

# FACING GENDER

## Negotiating Transgender Identity in Offline and Online Settings

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<p>From the perspective of symbolic interactionism gender identities are negotiated in interaction. This study illustrates how transgender individuals negotiate on their gender identities in everyday interaction. The emergence of communication and interaction technologies and development of various online settings provide essential and unique contexts for these ongoing identity negotiations. This study focuses on how transgender individuals negotiate on gender identities in offline and online settings. As minority identities and online settings relate closely to regulating privacy, special attention is directed to the relation of identity negotiation and privacy.</p> <p>This study is based on semi-structured intensive interviews of ten Finnish self-identified transgenders. The interviewees self-identified as transfeminines, transmasculines and non-binary and their ages ranged from 26 to over 60 years. Interview data is analysed with constructivist grounded theory analysis.</p> <p>The findings highlight the importance of online settings for gender minorities as it provides necessary privacy, tools to control interaction and presentation of “authentic self”. The automated face-recognition, friend recommendation systems in online settings and fear of confrontation in offline settings complicated the efforts to control interaction and presentation of self. This resulted continuous balancing between strategies to protect and disclose in order to construct a desired identity. These findings portray the relation of safe environments, personal control and identity negotiation.</p> <p>The findings suggest that individual’s identity negotiations are bounded in situations and contexts. It was discovered that online and offline contexts set various and differing boundaries and possibilities for identity negotiations. Online and offline settings are interwoven entities where transgenders manoeuvre flexibly to express themselves while protecting their safety and privacy.</p>			
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<p>Symbolisen interaktionismin näkökulmasta sukupuoli-identiteetit rakentuvat neuvottelemalla vuorovaikutuksessa. Tässä tutkielmassa tarkastellaan kuinka transihmiset neuvottelevat sukupuoli-identiteetistään arjen vuorovaikutustilanteissa. Kommunikaatio- ja viestintä teknologiat ja erilaiset verkkopalvelut luovat ainutlaatuisia konteksteja jatkuville identiteettineuvotteluille. Tässä tutkielmassa keskitytään siihen, kuinka transihmiset neuvottelevat sukupuoli-identiteetistään online- ja offline- ympäristöissä. Erityistä huomiota kohdistetaan yksityisyyden suojeluun, sillä yksityisyyden oletetaan liittyvän olennaisesti vähemmistö identiteeteistä neuvottelemiseen kuin online- ympäristöjen luonteeseen.</p> <p>Tutkimus toteutettiin haastattelemalla kymmentä (N=10) 26-60-vuotiasta transihmistä semi-strukturoitua intensiivistä haastattelua hyödyntäen. Osallistujat identifioivat itsensä transfeminiineiksi, transmaskuliineiksi ja muunsukupuolisiksi sekä transvestiiteiksi. Haastatteluaineisto analysoitiin konstruktivistisen grounded theoryn analyysillä.</p> <p>Erytisesti online- ympäristöt osoittautuivat tärkeiksi sukupuolivähemmistöjen identiteettineuvotteluissa. Online- ympäristöt tarjoavat identiteetin rakentamisen edellyttämää yksityisyyttä, keinoja hallita vuorovaikutusta sekä mahdollisuuden ilmaista “aidoksi” koettua osaa minuudesta. Toisaalta online- ja offline- ympäristöjen asettamat rajoitteet, kuten automaatio ja konfrontaation pelko, johtivat tasapainotteluun yksityisyyden suojelun ja avoimuuden välillä. Tutkielman tulokset kuvaavat turvallisen ympäristön, henkilökohtaisen kontrollin ja identiteettineuvottelujen välistä suhdetta.</p> <p>Tutkimustulosten perusteella voidaan todeta, että identiteettineuvottelut ovat tilanne- ja kontekstisidonnaisia. Online- ja offline- kontekstit tarjoavat erilaiset puitteet ja mahdollisuudet identiteettineuvotteluille. Transihmiset hyödyntävät joustavasti erilaisia ympäristöjä ilmaistakseen itseään kuitenkin yksityisyydestään ja turvallisuudestaan huolehtien.</p>			
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Finnish national board of education composed a guide in 2015 to advance gender equality and equity in comprehensive schools. The guide provides practical examples for reducing gendering in everyday situations. It is recommended that teachers use names instead of referring to persons as girls or boys. (Opetushallitus, 2015.) The guide received widespread attention in the media (see for example Kouluissa ei pitäisi enää turhaan puhutella ihmisiä tyttöinä tai poikina, 18.10.2016). Especially the last example about using gendered language in schools resulted an intensive debate and discussion. This caused general worry and distress due to the assumption that genders are going to be denied and the ability to use the words boy and girl will be limited. The debate and discussion led to strong counter arguments emphasising that genders are not going to be banned. Yet, the true aim of advancing the gender equality and equity is not denying gender but to allow a person the right to be, who they want, without external constraints. (see for example Ei, sukupuoliä ei olla edelleenkään kieltämässä kouluissa, 18.10.2016.)

The discussion described above represents an ongoing negotiation processes on gender norms and identities. The example sheds light to the importance of gender in our society. Goffman (1977) noticed that gender is a profound and essential part of our society as social structures and social interactions are based on gender. Also, Verkuyten (2005) points out that especially gender identities are embedded in the structures of society making them more robust than other identities. Although gender is a profound and essential part of social structures the example of negotiation process described at the beginning of the chapter implies that conventional social structures on gender are changing. Giddens (1991) argues that in modern societies, where traditions lose hold, individuals are forced to negotiate on lifestyles that constitute self-identity and daily activities from diversity of choices. Butler (1990) describes that gender minorities challenge normative gender and gender categories resulting difficulties to distinguish “real” from “unreal”. Butler (1990) emphasises that “the real” can change.

Terms sex and gender are often used interchangeably, yet the terms refer to quite different aspects resulting an extensive discussion about the use of these terms (Deaux, 1993). The term sex is often used when referring to biologically based differences between males and females, while gender is used when referred to socially and culturally affected differences (Bussey, 2011). Gender identity represents individual's sense and understanding of person's own gender including expected role behaviors, attitudes, styles, and appearance (Bilodeau, 2005; Diamond, Pardo & Butterworth, 2011). And as Bilodeau (2005, p. 30) reminds, gender identity is individual's sense of being male or female, as well as being between or outside of traditional gender norms.

This study focuses on gender identity negotiations among transgender individuals. Transgenders who participated in this study, self-identified as transmasculine, transfeminine, non-binary and transvestites. According to Whittle (1998), transgenders are people who live or desire to live in a role and dress of that gender which is considered to be in opposition to their sex assigned at birth. Whittle's (1998) definition fits to terms transfeminine and transmasculine. Transvestite is a person who has occasional need to express the opposite sex for example by dressing up (Seta, 2016). According to Finnish human rights advocacy organization SETA, terms transgender and non-binary refer to gender identity that is not univocally male or female but something in between or out of that dichotomy. In Finnish, term transgender is close to the term non-binary but in English it is used when referring to all trans people. (Seta, 2016.) In this study transgender is used as an umbrella term referring to individuals whose gender identity or presentation either deviates conventional conceptions of male and female or mixes different characteristics of male and female role and identity (Diamond, Pardo & Butterworth, 2011).

As was stated at the beginning of the chapter, gender identities are tightly interwoven in social structures, resulting challenges for gender minorities. West and Fenstermaker (1995) argue that gender emerge from social situations, and to get accountability as an individual, one must act according to social conventions. Gender minorities may face stigmatization because of their different gender behaviours (Grossman & D'Augelli, 2006; Lombardi,

2009). Also, Gagné, Tewksbury and McGaughey (1997) found out that challenging gender norms and conventions resulted in stigmatization, ostracizing and mockery towards transgenders. Those who are in stigmatized positions, have to negotiate on their identities more clearly (Howard & Hollander, 1997). Austin (2016) describes that transgenders need to explain their identities, needs and experiences to others in order to be seen, valued, and understood as authentic individuals.

According to pioneering scholars in symbolic interactionism Blumer (1969) and Goffman (1967), social structures are created and maintained in everyday interaction. Meanings and interpretations are shared through interaction to define situations and act accordingly. From the perspective of symbolic interactionism, identities are not “given” but instead negotiated in interaction (Howard & Hollander, 1997). According to McCall and Simmons (1966), people are aiming at consensus on the identities and meanings of everyone present in the situation. These definitions of identities and situations emerge from the actions of people (Goffman, 1959).

Goffman (1967) and Blumer (1969) theorised on everyday interaction and face-to-face encounters. The emergence of information and communication technologies (ICT) has increased interaction in mediated fashion and affected people’s interaction and identity negotiation processes. There is an ongoing debate about the effects of offline and online settings and their relation among scholars.

Giddens (1991) considered the twofolded nature of mass media as connecting people and simultaneously disconnecting them from their immediate settings. Castells (2000) agree with Giddens (1991) when arguing that online interaction provides opportunities to connect with others and build coherent identities while reflecting the fragmented and dispersed nature of these identities and separation from close communities. Turkle (2011) manifests that diminished face-to-face interaction increases alienation. Furthermore, Mckenna and Bargh (1998) argue the opposite by stating that online world enables de-marginalization



especially for individuals with stigmatized identities. Essential distinction between offline and online world relate to privacy and regulation of personal boundaries.

Suler (2004) emphasises that people feel uninhibited in online and express themselves more openly in contrary to offline world. Barnes (2006) talks about “*privacy paradox*” referring to people’s tendency to express concern over privacy issues even though these concerns are not reflected in their behaviour. Although, as it will be argued later in this study, transgenders due to their minority position, are concerned about their privacy and these concerns are reflected in their behaviour. Also, Levitt and Ippolito (2014) describe that social media created a risk of becoming public for transgenders and highlighted the importance of safety in identity negotiations.

Altman (1975) emphasises that by regulating boundaries of privacy, people are indeed defining themselves. Based on Altman (1975), to negotiate and create shared understanding, people have to disclose or give access to self. Hegland and Nelson (2002) argue that marginalized groups can express intimate details of their lives anonymously in online world. Although online world enables anonymity and disclosure, automation challenges control over private information (Vihavainen et al., 2014). According to Altman (1975) and Petronio (2002), identity negotiation requires balancing between concealing and revealing personal information.

While online and offline worlds have essential distinctions, their relationship is not unambiguous. For example, Turkle (1995) claims that offline and online are parallel worlds with different experiences and on the other hand Castells (2000) describes realistic nature of virtual experience rooted in offline world. Many scholars agree with Castells’s (2000) view on relatedness of the two worlds. Nip (2004) argues that online spaces are related to their offline counterparts. Also, Wilson and Peterson (2002) remind that technologies, texts and media in online world are cultural products embedded in everyday life. Nguyen et al. (2006) state that embeddedness of online and offline worlds has resulted same problems to occur in both worlds.

This master's thesis is part of the Digital Face (DIFA) project. The aim of the project is to find out how people construct their "face" in digital environments. I approach this area of research by studying how gender minorities negotiate on gender identities in offline and online settings. The objective of this study is to explore identity negotiation as an interaction process in everyday lives of transgenders. The emphasis is on the effect of online and offline contexts on identity negotiation processes.

## **2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 The Perspective of Symbolic Interactionism**

From the perspective of symbolic interactionism most of the “*things*” in our world are created through interaction. As Herbert Blumer (1969, p. 8) describes: “*This importance lies in the fact that social interaction is a process that forms human conduct instead of being merely a means or a setting for the expression or release of human conduct.*”

Herbert Blumer (1969, p. 2) defines three premises of symbolic interactionism. In the first premise Blumer (1969, p. 2) describes that people act toward things based on the meanings the things have for them. Secondly the meanings people have of things arises from interaction people have with each other. Finally, meanings are modified through individual’s interpretation processes. (Blumer, 1969, p. 2.) Selves, situations and societies are constructed in dynamic relationship of actions and interpretations, implicating that actions affect interpretations and vice versa (Charmaz, 2014). McCall and Simmons (1966) argue that people live in a symbolic world where those whose interpretations are ratified and considered as truth, have the power.

### **2.2 The Concepts of Self and Identity in Symbolic Interactionism**

The concept of self in symbolic interactionism is based on the conceptualization of “I” and “me” from the work of pioneering scholar George Herbert Mead. The subjective self is “I” and objective self is referred to as “me”. The self is created when people are looking themselves from the perspective of others. (Maed, 1934.) The “I” is compared, appraised and evaluated in the light of objective self, “me” (McCall & Simmons, 1966).

From Goffman’s (1959) dramaturgical perspective, self is described as an actor who performs to others. Actor with personal features plays a role to the audience. According to McCall and Simmons (1966), the played role expresses personality of the actor. Self or “I”

can be considered as performer or actor and “me” as internalised audience of the performer. “*The character and role are social objects determined jointly through the interaction of performer and audience*”. (McCall & Simmons, 1966, p. 57-59, 86.)

McCall and Simmons (1966) created a concept of role-identity to refer to dramaturgical nature of self in social situations. Role-identity reflects twofolded nature of self, interactional and psychological or conventional and idiosyncratic (McCall & Simmons, 1966, p. 70). Role-identities are acquired in the socialization process. Individuals’ main effort is to maintain idealized conceptions of themselves and to legitimate role-identities. The consistency between imagined self and role performance verify self. (McCall & Simmons, 1966.)

Also, McCall and Simmons (1966) make a distinction between situational self and character. Situational self is the role-identities people enact to situation and character is part of self that is interactively negotiated and verified by all participants in that situation. Character can be considered as “*persona*” if it is repeatedly assigned to the individual (McCall & Simmons, 1966, p. 87). Foddy and Finighan (1980) conclude that self and identity are separate yet related conceptions. They argue that conception of self may influence person’s identity presentation and reactions to these presentations may influence the sense of self.

### **2.3 Socially Constructed Gender**

Howard and Hollander (1997) remind that conception of gender in symbolic interactionism resemble the social constructionist conception due to their shared theoretical origin.

Garfinkel (1967) states that gender is not “*natural*”, instead it is accomplished through everyday behaviour. Garfinkel’s (1967) classical study on “transsexual Agnes” revealed strategies women use to construct and maintain gender identity. This pioneering study shed

light on the twofolded nature of gender: how gender is created in interaction and how gender simultaneously structures the interaction.

West and Zimmerman (1987) state that people are “*doing gender*”. They debate that gender is produced in social situations therefore socially created structures and norms also control and maintain gender. Gender is described as a result of social doings, constituted through interaction. According to West and Zimmerman (1987), doing gender is unavoidable, as gender is intertwined in interactional and institutional processes. Consequently, behaviour is always considered to be either gender-appropriate or gender-inappropriate.

While West and Zimmerman (1987) theorise about doing gender, Goffman (1979) presents the concept of gender display. In line with Garfinkel (1967) and West and Zimmerman (1987), also Goffman (1979) considers that gender displays constitute the social hierarchy of gender. Especially features that distinguishes the possessor from others are noticed. Interaction situations enable expressions of gender and in the same time these expressions are producing the gender differences. (Goffman, 1977.)

Goffman (1979) emphasises the importance of social situation and expectations of others. He argues that when people display gender and adhere to traditional conventions they do it to show appreciation and regard for others. Also, West and Zimmerman (1987), consider that doing gender is essential if individual wants to be a member of society. According to Goffman (1979, p.1), displays are “*evidence of actor’s alignment in the situation*”. Goffman (1979) debates that displays tell more about social structures than the social situation itself.

Judith Butler (1990) states that people are performing gender. Butler (1990, p. 33) argues that gender is producing the identity it is supposed to be by stating: “*There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very “expressions” that are said to be its results*”. Butler (1990) criticise that people are perceiving socially constructed gender conceptions as “real” and “true”. Gender norms are

considered to distinguish real from false or unreal. Butler (1990) argues that the “reality of gender” is in crisis when people balance between gender categories, as it is difficult to distinguish the real from the unreal.

In some degree Goffman (1977) seems to agree with Butler (1990) that there is no gender identity or gender “reality”. Goffman (1977) argues that only evidence of gender is the conventional acts established in relationships. Gender display is a ritual that reflects social structures while structuring interaction and relationships.

#### **2.4 Identity Negotiation Offline**

*“Reality, then, in this distinctively human world, is not a hard, immutable thing but is fragile and adjudicated – a thing to be debated, compromised and legislated”*

*(McCall & Simmons, 1966, p. 42)*

McCall and Simmons (1966) emphasise that the study of symbolic interaction is about acts creating “selves”. People are aiming at consensus on the identities and meanings of everyone present in the situation. McCall and Simmons (1966) debate that “the basic thing” to be identified in any situation is the person itself. In interaction situations people have to identify themselves before they can proceed with their intentions. Definition of who the person is in a certain situation, constitutes the self and transforms self into a social object. According to Goffman (1959), people acquire information on others and provide information they possess in social situations. This establishes the grounds to define situations and understand the expectations of others.

Blumer (1969) emphasises language and communication processes in construction of meanings, but he also states that created meanings are closely tied to actions and practices. Goffman’s (1959) dramaturgical approach, which is partly based on symbolic interactionism, emphasises the importance of social situations and construction of meanings through action. The definitions of the situations arise from the actions people perform. The

definitions people make, affect the way they act and may also affect how others act (Charmaz, 2014). Goffman (1967) states that people try to present themselves in an acceptable way, therefore, the self should be coherent and appropriate for the situation. By presenting themselves, people offer clues to others how they want to be encountered. If the people or audience, as Goffman phrases, believe in the part one is playing, it is considered “real”. The expression one *gives*, match the one that is *given off*. (Goffman 1959.)

#### **2.4.1 Motives Behind Identity Negotiation**

McCall and Simmons (1966) theorise that legitimation of self include convincing others to get support for their role. According to Goffman (1967, p. 105-106), people try to project an acceptable self by influencing and controlling their situations, interactions and self-presentations to receive affirmation to their “*like claims*”. Acceptance is feedback that verifies selves (Swann & Bosson, 2010).

