she has LGBT friends and everything. I'm working at the XXX so it's kind of religious thing, but they're very open minded. The problem with me was, we were scared how the parents of the kids would react because we had like very overprotective parents ... My boss, she knew about a year before I came out and we kind of started preparing how we're gonna do that. And yeah, but then finally when I came out they were all very accepting there were like one or two parents that weren't over excited about it but all the other ones were perfect, so they didn't dare say anything. So, yeah, I ... My job is great. Everyone, my colleagues, my boss they all accept me, and treat me like a cis male ..." The wait was difficult for him. He had to postpone his coming out and live in the female gender for a period of time. Since the right use of pronoun is very important to him, his colleagues referring to him as a female bothered him. Also, the fear of the uncertainty followed him as he was worried how will things work out once he starts the transitioning process: "During that year that I wasn't out, I was very depressed and I just couldn't do my job the way I wanted to because I didn't have the energy to give a 100 percent and I was very worried that if I didn't do my job right and if the parents would start complaining or something then they would just have the reason to act against me once I came out." This example shows that even in the most welcoming working environments, trans people do face problems of having to wait for the right moment, or fear of how the transition is going to affect their work.

Two informants who have passed later in their life, had similar experiences. Pomona, a Viennese trans woman who used to work in an electric supply shop, and now travels the world with her girlfriend, said of her work experience: "Main part of my coming out was in my company, yes, and in the company I did tell the colleagues, I explained the transition with the legal, the hormone and

the surgery ... and I had my boss, a woman, female boss, I told her, she laughed and said, my daughter is lesbian too (laugh), so that was nice communication.” Juno on the other hand has her own company, where she has the privilege to choose with whom she works and under which conditions. She told me: “I can’t really say if I don’t get contracts because I’m transgender or I don’t get contracts because they found somebody else they thought of, I can’t really ... I couldn’t connect. It can be simply about somebody who’s more fitting, I don’t know. I can’t have new evidence. Up to now, I get enough work, it’s improving you know? So people like working with me, touch wood. So I have, I personally have found no discrimination. And I’ve got friends, a good friend of mine, she is a engineer and still works in her profession so, and very successfully too ... I know a number of people who have no problems working in private industry.”

When I interviewed Persson, regarding employment as a transgender person, he mentioned that it mostly depends on the boss. If a person, who is transgender or wants to transition while working, has a good relationship with their superior who understands, respects and supports their decision to do so, it is highly likely that there won’t be many problems. He also mentioned that things have changed for the better, in all aspects of the status of a transgender person. According to Honneth, esteem as one of the three elements of recognition, reflects in the competition for professional status from which individuals learn to understand themselves as subjects possessing abilities and talents that are valuable to society. One can conclude that, by the testimonies of the informants interviewed, transgender people have a chance of becoming valuable and praised members of society.

4.3.3 Politics

As described previously the trans community in Austria has a history of self-organisation. The community is organised and run by a group of trans people, trying to make a difference in public perception and treatment of transgender individuals. The meetings of TransX I observed served to demonstrate the profile and the dynamics of one such group. When asked individually, some trans people I interviewed expressed their reluctance to joining such communities. For instance, Venus told me: “I tried to but it got to politicised ... this entire idea of let’s make up X genders and pretend

we switch gender on daily basis, combined with we have to constantly bash men for everything, just took over the entire trans community so, I ran away basically”. Or, Pales stated: “Just from what I’ve seen and what I’ve heard in the community, the communication between trans men and women is, in a way, sometimes a bit problematic. Which probably also, it depends on the people. Just because we’re all trans doesn’t mean we all have to get along and that we have the same interests and we have to, that every other person that is trans, but...the thing is that in my experience trans women are more active in the community. And whenever there are like, gatherings or like, events, or support group ... if you have a support group, it’s very quickly taken over by the women. And they’re like twenty women and two men or something and then, of course, the topics that are discussed are concentrated on that. How to wear make-up and stuff and then the trans guys are not going anymore because they’re underrepresented and the topics are more on the female side.” One could argue that certain topics are more important than others. For example, the themed events organised by TransX gathered all interested to engage in a range of topics, but more often they are female topics. On one occasion I attended an evening on dangers women face and how to defend themselves. One could argue that such evenings are not necessary for men, but trans men do indeed encounter violence.

