

**“LOOK, HERE I AM, I DO EXIST.”  
PARENTING EXPERIENCES OF TRANS PEOPLE IN  
THE 21ST CENTURY IN LATIN AMERICA.  
CASE STUDY THROUGH THE BIOGRAPHICAL APPROACH**

by

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## **Abstract**

In Latin America, a CisHeteroNormative family structure marginalizes LGBTIQ individuals from marital and parental roles. Despite social and legal risks, trans people continue to assert and practice parenting in adverse conditions. This case study aims to understand trans people's parenting experiences from a feminist post/decolonial perspective, using theories of subalternity and intersectionality. The main question addressed is: What are the parenting experiences of trans people in Latin America considering the challenges they encounter, the resources available, and the strategies of agency and resistance they employ? The study involved biographical interviews and Intersectional Looms with nine trans parents who have lived in Latin America for at least a year. Participants included four Mexicans (44.4%), three Chileans (33.3%), one Venezuelan (11.1%), and one Guatemalan (11.1%). Four identified as trans women (44.4%) and five as trans men (55.6%). Ages ranged from 35 to 69 years (mean age 49.22, SD 11.75). Parenting duration ranged from one to 43 years (mean 18 years, SD 12.25) and post-transition parenting ranged from one to 16 years (mean 6.88 years, SD 4.30). The number of children per participant ranged from one to three (mean 2, SD 0.67). Participants accessed parenting through previous heterosexual relationships (66.67%) and intrafamilial adoption (33.33%). Obstacles and challenges faced include socio-structural conditions, state-institutional conditions, and microsocial environment conditions, leading to various personal and transgender parenting concerns. Resources identified include social conditions, legal protection, and personal conditions. Strategies of protection, agency, and resistance were categorized into personal and relational coping mechanisms. This study highlights the need for legal frameworks that recognize diverse families and ensure their protection and equality under the law.

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## **Glossary**

**Assisted fertilization:** Medical procedure to support conception.

**Cisgender:** A person who conforms with one of the two options of sex-gender identifications that are available in the binary model male-female.

**Extrafamilial adoption:** Parenting a child with whom a relationship is established through legal extrafamilial adoption procedures.

**Heterosexual:** A person who feels sexual and affective attraction to persons labeled and identified with the “opposite sex”.

**Intrafamilial adoption:** Taking care of a child who is the offspring of another family member by blood or affinity, which may or may not involve legal adoption of the child.

**Latin America:** Argentina, Bolivia, Brasil, Chile, Colombia, Costa, Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Uruguay, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, and Haiti.

**LGBTIQA+:** Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual, and other people who dissent from the binary ideology of gender, and sexual-affective orientation.

**Parenting through agreements:** Different-sex couples agree to conceive a child and undertake parenting without forming a relationship.

**Parenting through previous heterosexual relationship:** The TP had a relationship with a person of a different sex before transitioning, resulting in one or more children.

**Parenting through trans relationships:** Conception of a child based on sexual difference between members of a couple that includes one or more trans person.

**PE:** Parenting Experiences.

**TP:** Trans People.

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## Chapter One. Introduction

This introduction aims to contextualize the Parenting Experiences (PE) of Trans People (TP) in Latin America by exploring the ideological assumptions about gender and sexuality and the unique challenges faced within the Latin American socio-cultural landscape. The introduction is structured around the following main themes: The historical and ideological assumptions of gender and sexuality in pre-colonial and colonial Latin America, the CisHeteroNormative Judeo-Christian Model (CHNJCM) imposed since the Spanish invasion, and the contemporary challenges and experiences of TP in parenting within this context. This chapter provides an overview of the study's aims, research questions, theoretical framework, and the relevance of the research in contributing to the understanding of TP's PE.