Identities are continuously in need of legitimation due to imperfect role-performances and unstable role-support. The main goal in identity negotiation is not simply in receiving acceptance and support from others, but living in accordance to person’s role-identity. Consequently, people want to be who they feel they truly are. (McCall & Simmons, 1966.)

Swann and Bosson (2010) argue that people engage in negotiation processes because of three motives: agency, communion and psychological coherence. To gain agency (autonomy and competence) people try to negotiate identities that are unique and distinguishes them from others. Then people need to belong and feel that they are interpersonally connected which makes them to negotiate on identities that reflect their similarity to other people. Psychological coherence refers to regularity, predictability and control over their self- views. People negotiate their identity by seeking identity consistent feedback and experiences.

### **2.4.2 Transgender Identity Negotiation**

As presented in introduction, gender is embedded tightly in social structures therefore gender minorities may face challenges when negotiating gender identity. West and Fenstermaker (1995) argue that gender emerges from social situations and enacting according to social conventions validate identities and enable achieving accountability. According to Gagné, Tewksbury and McGaughey (1997), challenging gender binary resulted stigmatization of transgenders, especially if their appearance was not convincing or did not resemble their biological sex. Grossman and D'augelli (2006) reported that most transgenders have experienced negative reactions to their gender atypical behaviour. Transgenders have also faced a lack of safe environments, poor access to physical health services, inadequate resources to address their mental health concerns, and absence of caregiving and support from their families and communities. Also, Lombardi (2009) discovered that transgenders faced transphobia. Especially person's who had transitioned early in their lives, were more likely to experience discrimination and had less resources to cope with.

Nuru (2014) argues that transgenders experience tensions when negotiating on their gender identity. It was discovered that discrepancy between an individual's self-view and self-presentation in interaction with others, may result that individuals are in the closet and enact their "nonconforming" gender behaviour in private. On the other hand, if others perceive transgender individual to be different than themselves identities may be negotiated by avoiding or passing. According to Nuru (2014), if there is an incongruity between individual's self-presentation and other's interpretation of individual's identity, transgenders may negotiate their identities by changing label or name.

Kaufman and Johnson (2004) emphasise the role of situation and interaction in identity negotiations and disclosures. According to their study, self-disclosure depended more on the situations than stigmatized individual's self-acceptance. They stressed the importance of positive appraisals to maintain a stigmatized identity. Kaufman and Johnson (2004) discovered that stigmatized individuals chose interaction with those who shared the same



stigma in order to get support. On the other hand, in environments with nonstigmatized individuals they tried to hide their stigma and “pass” as part of the dominant group. Also, Garfinkel (1967) argues that passing relates to the atmosphere of the society and structure of institutions. As Garfinkel (1967, p. 137) defined in his study of Agnes, passing is: *“the work of achieving and making secure her rights to live as a normal, natural female while having continually to provide for the possibility of detection and ruin carried on within socially structured conditions”*. Whittle (1998) argues that passing relate to offline world, where passing provides safety although it may restrict and can cause an inauthentic life.

One essential feature in transgender identity negotiation was found in the work of Austin (2016). It was discovered that while negotiating on transgender identity, people are obliged to explain their identities, needs and experiences to others. Even though explaining was considered painful and exhausting, it appeared to be necessary to be valued and considered as authentic self. The participants in her study experienced ongoing interpersonal, contextual, physical, financial, and emotional challenges to live authentically.

Also, Levitt and Ippolito’s (2014) examination of transgender identity development, revealed that identity formation is an ongoing process of balancing authenticity and necessity. Especially balancing the sense of authenticity with safety and social and material considerations was crucial to gender identity development. Their findings emphasise the tensions between a need to be respected and valued with a need to mitigate dangers of being out as transgender in different situations. Levitt and Ippolito (2014) discovered that at times people modify their gender presentation to secure their safety. The process of transitioning was found to make safe spaces difficult to find. Furthermore, Whittle (1998) found that many transgenders hide their transgender identity in offline world in order to avoid social sanctions.

In Pacey’s (2016) work it was discovered that youth gender minorities in non-metropolitan communities need prevention of isolation, social acceptance, emotional support and safety. It can be considered that online settings may be an answer to some of

the needs gender minorities have expressed in Pacey's (2016) study. Also, Whittle (1998) argues that offline world does not provide place for individuals to authenticate themselves as trans.

## **2.5 Identity Negotiation Online**

Kraut et al. (1998) concluded that Internet use is positively correlated with depression, loneliness, and stress. Turkle (2011) agrees with Kraut et al. (1998) by stating that diminished face-to-face interaction increases alienation. There is a growing evidence of the empowering nature of online world. Shaw and Gant (2002) invalidated Kraut et al.'s (1998) conclusions. They found out that Internet use decreased loneliness and depression while increasing social support and self-esteem. Furthermore, Ellison et al. (2006) discovered that using social network sites especially Facebook correlates with creating and maintaining all kinds of social capital.

Shapiro (2003) emphasises that Internet empowers people by uniting similar people together and by providing access to information. Online world provides tools and strategies for organizing that enable activists to be more productive and effective. McKenna and Bargh (1998) showed almost twenty years ago that online peer groups have "de-marginalization" effect for individuals. McKenna and Bargh (1998) concluded that in online world people can interact anonymously. Also, online world provides, especially for individuals with stigmatized identities, a place to belong and groups to identify to. Engaging in online groups increased people's self-acceptance and led to disclosure in offline world as well. McKenna and Bargh (1998) argue that participating in online group affects behaviour in offline groups and vice versa. Whereas Turkle (2011) is concerned about alienation that results from mediated interaction McKenna and Bargh (1998) argue that because of the anonymity, people are disclosing private information more quickly in online settings than in face-to-face interactions. Disclosing personal information might lead to more intimate relationships.

Also, Shaw and Gant (2002) emphasise the importance of anonymity in expressing and experimenting marginalized identities that are kept hidden in everyday life.

Mehra, Merkel and Bishop (2004) conclude that online world has positive effects on minorities. Findings of their study describe that online settings enable positive development of “queer identity”. Internet enables control over marginalized identities and provides opportunities to develop social networks.

### **2.5.1 Transgender Identity Negotiation**

Marciano (2014) discovered that online world provided preliminary, complementary and alternative spheres, where transgenders manoeuvred to negotiate their gender identities and to overcome challenges related to identity negotiation processes. Marciano (2014) describes that preliminary sphere provides opportunity to practice through virtual experiences before entering the offline world. Complementary sphere refers to online world as another social arena that completes offline world. By referring to alternative sphere Marciano (2014) emphasises that online world constitutes a parallel world with different experiences to users. Marciano’s (2014) findings suggest that transgenders could live a life in online world that was not possible in offline world. For example, some of the participants lived as opposite sex. Online world enabled experiences that was not available in offline world. Marciano (2014) agrees with McKenna and Bargh (1998) that online world has “de-marginalization” effect through alleviation of marginalization, especially for minority users. Marciano (2014) acknowledges that online world may limit transgenders agency. However, Marciano (2014) emphasises that online settings provide empowering experience to transgenders to fully express themselves and feel control over their identity. Online world is considered free from restrictions that exist in offline world for transgenders.

Also, Hegland and Nelson (2002) argue that all marginalized groups express themselves in online as it allows agency and support without the risk of been persecuted. Hegland and Nelson (2002) emphasise that individuals can express intimate details about their lives

while remaining anonymous. Gender identities can be established, even altered, since there is no concern over physical space. Hegland and Nelson (2002) state that passing is possible for everyone in online world. Also, keeping things in secret from others is easier when expressing oneself in online world. According to Hegland and Nelson (2002), online world provided cross-dressers necessary independence and own place to explore their identity. Whittle (1998) states that exploring virtual self enable awareness of inadequacies of the self in offline world. Also, Valkenburg, Schouten and Peter (2005) showed that online world has an important role in adolescents' identity exploration. Van Zoonen (2002) emphasises the absence of bodily limitations in online world, and it is possible to construct new gender identities or "genderless"<sup>1</sup> identities. Van Zoonen agrees with Turkle (1995) that online world provides a place where social categories does not have importance. Downing (2013) discovered that online world provides access to information on identities, peer and professional support and communication platforms. Downing (2013) argues based on his study that interaction in online settings is considered safe and anonymous.

Gray (2009) talks about the role of media and online world on LGBTQ identity construction. Gray (2009) emphasise that online world provides material and information for identity work and authentic identities are constructed through confirmation from online world. Lingel and Golub (2015) argue that there exists gap between ideologies of social media technologies and values of marginalized users. Studying on drag communities they found that many participants maintained separate Facebook accounts. Lingel and Golub (2015) concluded that many social media platforms limit online identity negotiation because of lack of fluidity and complexity of designs. Lingel et al. (2012) examined information practices of a punk-rock subculture. They argue that people's needs for secrecy should be taken in to account when designing applications. Lingel and boyd (2013) studied people from a community of extreme body modification. They discovered that hiding and keeping things in secret ensured safety for marginalized users. Despite challenges

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<sup>1</sup> The term "genderless" is used instead of conventional "asexual", as in this study the latter does not describe the meaning sufficiently.

technology and platforms may set in identity negotiations, Stern (2008) argues that people have more control in online world to decide what to reveal and omit.

### **2.5.2 Identity Negotiation and Privacy**

Foddy and Finighan (1980) conclude that individuals want to control access to themselves, as the information others have, influence identity that a person is possible to achieve. Foddy and Finighan (1980, p. 6) emphasise relational nature of privacy by defining privacy as *“the possession by an individual of control over information that would interfere with the acceptance of his claims for an identity within a specified role relationship.”* According to Foddy and Finighan (1980), privacy is necessary for maintaining identity and controlling interaction with others.

Also, Altman (1975) emphasises the importance of interpersonal boundary regulation in identity negotiation processes. Altman (1975) claims that most essential function of privacy is the definition of self. He emphasises that ongoing interactive boundary regulation is a source of self-knowledge. Altman (1975, p. 6) defines privacy as *“an interpersonal boundary process by which a person or a group regulates interaction with others”*. He refers to the control people have for selecting who has the access to the self. Privacy is a dialectic process of regulating social interaction by balancing between accessibility and inaccessibility.

Foddy and Finighan (1980) as well as Altman (1975) consider privacy as dynamic and depended on environmental factors, opportunities and circumstances. Foddy and Finighan (1980) indicated that concerns over control would increase along the technological development. They anticipated that with the use of “computer data banks”, information could be used in a way which individuals have no control over. Online settings relate closely to privacy management and safety concerns, providing a unique context to interact in. Several studies show that online world is considered safe and it provides anonymity. Although Levitt and Ippolito (2014) discovered firstly that social media created a risk for transgenders to be exposed, and secondly, seeking social support in online settings could be

dangerous. Levitt and Ippolito (2014) argued that identity negotiation is balancing between authenticity and safety.

Altman (1975 p. 50) considers that inability to regulate privacy makes people more vulnerable. He describes that the self without boundaries or control over access is “*nothing*”. To have an identity or self, negotiations on boundaries are unavoidable and most essential. Silverberg, Liikanen and Lampinen (2011) argue that automated sharing in social networking sites challenge and decrease individuals control over their selves. Especially people with stigmatized behaviors need the control for managing their identity segmentation and focused sharing (Farnham & Churchill, 2011). Farnham and Churchill (2011) found that people with multiple and even contradictory identities are concerned about technology, and that these concerns influenced their usage of social networks. They recommend tools for social network sites for private sharing to enable protection of individuals’ identity boundaries. Also, Vihavainen et al. (2014) emphasise the importance of control strategies for regulating automated disclosure in social network sites. Shaw and Gant (2002) remind that legislation to limit anonymity online has been presented and this may also challenge individual’s efforts to control their privacy.

Whereas Altman (1975) considers boundaries as the interface, Petronio (2002) describes boundaries to mark lines of ownership of information. Petronio (2002) emphasises that people manage their personal and collective boundaries that constitutes of co-owned private information. When disclosing private information to others they become “*co-owners*” of that information. People are often responsible of holding other people’s disclosures in confidence. The co-owners should agree on rules of what can be revealed and what should be concealed. Lampinen et al. (2011) state that people rely on unspoken reciprocal attentiveness in boundary regulation processes. Although challenges may appear due to impossibility to estimate how other’s might interpret disclosures. Petronio (2002) reminds that coordinating boundaries does not always go as planned. She refers to controversies over expectations on privacy as boundary turbulence.

## 2.6 Relation of Offline and Online Settings

Pinch (2010) concluded that Goffman's theories on face-to-face interaction are full of invisible technologies and mediated interaction. He states that *"no fundamental distinction can be drawn between online and off-line interaction; both are forms of performed, staged, and mediated interaction."* Many scholars agree with Pinch (2010) that interaction is similar in online and offline worlds even though they provide quite different and interrelated contexts for the interaction (McKenna and Bargh, 1998).

Turkle (1995) considers that offline and online settings are parallel worlds with different experiences. Castells (2000) emphasises that virtual experience is realistic and rooted in offline world. Many scholars have pointed out that offline and online worlds are related. Nip (2004) argues that online spaces are related to their offline counterparts. Wilson and Peterson (2002) remind that technologies, texts and media in online world are cultural products embedded in everyday life. Nguyen et al. (2006) state that embeddedness of online and offline world has resulted same problems to occur in both worlds.

Downing (2013) argues that offline and online realities form complex and multi-dimensional relationship in identity negotiation processes. In his study, it was discovered that boundaries between online and offline worlds were blurred and individuals move fluidly between these settings when negotiating on their identities. Also, Marciano (2014) addresses that transgenders are balancing fluently between offline and online worlds in order to negotiate on their gender identity and over come challenges that relate to these negotiation processes. Mehra, Merkel and Bishop (2004) highlight that Internet is not an isolated reality but an essential part of social realities of marginalized users.

### 3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

The objective of this master's thesis is to study gender identity negotiation of transgender individuals in offline and online settings. As presented in the previous chapter, from the perspective of symbolic interactionism gender identities are socially constructed and negotiated in interaction. Theoretical background showed that existence of identities is often sealed and verified intersubjectively. Online and offline settings provide different contexts for these negotiations. Especially, when negotiating on stigmatized and marginalised identities, online settings seem to provide tools to overcome challenges that individuals face in offline world. At the same time individuals are facing different and unique features of online world such as anonymity and privacy concerns that affect identity negotiations.

Furthermore, it is assumed that gender identity negotiations appear differently in online and offline settings. The aim of this study is to shed light on how gender identities are negotiated and how online and offline contexts affect on negotiation strategies transgenders use in order to construct and maintain a desired gender identity.

This master's thesis aims to answer to the following research question:

- ❖ *How transgender individuals negotiate on gender identities in offline and online settings?*

Special attention is directed to the possibilities online and offline settings provide for gender minorities to protect their privacy as a mean to construct gender identity. The second research question particularise the first research question as follows:

- ❖ *How negotiation strategies are employed to regulate privacy?*



## **4 METHODOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

### **4.1 Epistemological Background**

According to Alasuutari (2011), qualitative research can be divided into two epistemological perspectives, factual and cultural perspectives. Cultural perspective emphasises that research material is a sample of reality. On the other hand, factual perspective considers that research material is reflection of reality. When studying phenomena from factual perspective researcher is interested in common knowledge and arguments for “truth” or “reality”. From cultural perspective research material is a part or a version of the studied reality. (Alasuutari, 2011.)

The cultural perspective resembles social constructionism. In this study the theoretical background is based on symbolic interactionism and methodology is constructivist grounded theory. It should be acknowledged that these approaches have a lot in common with social constructionism. These approaches emphasise socially constructed nature of the reality. Although social constructionism and constructivism are very similar some ontological and epistemological distinctions can be pointed out.

From the perspective of constructivism people can derive meanings from objects and social interaction. From the perspective of constructionism deriving meanings directly from objects is not possible. The meanings arise only from interaction (Crotty, 1998; Kim, 2001.) Gergen (1999) defines that in constructivism individual mind constructs reality within a relationship to the external world. Gergen (1999) reminds that these mental processes are influenced by received conventions, history and interaction with others. According to Gergen (1999), in constructionism, the emphasis is on discourse through which self and world are articulated.

Talja, Tuominen and Savolainen (2005) makes a distinction between the epistemology of constructivism, social constructivism and constructionism. Whereas the first resembles the

definition of Gergen (1999) that individuals' creation of knowledge is influenced by the experience, observation, history and social relationships. Social constructivism emphasises that knowledge is created in mutual constitution of the individuals. The world is physically, socially and subjectively constructed. Finally, Talja et al. (2005) defines that in constructionism knowledge is created in ongoing conversations. In other words knowledge and identities are constructed in discourses.

Epistemologically this study is situated in cultural perspective because of its close relation to social constructionism. Especially, it is considered that individuals create meanings and interpretations of identities which are then affected by intersubjective negotiations. The focus is on individuals' interpretations that can be considered as samples or version of the studied reality. The negotiation of these interpretations is considered as actions to construct reality.

#### **4.2 The Grounded Theory Approach**

Grounded theory is originally created by Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss in their 1967 publication of *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. In that time, positivistic paradigm with objectiveness, deduction, hypothesis and quantifications was considered as the real scientific method. Glaser and Strauss (1967) made a statement for qualitative research by creating a systematic and logical qualitative research method that could generate theories. (Charmaz, 2014.) Glaser and Strauss (1967) argue that theories which are "grounded" in the data can be generalizable. They define that "*generating theory goes hand in hand with verifying it*" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 2). In grounded theory, conceptual categories are created from the data and then the data is used to demonstrate the concept. Features of grounded theory presented in the following list are adopted from Kathy Charmaz (2014, p. 7-8).

- ❖ Simultaneous data collection and analysis (iterative process)
- ❖ Analysis of actions and processes

- ❖ Codes and categories arise from the data and are not preconceived from hypotheses
- ❖ Phases of analysis include constant comparison
- ❖ Theory is developed during the whole process of data collection and analysis
- ❖ The importance of elaboration and memo writing
- ❖ Data sampling toward theory construction (theoretical sampling)
- ❖ Conducting the literature review after developing an independent analysis.