Trans people that I interviewed, through the course of my research, seem to have a unified opinion on the amount of attention transgender community needs in the political mainstream. For example, Pomona said: “I think the state has more important problems, I am satisfied if we, the trans people are free to do this what we want to do.” Or Venus: “It pays as much attention as any other two percent minority, which might not be much it’s a two percent minority, it’s like ten thousand people ... umm, roughly ... my point is we don’t see politicians talk about a small little town in Steier, so why should we see them talk about specific trans issues. The population is roughly the same ... The point of transitioning for every trans person I know, is to pass and ... to fully pass as a member of gender they identify as. So, putting focus on that group in my eyes is, not beneficial in the slightest.” For the already mentioned reasons of transitioning and what might come with it, this minority is likelier to need medical assistance than any other. Therefore it needs certain public attention in order to make the optimal programme that would recognise and respect transgender needs. One could argue that one way to do it is through political action that would have to start advocating trans issues. None of the informants, however seems to wish for more public attention which might be the result of the hiding characteristic of the community.

When asked if their transgender identity influences their voting choices, Pales told me: “There are certain parties that openly are pro LGBT and I would never vote a party that is against LGBT ... so, I would say that it’s my personal main reason to vote for certain parties.” On the other hand Venus had a different point of view: “I vote, but I try not to let influence me. Best example would be ... every single trans person I know was for Hilary during the US election, while I was completely for Donald Trump. Simply because he also supports LGBT people and does more ... a lot of trans people I know just have this tunnel vision I have to vote left because I’m trans, so I just try to avoid that as much as possible and look at what best aligns with my views, regardless of trans ... if it happens to be beneficial that’s just a nice byproduct.”

After going through a rather invasive procedure of transitioning from one sex and gender into another (or something in between), and possibly experiencing depression and anxiety alongside a variety of vulnerable social situations, transgender individuals are then expected to *start* with their own life. As Persson remarked: “People are celebrating birth of little children but they don’t celebrate trans people transitioning. So, you know it’s so simple, but.. If we could change this value, if we could change the value that’s it’s the same, that it’s seen as same, that would be recognition for example.”

Gaining respect and building self esteem in one’s community can be hard enough, especially if one is changing genders. From the testimonies presented above, one can conclude that trans people are regarded as equal peers in certain contexts in Austria. According to the informants interviewed within this research, none of them stated they felt less worthy than their cis peers. They continue to work and are allowed and expected to participate in the political process of the state.

To summarise all above argued one should consider the answers to the sub-research questions. According to Honneth’s and Fraser’s theoretical presumptions about recognition following sub-questions have been posed:

- How can the awareness of the existence of the transgender community help their status in the Austrian society?
- What can the state organised process of transitioning and legal change of gender say about recognition of the trans community in Austria?

- How can treating transgender individuals as equal peers in competition for social esteem help the community's status in Austria?

From the informants interviewed and events observed throughout the research one could conclude that the transgender community in Austria is indeed recognised within the society and the legal framework. Certain resources are being distributed to the individuals, through health care and the social system so that transgender persons can have an opportunity to live in the chosen gender. The development of the Austrian legal framework that defines and handles issues of this community has shown significant improvement over time. Forced sterilisation, divorce, real-life test and major medical procedures are no longer required for the legal change of gender in one's documents. Transitioning processes are funded by the state and provide certain options for people starting their journey into their true self.

On the other hand, one can conclude that there is still transphobia present in the society, in ways individuals are not aware of. The stereotyping and the gender roles that are a result of a comprehensive social construct that is still quite dominant in Austria, still hinder transgender people in some ways. For example, some of them find the use of the wrong pronoun offensive, while others find the binary toilets discriminatory.

In addition, it is clear that the legal framework shaping the state-funded transitioning process is not up to date. There is only a limited number of physicians specialising in female-to-male and male-to-female transition, as well as insubstantial number of psychologists and psychiatrists competent to help people who are taking on gender change. Advanced types of hormone therapy alongside progressive surgical techniques are needed to make transitioning a less painful and traumatic experience.

Finally, the transgender community is deemed to self-organisation. The oldest and most powerful organisations are nothing but a group of trans people gathering and organising actions to change systemic negligence of transgender issues. Apart from a few organisations, transgender individuals seem to be on their own, even expressing reluctance to join clubs or political parties because they feel trans issues are portrayed wrongly. Similarly, under the surface of the social mainstream, a variety of queer and trans events take place, but they are not visible to the mass audience. When

only already involved with the community, one can get to know about the cultural, educational and art programme in the large cities of Austria.

From the answers to sub-research questions I move on to the main debate which is: How do transition and redistribution contribute to the status of the transgender community in Austria? It should be clear that the two grant human rights and just distribution of resources to the minority in question. The efforts of the state to legally organise and fund transitions and gender-changes alongside public space for presenting and discussing the development of the project shows the importance of recognition and redistribution to the transgender community.

Even though there is still a bulk of issues that need to be discussed publicly and changed in the political and social system of Austria, trans informants have stated they are satisfied with their life in this country, especially if they compare it to other states. The change of how transgender individuals are perceived by the public is constantly changing for the better, which this research can testify to. In the following I conclude the project with the answer to my research question and further perspectives for research.