Latin America<sup>1</sup>, has been shaped by a complex interplay of Indigenous traditions, colonial histories, and modern socio-political movements. The region's socio-cultural landscape reflects a blend of Indigenous, African, and European influences (Sánchez-Recio, 2019), resulting in diverse cultural expressions and societal norms. Despite the diverse cultural expressions and societal norms, there are several commonalities that Latin American countries share to this day. These shared traits are rooted in the imperial systems that extended across Latin America pre-Spanish invasion, the high rate of trade between Indigenous nations that existed prior to the invasion, and the specific culture imposed during colonization by Spain and its neighbor Portugal (Quijano, 2014). The colonization by these two countries created a

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<sup>1</sup> I follow Sánchez-Recio's (2019) definition of Latin America, who considers Argentina, Bolivia, Brasil, Chile, Colombia, Costa, Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and Uruguay as the core nations of Latin America; she also considers Cuba, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, and Haiti -the Hispanic Caribbean- as close to the nuclear core concept of Latin America.

relatively homogeneous cultural and linguistic foundation that still influences the region (de Souza Santos, 2011; Quijano, 2014). This shared colonial history has left a lasting impact on the legal, religious, and social structures across Latin America.

Regarding gender and sexual orientation, in Latin America some Indigenous communities interpreted them as fluid (Bacigalupo, 2010; Lugones, 2010; Segato, 2013). These pre-colonial ideologies clashed with the CisHeteroNormative Judeo-Christian Model (CHNJCM) imposed on Latin American peoples since the Spanish invasion. Understanding this historical context is essential for comprehending the contemporary issues faced by TP in Latin America, as the legacy of colonialism and the CHNJCM continue to shape and challenge their experiences today.

Since the CHNJCM maintains a binary conception of gender and sexual-affective orientation, in which there are only two possible social identities: male and female, which are considered "opposites" and can feel sexual or affective attraction only towards the opposite (Mann, 2012), it grants a foundation for discrimination against TP. Also, the CHNJCM imposes three requirements for every person: to be cisgender<sup>2</sup>, to be heterosexual<sup>3</sup>, and to conform to the hegemonic family life cycle norm, meaning forming a couple, getting married, having children, and forming a family (Castañeda-Rentería, 2016) which also clashes with the experiences of TP.

These prescribed steps, intended for Cisgender Heterosexual Persons (CHPs) (Castañeda-Rentería, 2016), solidify a CisHeteroNormative family structure, marginalizing LGBTIQA+<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> To conform with one of the two options of sex-gender identifications that are available in the binary model male-female.

<sup>3</sup> To feel sexual and affective attraction to persons labeled and identified with the "opposite sex".

<sup>4</sup> Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual, and other people who dissent from the binary ideology of gender, and sexual-affective orientation.

people from marital and parental roles<sup>5</sup>, since the CHNJCM ideology is embedded in social and legal systems and continues to exert tangible effects on the lives of TP. For example, identification laws in many Latin American countries only recognize two genders in civil registry systems, excluding non-binary and queer people and preventing/hindering TP people from adjust their identification documents to their gender. Additionally, marriage laws often stipulate that marriage must be between a man and a woman, thereby excluding a significant portion of the LGBTIQA+ community. Public policies frequently prioritize heterosexual couples, such as assisted insemination laws that primarily benefit those in traditional heterosexual marriages, further marginalizing LGBTIQA+ people (Alday-Mondaca, & Lay-Lisboa, 2021a, b).

TP face heightened stigma, prejudice, and discrimination within the LGBTIQA+ community (Barrientos, 2015; Barrientos et al., 2019; Brito, 2019; Tomicic et al., 2016). Despite enduring social and legal risks, TP assert and practice parenting even in adverse conditions (Condat et al., 2020; Condat et al., 2018), contending with discrimination, violence, and rights limitations to satisfy their parental aspirations and human needs (Alday-Mondaca, 2022; Alday-Mondaca & Lay-Lisboa, 2021a, 2021b; Condat et al., 2018; Imrie et al., 2020; James-Abra, 2015).

For some TP, the prospect of parenting represents a significant aspect of their life plan, although societal inequities may impede the realization of their desires and intentions (Malmquist et al., 2021). Access to parenting enables TP to cultivate their self-identity and

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<sup>5</sup> I follow Palomar (2005), who states that parenting refers to people who engender, conceive, give birth to, and raise children without distinction of sex/gender, based on a shared common responsibility, mutating daily child-rearing practices to include children in diverse affective constellations.



receive social validation, aiding in the expression and consolidation of an identity aligned with their aspirations (James-Abra et al., 2015). Despite evidence demonstrating that children raised by LGBTIQ+ do not experience adverse developmental outcomes (Gartrell & Bos, 2010; Gates, 2013; Gender and Social Change, n.d.; Goldberg, 2010; Imrie et al., 2020), baseless concerns persist, resulting in discriminatory curtailment or denial of TP's parental rights (Imrie et al., 2020).