(Charmaz, 2014, p. 7-8)

Charmaz (2014) describes that Glaser and Strauss had contrasting epistemological backgrounds. Grounded theory's logic and systematic approach reflects Glaser's background in positivism at Columbia university. Whereas Strauss's background at pragmatic Chicago School reflects social and subjective meanings and emergent processes. According to Charmaz (2014), Strauss adopted Blumer's symbolic interactionism.

Later Glaser and Strauss developed grounded theory to different directions. Glaser remained consistent with empiricism and the data driven nature of categories. Strauss developed grounded theory with Juliet M. Corbin to the more theory verificative direction (Charmaz, 2014.) Recently grounded theory has been developed to more constructivist direction. For example, Adele. E. Clarke (2005) emphasises in her situational analysis the complexity of social situations. She argues that it is important to focus on the situations instead of only to the individual. Charmaz (2014) on the other hand emphasises the importance of individual's meaning making.

### **4.3 The Constructivist Grounded Theory Approach**

According to the developer of the constructivist grounded theory (CGT) Kathy Charmaz (2014), CGT accepts inductive, comparative, emergent and open-ended nature of the original grounded theory approach. As discussed in the chapter 2.1 symbolic interactionist perspective emphasises sharing meanings and interpretations through communication and action. Charmaz (2014) argues symbolic interactionism and grounded theory methods to fit,

complement and advance each other. Symbolic interactionism provides loose and flexible theoretical background for inductive and data driven qualitative study. The constructivist grounded theory approach accentuate that researchers collect and analyze data to construct theories that are “*grounded*” in the data.

Loose and flexible theoretical background enables the inductive nature of research. Furthermore, Charmaz (2014) describes research process to be iterative which means that data collection and analysis are done simultaneously. Researcher iteratively goes back and forth between the data and the analysis comparing through out the process. Charmaz (2014) emphasises that researcher is actively interacting and involved with the data and the analysis. Charmaz (2014) acknowledges that researcher’s preconceptions and prior theoretical and empirical knowledge influence the research process and interpretations.

Charmaz (2014) developed the approach in the 1980s and early 1990s out of the dissatisfaction to the prevalent social constructionist approaches. By naming the approach constructivist grounded theory Charmaz (2014) emphasises the subjectivity and researcher’s involvement in the construction and interpretation of the data. CGT does not agree with radical subjectivism instead subjectivity cannot be separated from the social world. Charmaz (2014) acknowledges that CGT approach resembles the prevalent form of social constructionism. Furthermore, she concludes that the CGT approach is also in a close relation to social constructivism.

If it is assumed that social reality is diverse and constructed, CGT acknowledges that also research is a construction instead of a discovery. Whereas Glaser and Strauss (1967) argue for discovering a theory Charmaz (2014) emphasises constructing a theory.

Researcher’s position, privileges, perspective and interactions affect research situations. Charmaz (2014) reminds that researcher should elaborate how preconceptions may shape the analysis and affect the facts that can be identified. Charmaz (2014) emphasises the subjectivity and the researcher’s involvement in the construction and interpretation of the

data. In this study codes emerge from the data however the analysis is considered as researcher's interpretation of the studied reality.

Grounded theory methods are based on the discovery or on the construction of theory. There are ambiguities relating to the definition of theory among grounded theory scholars. Charmaz (2014) makes a distinction between positivist and interpretive definitions of theory. Positivist theories explain and predict research findings where as interpretive theories interpret and give abstract understanding. Grounded theory combines elements of these two definitions of theory because the theory is based on empirical observations yet depends on researcher's construction of them. Charmaz (2014) emphasises that constructivists study how participants construct meanings and actions in specific situations.

The final phase of grounded theory analysis is theoretical coding. It is considered ambiguous because it challenges the principle of not applying prior knowledge or theories in to the data. Even though Glaser and Strauss (1967) argue that after the categories have emerged from the data similarities with the literature can be established. Charmaz (2014) argues that by theoretical coding forming coherent and comprehensible entity is possible. Based on these theoretical guidelines this study applies the principle of data drivenness when gathering data and in the initial analysis. When study proceeds to theoretical coding theoretical knowledge is used to explain and bring the codes together. Theories are not "applied" to the data but utilised to underline the focus of the codes.

The constructivist grounded theory approach is applied to this study because it provides guidelines as well as actual practices to conduct the whole research process from data gathering to theory construction. The CGT acknowledges the socially constructed nature of the world which for example the original grounded theory does not. The emphasis is to construct a theory grounded in the data instead of objectively discovering it. According to Alasuutari (2011), grounded theory research is often conducted from the factual perspective because of the underlying assumption that there is an objective "reality" that researcher's

are trying to discover. In this study the constructivist grounded theory is utilized because the epistemological background emphasises the existence of multiple realities.

The aim is to study how people create meanings and interpretations of gender identities and how these interpretations affect intersubjective negotiations. The approach was chosen because it provides guidance how to deepen the analysis instead of merely categorising and summarising the data. One reason to apply this approach, is that it helps to relate the codes together as a coherent entity. Many qualitative methods guide the categorisation and interpretation but not how these categories and interpretations fit together forming a coherent whole. Also, CGT acknowledges that researcher's prior history and interpretations affect the research process. The constructed theory is as well an interpretation of the researcher.

## **5 RESEARCH MATERIAL AND METHODS**

### **5.1 Data Collection Method**

The aim of this qualitative study is to explore meanings and interpretations transgenders give for a certain phenomenon. Data was collected applying semi-structured intensive interview to explore and understand participants' experiences, perspectives and meanings. The interview was conducted by avoiding confrontational style to enhance open and free conversation. The aim was to encourage, listen and learn. Semi-structured interview with open-ended questions was applied to guide the conversation. (Charmaz, 2014.)

Semi-structured interview provided looseness to raise questions out of the interview outline. Open-ended questions gave participants possibility to talk freely. In constructivist grounded theory based study the interview questions may change and develop along the research process as a distinction from standardised interviews where the same questions are presented for all the participants. (Charmaz, 2014.) In this study, research questions were modified after the first interviews. Charmaz (2014) reminds that an interview is also

contextual and negotiated. It was acknowledged that interviewees should have the opportunity to change the direction of the interview and have control over the situation. (Charmaz, 2014.)

The outline of the interview is presented in appendix 2. Nine of the ten interviews were conducted face-to-face. One of the interviews were conducted through a phonecall because of the geographical distance between the researcher and interviewee. The interviews lasted two and a half hours on average. Total eleven interviews were conducted but one of the interviews were withdrawn from the analysis because the participant did not represent the sample of the study.

## **5.2 Research Material**

The sample of the study consists of ten Finnish self-identified transgenders. Six of them identified themselves as transvestites or non-binary. Some interviewees used the term transvestite themselves however due to the negative connotation the term has, the term non-binary is used when referred to transvestite participants to make a distinction from transfeminines and transmasculines. Three of the participants were transfeminines and one identified as transmasculine. Participants ages ranged between 26 to a little bit over 60 years. Four of the participants were from Helsinki metropolitan area and six of the participants were from eastern, western and northern Finland.

First participants were recruited by sharing information on this study to researcher's friends, who shared the information to their friends mainly in social media. Research announcement was created and shared to friends and friends of friends. Some of the friends of friends shared the announcement to private groups in Facebook. Also, the research announcement was shared by the researcher to different public groups in Facebook and to chat forums that are aimed to gender and sexual minorities. The announcement was published for example at puuteri.org and at Seta's chat forum (keskustelu.seta.fi) and Dream Wear Club's chat forum. Recruiting in social media and chat forums was chosen

because it was the easiest way to reach out and contact people from a small minority. The mentioned chat forums were chosen because of their publicness and possibility to get access to share the announcement. Also, recruiting in online settings may reach out transgenders who live in secret.

Snowball sampling was used to recruit participants. All interviewees were asked if they knew someone researcher could interview and that could they pass on information of the study to their networks. Some of the interviewees shared the announcement to different private groups in Facebook after their interview. The research announcement is presented in appendix 1. Also, Transtukupiste at Helsinki and HUS gender identity research clinic was contacted. HUS clinic printed research announcements to their waiting room for their clients to see. The participants were contacted and communicated through e-mail, Facebook's messenger and text messages. Seven of the participants contacted the researcher through emails and three of the participant's were contacted by the researcher through Facebook's messenger.

The interviewees chose the place where the interviews were held. The interviews took place in various settings such as cafes and libraries. One interview took place in the interviewees home and two in an office at Aalto University. The data gathering started in July 2016 and ended in September 2016.

The interviews were recorded with Olympus voice recorder and backup versions with Iphone's recorder. Eight of the recordings were transcribed in to text by a private company Tutkimustie in Tampere. The recordings were loaded in to Tutkimustie's own secure server. Transcriptions were made literally without expletives. Meaningful feelings such as laughter and long pauses were transcribed. Two of the recordings were transcribed by the researcher herself. One of the recordings were transcribed because of early timing of the interview. The other were transcribed due to the poor quality of the interview that were recorded through a phonecall and technical problems that occurred in downloading. The recording had to be listened straight from the recorder. Data consists 322 pages of



transcribed text. The original recordings were deleted from the voice recorder and Iphone. The recordings and transcriptions were stored to external hard drive and flash drive.

Quotations in chapter 6 are translated in English by the researcher herself with a help of proficient English user MSc Riikka Lehti. Original Finnish quotations and their English translations are presented in appendix 3. Quotes were equally selected from all the interviewees and all personal information have been deleted from the quotes. To protect interviewees anonymity interviewees are coded with numbers instead of more detailed information. More detailed information could specify the interviewees since the group of transgenders in Finland are rather small.

### **5.3 Methods of Data Analysis**

In this study data was analysed with constructivist grounded theory analysis.

Data analysis and gathering of the data were done simultaneously meaning that data analysis started quickly after the first interviews were transcribed even though data gathering were not finished. Also, memos were written during the data gathering and analysis. Charmaz (2011) reminds that the difference with many other approaches is that codes are not preconceived and applied to the data. (Charmaz, 2011.) Glaser and Strauss (1967) emphasise that at first it is essential to ignore prior theories and literature to create categories that are definitely emerging from the data.

After the first interviews were transcribed the analysis were started with initial coding to produce categories and summaries. During initial coding segments of data were studied and labeled. Instead of using line-by-line coding the coded segment was the total comment that often included several sentences. Coding concentrated on actions and gerunds to find out what was happening in the data. (Charmaz, 2014.) The codes that recurred in various interviews were selected. The essential initial codes were for example make-up, creating virtual identity, double life, telling or not telling others, defining transidentity, passing and afraid of confrontation.

After the initial coding the analysis predecided to focus coding where large amount of data is sorted, integrated and organised by using the essential initial codes. Often recurred initial codes where then compared to the rest of the data. (Charmaz, 2014.)

Alasuutari (2011) argues that research that is based on grounded theory analysis starts from finding distinctions in the material. These distinctions form typologies that isn't necessarily the actual results of the study but a starting point for analysis and interpretations. After the initial codes were compared to the rest of the data and often recurred codes where united in to categories it was discovered that participants described many contrasting interpretations which resulted balancing between these inconsistencies. For example, they emphasised meanings of stereo- and prototypical gender features while defining themselves trans people. Same kind of ongoing balancing related to for example "coming out" and "being in the closet".

During the initial and focus coding, categories of protect and break emerged. It was interpreted that participant's were protecting themselves and social norms while they simultaneously tried to break these norms and be open about themselves. The inconsistencies and ambiguities that emerged from the data could be explained with this code "balancing between protecting and breaking". After the emergence of protect and break codes the whole data where compared and tested through these codes.

After the balancing between protecting and breaking categories codes emerged it was still unclear that what does this mean, why do people balance? The next phase in constructivist grounded theory analysis is often theoretical coding. In this phase, prior knowledge and theories are used to integrate the founded focus codes. In this study concepts and ideas from Altman's (1975) theory of boundary regulation and Petronio's (2002) communication privacy management theory were used to integrate the codes into a coherent "story".

#### **5.4 Ethical Considerations**

The interviews took place in different locations. The interviewees could choose the place which they felt comfortable and private. Special consideration was applied with interviewees who were not “out” yet. It was ensured that they could participate without exposing themselves by meeting them in places they felt safe and their privacy could be ensured.

The interviewees had been informed before participating on the theme of the study. It was stated in the research announcement. Each informant signed the form of informed consent before the interview. With one exception when one of the interviews were conducted through a phone call. The interviewee signed the form of informed consent afterwards and mailed it to the researcher. Furthermore, participants signed a form of consent about saving data to Finnish Social Science Data Archive (FSD). The consents are archived to a locker where only the members of the research team have access. The consents are preserved for the duration of the research project and interviewees are aware of that.

Interviewees were able to withdraw from the interview any time and after the interview interviewees had the possibility to withdraw their interview from the data and further analysis.

The interviews were personal and confidence between researcher and interviewee was very important. The researcher tried to build the confidence through openness and relaxed atmosphere. The interviews were conducted as sensitively as possible by using principles of intensive interviewing described in chapter 5.1 where data collection methods are discussed.

The constructivist grounded theory emphasises that research is also socially constructed which means that researcher’s values, preconceptions and interaction affects the situation and interviewees responses and interpretations. Most of the interviews were personal and

reminded more of a deep conversation than interview. Due to the nature of the interview and interaction style of the researcher the reciprocally constructed nature of the data should be acknowledged. (Charmaz, 2014.) The anonymity of interviewees was protected by coding the data and deleting all the information that could specify informants. The data were archived properly and handled with care and respect. The data were stored in to external hard drive and flash drive.

## **6 FINDINGS**

In the following chapter, findings of this study are presented. Based on the theoretical background presented in the previous chapters, gender identity negotiations are considered as context specific. It is argued that identity negotiations are manifested differently in online settings compared to offline settings. The findings are categorised to strategies that protect and disclose. It is assumed that regulation of personal boundaries and privacy are related closely to the lives of transgenders due to the minority position. Furthermore, privacy regulation is an essential part of interaction in online settings. Strategies to protect relate to conforming to gender norms and concealing private information whereas strategies to disclose relate to opposing gender norms and revealing private information. One interviewee described the use of these different strategies as follows:

- 1) *"You have to have like balance between how much you challenge peoples' ideas and stereotypes, and how much you want to get away easily and benefit from that."*(I5)

The characteristics and differences of these negotiation strategies in offline and online settings are presented more broadly in the following chapters.

## 6.1 Identity Negotiation Strategies to Protect

### 6.1.1 Conforming to Expectations

The necessity to negotiate and balance related to the interviewees' experience about society's norms and atmosphere. They described that societies are "gendered" and due to the "gender binary" their gender identity is in a spotlight. As (I5) reflects:

- 2) *"The rest of the society is very strongly binary. If it was not, I do not know whether I had such strong gender identity."* (I5)

Majority of the interviewees described that when they were growing up "there was only girls and boys". They depicted that there is no overlap between binary gender categories which led many interviewees to conclude that they represent something inappropriate. Interviewees have faced expectations to act according to their assigned gender. Acting according to gender expectations felt appalling and strange.

The interviewees described situations where they have conformed to gender expectations in order to cope and protect themselves. An interviewee describes why to go along in the following quote:

- 3) *"It is also a kind of defence system that one has learned in life, that if it comes, it is better to go along the majority."* (I5)

Expectations of two genders created a need to belong to the existing gender categories. The interviewees referred to this as "**passing**". The phenomenon of passing caused ambivalent feelings among the interviewees. They felt that passing is important as it would make life easier. If to pass interviewees could live without explaining and justifying themselves. The ones who pass were considered lucky. One of the interviewees related passing to "normal life" as can be depicted in the following quote:

- 4) *"Somehow could live as normal life as possible or near normal or something like that..."* (I11)

The interviewees described that it is essential to get feedback and verification to their desired identity. Especially at the beginning, it is very important to get feedback on passing. As one of the interviewees states:

- 5) *"Because you want to be man but then one sees already from five meters that bullshit that one is not a bloke."* (I9)

At times, passing is considered important not only for people themselves but also for their close-knits. Closest family and friends can avoid unnecessary explaining to others when their spouse or friend passes.

Even though passing was considered to make life easier and worth pursuing for, interviewees were opposing the idea of passing. As one of the interviewees stated that she could never fully pass and it would be distressing to even pursue passing. Also (I11) describe the contrasting feelings on passing. Even though they<sup>2</sup> is pursuing to pass they considers that it does not matter if other people are looking because they is the only one who knows *"the truth"* about oneself.

Interviewees discussed that passing relate to *"real world"* and face-to-face encounters. As one of the interviewees concludes:

- 6) *"In the virtual world among those people, or with the people that I mostly communicate, it is not a relevant issue. I think it has to do more with situations in the real world"* (I6)

Also, (I6) described that it is important not to be *"an exclamation point"* in the street. Many interviewees emphasise the importance to pass as an authentic Finnish woman or a man. Passing in offline settings were considered challenging for gestures, body structure and

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<sup>2</sup> Gender-neutral pronoun is used when referred to non-binary interviewees

voice. These salient features might evoke confused feelings and contrasting interpretations among other people.

- 7) *"I know that with my body structure I wouldn't pass anyway, but it depends about the environment and how you face it."* (I4)

Also, passing were related to online settings. Some interviewees mentioned that photos should be as ordinary as possible to avoid confusion and being left out.

- 8) *"For example, when I am selecting a profile picture, I think not to choose the, you could say, the most provocative, although I do not necessarily mean to provoke. But somehow I select profile picture to be that kind of somehow normal picture or something."* (I5)

Interviewees emphasise that passing in online world is easier compared to offline world. Many interviewees mentioned occasions where they had passed, due to the interpretations based on their profile picture.