5. Conclusion

Choosing gender is not optional, one is born with it. Most cisgender people, asked when they knew they were male or female, have no recollection of when they realised it. For a cisgender woman, being female is a part of her identity she doesn't doubt, nor want to change. Social construct that shapes the concept of gender identity can be traced, and changed, to some extent, but the inner agreement within one's gender remains intact. I, as such a cisgender woman, cannot clearly distinguish my gender identity, it is just something that is home to me. Transgender people, on the other hand, do not share the same experiences. Growing up, they question sex, gender and the according social construct. They learn to live the reality they were born into because it is often difficult to confront the society that does not approve of it. Pales gave me an example from the kindergarten where he works: "I felt like it when I was 3. It's just the way I felt you know? And if you go to a nursery and you look at a girl who has short hair but feels like a girl and you mistake

her for a boy, she's probably going to correct you because she knows her gender identity already. And that's the same way transgender kids feel.”

Seeking the path to self-realisation, one yearns the recognition from their family, friends and fellow citizens. Every trans- and cisgender person needs love as an affirmation of their value in the community they live in. Then they need the status that confirms them as members of society and legally protects them and their work. And finally, they need the opportunity to fight for social acclaim, proving to themselves and the others that they are valuable and deserving of respect. I argue that Honneth's proposal of recognition as love, law and esteem can be interpreted as a valuable explanation for patterns of social behaviour. Fulfilling these three elements, one finds reassurance in one's merit and stimulation for further progress.

The thesis guides the reader through the three elements in the case of transgender people in Austria. Feedback from the family and friends, their acceptance, going to school or finding a job, voting and opinions on popular culture are chosen as relevant topics that illuminate the workings of love, law and esteem. The three concepts based on which the research has been conducted, present a comprehensive insight into lives of trans people in Austria and the advantages and problems they face in their lives.

In order to better place Honneth's theoretical framework into the social setting and examine his proposal, Nancy Fraser's opinion has been considered. She claims that redistribution is as valuable as recognition, and that without it, one cannot hope to get equal treatment and chances in a society. The concept of redistribution is tackled in the conversations with informants through state funding, medical insurance and legal system that are supposed to protect and provide every citizen with basic equal prerequisites to start their lives. I find this concept particularly valuable when taken in consideration with Honnet's three elements, because it offers a tangible way of evaluating if the system indeed works. Considering just redistribution within citizens of different minorities is, in my opinion, a good way of putting the theory to the test. By examining the Austrian health and legal system, I was able to investigate how the state protects and helps the transgender community in the country. Finding out that a trans person has right to a transition process organised by the Austrian health system, funded by the state, testifies to the recognition of transgender minority in the country. Even though it should be improved in many respects, it serves a reminder that it exists and changes through time.

The struggle to pass to a gender one identifies with is always seen in a social context. One is going through an emotional personal drama, while explaining it and fighting for the respect from one's community or family, friends and professional partners. Trans people need to figure out how to conform to the social construct of the gender they are passing into and find their new identity. The riddle of gender, as a biological characteristic wrapped inside a social construct is an interesting concept to ponder and transgender people are maybe the ones to lead us to finding more about it. Since they need to find a functioning pattern of conforming to different genders, they can answer many of the questions regarding the relationship between the biological and the social.

The six informants I interviewed, the six protagonists of the documentary movie as well as the five events I observed illuminate this subject in Austria. The colourful rainbow of different genders, ages, professions and nationalities all helped shed light on the status of the community in this country. These people opened up and shared intimate experiences and their life stories of transition and life after it. Their testimonies in form of transcripts and protocol sheets have been collected and organised according to the topics discussed. Their narratives have been analysed and presented to answer the following question: How do recognition and redistribution contribute to the status of the transgender community in Austria?

To answer simply, recognition and redistribution are of great help in the improvement of the status of the transgender minority. They contribute to the awareness of the existence, the needs transgender individuals seek, and the just distribution of resources to cater to them. Self-realisation through intimate relationships, legally appointed rights and competition for professional status accompanied with just redistribution and participation, creates an environment in the society for the individuals of the minority to live full and content lives.

The transgender community in Austria is recognised and certain resources have been distributed to improve the transitioning processes and life after it. Informants have stated satisfactory conditions and almost no hindering in pursuing happiness and self-realisation. This does not, however, mean that there are not any problems. Proper use of pronouns, toilets and more visibility of the community are issues that still need to be solved. Additionally, the medical system should invest in specialisation of staff that helps people through their transition. Better training and connection between psychiatrists, psychologists and physicians performing medical procedures, is needed for

trans people to feel safe during their transition.

Issues aside, each informant from the research is happy with their transition and life in Austria. For example, Nick said: “I was lucky actually because, yeah because that kind of story it made me the person who I am and I like the person that I am today, not all of it, but of course, but it gave me a certain lens to look at the world and yeah, I’m very happy with that lens. It also has a lot of ... I would never say it’s a tragic story or something, it’s like for some people or, a lot of people even, it’s hard and you’re born into a fight in a way, but I wouldn’t change it for anything, again I’m very privileged and I’m very lucky”. Trans people in this research lead happy lives and value the change they went through, which they continue to share with their community. Learning to accept and appreciate their stories and use them for improving of their status is paramount to the progress of our society in general. The advances that are evident in our daily lives are results of struggles of past generations. In the developed countries of Europe today, it is considered normal for a woman to go to school, work, vote, etc. It is also considered normal to be homosexual and to be treated equal. Redefining transgender people as normal and valuable is the necessary next step.

The transgender community can serve as an example of how social constructs dominating modern-day states prevent certain groups of people from realising their lives and prospering. This minority is reshaping the way predominantly cisgender society views gender and roles constructed for it. By opening up subjects like this and having time for people to tell their stories, understanding and inclusion are exercised. Ultimately perfect conditions for trans people, or any other minority for that matter, cannot be achieved, but we can try to come as close to it as we can.

One of the difficulties in researching this minority is the lack of reliable information on the size of it. Statistical records showing how many registered transgender individuals there are in Austria is missing. This is due to the fact that most of them hide, delay or refuse transition. Depending on the community a trans individual lives in, they have more problems coming out. As mentioned earlier, some estimates have been made on the number of trans people in Austria, but they are not to be considered as definitive numbers. Also, topics covering transgender issues are not present in public sources. One needs to do a bit of a research to find out what organisations are there, when and how they meet. Topics that defy the binary gender system are not frequent, even though the situation is improving. As mentioned earlier, people interested in this topic can get informed, but they need to know where to look.

One of the latest advances was the public opening of the Transgender-Center (TGCI) in Innsbruck. An interdisciplinary team of experts gathered together at the Innsbruck University clinic is supposed to provide support and counseling to interested individuals. The news of the opening have been published in the daily newspaper *der Standard*. The centre has been working for two years and has finally been open for public in April 2017 (Aurora, 2017, n.p.). Such examples show that the situation is improving and that trans people in Austria have something to hope for.

Further perspectives on the research can be made in specific directions of the three sub-research questions. One can additionally investigate love, law and esteem within the transgender community across Austria. Detailed investigation of the evolution of legal framing of transgender people and their rights could shed light into the workings of the state of Austria and ways for further improvement. Also, had I had more time and resources, I would have been interested in furthering my research to rural parts of Austria, where I think the situation is a bit different.

I hope that the thesis can help the reader better understand the reality trans people live in Austria and the predicaments they are faced when trying to do so. Examining the evolution of such minority shows that there is hope and will to work on the problems and find solutions. Open dialogue about the transgender subject is already a start. The progress is a painstakingly long road that doesn't promise much, but the hope that we can continue means a lot. Trans people who are sharing their stories make us aware of the problems that need to be solved.

As Mark Twain said on hope: "It is like any other agriculture: if you hoe it and harrow it and water it enough, you can make three blades of it grow where none grew before. If you've got nothing to plant, the process is slow and difficult, but if you've got a seed of some kind or other – any kind will answer – you get along a good deal faster." (Twain and Sutton, 1968, p. 549)

6. Literature

- Aurora S., 2017, *Vom Mann zur Frau werden - oder umgekehrt*, der Standard, <http://derstandard.at/2000056315440/Transident-Vom-Mann-zur-Frau-werden-oder-umgekehrt> Accessed: 09.05.2017.
- Baumgartinger, 2017, *Trans Studies: Historische, begriffliche und aktivistische Aspekte*, Wien, Zaglossus
- Bassichis M., Lee A. and Spade D. (2016), *Building an Abolitionist Trans & Queer Movement with Everything We've Got* in Stanley, E.A. and Smith, N. (2016) *Captive genders: Trans embodiment and the prison industrial complex*.
- Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (2006), Official Journal of the European Union, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:204:0023:0036:en:PDF> Accessed: 06.05.2017.
- Diskursiv, Verein zur verqueerung gesellschaftlicher zusammenhänge, <https://diskursiv.diebin.at/index.php%3Fid=32.html> Accessed: 28.03.2017.
- EIGE, European Institute for Gender Equality, *Gender Mainstreaming: Concepts and definitions*, <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/concepts-and-definitions> Accessed: 26.03.2017.
- European Commission (2011), *Trans and intersex people: Discrimination on the grounds of sex, gender identity and gender expression*, European Commission Directorate-General for Justice, http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/trans_and_intersex_people_web3_en.pdf Accessed: 26.03.2017.
- Feinberg, L. (1997) *Transgender warriors: Making history from Joan of arc to Dennis Rodman*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Feinberg, L. (1999) *Trans liberation: Beyond pink or blue*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Flick, U. (ed) (2013) *The sage handbook of qualitative data analysis*. London, United Kingdom: SAGE Publications