- 9) *"Lets say that it has happened that a person thinks she/he is contacting a woman, and you wonder that have she/he not managed to read something that is clearly spelled in the profile"* (I4)

All the interviewees highlighted the importance of **appearance**. They emphasised femininity through make-up, dresses, high heels, nail polish, hair styles or wigs. Masculinity were emphasised through beard, short hair and masculine clothes (jeans, T-shirts, suits, ties). One of the interviewees describe the importance of appearance in the following quote:

- 10) *"Because those are the obvious things that everyone can see, because you cannot see inside one's head. It is those that you can communicate, not much more."* (I1)

As the previous quote reflects feminine and masculine features are only way for transgenders to indicate their experience. With feminine and masculine features

transgenders can prove who they are and “*be themselves*”. Expressing oneself enabled feelings of freedom and empowerment. As one of the non-binary interviewees described that dressing up is very meaningful for them. “Over feminine” features boost experience and feelings of self. Sometimes transgenders are more feminine than “*natural women*.”

Feminine and masculine features are emphasised in online settings as well. Impression management is easier in online settings. In shared photos and posts, it is possible to emphasise relevant gender features and hide contrasting ones. These efforts are described in the following quotations:

11) *“At least I choose the sort of photos that definitely highlight my femininity. I choose a photo where nail polish or similar appears, instead of just taking a photo of the palm of my hand.”* (11)

12) *“Well, the only thing, when I comment in the Facebook, it is like hold on, is this a bit too womanish. I cannot put it like this [laughs].”* (19)

Feminine and masculine appearance can be considered rather contradictory. By emphasising these features, interviewees can “be themselves” although highlighting gender binary and gender typical appearance that they are ideologically opposing. However, one of the interviewees points out the importance of enjoying who one is, instead of considering what is politically correct thing to do.

13) *“Although in some other countries trans-women, meaning transgenders, fully enjoy femininity. It is a little bit the same as in the second wave of feminism, where you are not supposed to be too feminine not to give into some issue. And now in the third wave you can let all the flowers bloom.”* (17)

Some interviewees described that usually people are “gendering” others in everyday life rather quickly. Gendering led to **conforming** and acting according to the interpretation of others. The following quote enlighten gendering and conforming:



14) *"Then you notice that you are classified a female despite, and then I realise that in my behaviour I am a bit more careful in order to pass as a female also in the future."* (I10)

By conforming, interviewees are showing appreciation and politeness for others as it shows in the following quote:

15) *"Yea, of course other's opinions must always be considered no matter how much it is about self-expression."* (I2)

Occasionally, it is easy for transgenders to go along with the situation and present the self, others are expecting. The situations hold up the interaction and interviewees can conform to expectations by interacting according to "rituals" or "lines". For example, one of the interviewees describes that his co-workers cannot imagine him to be a woman sometimes. Despite the fact, he has long nails, shaped eyebrows and he is wearing women's clothes. People are expecting to interact with a man without recognising feminine features that indicate otherwise. People are making coherent stories by interpreting things in a gender typical way as the following quote depicts:

16) *"The fact that I had my ears pierced three years ago, got my nearest colleagues to comment. They were confused about it. And just at the same, the twins were born. Then someone came to ask if I had piercings in both ears because I had twins. [laughs]"* (I7)

One of the interviewees recognise the relationship of confidence and conforming. When feeling insecure it is more likely to "go along". Especially, in situations that include concerns over power. Conforming might be even mandatory with authorities. Many transfeminines and transmasculines participate in "the process" to legitimize their gender and to receive treatments. They need a statement from psychiatrist to change their name and social security number. One of the interviewees describes the anxiety relating to "the process" by stating that:

17) *"He/she has the power to give the diagnosis which allows you the treatments, the name and everything or not to give it, when everything that you feel that is your own humanity is taken away. It can be very devastating. And for many, the road has come to an end completely at that point."* (I3)

Power to legitimize gender may lead to conforming. For example, one of the interviewees explained that she wears make-up only when she is going to see doctor in transclinic. And as other interviewee describes that in speech therapy she learned which features are feminine and which masculine. Interviewees depict that it is typical for them to practice gender typical behaviour. One of the interviewees criticises "the process" by stating that:

18) *"I could partially blame our treatment process. Because there you are under a very close monitoring and you have to live a year or two under monitoring for the doctors to see if you are convincing enough to pass."* (I3)

Interviewees described that conforming to expectations is sometimes even mandatory due to "gendering" in offline settings. Online world provides more "genderless" setting compared to offline world. Interviewees experience that they can interact "gender freely" without facing gender expectations in online world.

19) *"And many websites and such like, are genderless. It does not come out from anything unless a person says it. So there no assumptions are made about it."* (I3)

### **6.1.2 Hiding and Avoiding**

Many of the non-binary interviewees have not come out in offline world. They describe being totally or partially in "*the closet*". Some interviewees expressed fear of confrontation. Interviewees were afraid that their close-knits would abandon and exclude them if to come out.

One interviewee describes the paranoia experienced while being in closet in the following quote:

20) *"I have been completely in the closet when over fifty. And a transvestite in the closet, who I was at that time, is the most paranoid person possible. I, for example, had moustache until I was 45, so that no-one would ask questions. It sounds mad, but in that context it feels totally logical to block any questions about why you shaved the moustache. That it would not cause confusion because actually I wanted to shave, to be able to better maybe try and put some make-up on. The own thought about someone getting you caught, the confusion, that was kind of scary."* (I7)

Fear of being exposed leads interviewees to live *"a double life"*. Many non-binary interviewees had separated their *"everyday"* male identity from their female identity. Double life is lived often as a man in offline world and as a woman in online world. For some non-binary interviewees, female identity existed only in online world. Balancing between male and female identities caused ambivalent emotions. Some felt that balancing increased mental stress due to the impossibility to be *"yourself"* all the time. Interviewees describe feelings of distress and anxiety if they could not express themselves. Interviewees experience that being in the closet takes a lot of energy and causes frustration.

On the other hand, one of the interviewees ponder that he keeps people in the two worlds separate. He considered that people from different social settings do not want to know each others existence. He states that transvetism is a private matter. It is typical for many non-binary interviewees to balance between expressing themselves and keeping things in secret. Desire to express their feminine side is very strong. One of the interviewees describe these efforts in the following quote:

21) *"Somehow you want to be as girly as possible, hiding it for now, to play with it, to be some kind of mystical person. [You want to be] a person who wears the veil and is still the popular one in the group of friends."* (I11)

Possibility to express self in online world has been a major relief while providing a first step for many interviewees.

22) *"So if I do not have the courage for the physical life, I must express myself somewhere, or otherwise my head explodes, so to speak."* (I6)

Living a double life does not mean that there are "two personas" competing on authenticity. Interviewees try to live a harmonious life with these co-existing identities. For many interviewees, the self presented online is the real and authentic self. As one interviewee describes his virtual identity in the following quote:

23) *"Now I have a complete digital identity by the name Maija. I have my own email address, phone number, most have these. And of course passwords and IDs in many forums and such like. A network of friends there, where there are people that I have met through other instances, but also people who are somehow interested in transpeople and completely different forums where I am, different Facebook-groups. I have two Facebook accounts."* (I14)

Other non-binary interviewee depicts perception of authenticity and self as follows:

24) *"But as a boy-profile I have never really, there has never been much activity. So, as I cannot you know, I do not have there a photo either. I have taken some boy photos, but that exactly is not, that really does not feel, I do not recognise myself. Or."* (I11)

Online world provides possibilities to construct and develop identities while being in the closet. As (I11) shed a light to the role of playing online games for identity:

25) *"In the teens, because I did not have developed my own, this today's world's non-interactive identity, I developed it in the interactive [world]. So I played as female figures and then built the identity through that."* (I11)

Transgenders who are not in the closet may also face confusing situations in which they do not feel comfortable. This might lead to **avoidance** of situations that are intimate and precedes exposing. Some transgenders avoid swimming halls and public saunas. One of the interviewees described how she is avoiding work places coffee room at coffee breaks due to the uneasy atmosphere.

Especially encounters in offline world precedes considerations on safety. Transgenders felt vulnerable to "go out there" and expose themselves. They favor places that are known to be tolerant and safe for example gay bars or peer group meetings. Some interviewees avoid

traveling alone at night or places where people are drunk. Interviewees reflect that online world is safer than offline world. In online settings interviewees feel less vulnerable and avoiding is not necessary. Online world provides physical distance and anonymity that increase feelings of safety. As one interviewee states “*digitally it is easier to avoid being out at night*”. One of the interviewees stated that if things get unpleasant or threatening it can be just clicked away. Also, online settings feel safer due to the administrations which can be contacted in threatening situations. The following quote demonstrates how transgenders have more control over private information in online settings.

26) *”First of all, digitally it is safer in many ways, because you can reveal just as much as you choose, about yourself.”* (I4)

While living in the closet and **keeping secrets** might be frustrating, it provides essential personal space to develop and explore self. As can be depicted in the following quote that when keeping things to self others cannot influence one’s identity.

27) *”Somehow you wanted to develop yourself, so when I think if I had told two three years ago, when I was somewhat ready, there is was also the fear of being abandoned. But also when you tell, the own identity growth comes along, oh, I do not know. It feels as if it may be manipulated a little. Because then you will be influenced by others. Then you are not able to grow independently somehow.”* (I11)

One interviewee reflects that keeping things in secret made the self special and mysterious. As depicted in the following quote where he regrets for telling.

28) *”Exactly that I feel a little annoyed that I even told anyone, so now it is not a complete secret anymore. Well that is slightly...not much but a little downer.”* (I2)

Whereas some interviewees are keeping things in secret to protect themselves from manipulation others are concealing information to protect their close-knits, especially children and older parents from emotional stress and social problems.

29) *"We thought that we will be telling at some point, but at the moment especially, this seven-year-old tells everything to everybody. So we thought we will protect them, for them not to have any problems."*(I9)

30) *"No, more like, I am not afraid of what they, but I am really afraid that this would be a total shock for them."* (I6)

Interviewees highlighted the need for privacy to be able to express themselves. They emphasise the importance of privacy in discovering themselves. Many non-binary interviewees have expressed themselves for first time when they have moved away from home and gained more personal space. Personal space enabled exploring and increased feelings of independency. As (I11) describes the frustrating experience to control privacy in offline world:

31) *"It is like heaven and hell at the same time. Continuous joy but constantly there's a fear that soon the door goes and you are in a difficult situation and you must close the door and say that "I'm not doing anything here" when drawers are banging and everything there."* (I11)

For many non-binary interviewees, online world provided more privacy compared to offline world. In online world, interviewees could express themselves without interruptions and without the risk of being exposed to close-knits. Online settings provide personal space that is not bounded in time. Identity exists in online world and interviewees do not have to dress up to be "themselves". As one interviewee describes:

32) *"It sure is so much easier there. And you do not have to prepare much, so you can be Leena there at any time. Even in the middle of working day. There is, at least, essential difference."* (I7)

### **6.1.3 Controlling Boundaries of Self**

The interviewees emphasised that in online world they have more control over **self-presentation** than in offline world. Transgenders present themselves by real name or screen name. They can choose not to mention their gender in profile texts or they can use

other gender categories instead of man or woman categories. Shared pictures and photos can be “genderless” or emphasising essential gender features. Interviewees felt that their voice, body structure or gestures are not salient in online settings. Interaction is not necessarily affected by gender interpretations. As one of the interviewees states:

33) *”There you really do not have the voice as a burden, so there you can properly go nuts.”* (I7)

As one interviewee reminds that people make a compromise with openness and safety. Online settings enable control over **interpersonal relations** differently than offline settings. Many interviewees describe how they select, restrict, block, ignore and delete people to control their privacy and relationships. For example, in Facebook interviewees select people, who they interpret to be tolerant, to stay in friends list. Interviewees divide friends in to groups and post selectively. One of the interviewees describe the necessity to divide friends in to groups and restrict “*queer posts*” from co-workers to avoid explaining and prejudice. In the Following quote an interviewee describes how she controls posts in Facebook:

34) *”I have there about ten different levels for the publicity settings to whom all this is visible.”* (I3)

The ones who live double life has often two Facebook profiles. They keep the profiles in control by making sure that there are no “links” or mutual friends between the profiles. It is essential that these different identities cannot be connected to each other. As one of the interviewees reminds the nature of Internet in the following quote:

35) *”But because you cannot erase things from the Internet, it is wisest to try and build it in a way that they cannot be connected.”* (I3)

The same interviewee describe that she did “*a reformation*” to her Facebook friends list when she changed her name and created a “new” profile. She has done a lot of work to

“erase” her past from the Internet for example by deleting hundreds of photos that relate to “*the former self and life*”.

Online settings enable **identity construction** differently compared to face-to-face situations. The interviewees constructed, tested and reconstructed their identities by creating a new profile. As one interviewee stated that he is “*recreating himself*” through his new profile. The interviewee had created a one female profile earlier and now he experienced that he has changed and wanted the profile to reflect the existing identity.

Even though online settings provided more tools for controlling boundaries of selves than offline settings, many interviewees recognised dangers such as deception relating to online world. As depicted in the following quote that despite of dangers in online world it is considered more appealing than being out in offline world.

36) *“I know sadly well what this is about, still despite the risks I have gone there. Because it feels like at this point I do not have any other way.”* (I6)

Many interviewees were concerned on evolving technology and automation. Especially certain automated functions challenge the control transgenders have for protecting their privacy. For example, Facebook’s face recognition systems prevented sharing photos of face. As described in the following quote:

37) *“Facebook uses the photo identifier at present. That has raised some problems when you have published photos as everyday self and then told the Facebook that you have let someone tag you to some photo and it know from that connection that a person with those facial feature is this. Then there is is a photo where you are in another role and someone suddenly posts it and asks whether that is this person.”* (I4)

As one non-binary interviewee described that while being in the closet they created fake pictures to ensure not to be exposed when expressing and exploring oneself online. One interviewee describes that he hides recognisable tattoos from the photos he posts.



Also, Facebook's automated friend suggestions challenges privacy regulation. For example, if Facebook suggests one's female profile to the male profiles friends one's privacy is threatened and the connection between profiles is at risk to be revealed.

38) *"It [Facebook] does that snooping, who has visited which site, then it starts to suggest."* (I7)

39) *"And I try to keep them separate at least somehow. I use for example different browsers etc."*(I11)

Some non-binary interviewees try to overcome these technological challenges by using separate servers, email accounts, mobile subscriptions and profiles.

Also, the developing interaction technologies such as instant videos, cameras and microphones create challenges to transgender's privacy regulation. While expressing self in online world may be liberating these technologies may prevent interaction and formation of relationships. As (I11) depicts that playing as a girl in online games was safe but eventually other players wanted to deepen the interaction.

40) *"And I appear then as a female, a girl, there in the game and then sometimes I even told I was a girl. Then there were some problems when people wanted, suddenly said that "have you got microphone" and it was then that "no I don't" Then latest at that point you realise that you cannot. Then you started to think that what am I getting into?"* (I11)

Some interviewees were also concerned about tracking and digital footprints. As one interviewee reflects the difficulty to order women's clothes from online stores due to the risk of being exposed.

41) *"Yes, in the beginning there was this high nervousness to keep it secret. It was a very big thing to even consider to order anything online, because the money goes from your own bank account and there you can see it then. Then I began to think, does it really matter. And the officials are the last group who would be interested about it, as I do not have any ambitions for any special positions anymore. It was I guess one thing that it does of course close some doors there."* (I2)

## 6.2 Identity Negotiation Strategies to Disclose

### 6.2.1 Opposing Gender Expectations

Many interviewees describe the confusion they had had especially at the beginning about themselves. As one of the interviewees stated that gender is “*a perfect mystery*”. For many, it took years to realise who they are and what their experiences mean.

*42) "so, when I discovered that I am a trans person, that I am neither or I am both, it shattered the conceptual world I had had until that point. I had to then completely change the gender perception about myself and others. And ultimately everyone is a person so if we started to split hairs, person is solely their gender." (I10)*

For most interviewees, it was essential to classify themselves as trans people.

The interviewees describe themselves as “*out of the binary*”. Out of the binary means that they do not classify themselves into the male or female categories. Some interviewees describe that they are somewhere in the middle of the imagined line between male and female categories. Others describe that they are somewhere out of that line.

*43) "I go around there quite freely. I have a work role that I have at work or it is according to my official sex, but then in other occasions I am more or less feminine and sometimes something else, something completely different." (I4)*

*44) "the more familiar group, the more it lives, meaning my gender, so it can jump from one end to another and it may be as if someone was throwing a tennisball into a large tub."(I10)*

For some interviewees, out of the binary means that they are “genderless”. One interviewee liked to use words “*gender sloppy*”.

*45) "You cannot say that am I careless, that I do not care or that I don't want at all." (I5)*

For transgenders, being in the middle means that they define themselves as transwoman, transman or transfeminine or transmasculine instead of classifying themselves as woman or a man. Categorising oneself to trans categories enable people to be more “themselves” and free from the pressure to be a man *or* a woman. They have a freedom to be man *and* woman or something else simultaneously. The interviewees describe that it is liberating to realise that classifying oneself as trans set them free from passing expectations. Being out of the traditional categories enable that people can express themselves more freely. As one of the interviewee concluded that as a trans or gender fluid one can “*pick the best out of everything*”. One of the interviewees emphasise that gender should not constrain behaviour.

46) *”yes, like because I am a trans person it is so liberating when everyone else has to follow all the norms of how to dress and behave, but I do exactly as I please.”(I10)*

47) *”I have the advantage that I have not lost the masculine side. I can bring that out in specific situations. And take over the situation.” (I3)*

Also, the interviewees emphasise that gender cannot be seen only from appearance. As the interviewees describe the contrast between their appearance and gender by stating that:

48) *”I am wearing four inch high heels and nice dress, make up on and a wig, so to the outside very feminine and then I roar like a bandit.” (I10)*

49) *”There’s already so much more to do in the mornings. Then if you, goddamn, h* interviewees cherish their distinctiveness and individuality. They have a unic history which have affected their identity in an important way. As the following quote reflects:

50) *”Because many, who have completely reassigned gender, what I have had conversations, well the boy-me dies. It is, for me, a terrible idea. Because no-one really dies, as it is anyway what you have built within you. And from there the girl-me has developed to exactly what it is. So it is a horrible idea to completely lose the boy-me.”(I11)*

In offline settings interviewees felt they need to explain themselves and their behaviour.