- Flick, U. and Flick, P.U. (2014) *An introduction to qualitative research*. 4th ed. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.
- Fraser, N. (1996) *Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition, and Participation*. Stanford University: THE TANNER LECTURES ON HUMAN VALUES. <http://www.intelligenceispower.com/Important%20E-mails%20Sent%20attachments/Social%20Justice%20in%20the%20Age%20of%20Identity%20Politics.pdf> Accessed: 06.03.2017.
- Fraser, N. (2000) 'Rethinking Recognition', *New Left Review*, 3(May June 2000), pp. 107–120. Accessible at: <https://newleftreview.org/II/3/nancy-fraser-rethinking-recognition> Accessed: 19.12.2016.
- Fraser, N (2003a) *Distorted Beyond All Recognition: A Rejoinder to Axel Honneth*, pp.198–236 in Fraser, N., Honneth, A., Golb, J., Ingram, J. and Wilke, C. (2003) *Redistribution or recognition? A Politicalphilosophical exchange; Trans. By Joel Golb*. LONDON: Verso Books.
- Fraser, N b (2003) *Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition, and Participation*, pp. 1–109 in Fraser, N., Honneth, A., Golb, J., Ingram, J. and Wilke, C. (2003) *Redistribution or recognition? A Politicalphilosophical exchange; Trans. By Joel Golb*. LONDON: Verso Books.
- Frketic V. and Baumgartinger, P.P. (2008) *TransPersonen am österreichischen Arbeitsmarkt*. Wien: diskursiv, Verein zur Verqueerung gesellschaftlicher Zusammenhänge.
- Honneth A. a (2003) Redistribution as Recognition: A Response to Nancy Fraser, pp 110–197 in Fraser, N., Honneth, A., Golb, J., Ingram, J. and Wilke, C. (2003) *Redistribution or recognition? A Politicalphilosophical exchange; Trans. By Joel Golb*. LONDON: Verso Books.
- Honneth A. b (2003) The Point of Recognition: A Rejoinder to the Rejoinder pp. 237–268 in Fraser, N., Honneth, A., Golb, J., Ingram, J. and Wilke, C. (2003) *Redistribution or recognition? A Politicalphilosophical exchange; Trans. By Joel Golb*. LONDON: Verso Books.
- ICD-10 (2016) Classification of Mental and Behavioural Disorders, <http://apps.who.int/classifications/icd10/browse/2016/en#/F60-F69> Accessed: 28.03.2017.
- Irving D. (2013) *Normalised Transgressions: Legitimising the Transsexual Body as Productive* in Stryker, S. and Aizura, A.Z. (2013) *The Transgender studies reader 2, band 2*. Routledge.

- Juang R. (2006) *Transgendering the politics of recognition* in Stryker, S. and Whittle, S. (2006) *The Transgender studies reader*. Taylor & Francis.
- Kobath P.A. (2007) "Ein kleines Körperteilchen bestimmt noch nicht die Geschlechtlichkeit" in CliniCum, Das Magazin für die Führungskräfte im Krankenhaus, <http://eva.transgender.at/Loc/CliniCum.htm> Accessed: 04.04.2017.
- Morland I. (2009) *Chapter 2: Why Five Sexes Are Not Enough*, in O'Rourke, M. and Giffney, N. (2009) *The Ashgate research companion to queer theory (queer interventions)*. Routledge.
- O'Brien M. (2013) *Tracing This Body: Transsexuality, Pharmaceuticals & Capitalism* in Stryker, S. and Aizura, A.Z. (2013) *The Transgender studies reader 2, band 2*. Routledge.
- Rechtsinformationssystem, 1996, *10Obs2303/96s*, http://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/Justiz/JJR_19960912_OGH0002_010OBS02303_96S0000_002/JJR_19960912_OGH0002_010OBS02303_96S0000_002.pdf Accessed: 28.03.2017.
- Rudacille, D. (2007) *The riddle of gender: Science, activism, and transgender rights*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Ryle, R. (2014) *Questioning gender: A sociological exploration*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE/Pine Forge Press.
- The Yogyakarta Principles (2006) http://www.yogyakartaprinciples.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/principles_en.pdf Accessed 15.03.2017.
- Thema transgender, Information und Beratung zum Thema Transsexualität, wien.at n.y. n. p. <https://www.wien.gv.at/sozialinfo/content/de/10/SearchResults.do?keyword=Transgender> Accessed 08.05.2017.
- TransX a n.y. n.p. Hormone, <http://www.transx.at/Pub/Hormone.php> Accessed 08.05.2017.
- TransX b n.y. n.p. Medizinisches, <http://www.transx.at/Pub/Medizinisches.php> Accessed 08.05.2017.
- TransX c n.y. n.p. News Archiv, http://www.transx.at/Pub/TransX_NewsArchiv.php Accessed 08.05.2017.