Face-to-face encounters are instant and impression management is more complex due to the

certain social cues. Although, some interviewees told that they like to cause confusion by being ambiguous. They felt succeeded in expressing their identity when others were pondering their gender.

In online settings explaining is not necessary because private information is shared in profile texts, photos and posts. There is more time to react when confusions are dealt in private. Some interviewees shared photos that are ambiguous and communicate for the diversity of their identities. As one of the interviewees stated that by sharing ambiguous photos she communicates that gender is not that simple.

*51) "We I did have last October, when I shaved my head with a razor, one of my girlfriends did my make up and false lashes and a good make up on and then we added foundation to cover the hairline shadow, so that we created my head as bold as possible. I had that [photo] as a profile picture for, like, two months." (I10)*

Instead of ambiguous photos, transgenders might indicate neutrality or “genderlessness” in profile pictures, pick a “gender neutral” name or a screen name to communicate that gender is not a dominant feature in interaction. As was noticed earlier to be genderless in offline world is challenging due to the gender binary expectations.

### **6.2.2 Openness to Others**

*52) "I consider it polite, and I did not have the feeling that it was my private issue, that I could not tell anyone, as it was so obvious."(I1)*

As the previous quote reflects that openness and **coming out** is considered polite because it is obvious and people might start to wonder. Coming out is considered challenging among the interviewees. Majority of the non-binary interviewees have not come out entirely in offline world. For transfeminines and transmasculines, especially for those who are in "the process", disclosure is necessary and even expected.

Even though coming out is considered challenging one of the interviewees reminds of the consequences hiding and secrecy have:

53) *"I talk openly about everything, I always have. Because I have once been caught of a lie which was very embarrassing. Since that, I have decided that from now on I always talk directly. So if someone does not understand, they will be the embarrassing ones then."* (I9)

All interviewees have come out at least in online world. Many interviewees felt that it is an easy way to notice everyone at once. They shared a post to all their friends and told what is going on and why. They experienced it easy for practical reasons meaning that you do not have to tell everyone separately. Posting provides time to handle the news and people can respond after a consideration. Instant reactions are not necessarily shown and interaction continues without confusions.

54) *"It did not rain frogs or brimstones. The fear was mostly self-creation. But the social media allowed me not to tell everyone in advance. Instead the message was there for everyone to take in. That was also an advantage of the online world."* (I3)

Several non-binary interviewees experienced virtual coming out as an easy and safe way to start. For example, one of the interviewees send a picture of him as a woman to his mother through Facebook's messenger. For many non-binary interviewees, coming out virtually has been enormous ease of mental stress.

55) *"Only the fact that I have come out and somehow opened myself, even in the virtual, it has helped me very much."* (I6)

Virtual coming out verified interviewees inner experience and enabled self-presentation. Even though interviewees came out to a small peer group it provided a meaningful step for the individual. Many interviewees felt their life changed tremendously when they had the courage to come out virtually. As one interviewee concludes that coming out in virtual world is practice for coming out in real world.

Many interviewees described having lack of inhibition in online settings which led to disclosing. Also, disclosing prevented loneliness. In online settings anonymity and physical

distance provide safety to open up and interviewees created close relationships with people they never met face-to-face.

56) *"And there is especially the point, that if there are persons who you have never met and you never possibly will meet again, with them it is easiest to talk always."* (12)

Majority of the interviewees considered openness very important for wellbeing.

57) *"But I have this, whilst I have opened up, this world has opened up for me that the anxiety has disappeared. Ten years ago I still had quite rough [anxiety]."* (17)

58) *"Or that the tension would decrease, when you are experiencing a contradiction, that you do not talk about, but when you deal with it, the psychological tension has somehow diminished."* (16)

Interviewees described openness and coming out rewarding. Majority of the interviewees had positive feedback and encouragement from the people they have disclosed to. Coming out and disclosing in online settings made coming out easier in offline settings. After gaining courage and positive feedback from online world interviewees were more open about themselves in offline world. Some regretted not coming out sooner and pondered what kind of life they could have lived.

59) *"As a matter of fact, now that I have been around there, regardless of who there is, no-one has anything against this."* (17)

60) *"They have taken it surprisingly well. I have received quite constructive comments."* (16)

61) *"Well the only thing that I regret very much is that I did not go through all this at the first time. I could argue that about 20 years of my life would have been a hell of a lot easier. So that I would not have had to fight over my own space, but to simply be what I am."* (19)

Even though interviewees have had positive experiences about disclosing and openness, coming out is challenging at least in offline world. It takes a lot of courage due to the fear

of confrontation and abandonment. One of the interviewees considered the relation of legitimate status and disclosing in offline settings. Laws provide protection transgressors need while struggling with feelings of insecurity and fear.

*62) "But on the other hand, at the moment even the law is on my side, because in Jan 2015 the Equality Act was amended with a clause that the bleeding of gender can be used as an argument for discrimination. It also means that if I one day wish to be there in a dress, no-one can deny me that right." (I7)*

### 6.2.3 Slacken Control

Controlling personal boundaries demands effort and energy. Interviewees started to slacken control when realising that they cannot control everything, especially in continuously developing online world. Also, the need to conceal private information decreases when they are more open and disclose themselves. As one of the interviewees states that *"there's nothing to lose"* and other describes being *"negligent"* on purpose.

*63) "True, it cannot, I do not know everything either. No I have sometimes, now I have just let it go. I mean, If I do not know something then I have thought, well what ever, some limits. Because otherwise you go crazy." (I11)*

Interviewees described being emboldened to share photos of face and use Facebook more openly. Openness in online settings enabled **verification** transgender identity. Interviewees considered necessary to be recognized as "real" and **authentic**. Also, disclosure related to agency. Interviewees experienced that more they reveal the more active and confident they became.

Some non-binary interviewees, despite the fact, that they have not come out to everyone, go out as a woman. As one of the interviewees emphasise importance of being visible so as people get used to the gender diversity.

64) *"I wanted to say, that by being me, I want to get people's eyes used to the fact that there are people like this. This would then give room and encouragement for others. It is so important. I walk the streets and I am political at all times."* (I7)

Also, going out in offline world is considered as a political act. Some interviewees had courage to expose themselves in intimate situations. Interviewees thought that by exposing themselves and being out in the open enhances the position of gender minorities in society.

65) *"I remember, it was a single moment. I was sunbathing in Munkkiniemenranta in a bikini for the first time. And I, at that moment felt it in my bones and realised, that I was a political animal, even in that situation."* (I7)

66) *"I went to sauna to the men's side with my long red nails, small breasts and a stubble hair, so if someone had a stomachache from that, that was not me [Laughing]."* (I10)

67) *"One reason for our public theatre trips is that when we appear on the streets, people learn that these people are not so weird after all, so we do that kind of educational work."* (I4)

Interviewees considered that to live satisfying life, disclosing is inevitable. As one of the interviewees ponder the twofolded nature of online world.

68) *"Sometimes I had that feeling that I would settle for the virtual reality. But I have learned that there is no need to settle for that. So that, and I also feel like it was a kind place to escape sometimes. But now it is just a small alternative method."* (I11)

As depicted in the previous quote, online settings enabled a lot being especially crucial at the beginning of discovering gender identity. Despite the benefits, transgenders do not want to settle for only online world. As one of the interviewees described the empowering nature of face-to-face encounters:

69) *"To me..I do not know, if it is that every time I meet a person and... we get to have a conversation or something, I get power from that. And I get to be myself. I cannot really explain it but..."* (I9)



Interviewees described that slacking control relate more to offline world and being out in the public. Even though interviewees describe the importance of online settings have for expressing authentic self they expressed it to mainly peers. Online world enabled verification to transgender identities but changing minority position demanded visibility in offline world. Finally, as one interviewee emphasises:

70) *"That perhaps, by appearing more, the world would become safer or better place."* (I4)

### 6.3 Networking and Segregating

The interviewees emphasised importance of peer groups. Everyone had joined peer networks. Peer support and groups are present in offline as well in online settings. The interviewees considered that peers are easier to find from online. In offline it is necessary to go out to meet peer groups which might be very challenging.

71) *"Yes but I still have not had the courage. When I have thought that ou should go there all dressed up, but I have not dared to go."* (I6)

The interviewees described that participating in peer networks demanded "*prove*". For example, interviewees wanted to dress up before going to the peer meeting to prove they are authentic and "*really trans*". In online transgenders prove their authenticity by sharing photos. One of the interviewees described the difficulty to get in in peer networks in online settings. Interviewees showed that they are "real" and trustworthy by sharing real pictures of themselves.

72) *"I also noticed that people are very careful. For some odd reason [laughter]. This was sarcasm but..yeah, people are awfully,you can't quite say suspicious, but, they keep the distance to new people."* (I6)

At the beginning, all the interviewees started networking and seeked information from Internet. Many non-binary interviewees created female profile to find peers. The

interviewees described that it is very important to their identity to share experiences and find people to talk to. Many interviewees found peer networks effortlessly from online. Interviewees interacted with peers is actively and daily.

*73) "I have read, mainly about trans-women, and those are also more available. To talk with my peers online, foreigners and in Finland with Finnish also, and I have realised that it is very important for my identity and how I can express." (I1)*

Peer group meetings in offline as well as online forums provided safety. In safe environments, it was easier to disclose and express self freely.

*74) "It was also this, somehow, official or plain psychological process of how to express yourself through gender, or how you want to express yourself in general. So, in a safer environment, to like post photos about today I dress up like this, or like, I wish I had the courage to dress up to school like that tomorrow. And through that, to get support from others, oh well." (I5)*

*75) "In this kind of events the group support, that we are all here now like this and this is our own circle where we are safe from the outsiders looks." (I4)*

On the other hand, one of the interviewees described a paradox which relate to peer networking in the following quote:

*76) "It has a quite remarkable meaning that it can be that when this transvestism is not anymore something you have to separately discuss about, now it is clearly out there, then you do not have to pay attention to it anymore. This sounds pretty paradoxical." (I6)*

Some interviewees pointed out that passing related also to transgender identity and peer networks. They described "trans normativity" creates expectations for passing as a trans person. Especially non-binary interviewees felt inferiority due to the "men in dresses" stereotype. They are not considered convincing or truly trans. As one transfeminine described receiving feedback on being "too masculine to be a transfeminine".

*77) "But the certain trans normativity, that is even funny. And that very much exists in Finland, that you have to be an ordinary woman. If you are a little more dressed*

*up, then that can give hint about whether you are real after all, whether you are a just a transvestite.” (I7)*

The interviewees reflected that many transgenders are in the closet. Interviewees expressed concern over those transgenders’ psychological wellbeing. One essential motive for participating in this study was to make transgender lives more visible especially for those who have not come out yet and might need peer support.

*78) “Yes and how many are there, who continue to live secretly and in darkness and do not tell.” (I6)*

Although some interviewees reflected that they have diverged from friends and relatives since they do not have anything in common with them. Most interviewees had separated their friends and family from peer groups in offline and in online settings. For example, non-binary interviewees’ friend list in ”girl profile” consisted only peers. Many transgenders had separated peers and other friends to own groups in Facebook and other services. It was typical to post and share selectively.

*79) “There all are these kinds of transpeople, yes. And everything actually somehow has to do with this.” (I11)*

As depicted online settings enabled peer networking effortlessly. Many non-binary interviewees created their girl profiles to find peers. Although networking is easier in online world concerns about authenticity and trustworthiness challenged these efforts. Interviewees described that they need to prove to be “really trans”. Networking is essential in identity negotiation however interviewees described how they started to diverge from other friends and family. Networking enabled disclosing while disclosing took place in a secure and concealed group of people with whom personal safety ja privacy could be ensured even though it led to segregation of social groups.

## 6.4 Summary of Findings

It was discovered that transgenders use three strategies to protect: conforming, hiding and avoiding and controlling. Furthermore, they used three strategies to disclose: opposing, openness and slacken control. Networking is considered as a strategy that enable both protecting and disclosing. Online and offline settings and their interrelatedness affect how these strategies are employed. Summary of findings is presented in the table 1.

Table 1. *Identity negotiation strategies to protect and disclose*

<b>Strategies to protect</b>	<b>Conforming</b>	<b>Passing, Appearance, Acting according to expectations</b>
	<b>Hiding and Avoiding</b>	<b>In the Closet, Double life Avoiding Keeping secrets</b>
	<b>Controlling</b>	<b>Self-presentation Interpersonal relations Identity Construction</b>
<b>Strategies to disclose</b>	<b>Opposing</b>	<b>Out of the binary</b>
	<b>Openness</b>	<b>Coming out</b>
	<b>Slacken control</b>	<b>Verification Authenticity</b>
	<b>Networking and Segregating</b>	<b>Revealing yourself Concealing together</b>

Conforming to gender norms and expectations by passing and with gender typical appearance are considered as strategies to protect self. Similarity to majority protects from disapproval and confrontation. Conforming is easier in online settings due to the tools to emphasise desired gender features. Furthermore, contrasting or ambiguous social cues can be hidden whereas body structure and voice are not that easily concealable in offline settings. Although conforming in online world is easier it is not mandatory because online world is considered more “genderless”. Interviewees are facing more “gendering” in offline settings compared to online settings.

Hiding and avoiding is considered to protect self by concealing private information. Hiding, avoiding and keeping secrets are strategies that relate to offline settings. Many interviewees were in the closet in offline world due to the feelings of vulnerability and unsafety. Avoiding was not necessary in online settings. Online world enabled self expression and tools to protect self whereas keeping secrets and finding private space was challenging in offline world. Paradoxically, online settings provided transgenders interviewees privacy to explore and express themselves.

Online world provides more tools for controlling self-presentation, interpersonal relationships and identity construction compared to offline world. These possibilities to control made online world appealing for transgenders although evolving technology and automation reduced these benefits. Reduced control over personal boundary regulation and privacy resulted various efforts to restore control and power over self.

Opposing to expectations and gender norms is considered as a strategy to disclose. Defining identity out of the gender binary categories resulted sharing and revealing private information. Once again online settings provided “genderless” environment where unnecessary explaining could be avoided whereas in offline world opposing gender norms resulted a need to explain and justify.

In common with previous findings, openness and coming out is considered easier in online world. For some interviewees, coming out was possible only in online world. Although disclosing in online settings transferred to offline settings. Interviewees disclosed more also in offline world. Somehow, to get verification and authentication to a desired identity, slackening control and disclosing in offline world is crucial. Interviewees highlighted importance not to abide by online world. The goal is to flexibly manoeuvre in both settings.

Networking is considered a strategy that simultaneously enable protecting and disclosing. Networking with peers enable revealing private information and safe disclosure. Often peer groups and networks are private and identities can be kept in secret from outsiders. To get in to peer groups individuals need to prove that they are real and trustworthy. Privacy ensures safety and trustworthy atmosphere resulting revelation of personal information. Peer networks validate transgender identity and enable free expression of self. Furthermore, there is more power in a group to influence. On the other hand, a risk of segregation and marginalisation may exist if transgenders are interacting only with peers. Peer groups are not visible to wider population resulting a threat of marginalisation of the whole group. Disclosing only with peers may narrow relationships and make gender diversity invisible in the society. Being invisible can be considered as silently conforming to existing norms and protecting privacy boundaries together.

## **7 DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study shed light on the relation of gender identity negotiation and offline and online settings among transgenders. Special attention was drawn to privacy for its strong relation to both online settings and gender minorities. From the perspective of symbolic interactionism and Goffman's dramaturgical approach identities are constructed in interaction. Identities are negotiated to get legitimation and verification to the desired self. The findings of this study suggest that online and offline contexts provide differing environments for identity negotiations, resulting variation in constructed gender identities.

Several transgenders evaluated offline settings to be unsafe, which resulted in concealing private information. Constructing transgender identity in offline contexts is challenging and it often led to conforming to binary identities of a female or male. In some cases, because of the concealing of private information, transgender identity did not even “exist” in offline world. Goffman (1979) considered that people are displaying gender because of the appreciation and regard for others. Also, West and Zimmermann (1987) emphasise that gender is profound part of societies as people are always interpreted as gender-appropriate or gender-inappropriate. In this study, especially offline settings were interpreted to be “gendering” and “gendered”. Conforming to conventions and norms by passing is a strategy transgenders use when facing gender in offline world. As Goffman (1963, p. 42) defines that passing is “*management of undisclosed discrediting information*”. Whittle’s (1998) argument that passing relate to offline world, was consistent with the findings in this study.

But why is the need to pass and fear of confrontation related to offline world? It is assumed that impression management and controlling personal boundaries are more challenging in offline settings. Transgenders non-conforming gender features are more salient in offline settings, thus disclosing is somewhat inevitable. As Austin (2016) stated that transgenders need to explain themselves to be encountered in a way they desire. Goffman (1967) emphasises that interacting according to interaction rituals or “lines”, make social situations proceed smoothly whereas “non-conforming” behaviour may result in confusion and threat to lose face.

Furthermore, disclosing private information calls for trustworthy and approving atmosphere. According to Levitt and Ippolito (2014), safe spaces are difficult to find in offline settings. Being out in the open and disclosing makes transgenders especially vulnerable in offline settings due to the lack of control they might have over these situations. Conforming to expectations and efforts to pass can be explained by the vulnerable atmosphere offline settings provide and the need to “safe face”.