- TransX d, n.y. n.p. Psychotherapie, <http://www.transx.at/Pub/Psychotherapie.php> Accessed 08.05.2017.
- TransX e, n.y. n.p. Rechtliches, <http://www.transx.at/Pub/Recht.php> Accessed 08.05.2017.
- Towle E.B. and Morgan L.M. (2006) *Romancing the transgender native : rethinking the use of the “third gender” concept* in Stryker, S. and Whittle, S. (2006) *The Transgender studies reader*. Taylor & Francis.
- Twain, M. and Sutton J. (1968) *Mark Twain’s “Which Was The Dream?” And Other Symbolic Writings Of The Later Years*. 1st ed. University of California Press
- Wilchins, R.A. (2004) *Queer theory, gender theory: An instant Primer*. Alyson Books.

7. Appendixes

7.1 List of interviews

Name of the informant	Date of the interview	Place of the interview	Is the interview recorded?	Is the interview held in person?	Duration of the interview
Nick	04.10.2016.	Top Kino Bar	Yes	Yes	00:57:43
Pomona	07.11.2016.	TransX	Yes	Yes	00:23:22
Juno	11.11.2016.	Cafe Drechsler	Yes	Yes	01:05:58
Pales	13.11.2016.	Cafe Drechsler	Yes	Yes	00:47:53
Persson	19.11.2016.	Researchers home	Yes	No, via Skype	01:17:17
Venus	27.11.2016.	Cafe Drechsler	Yes	Yes	00:44:48

7.2 Questionnaire

Hello, so happy you could find time to help me out with my research. Thank you! I would like to ask you some basic questions about yourself, regarding your gender expression and the present socio-political state of Austria.

I need to let you know that the information you give me will be used only for the purposes of writing my Master Thesis where your identity will be protected. Also, you don't need to answer any question you don't feel like answering.

What is your name?

Let's start with questions about identity:

1. How would you define yourself?
2. How it is to live in Austria as a transgendered person? Have you any experience living in other countries, from which you can draw parallels?
3. How supportive would you say your environment (family, friends, colleagues, coworkers) is of your gender expression?
4. Do cis people in Austria recognise and respect your identity? Does the state of Austria respect it?
5. Did you find the process of changing your legal documents in Austria well organised? Could you tell me about your experience of changing your documents?
6. How would you describe the need to be recognised and respected as a transgender person? What is recognition to you and what are key aspects?
7. How important is proper labelling in your opinion?
8. Have you ever been discriminated by the Austrian social or political system based on being a trans person and if yes, would you be willing to explain how, when and by whom?
9. Do you consider gender (and sex?) to be a social construct? Can you elaborate?

Now, the medical/health system questions:

10. Would you say that the medical procedure of “treatment” of transgender people is well conceived, organised and conducted in Austria? Which part in your opinion would need improvement or change?
11. What was the procedure you had to go through to legally transition? And tell me how you feel about it. When did it start? What steps did you have to take? How did you find the necessary information and care?
12. The process of obtaining state funded hormone therapy and surgery is a lengthy and costly process that deems transgender people with “Störung der geschlechtlichen Identität”. What are your thoughts on that?
13. *Michelle O’Brien writes about the exclusion of trans people from the medical discourse all together, with no mention of trans people in descriptions of hormone medication. Similar situation in Austria? How do you feel about that?*

Now, onto the questions about education and employment:

12. Did you come across any obstacles choosing an education or employment based on you being transgender?
 14. Would you say your school/employer(s) have been supportive of your gender identity?
 15. Have you ever been discriminated at work? (verbally, by mobbing, outed, felt uncomfortable with the choice of toilets)
 16. Do you feel you needed to work harder than your other “normal” peers in order to gain respect or prove that it id doesn’t matter that you’re trans? *When I read articles in the Transgender reader from Michelle O’Brien, Susan Stryker, Dan Irving and so on, I came across interviews of trans people feeling the need to work and earn their transition and maintain above-average performance in order to prove their are worthy of their job. Does this sound familiar?*
- *Do you feel there is a connection between employment and transgender identity in Austria that needs to be further discussed? Do you think there is any kind of discrimination employment policy based on being transgender?*
 - *With the work that you do, do you expect to move, raise awareness or help people to learn something on the trans subject? Or do you do it for yourself?*
 - *Can you tell me something about your project?*

Onto the Political identity:

17. Do you vote and if you do, is it connected to you being transgender?
18. Do you feel that the mainstream political system in Austria pays enough attention to the trans community? What can be done better?
19. I read that the SPÖ Frauen have organised something for the International Transgender day of Visibility on Mach 31st and also the SoHo (LGBTI-Organisation der SPÖ) advocates tolerance and acceptance. Do such actions resonate to you? Do you get involved in any way?
20. Do you think there is enough coverage on transgender topics? What transgender topics, in your opinion, should become a part of everyday social and political public discussion?