Paradoxically, interaction situations enable expressions of gender, while these expressions are maintaining and producing gender (See for example Goffman, 1977). Also, according to Gagné, Tewksbury and McGaughey (1997), transgenders are ideologically challenging the binary system of gender, while illustrating the system they hope to change. As found in this study, transgenders highlight feminine and masculine gender features. Gender typical appearance directs the interpretations of others to consider a person as a woman or a man even though the person's experience of self might be trans. Gagné et al. (1997) argue that transgenders are conforming to traditional and binary conceptualizations of gender due to limited identities available. Consequently, a verification for desired identity cannot be achieved without shared understanding, when identities are constructed in interaction. Constructing and maintaining transgender identity can be even exhausting because of expectations and interpretations of others that are shared in situations. Furthermore, gender typical appearance may result maintaining the binary system and challenge transgender identity negotiations.

Conforming to expectations may result in a presentation of self that is not considered authentic. The findings of this study are consistent with the findings of Nuru (2014). Discrepancy between self-view and self-presentation resulted the need to enact "non-conforming" behaviour in private. Kaufman and Johnson (2004) emphasise that self-disclosure is depended on situations. The findings suggest that online settings provide, for many transgenders, essential privacy and a possibility to receive positive appraisals. One essential question is, why online world feels safer and enables construction of authentic identities compared to offline world. Marciano (2014) emphasises that online settings are free from restrictions that exist in offline settings. Even though Kraut et al. (1998) and Turkle (2011) are concerned about the effects online settings have for individuals, findings of this study do not share those concerns. Online settings seem to provide anonymity that enhances disclosure which may lead to intimate relationships. As McKenna and Bargh (1998) argue that anonymity enables disclosing private information faster in online settings than in face-to-face encounters.

Also, in online world transgenders have more control over their identities and possibility to



identificate to peers. Findings suggest that offline and online settings provide different possibilities to control the access to the self. The findings are consistent with Mehra, Merkel and Bishop (2004) that online settings enable more control over marginalized identities and with Farnham and Churchill (2011) that online provides more tools to protect privacy which may lead to more control over self and identities. In online settings, transgenders could express themselves and reveal information about themselves that enabled construction and verification of transgender identity. It is assumed that many transgenders prefer environments where they have more control and tools to influence identity negotiations. Agency and control enables the construction of authentic identities. To summarise, the online world provides anonymity, physical distance and more tools to control impression management and interaction. Therefore, it can be assumed that in online world people have more control and power over identity negotiations. This raises a question of does control and power relate to feeling of safety that is necessary for the negotiation of authentic identities.

Levitt and Ippolito (2014) discovered that transgenders are balancing between the authenticity and safety. To be authentic and respected, transgenders need to disclose while avoiding dangers that result from being out in the open. Disclosing may lead to either acceptance and verification of identity or inacceptance and disqualification. According to Altman (1975), defining self is an interpersonal process of revealing and concealing information to receive legitimation and verification to self from others. Foddy and Finighan (1980) emphasise that controlling access to self means influencing information others can have about the self. Information others have access to, will influence the construction of identities. What Altman (1975) considers as dangers to self, differs from what Levitt and Ippolito (2014) depict. Altman (1975) describes that danger to self rises from not having control over access to self. Also, Kelvin (1973) reminds that with privacy, people can protect themselves from the influence of others while maintaining control over self. To have a desired identity, it must be negotiated in interaction to get acceptance and verification. On the other hand, when participating in negotiation process, there is always the risk of manipulation and influence of others.

Even though online world enable more control over access to self, evolving technologies and especially automation challenged control transgenders have over themselves and privacy. This raises questions about the role of online world for marginalized individuals. Several transgenders have avoided stigmatization and achieved verification to their identities in online world. Online settings provide tools to control privacy by restricting access, creating new and different profiles, posting selectively and contacting peer groups. Automated services reduced control over privacy for example by recognizing faces or recommending friends. Altman (1975) state that if a person does not have control over access to the self he is “*nothing*”. This leads to a reflecting question of what is the effect of losing control to technology and automation on identities.

Petronio (2002) emphasise co-owning private information meaning that controlling boundaries is co-operation instead of being merely a task of the individual. Co-owning information with individuals is different than co-owning information with big social network companies. As discovered in Lampinen et al’s (2011) study, individuals rely on unspoken reciprocal attentiveness in boundary regulation processes. However, is reciprocity possible with algorithms and technology that cannot negotiate flexibly to build a shared understanding of boundary regulation? The findings of this study suggest that individuals are overcoming these challenges by restricting access to the self and segregating their identities and interrelations to various settings, groups and devices.

To summarise the above discussion, online and offline settings can be considered as intertwined entities where individuals manoeuvre in order to have safe environments and control over privacy to construct and maintain a desired identity. On the other hand, Turkle (1995) considers online and offline settings as parallel worlds with different experiences for users. However, it can be concluded that online and offline worlds provide different possibilities to control identity negotiation, yet the two worlds are not parallel but interrelated. Despite the empowering role of online settings, transgenders highlighted that disclosing in offline settings is necessary to live a satisfying life. Furthermore, Nguyen (2006) state that same problems occur in online as well as in offline settings. The findings of this study partially disagree with Nguyen (2006). Due to the identified problems and

potentials in online and offline settings, individuals flexibly manoeuvre between these environments to make good use of the possibilities and to overcome challenges.

### **7.1 Limitations of the Study**

In this study, there are specific limitations that need to be acknowledged and discussed. Generalisability of the findings are limited firstly due to the small sample of Finnish transgenders participated in the study. Secondly, the participated transgenders represent a small heterogenous group, whose interpretations cannot be generalised to wider public, other minorities or even other gender minorities. Generalisation to other countries should not be drawn as Finland represents comparatively individualistic, low power distance and feminine cultural setting (Hofstede, 2001). Negotiating on minority identity may vary from country to country.

Several generalisations had to be made to classify data. The categorisation of the interviewees to different gender minority groups as well as using an umbrella term transgender, may simplify the diversity of gender emphasised by interviewees. For example, some interviewees did not want to categorise themselves. It should be acknowledged that transfeminines, transmasculines and non-binary interviewees interpret gender differently, having different goals. For example, some interviewees are heading to live as an opposite sex than assigned at birth and others want to express their feminine side occasionally by dressing up. Thus, the challenge here is, how to highlighting the true diversity of gender.

Also, generalising the findings to online setting should be discussed. Most of the interviewees talked about certain social network sites or chat forums that do not represent the whole online world including its different services and platforms. There was also differences between the interviewees and their relation to offline world. Some interviewees lived as a woman or a man in offline world while others expressed themselves only in online world. The interviewees were also in different “phase” of realizing their gender

identity or transgender identity which have affected the negotiation strategies they used at the time of the study.

Using constructivist grounded theory methods, resulted in some challenges that need to be discussed. Even though constructivist grounded theory provided suitable and comprehensive methods for conducting research and data analysis the processual and iterative nature of the method resulted that many phases of the research were done simultaneously. Because of this, it was challenging to present the research process in a coherent manner. Ideas emerged when memos were written and initial codes were at first aggregated in many ways. Initial coding and focus coding were partially done at the same time. Constructivist grounded theory approach was new to the researcher and it should be acknowledged that due to the researcher's inexperience the study may consist some inconsistencies.

The proposed negotiation strategies are not exhaustive and the purpose of these strategies is to describe the manifold nature of gender identity negotiation. Strategies are not considered as permanent ways to negotiate because of the close relation to situations and contexts that are continuously changing. Especially strategies used in online settings may change rapidly due to fast development of technology. Also, it should be acknowledged that changes in online settings affect negotiation in offline settings and vice versa.

## **7.2 Ideas for Further Research**

Despite the limitations discussed in the previous chapter it can be argued that online settings have an important and essential role in identity negotiation, especially for gender minorities. The distinctions in online and offline settings and their relation to identity negotiation process needs further research. The suggested relationship between contextual control over self, feelings of safety and identity negotiation could be worth studying for.

More research is needed to explore the relationship of marginalization and technology. Further research could be directed to study different minorities and their identity negotiation. Further studies could be aimed at gaining understanding on how regulating personal boundaries and automated technology affect identities. Furthermore, it can be concluded that openness and expressing oneself relate to the trustworthiness and safety of the contexts and situations. Research is needed to shed more light on the situational factors and how online world could provide safety and autonomy. Especially attention should be directed to possibilities for control and agency people need to negotiate a desired identity.

All the interviewees started to figure out who they are and what their experience mean with the help of Internet. People searched information and peers from online world. The information and contacts they found influenced understanding and interpretations of themselves. This raises the questions about the power Internet has on identities and prevalent discourses in societies. As McCall and Simmons (1966) argue that people whose interpretations are ratified and considered as truth, have the power. It can be assumed that information and interpretations people find and share in Internet are not the whole “truth” but versions of multiple “truths”. Who has access and to what kind of information and how this affect interpretations and behaviour?

Also, marginalization relates to the access and need of information. Chatman (1996) refers to information poverty when she talks about marginalized groups that avoid useful information. These marginalized groups act according to their own norms and rules instead of seeking out other information that might be even contradicting. Online settings provide massive amount of information but can it still lead to information poverty for people in the margins or for all people? Selecting and filtering information is necessary to avoid overload but if the information one seeks only verifies what is already known what are the effects for identities and especially for groups that are already in the margins?

### **7.3 Conclusions**

It can be concluded that protecting personal boundaries are necessary for identity construction. Privacy provides possibilities to explore identities without the fear of losing agency and power over self. Though, without disclosing, verification to the self is not possible to have. By disclosing, authentic identities are commonly created.

To enhance disclosing a special consideration should be directed to creating environments that provide safety and personal control. Safe environments enable disclosing whereas disclosing have a major effect on individuals' psychological wellbeing. The future challenges, in offline and online settings relate to finding a balance between individuals' agency and privileges and communal safety and responsibilities.

Giddens (1991) argued that in modern society traditions lose hold and people need to choose lifestyles from variety of choices. Even though traditions lose hold providing freedom for individuals in modern societies, these societies are continuously changing. Change causes societies to be more unpredictable resulting feelings of uncontrollability. It can be concluded that control over self will have more and more importance in our modern, networked and sharing based society.

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## APPENDIXES

### Appendix 1. Research Announcement



TAMPEREEN  
YLIOPISTO



Tutkimusprojekti Digital Face (DIFA)

#### TUTKIMUSILMOITUS

#### Etsitään sukupuolivähemmistöihin kuuluvia haastattelututkimukseen

Hei,

Olen Jenny Julkunen, sosiaalipsykologian opiskelija Helsingin yliopistosta. Olen tekemässä pro graduani vuoden 2016 aikana Suomen Akatemian rahoittamaan Digital Face (DIFA) - tutkimusprojektiin työskennellen samalla Aalto-yliopistossa. Nelivuotisessa DIFA -projektissa tutkitaan laajasti ja poikkitieteellisesti sitä, kuinka ihmiset ilmaisevat, rakentavat ja ylläpitävät "kasvojaan" (esimerkiksi erilaisia identiteettejään) digitaalisessa maailmassa.

Graduni on osa DIFA -tutkimusprojektia ja tutkimusaiheenani on: Sukupuolen ilmaiseminen ja ylläpitäminen vuorovaikutuksessa. Tutkimukseni koostuu laadullisista haastatteluista, joissa haastattelen sukupuolivähemmistöihin kuuluvia. Tutkimuksen haastattelut tehdään elosyyskuussa 2016. Haastattelut kestävät n. tunnin ja ovat luonteeltaan avoimia keskusteluja. Haastattelupaikka ja -ajankohta ovat sovittavissa joustavasti. Haastattelut nauhoitetaan ja litteroidaan (kirjoitetaan tekstiksi) sisällönanalyysia varten. Tutkimuksessa kerättyä aineistoa hyödynnetään pro gradu -tutkielman ja tieteellisten artikkelien kirjoittamiseen. Tutkimus toteutetaan luottamuksellisesti ja yksityisyyttä suojellen.

Vastaan mielelläni, mikäli tutkimuksesta herää kysyttävää!

Yhteydenottoasi odottaen,

Jenny

## Appendix 2. Interview Outline

HAASTATTELURUNKO (60-90 min.): Sukupuolivähemmistöt

ALOITUS (5 min):

- Esittelyt
- Tutkimuseettiset asiat, anonymisyys, nauhoittaminen, suostumukset yms.
- Haastattelun käytännön asiat: kesto, aiheet, tyyli

DEFINING GENDER (15 min.)

- Minkälainen on oma kokemuksesi sukupuolestasi?
- **Miten ilmaiset kokemaasi sukupuolta/sukupuolettomuutta?** (*Miksi juuri nämä keinot? Mistä olet ”oppinut” tai keksinyt nämä keinot?*)
- Miten ilmaisutavat eroavat toisistaan? (*Jos feminiinisyys ja maskuliinisuus, binäärisuus on tullut ilmi, niin miten ne eroavat toisistaan ja miksi juuri näin?*)
- Millaisiin asioihin sosiaalinen verkostosi kiinnittää huomiota sukupuolen ilmaisussasi? Minkälaisena haluat heidän näkevän sinut?

OFFLINE NEGOTIATION (20 min.)

- **Minkälaisia oletuksia ja odotuksia sosiaalisella verkostollasi on sukupuolen kokemukseesi liittyen?**
  - Perhe
  - Ystävät sekä cis että trans
  - Työ- ja opiskelukaverit
- Millä tavalla pyrit vastaamaan näihin odotuksiin?
- Minkälaisiin odotuksiin et halua vastata?
- Entä silloin, jos sinuun kohdistuvat odotukset ovat ristiriitaisia?
- Mistä nämä odotukset mielestäsi johtuvat?
- **Eroaako sukupuolen kokemuksesi ilmaiseminen eri tilanteissa, eri ihmisten kanssa, jos eroaa niin miten ja miksi?**

- **Kohtelevatko ihmiset sinua eri tavalla riippuen sukupuolen ilmaisustasi?**
- Minkälaisia asioita olet huomannut, että muiden ihmisten (eri sosiaaliset ryhmät) on **vaikeaa hyväksyä**? Miten toimit tällaisissa tilanteissa?
- Oletko tuntenut häpeää, sosiaalisten tilanteiden seurauksena? Kertoisitko tilanteesta tarkemmin?
- Minkälaisissa asioissa sosiaalinen verkostosi rohkaisee ja kannustaa sinua? Millä tavoilla rohkaisu ilmenee? Miksi juuri näissä asioissa?
- Minkälaisissa asioissa koet, että joudut tekemään kompromisseja? Miksi?

#### ONLINE NEGOTIATION (20 min.)

- Minkälaisia digitaalisia palveluja pääasiassa käytät ja kenen kanssa? Miksi?
- **Miten sukupuolen ilmaiseminen tapahtuu digimaailmassa?** (*E erityisesti kun kasvojen ilmeet, eleet ja ääni eivät välttämättä välity*) Kerro esimerkkejä
- **Millä tavalla sukupuolen kokemuksesi näkyy jakamissasi kuvissa tai teksteissä erilaisissa digitaalisissa palveluissa?** (*Minkälaisia asioita korostat, mitä vältät ja miksi?*) Onko näyttää esimerkkejä?
- **Minkälaisia asioita haluat viestittää itsestäsi** esim. kuvissasi, profiileissasi tai päivityksissäsi? Miten pyrit viestittämään näitä asioita?
- Miten erilaiset digitaaliset palvelut vaikuttavat toimimiseesi? Minkälaisia asioita ne mahdollistavat entä minkälaisia asioita ne estävät?
- **Millä tavalla vuorovaikutuksesi digitaalisessa maailmassa eroaa mielestäsi esim. Face-to-face tilanteista?**

#### YHTEENVETO JA LOPETUS:

- Herääkö sinulle vielä jotain lisättävää tai kysyttävää tutkimukseen ja/tai keskusteluunne liittyen?

KIITOKSET!

### Appendix 3. Quotations in Finnish and in English

1	<i>“Siis siihenki pitää, semmonen tasapaino kuin paljon just, haastaa ihmisten mielikuvia ja stereotypioit ja kuin paljon, sit haluu taas päästä helpommal ja hyötyy silleen”</i>	<i>“You have to have like balance between how much you challenge peoples’ ideas and stereotypes, and how much you want to get away easily and benefit from that.”</i>
2	<i>“muu yhteiskunta on niin voimakkaast se binäärinen. Ni sit, et jos ei ois ni mä en tiä oisko mul niin voimakast sukupuoli-identiteettiä.”</i>	<i>“The rest of the society is very strongly binary. If it was not, I do not know whether I had such strong gender identity.”</i>
3	<i>“Se on ehkä, kans semmonen suojautumiskeino minkä on oppinu sillee, elämän aikana et jos tulee ni, et kannattaa mennä mukana siin muiden jutussa.”</i>	<i>“It is also a kind of defence system that one has learned in life, that if it comes, it is better to go along the majority.”</i>
4	<i>“jotenkin pystyis elämään mahdollisimman normaalia elämää tai jotenki lähellä normaalia tai jotenki semmost..”</i>	<i>“Somehow could live as normal life as possible or near normal or something like that...”</i>
5	<i>“Et koska, se että sä haluut olla mies mut sitten näkee jo viiden metrin päästä et paskanmarjat toi mikään äijä oo.”</i>	<i>“Because you want to be man but then one sees already from five meters that bullshit that one is not a bloke.”</i>
6	<i>“et tuolla virtuaalimaailmassa niiden ihmisten parissa, tai niiden ihmisten kanssa joiden kanssa mä lähinnä kommunikoin ni, ei se ole se olennaisin asia. Mä luulen et se liittyy enemmänki siihen et jos liikkuu reaaliaailmassa.”</i>	<i>“In the virtual world among those people, or with the people that I mostly communicate, it is not a relevant issue. I think it has to do more with situations in the real world”</i>
7	<i>“Mä tiedän että mun ruumiinrakenteella mä kuitenkaan en mene läpi, mutta se nyt riippuu ihan kuitenkin sitten ympäristöstä miten ympäristön ottaa.”</i>	<i>“I know that with my body structure I wouldn’t pass anyway, but it depends about the environment and how you face it.”</i>
8	<i>“esimerkiks, minkä profiilikuvan mä laitan ni sitä mä sit mietin et mä en laita jotenki ihan sitä, no vois ehk sanoo provosoivinta vaik mä en välttämät tarkota provosoida. Mut jotenki sillee, mä, laitan profiilikuvaks, aika</i>	<i>“For example, when I am selecting a profile picture, I think not to choose the, you could say, the most provocative, although I do not necessarily mean to provoke. But somehow I select profile</i>



	<i>semmosen, yleensä, jotenki, tavallisen kuvan tai silleen.”</i>	<i>picture to be that kind of somehow normal picture or something.”</i>
9	<i>”sanotaan että joskus on todellakin tullu näitä että ihminen luulee ottavansa naiseen yhteyttä ja sitä miettii että eikö se oo itse, siis profilissa selkeesti lukevaa asiaa saanu luettua.”</i>	<i>”Lets say that it has happened that a person thinks she/he is contacting a woman, and you wonder that have she/he not managed to read something that is clearly spelled in the profile.”</i>
10	<i>”koska ne ne on ne ilmi selvät mitkä kaikki näkee, koska pään sisälle ei nää. Ne on ne mitkä pystyy viestittää ei oo paljoo muuta”</i>	<i>”Because those are the obvious things that everyone can see, because you cannot see inside one’s head. It is those that you can communicate, not much more.”</i>
11	<i>”ainaki ite valitsen semmosia kuvia tai hetkiä jotka kylläkin ehdottomasti korostaa feminiinisyttä itseni kohdalla. Valitsen kuvan, jossa näkyy esim. Kynsilakka tai jotain tällasta sen sijaan että ottaisın kuvan kämmenestä vaan.”</i>	<i>”At least I choose the sort of photos that definitely highlight my femininity. I choose a photo where nail polish or similar appears, instead of just taking a photo of the palm of my hand.”</i>
12	<i>”No ainut mitä, joskus sitten kun tuolla Facebookissa kommentoi niin sit silleen et, hetkinen onkohan tää kuitenkin liian naismaista. En mä voi näin laittaa [nauraa].”</i>	<i>”Well, the only thing, when I comment in the Facebook, it is like hold on, is this a bit too womanish. I cannot put it like this [laughs].”</i>
13	<i>”Vaikka joissain toisissa maissa transnaiset, siis transsukupuoliset täyttä päätä nauttii siitä naiseudesta. Siinä on vähän samaa kun toisen aallon feminismissä, et ei saa olla liian feminiininen että siinä antaa periksi jollekin asialle. Ja nyt kolmannessa aallossa taas saa antaa kaikki kukat kukkia.”</i>	<i>”Although in some other countries trans-women, meaning transgenders, fully enjoy femininity. It is a little bit the same as in the second wave of feminism, where you are not supposed to be too feminine not to give into some issue. And now in the third wave you can let all the flowers bloom.”</i>

14	<p><i>“sitte huomaa että ympäristö siitä huolimatta sukupuolittaa ihan naiseksi niin kyllä mä huomaan että mun käytöksessä tulee semmonen et mä oon vähän tarkempi siitä eteenpäin et mä myös meen niinku jatkossaki naisena läpi”</i></p>	<p><i>”Then you notice that you are classified a female despite, and then I realise that in my behaviour I am a bit more careful in order to pass as a female also in the future.”</i></p>
15	<p><i>“Juu totta kai siis muitten mielipiteethän on siis aina otettava mun mielestä huomioon vaikka ois kuinka itsetoteutuksesta kyse.”</i></p>	<p><i>”Yea, of course other’s opinions must always be considered no matter how much it is about self-expression.”</i></p>
16	<p><i>”Se että mä otin reiät korviin kolmisen vuotta sitte, ni siitä tuli lähikollegoilta kommenttia. Ne oli hämmennyksissä siitä. Ja just lapset, kaksoset synty siinä. Sitte joku tuli kysymään et onks ne sen takia molemmissa korvissa että ne on kaksoset [naurahtaa]. ”</i></p>	<p><i>”The fact that I had my ears pierced three years ago, got my nearest colleagues to comment. They were confused about it. And just at the same, the twins were born. Then someone came to ask if I had piercings in both ears because I had had twins. [laughs]”</i></p>
17	<p><i>”Hänellä on valta asettaa se diagnoosi jolla saat ne hoidot, nimen ja kaikki tai olla asettamatta sitä jollon sulta viedään kaikki se minkä sä koet omaksi ihmisyydeksesi. Se voi olla hyvinki murskaavaa. Ja monella tie on päättyny justiinsa siinä kokonaan.”</i></p>	<p><i>”He/she has the power to give the diagnosis which allows you the treatments, the name and everything or not to give it, when everything that you feel that is your own humanity is taken away. It can be very devastating. And for many, the road has come to an end completely at that point.”</i></p>
18	<p><i>”Mä voisin tässä syyttää osittain meidän hoitoprosessii. Koska siellä syynätään niin tarkasti sä joudut sen vuoden kaks elämään tarkkailun alla lääkäreiden osalta et oletko riittävän läpimenevä.”</i></p>	<p><i>”I could partially blame our treatment process. Because there you are under a very close monitoring and you have to live a year or two under monitoring for the doctors to see if you are convincing enough to pass.”</i></p>
19	<p><i>”Ja sit monet nettipalstat ja muut, ne on sukupuoleettomia. Se ei tule mistään esille ellei henkilö itse sano. Eli siel ei edes tee mitään oletuksia siitä”</i></p>	<p><i>”And many websites and such like, are genderless. It does not come out from anything unless a person says it. So there no assumptions are made about it.”</i></p>

20	<p><i>"Mä olen yli viiskymppisenä ollu täysin kaapissa. Ja kaapissa oleva transvestiitti joka mä nyt sillä hetkellä käytännössä olin, on maailman vainoharhaisin. Mä muun muassa 45-vuotiaaks asti pidin viiksiä ettei kukaan kyselis. Kuulostaa aivan älyttömältä, mutta siinä kontekstissa se tuntuu täysin loogiselta, ettei kukaan kysyis vaan että miks sä ajoit ne viikset. Ettei siitä tulis hämmennystä että itse asiassa mä ajoin sen takia et mun ois kivempi ehkä yrittää meikata naamaani. Se oma ajatus, että sen sais joku kiinni sen hämmennyksen, se oli tavallaan pelottavaa. "</i></p>	<p><i>"I have been completely in the closet when over fifty. And a transvestite in the closet, who I was at that time, is the most paranoid person possible. I, for example, had moustache until I was 45, so that no-one would ask questions. It sounds mad, but in that context it feels totally logical to block any questions about why you shaved the moustache. That it would not cause confusion because actually I wanted to shave, to be able to better maybe try and put some make-up on. The own thought about someone getting you caught, the confusion, that was kind of scary. "</i></p>
21	<p><i>"Ni jotenki halua olla, mahdollisimman tyttömäinen kuitenkin jotenki salaten sen vielä toistaiseksi, leikkiä sillä, sitä olla se jonkinlainen, mystinen henkilö. Joka pitää sitä vaan huntua päällään ja kuitenkin on pidetty kaveriporukoissa. "</i></p>	<p><i>"Somehow you want to be as girly as possible, hiding it for now, to play with it, to be some kind of mystical person. [You want to be] a person who wears the veil and is still the popular one in the group of friends. "</i></p>
22	<p><i>"että jos mä en uskalla lähteä fyysiseen elämään niin mun täytyy jossakin kuitenkin ilmasta itseäni et muuten mun pääni räjähtää niin sanotusti. "</i></p>	<p><i>"So if I do not have the courage for the physical life, I must express myself somewhere, or otherwise my head explodes, so to speak. "</i></p>
23	<p><i>"Nykyään mul on Maijan nimellä täydellinen digitaalinen identiteetti. Mul on oma meiliosote, oma puhelinnumero, nää on useimmilla. Ja tietenkin tunnuksia useilla eri foorumeilla ja tällasilla. Ystäväverkosto siellä jossa on tietenkin ihmisii joita mä oon tavannu muuta kautta mutta myös sellasii ihmisii jotka on jotenkin kiinnostunu transihmisistä, ja täysin eri foorumit missä mä olen, eri Facebook-ryhmät, mul on kaks Facebook-tiliä. "</i></p>	<p><i>"Now I have a complete digital identity by the name Maija. I have my own email address, phone number, most have these. And of course passwords and IDs in many forums and such like. A network of friends there, where there are people that I have met through other instances, but also people who are somehow interested in transpeople and completely different forums where I am, different Facebook-groups. I have two Facebook accounts. "</i></p>

24	<p><i>"Mutta poikaprofiilina mä en oo koskaan oikeen, siellä ei oo mitään aktiivisuutta paljo oikeestaa koskaa ollu. Et, koska en mä pysty silleen, ei mulla siellä semmosta itestäni kuvaakaa oo. Oon mä muutamia poikakuvia ottanu mut se nimenomaan ei, se on nii jotenki et tuntuu et ei se, en mä, mä en tunne itteäni. Tai.</i></p>	<p><i>"But as a boy-profile I have never really, there has never been much activity. So, as I cannot you know, I do not have there a photo either. I have taken some boy photos, but that exactly is not, that really does not feel, I do not recognise myself. Or."</i></p>
25	<p><i>"teini-iässä koska ei ollu sitä omaa, tätä tämän maailman ei-interaktiivisen niin semmost identiteettiä kasvanu niin mä kasvatin sitä siellä interaktiivisessa. Niin mä pelasin naishahmoilla ja sit, mahdollisimman sitten rakensin sitä kautta siellä sitä identiteettiä sitten."</i></p>	<p><i>"In the teens, because I did not have developed my own, this today's world's non-interactive identity, I developed it in the interactive [world]. So I played as female figures and then built the identity through that."</i></p>
26	<p><i>"ensinnäkin se on turvallisempaa monella tavalla sähköisesti koska sä pystyt paljastaan itsestä vaan sen verran kun sä haluat."</i></p>	<p><i>"First of all, digitally it is safer in many ways, because you can reveal just as much as you choose, about yourself."</i></p>
27	<p><i>"Halus jotenki ite, vähä kehittyä että jos olis esim. ku mä mietin et jos mä oisin kertonu pari kolme vuotta sitten jollon mä oisin ehkä ollu valmis jo, tietyllä tavalla niin siinä oli sitte ehkä myös se pelko että tulee hylätyks mut myös se että sitte kun kertoo muille niin se oma identiteettikasvu tulee, voi, en tiiä. Siit tulee semmonen olo et se voi joutuu manipuloiduks vähän. Koska sitte tulee niit vaikutteita alkaa tulla muilta. Ei pysty kasvaan enää silleen itse jotenki."</i></p>	<p><i>"Somehow you wanted to develop yourself, so when I think if I had told two three years ago, when I was somewhat ready, there is was also the fear of being abandoned. But also when you tell, the own identity growth comes along, oh, I do not know. It feels as if it may be manipulated a little. Because then you will be influenced by others. Then you are not able to grow independently somehow."</i></p>
28	<p><i>"Justiinsa se että itteeki vähän harmittaa ku tuli ylipäätänsä kerrotaan kenellekään, et nyt se ei oo salaisuus enää täysin. Ku se pikkasen vie sitä.. ei nyt paljoo, mut pikkasen vie kuiteski sitä tunnelmaa pois siitä."</i></p>	<p><i>"Exactly that I feel a little annoyed that I even told anyone, so now it is not a complete secret anymore. Well that is slightly...not much but a little downer."</i></p>

29	<i>"Et me aateltiin että me kyllä kerrotaan jossain vaiheessa, mutta tällä hetkellä varsinkin tää seittämänvuotias kun se on niin, se kertoo kaiken ja kaikille. Niin me aateltiin et, me suojellaan ihan niitä itteensä, ettei niille tuu ongelmii."</i>	<i>"We thought that we will be telling at some point, but at the moment especially, this seven-year-old tells everything to everybody. So we thought we will protect the, for them not to have any problems."</i>
30	<i>"Ei, pikemminki, emmä pelkää sitä mitä he, mutta mä tosiaan pelkään sitä että heille tämä olisi shokki suorastaan."</i>	<i>"No, more like, I am not afraid of what they, but I am really afraid that this would be a total shock for them."</i>
31	<i>"se on vähän taivasta ja helvettiä samaan aikaan. Jatkuvast semmonen ilo mutta jatkuvasti on semmonen pelko että kohta ovi käy ja, sitte joutuu tukalaan tilanteeseen ku joutuu sulkemaan oven ja sanoo et "en mä, mä en täällä puuhaa mitään" ku laatikot kolisee ja kaikkea siellä."</i>	<i>"It is like heaven and hell at the same time. Continuous joy but constantly there's a fear that soon the door goes and you are in a difficult situation and you must close the door and say that "I'm not doing anything here" when drawers are banging and everything there."</i>
32	<i>"Onhan se hirveen paljon helpompaa siellä. Ja siihen ei tartte valmistautua sen enempää, et sä voit olla minä hetkenä tahansa siellä Leenana. Vaikka keskellä työpäivää. Siinä on ainaki aivan olennainen ero."</i>	<i>"It sure is so much easier there. And you do not have to prepare much, so you can be Leena there at any time. Even in the middle of working day. There is, at least, essential difference."</i>
33	<i>"Siellä kun tosiaan sitä ääntä ei ole ikään ku painolastina, ni siellähän voi sit tavallaan revitellä täysin."</i>	<i>"There you really do not have the voice as a burden, so there you can properly go nuts."</i>
34	<i>"mul on siellä kymmenkunta eritasoista julkaisuasetusta kenelle kaikille tämä näkyy."</i>	<i>"I have there about ten different levels for the publicity settings to whom all this is visible."</i>
35	<i>"Mutta siinä se että netistä ku ei saa mitään pois niin se on järkevintä yrittää rakentaa siten että niit ei voida yhdistää keskenään"</i>	<i>"But because you cannot erase things from the Internet, it is wisest to try and build it in a way that they cannot be connected."</i>

36	<p><i>"Mä tiedän valitettavan hyvin mistä täs on, silti niistä riskeistä huolimatta mä oon kuitenkin menny sinne. Koska tuntuu et ei mulla tällä hetkellä oikein muutakaan keinoa ole."</i></p>	<p><i>"I know sadly well what this is about, still despite the risks I have gone there. Because it feels like at this point I do not have any other way."</i></p>
37	<p><i>"Facebook käyttää kuvantunnistusta nykyään ja siit on tullu muutama ongelma että on arkiminällä julkassut joskus valokuvia ja sitten sanonut Facebookille että, antanut jonkun tagata itsensä johonkin valokuvaan ja se tietää että noilla kasvopiirteillä se ihminen on tämä. Sitten siellä on joku kuva missä sä oot toisessa roolissa ja joku laittaa sen ja sit yhtäkkii Facebook sanoo että "hei, onkos tuo se ja se henkilö?"</i></p>	<p><i>"Facebook uses the photo identifier at present. That has raised some problems when you have published photos as everyday self and then told the Facebook that you have let someone tag you to some photo and it know from that connection that a person with those facial feature is this. Then there is is a photo where you are in another role and someone suddenly posts it and asks whether that is this person."</i></p>
38	<p><i>"Ku sehän (Facebook) tekee sitä et se nuuskii niitä et kuka on käyny missäki, niin se rupee ehdottelemaan."</i></p>	<p><i>"It [Facebook] does that snooping, who has visited which site, then it starts to suggest."</i></p>
39	<p><i>"Ja mä yritän ne pitää ainakin jollain tavalla erillään että mä käytän eri selaimia ja tommosii ja tälläsii."</i></p>	<p><i>"And I try to keep them separate at least somehow. I use for example different browsers etc."</i></p>
40	<p><i>"Ja esiinnyin sitten naispuolisena, tyttönä, siellä pelissä ja sitten joskus ilmotin jopa olevani tyttö. Siinä tuli sitte tietenki ongelmia ku haluttiinki jo, yhtäkkii sano että "onks sulla mikrofoni" se onki sitte että "no ei ole" että, siinä tulee viimestään siin kohtaa se ettei voikaan. Että sit siin ajatteli että "ei he-, et mihin soppaan mä itteni tässä nyt laitan"</i></p>	<p><i>"And I appear then as a female, a girl, there in the game and then sometimes I even told I was a girl. Then there were some problems when people wanted, suddenly said that "have you got microphone" and it was then that "no I don't" Then latest at that point you realise that you cannot. Then you started to think that what am I getting into?"</i></p>

41	<p><i>”Niin siinä tietysti alkuvaiheessahan se oli se hirvee jännitys että pitää salassa. Se oli ihan uskomaton kynnys ees tilata netistä mitään, koska siinä, omalta tililtähän ne rahat menee niin senhän näkee sitte. Sit mä rupesin miettii et mitä ihmeen väliä sillä on, ja siis viranomaiset on viimeinen asia ketä se kiinnostaa ku ei oo sillai mitään pyrkimyksiä mihinkään ihmeempiin tehtäviin enää. Et seki kai siinä oli että kyllähän se tietysti sulkee sitte paljon ovia tuolta tommosiin.”</i></p>	<p><i>”Yes, in the beginning there was this high nervousness to keep it secret. It was a very big thing to even consider to order anything online, because the money goes from your own bank account and there you can see it then. Then I began to think, does it really matter. And the officials are the last group who would be interested about it, as I do not have any ambitions for any special positions anymore. It was I guess one thing that it does of course close some doors there.”</i></p>
42	<p><i>”sit ku mä tajusin ite olevani transihminen niin se niinku mä totesin et mä en oo kumpikaan tai mä oon molemmat niin mullahan romuttu koko siihen astinen niinku käsitemaailma ja mä jouvuin muuttamaan koko sukupuolikäsitykseni sekä itseni että muiden suhteen ihan uusiksi ja kun viime kädessä kaikki ihmiset on periaatteessa persoonia jos ruettas hiuksia halkomaan niin ihminen on yksin omaan sukupuolensa”</i></p>	<p><i>”so, when I discovered that I am a trans person, that I am neither or I am both, it shattered the conceptual world I had had until that point. I had to then completely change the genderl perception about myself and others. And ultimately everyone is a person so if we started to split hairs, person is solely their sex.”</i></p>
43	<p><i>”mä liikon siellä melko vapaasti. Mul on työrooli joka on, työssä tai sen mun virallisen sukupuolen mukaan mutta sitten muissa yhteyksissä mä oon vaihtelevasti sitten enemmän tai vähemmän feminiini ja välillä jotain muuta, jotain täysin siitä ulkopuolelta.”</i></p>	<p><i>”I go around there quite freely. I have a work role that I have at work or it is according to my official sex, but then in other occasions I am more or less feminine and sometimes something else, something completely different.”</i></p>
44	<p><i>”et mitä tutumpi porukka niin sen enemmän se elää tavallaan se mun sukupuoli tavallaan et se voi pomppia ihan laidasta laitaan ja olla niinku semmonen ku heittää tennispalloa isoon saaviin.“</i></p>	<p><i>”the more familiar group, the more it lives, meaning my sex, so it can jump from one end to another and it may be as if someone was throwing a tennisball into a large tub.”</i></p>