Now, the influence questions:

21. Do you follow other transgender (or queer) communities outside Austria? Which? If not, why?
22. Do you have a personal hero, activist, public personality or political party that inspires you and helps you through tough times?
23. Do you find any similarities with your life story and the public portrayal of transgendered people in the mainstream culture (mostly movies, tv series, music and such)? In other words, do you think that the portrait of transgendered persons in mainstream entertainment is realistic?

There are no more questions, but would you like to add something? Do you feel we missed some important aspect of the issue? If not, thank you a lot again, for helping me in my research. This has been very interesting and insightful!

7.3 Interview with the directors of FtWtF

Interview with Cordula Thym and Katharina Lampert obtained via e-mail on 15.11.16.

- *Where did your inspiration come to make the Female to WtF movie?*

15–10 years ago a lot of things started changing and shifting in the queer community in Vienna – there was a lot of discussions about for example opening up women only spaces for trans* people, also at the ladyfest that was happening a few times in the 2000s these discussions about being a

more inclusive space started. At the same time people in our closer circle of friends started transitioning and that also had impacts on our interpersonal relationships. The Rosa Lila Villa, a queer community house where Cordula lives also started a process of transforming from a mainly gay and lesbian house to a trans*inclusive house which manifested in renaming of the counselling centre and also putting Trans* on the facade.

We also watched a lot of documentaries about trans* people and often we were not very satisfied with their representations as suffering individuals who don't have very much agency. Also a lot of the films focus on the medical transition and end after the medical transition is achieved. We wanted to show strong and diverse stories beyond a pure medical transformation. So there was a lot of different incentives to do the film.

- *Were you acquainted with the transgender issues (did similar projects, had friends from the trans community) from before or was this your first time researching the subject?*

As mentioned above our knowledge of trans*related issues evolved with the changes happening in the queer community. And of course through making the film we came to a much deeper understanding of things that we had not thought about before especially that its not always a journey from A to B.

- *Why did you choose to define your research only to females who are transitioning?*

Because in our opinion at that time there was a lot less media representation of Trans*masculinity and also it was something really quite new in Vienna in terms of visibility. Trans*women in the scene had been visible for much longer.

- *What was the most challenging part in the process of defining the focus (the subject) of the documentary?*

The editing process was the most challenging time in terms of how to tell the stories of each person adequately.

- *How do you think your movie resonates with the audience?*

It very much depends on who watches the movie. Straight audiences are sometimes a bit overwhelmed and can't really imagine, even after watching the movie that for some people gender is very fluid. They also tend to perceive our protagonists as suffering very much from that circumstance. Which is a narrative that is very mainstream and apparently is so strong that it overshadows the, in our opinion quite uplifting narrative of our movie.

Audiences who are mostly queer react differently, they have more nuanced critique of the movie but also more appreciation for the positive and powerful stories that our protagonists are telling.

- *In a couple of interviews with trans men, your movie was mentioned as a significant influence (or a good portrayal of the trans community). How do you feel about this?*

That makes us very happy of course!

- *Now, that some time passed since the movie came out, what would you conclude, how it is to live as a trans person in Austria? Do you think anything changed since your movie came out?*

The movie was in the cinema only this spring, so actually not a lot of time has passed and the situation of trans*people has not changed since then. We hope to also show the movie in schools in the future, that might have a positive impact.

With the depiction of stories told by the six individuals, this documentary provides an insight into a special group of people and their life realities. Even though it didn't strive to define their identities or categorise them as same, it did leave an impression of unity within the queer community. The relevance of this project, as a source of data collection, for my research is immense. Testimony of the two directors presents a conceptual framework for the protagonist's stories and hopefully gives a feel of how it is to be transgender in Austria today.

This chapter encompassed methods of collecting data for this research. It includes expert interviews of two people, problem-centred interviews of four informants, participant observation of three events of a leading transgender organisation in Vienna, one film screening within an International Queer Minorities Film Festival, one demonstration on the International Women's Day, and one an Austrian documentary movie. The rest is presented with reasons why these methods were chosen and why the information that was gathered is relevant. In the following an ethical stand is taken, explaining where the researcher comes from, regarding the issue. Then, a contextual framework of the study is given, to aid the reader to understand the process that has occurred. Finally, the strategy organising and the analysis of the gathered data are presented.