45	<i>“Siit ei tiedä et, oonks mä, huolimaton sillee et mä en välitä vai sillee et mä huoli ollenkaa.”</i>	<i>“You cannot say that am I careless, that I do not care or that I don’t want at all”</i>
46	<i>“nii ku miä oon transihminen se on niin vapauttavaa ko muut joutuu aina niinku noudattelemaan kaikkia normeja et miten ne pukeutuu ja miten ne käyttäytyy mie teen just niinku mie haluan”</i>	<i>”yes, like because I am a trans person it is so liberating when everyone else has to follow all the norms of how to dress and behave, but I do exactly as I please.”</i>
47	<i>”mulla on etuna se että mä en oo kadottanu sitä maskuliinista puolta. Mä pystyn tuomaan sen esiin tietyissä tilanteissa. Ja sillä ottamaan tilanteen haltuun.”</i>	<i>”I have the advantage that I have not lost the masculine side. I can bring that out in specific situations. And take over the situation. ”</i>
48	<i>“mulla on neljän tuuman korkkarit jalassa ja nätti mekko meikki naamassa ja peruukki hyvin noin niinku ulkoisesti hyvinkin naisellinen ja sitten mie karjun ku rantarosvo”</i>	<i>”I am wearing four inch high heels and nice dress, make up on and a wig, so to the outside very feminine and then I roar like a bandit.”</i>
49	<i>”Et täs on jo muutenki paljo enemmän tehtävää aamulla. Sitte jumalauta jos pitäis vielä alkaa meikata siihen päälle.”</i>	<i>”There’s already so much more to do in the mornings. Then if you, goddamn, had to start to put make up on as well.”</i>
50	<i>”Koska moni tommonen joka on korjannu ihan täysin sukupuolensa mitä oon puhunu ni jotenki puhunu et se poikaminä kuolee pois. Se on hirvee ajatus mun mielest. Koska eihän kukaan kuole, pois koska se on kuitenkin se mitä on rakentanu itessään. Ja joka, ja siitähän se tyttöminä on kehittynyt. Juuri semmoseks mitä on. Niin se on hirvee ajatus kokonaan et se poikaminä kuolis kokonaan pois. Se on ehkä just että haluaa tavallaan säilyttää sen oman tarinan jotenki siellä takana.”</i>	<i>”Because many, who have completely reassigned gender, what I have had conversations, well the boy-me dies. It is, for me, a terrible idea. Because no-one really dies, as it is anyway what you have built within you. And from there the girl-me has developed to exactly what it is. So it is a horrible idea to completely lose the boy-me.”</i>



51	<p><i>“olihan mulla viime lokakuussa ku ajoin tukkani pois ihan semmosella partaterällä niinku ihan silleen sileäksi ihan iholle yks mun ystävätär meikkas mut laitettiin kuitenkin ihan tekoriipset ja oikeen hyvä meikki ja vielä meikkivoiteella peitettiin se hius hiuksen varjo partaterällä vejettiin ihan sileäksi mutta sitten se vielä se hiusten varjo peitettiin vielä meikkivoiteella että saatiin niinku ihan semmonen kaljupää ku mahdollista oli mulla seki varmaan kaks kuukautta profiilikuvana”</i></p>	<p><i>“We I did have last October, when I shaved my head with a razor, one of my girlfriends did my make up and false lashes and a good make up on and then we added foundation to cover the hairline shadow, so that we created my head as bold as possible. I had that [photo] as a profile picture for, like, two months.”</i></p>
52	<p><i>”mä koen et se vaan on niinku kohteliasta eikä mulla ollu semmonen olo et tää on mun yksityisasia et mä en voi kertoa tästä kenellekään koska se on niin ilmeistä mun mielestä se oli niin ilmeistä”</i></p>	<p><i>”I consider it polite, and I did not have the feeling that it was my private issue, that I could not tell anyone, as it was so obvious.”</i></p>
53	<p><i>”Mä puhun kaikesta avoimesti, oon aina tehny sitä. Koska mä oon kerran jääny, nolosti valheesta kiinni. Niin mä oon sen jälkeen päättäny että, tästä lähin niin mä aina puhun ihan suoraan. Et jos joku ei ymmärrä niin se on se, nolo sitten.”</i></p>	<p><i>”I talk openly about everything, I always have. Because I have once been caught of a lie which was very embarrassing. Since that, I have decided that from now on I always talk directly. So if someone does not understand, they will be the embarrassing ones then.”</i></p>
54	<p><i>”Ei sieltä taivaalta tullu sammakoita tai tulikiveä. Et hyvin paljon se pelko oli itse luotua. Mut se sosiaalinen media siinä salli sen et mä en menny jokaselle sanomaan etukäteen. Vaan se viesti jäi sinne ja saivat rauhassa mutustella sitä. Et se oli siinä myös sen verkkomaailman etu.”</i></p>	<p><i>”It did not rain frogs or brimstones. The fear was mostly self-creation. But the social media allowed me not to tell everyone in advance. Instead the message was there for everyone to take in. That was also an advantage of the online world.”</i></p>
55	<p><i>“Pelkästään se että mä oon nyt tullut esille jollakin tavalla avannut jonkunlaisen lipan ja venttiilin itsessäni, edes virtuaalisessa, se on auttanu hirveesti. Se on auttanu paljon.”</i></p>	<p><i>“Only the fact that I have come out and somehow opened myself, even in the virtual, it has helped me very much.”</i></p>

56	<i>“Ja varsinkin siinä on se että jos semmoset henkilöt mitä ei oo ikinä tavannu eikä todennäköisesti ikinä tulekaan tapaamaan, ja niitten kanssahan se on kaikkein helpoin puhua aina.”</i>	<i>”And there is especially the point, that if there are persons who you have never met and you never possibly will meet again, with them it is easiest to talk always.”</i>
57	<i>”Mut mulla on tää, sitä mukaa ku mä oon avautunu, ni mulla on myös avautunu tää maailma että ne ahdistukset on kadonneet. Vielä kymmenen vuotta sitte oli aika hurjat.”</i>	<i>”But I have this, whilst I have opened up, this world has opened up for me that the anxiety has disappeared. Ten years ago I still had quite rough [anxiety].”</i>
58	<i>“tai että jokin jännite laskisi tai jokin sellanen, jokin sellanen, se on vähän että kun on jokin ristiriita, josta vaikenee, mut sitte ku sen jollain tavalla.. käsittelee sitä niin se henkinen psyykkinen jännitys jotenki on liudentunut.“</i>	<i>”Or that the tension would decrease, when you are experiencing a contradiction, that you do not talk about, but when you deal with it, the psychological tension has somehow diminished.”</i>
59	<i>”Itse asiassa nyt ku on liikkunu tuolla, onpa siellä nyt melkein kuka tahansa, ni ei kenelläkään oo tämmöstä vastaan mitään.”</i>	<i>”As a matter of fact, now that I have been around there, regardless of who there is, no-one has anything against this.”</i>
60	<i>“he ovat yllättävänki hyvin ottaneet vastaan. Olen saanut ihan rakentavia kommentteja.”</i>	<i>”They have taken it surprisingly well. I have received quite constructive comments.”</i>
61	<i>”No se on ainut asia mikä mua, kaduttaa ihan hemmetisti et mä en silloin ekakerralla kuunnellu itteäni ja menny tätä kaikkea läpi. Et mä voisin väittää että, noin 20 vuotta mun elämästä olis helvetin paljon helpompaa. Et ei olis tarvinnu, tavallaan tapella siitä omasta sijasta vaan olis puhtaasti voinu olla sitä mitä on.”</i>	<i>”Well the only thing that I regret very much is that I did not go through all this at the first time. I could argue that about 20 years of my life would have been a hell of a lot easier. So that I would not have had to fight over my own space, but to simply be what I am.”</i>

62	<p><i>"Mutta toisaalta tällä hetkellä lakiki on mun puolella, koska 2015 tammikuussa tasa-arvolakiin tuli semmonen kun sukupuolen ilmaus syrjintäperusteeksi. Joka tarkoittaa myöskin sitä että jos mä haluan olla jonaki päivänä siellä mekossa, niin silloin sitä ei saa kukaan kieltää."</i></p>	<p><i>"But on the other hand, at the moment even the law is on my side, because in Jan 2015 the Equality Act was amended with a clause that the bleeding of gender can be used as an argument for discrimination. It also means that if I one day wish to be there in a dress, no-one can deny me that right."</i></p>
63	<p><i>"Nii ei voi, en mäkään kaikkia voi tietää. Nyt mä oon välil, nyt mä oon vaan vähä antanu mennä. Et jos mä en nyt jotain tiää niin sit mä oon ajatellu et nyt menköö että joo et joku raja. Koska muuten tulee hulluks."</i></p>	<p><i>"True, it cannot, I do not know everything either. No I have sometimes, now I have just let it go. I mean, If I do not know something then I have thought, well what ever, some limits. Because otherwise you go crazy."</i></p>
64	<p><i>"Piti sanoa että mä haluan omalla olemisella totuttaa ihmisten silmän, että tämmösiä on, joka antaa sitten tilaa muillekin ja rohkasua sitä kautta. Se on hirvittävän tärkeä asia. Mä kuljen tuolla kadulla ja mä oon koko ajan poliittinen."</i></p>	<p><i>"I wanted to say, that by being me, I want to get people's eyes used to the fact that there are people like this. This would then give room and encouragement for others. It is so important. I walk the streets and I am political at all times."</i></p>
65	<p><i>"Mä muistan, se oli yks hetki. Mä olin Munkkiniemen rannassa ottamassa aurinkoo bikineissä ensimmäistä kertaa. Ja mä sillä hetkellä oikein sen luita ja ytimiä myöten tajusin, että mä oon täällä näin itse asiassa poliittisena eläimenä, juuri siinäkin tilanteessa."</i></p>	<p><i>"I remember, it was a single moment. I was sunbathing in Munkkiniemenranta in a bikini for the first time. And I, at that moment felt it in my bones and realised, that I was a political animal, even in that situation."</i></p>
66	<p><i>"miä menin pitkine punasine kynsieni pienien rintojeni kans sänkitukkani kans sinne miesten puolelle saunaan jos siellä nyt jollaki tuli maha kipiäksi ni ei se ollu minun maha (Naurua)"</i></p>	<p><i>"I went to sauna to the men's side with my long red nails, small breasts and a stubble hair, so if someone had a stomachache from that, that was not me [Laughing]."</i></p>
67	<p><i>"Yks syy näiden meidän julkisille teatterimatkoille on se että kun me näyttäydytään kadulle niin ihmiset oppii että ei ne nyt ton ihmeellisempiä sitten olekaan, eli me tehdään sellasta valistustyötä."</i></p>	<p><i>"One reason for our public theatre trips is that when we appear on the streets, people learn that these people are not so weird after all, so we do that kind of educational work."</i></p>

68	<p><i>"mulle tuli välil semmone että mä tyydyn pelkkään siihen virtuaalitodellisuuteen. Mut mä oon sen oppinu että en oo tarvi tyytyä siihen. Että se ja, kyl mä yhä enemmän koen et nimenomaan että se oli ehkä semmonen tietty pakopaikka mikä joskus oli. Mut nykyään se on vaan semmonen pieni vaihtoehtonen menetelmä."</i></p>	<p><i>"Sometimes I had that feeling that I would settle for the virtual reality. But I have learned that there is no need to settle for that. So that, and I also feel like it was a kind place to escape sometimes. But now it is just a small alternative method."</i></p>
69	<p><i>"mulle on.. En mä tiä johtuuko se sitten siitä että, joka kerta kun mä kohtaan ihmisen ja.. saahaan keskustella tai jotain niin, mä saan voimaa ittelleni siitä. Ja taas tulee se että.. mä voin olla se oma itteni. En mä osaa selittää sitä mutta.."</i></p>	<p><i>"To me..I do not know, if it is that every time I meet a person and... we get to have a conversation or something, I get power from that. And I get to be myself. I cannot really explain it but..."</i></p>
70	<p><i>"Et jos, kenties näyttäytymällä enemmän niin maailmasta tulis turvallisempi paikka tai parempi paikka."</i></p>	<p><i>"That perhaps, by appearing more, the world would become safer or better place."</i></p>
71	<p><i>"Kyllä mut en oo vieläkään uskaltanu. Ku mä oon ajatellu et sinne pitäis mennä laittautuneena mut mä en oo uskaltanu lähteä."</i></p>	<p><i>"Yes but I still have not had the courage. When I have thought that ou should go there all dressed up, but I have not dared to go."</i></p>
72	<p><i>"mä oon huomannu senkin että ihmiset ovat todella varovaisia. Jostakin kumman syystä [naurahtaa]. Tämä oli sarkasmia mutta.. niin, ihmiset on hirvittävän, ei voi sanoa ehkä nyt epäluulosia mutta siis, pitävät etäisyyttä uusiin ihmisiin kyllä."</i></p>	<p><i>"I also noticed that people are very careful. For some odd reason [laughter]. This was sarcasm but..yeah, people are awfully, you can't quite say suspicious, but, they keep the distance to new people."</i></p>
73	<p><i>"mä oon lukenu muiden trans tai koko ajan mä oon lukenu eri transnaisten ennen kaikkea transnaisten juttuja ja niitä on enemmän saatavillakin juttelu vertaisteni kanssa internetissä ulkomaalaisia ja suomessakin suomalaisia ja oon nyt oivaltanu et se on tosi tärkeä mun identiteetin ja sen kannalta mitä mä niinku tunnen olevani ja miten mä voin ilmaista "</i></p>	<p><i>"I have read, mainly about trans-women, and those are also more available. To talk with my peers online, foreigners and in Finland with Finnish also, and I have realised that it is very important for my identity and how I can express."</i></p>

74	<p><i>"Oli se sit ihan tää jotenki virallinen tai sit ihan henkinenki prosessi, et, miten, sukupuolellisesti ilmasee tai miten, ylipäättään haluu ilmasta itteään ni, semmoses turvallisemmas ympäristös, postaa vaiks kuvii sillee et, tänään mä nyt pukeuduun tälleen ja nyt mä aattelen, tai, et, vitsit et, jos, uskaltaisinpa pukeutuu tällee huomenna kouluun tai tämmöstä. Ja sit, saada silleen tukee silleen muilt, just no."</i></p>	<p><i>"It was also this, somehow, official or plain psychological process of how to express yourself through gender, or how you want to express yourself in general. So, in a safer environment, to like post photos about today I dress up like this, or like, I wish I had the courage to dress up to school like that tomorrow. And through that, to get support from others, oh well."</i></p>
75	<p><i>"tälläsis tilaisuuksis nimenomaan se ryhmän tuki et me ollaan kaikki tässä nyt tällä tavalla ja tämä on meidän oma piiri jossa ollaan turvassa ulkopuolisten katseilta."</i></p>	<p><i>"In this kind of events the group support, that we are all here now like this and this is our own circle where we are safe from the outsiders looks."</i></p>
76	<p><i>"Onhan sillä aika suuri merkitys et voi olla, kun ei tästä transvestismista tarvitse enää erikseen puhua, nyt se on selvästi näkyvillä, ni sit siihen ei tarvitse enää kiinnittää huomiota. Tää kuulostaa aika paradoksaaliselta."</i></p>	<p><i>"It has a quite remarkable meaning that it can be that when this transvestism is not anymore something you have to separately discuss about, now it is clearly out there, then you do not have to pay attention to it anymore. This sounds pretty paradoxical."</i></p>
77	<p><i>"Mutta semmonen tietty transnormatiivisuus, joka on ihan hassukin. Ja se on Suomessa hyvin paljon kuitenkin olemassa, jossa pitää olla nimenomaan tavismuija. Jos sä olet vähänkin enemmän laittautunu, ni se voi ikään kun antaa vinkkiä et jos sä et ookaan aito, jos sä ootki vaan transvestiitti."</i></p>	<p><i>"But the certain transnormativity, that is even funny. And that very much exists in Finland, that you have to be an ordinary woman. If you are a little more dressed up, then that can give hint about whether you are real after all, whether you are a just a transvestite."</i></p>
78	<p><i>"Niin ja kuinka paljon sitten on niitä jotka elävät edelleen salassa ja pimennossa eivätkä kerro."</i></p>	<p><i>"Yes and how many are there, who continue to live secretly and in darkness and do not tell."</i></p>
79	<p><i>"Siellä on kaikki tämmösiä transihmisiä joo. Ja ihan kaikki oikeestaan tätä jollain tavalla liittyy tähän."</i></p>	<p><i>"There all are these kinds of transpeople, yes. And everything actually somehow has to do with this."</i></p>