Abstract

Identity politics has become a modern topic in current political discourses around the world. It revolves around one's recently found freedom, in modern democracies, to declare one's authentic characteristics and demand fair treatment by the state and the society. Gender identity, as one of the examples for identity politics, has become the focus of public debate. It is a person's deeply felt experience of gender, that encompasses a wide range of gender expressions (The Yogyakarta Principles, 2006, p. 8). One of them, and the focus of the thesis, is transgender identity, which seems to be an emerging subject, especially in popular culture, featured in music, film, television, fashion, blogging culture etc.

The aim of the thesis is to answer the research question: How do recognition and redistribution contribute to the status of the transgender community in Austria? Since the 1980s, this country has been building a legal framework to meet the needs of its transgender minority. As a theoretical base of my investigation I have chosen recognition and redistribution, and their contribution to the status of this minority. In the light of this emerging trend, the philosophical exchange between Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth revolves around accurately determining what recognition is and in which cases it is to be considered justified.

This research is a qualitative one, based on expert and problem-centred interviews, participant observation of group meetings and events in direct connection to transgender expression and issues in Austria, as well as one Austrian documentary movie on the subject. The wide palette of different genders, ages, professions and nationalities all helped shed light on the status of the community in this country. These people opened up and shared intimate experiences and their life stories of transition and life after it. Their testimonies in form of transcripts and protocol sheets have been collected and organised according to the topics discussed.

The transgender community can serve as an example of how social constructs dominating modern-day states prevent certain groups of people from realising their lives and prospering. This minority is reshaping the way predominantly cisgender society views gender and roles constructed for it. By opening up subjects like this and having time for people to tell their stories, understanding and inclusion are exercised.

Identitätspolitik wurde in politischen Diskursen weltweit zum Modethema. Die Diskussion behandelt die soeben gefundene Freiheit Einzelner, in modernen Demokratien die eigenen authentischen Charakteristika zu bestimmen und von Staat und Gesellschaft eine gerechte Umgangsweise einzufordern. Geschlechtsidentität, als eines der Beispiele für Identitätspolitik, wurde zum Fokus öffentlicher Debatten. Es ist das tief empfundene und innere persönliche Gefühl der Zugehörigkeit zu einem Geschlecht, welches die Bandbreite von Geschlechtsausdrücken umfasst (vgl. Hirschfeld-Eddy-Stiftung (2008), *Die Yogyakarta-Prinzipien*, Schriftenreihe der Hirschfeld-Eddy-Stiftung (1), S. 13) Eine dieser Identitäten, welche als Schwerpunkt dieser Arbeit ausgewählt wurde, ist die Transgender Identität. Hierbei handelt es sich um ein besonders in der Populärkultur (Musik, Film, Fernsehen, Fashion, Blogs etc.) aufstrebendes Thema.

Ziel dieser Arbeit ist die Beantwortung der Forschungsfrage: Wie tragen Anerkennung und Umverteilung zum Status der Transgender Gemeinschaft in Österreich bei? Seit den 1980er Jahren schafft dieses Land einen Gesetzesrahmen, welcher die Bedürfnisse der Transgender Minderheit erfüllen soll. Als theoretische Grundlage meiner Arbeit wählte ich Anerkennung und Umverteilung und deren Beitrag zum Status der Minderheit. Im Lichte dieses aufstrebenden Trends befasst sich der philosophische Austausch zwischen Nancy Fraser und Axel Honneth um die akkurate Bestimmung, was Anerkennung tatsächlich ist und in welchen Fällen sie gerechtfertigt ist.

Die mittels qualitativer Forschungsmethoden durchgeführte Recherche stützt sich auf Experten- und problemorientierte Interviews, die Beobachtung der TeilnehmerInnen von Gruppentreffen und Veranstaltungen, die im direkten Zusammenhang zu Transgender Themen in Österreich stehen, sowie einen österreichischen Dokumentarfilm zu diesem Thema. Die breite Palette an verschiedenen Geschlechtern, Altersgruppen, Berufen und Nationalitäten half dabei, Aufschluss über den Status der Gemeinschaft in diesem Land zu bekommen. Die Personen öffneten sich und teilten intime Erfahrungen sowie Lebensgeschichten über den Wandel und das Leben danach. Deren Erfahrungsberichte in Form von Transkripten und Protokollen wurden gesammelt und dem diskutierten Thema entsprechend sortiert.

Die Transgender Gemeinschaft kann als Beispiel dafür dienen, wie das Dominieren des alltäglichen Lebens aufgrund sozialer Konstrukte bestimmte Gruppen daran hindern kann, die eigene Selbstbestimmtheit zu ergreifen und persönlich aufzublühen. Diese Minderheit verändert die Sichtweise, die vor allem Cisgender Personen auf Geschlecht und konstruierte Geschlechterrollen

haben. Durch das Sichöffnen gegenüber solchen Themen und dem Widmen von Zeit wird Inklusion und Verständnis ausgeübt.