Despite the growing body of research on LGBTIQ+ families, the experiences of TP who engage in parenting remain underexplored, particularly in the Latin American context (Goldberg, 2010). Research on LGBTIQ+ families has traditionally been limited and focused on the experiences of/effects on children (Bos et al., 2007; Goldberg, 2010; Golombok & Tasker, 1996; Patterson, 2006). However, the study of families where the caregivers are part of the LGBTIQ+ community is an emerging area that is gaining more attention in the academic literature (Gate, 2013; Imrie et al., 2020).

There is a significant gap in understanding the unique PE of TP, who often navigate additional layers of discrimination and legal hurdles. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the specific challenges, resources, and strategies employed by TP in Latin America. By focusing on this marginalized group, the research seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of their PE and contribute to more inclusive social and legal policies. This study also aimed to enhance the understanding of TP PE from a feminist post/decolonial perspective, theories of subalternity, and intersectionality standpoint (Letherby, 2003; Rice, 2009).

The main question of the research was: What are the PE of TP in Latin America considering the challenges they encounter, the resources at their disposal, and the strategies of agency and resistance they employ? The research question comprises the following

subquestions: 1. Describe the obstacles and challenges faced by TP concerning PE, considering the intersectional effects of their different social locations/identities; 2. Analyze how TP articulate the resources they have to address the obstacles and challenges of PE, considering the intersectional effects of their different social locations/identities; 3. Analyze the strategies of protection, agency and resistance that TP employ in their PE.

As the study of TP-formed families is still emerging, qualitative methodologies are recommended for in-depth understanding (Imrie et al., 2020; Letherby, 2003; Lerner et al., 2015; Zadeh et al., 2019). In previous research, I focused on LGBT people's PE (Alday-Mondaca, et al., 2023; Alday-Mondaca, 2022a; Alday-Mondaca & Lay-Lisboa, 2022a, 2022b; Alday-Mondaca et al., 2022; Alday-Mondaca & Lay-Lisboa, 2021a, 2021b) providing a foundation to delve deeper into TP PE in Latin America, considering conditions that were relevant to make the experiences different, such as country of residence, ethnicity, class, education, among others.

The theoretical framework of Intersectionality and post/de(s)colonial feminism were bases of the research and will be delineated in the following subsections.

### **Theoretical Perspective. Intersectionality**

Intersectionality theory conceptualizes and theorizes social inequities among various groups, originally focusing on inequities related to race and gender (Crenshaw, 1991; Mann, 2012). According to Crenshaw (1991), structural intersectionality refers to the intersection of inequalities present in two or more social groups with which a person identifies or is identified. To grasp the configuration of inequalities experienced by different groups, it is crucial to identify an axis (e.g., sex) and examine the relationship between the dominant group ("the One", which in the sex category would be males) and the subordinate group(s) in that axis ("the Other(s)",

females, and intersex people) (Crenshaw, 1991). For instance, Black women experience the discriminations/limitations of rights suffered by both women and Black people, generating a new web of subalternities whose effects are interwoven in a way that cannot be divided between these identities. Also, Black women face the fact that neither the social movements and public policies that seek to protect women nor those that seek to defend Black people meet all their needs and do not focus on their rights; therefore, their specific situation of vulnerability remains unaddressed (Crenshaw, 1991). Intersectional analyses enable the identification of the diverse experiences of oppression among people intersecting different axes, as well as the social positions that remain unaffected by such oppression because they represent "the One" (Viveros-Vigoya, 2016) in a specific context/activity.

Hancock (2007a, 2007b) asserts that the intersectional approach should account for multiple categories and fluidly related social locations/identities, which mutually constitute each other. A category/social location/identity dominant in one context may lose its dominance in another due to the fluid nature of their relationship. For instance, for a Black gay man, racialization may be a predominant category in broad social settings - if he attempts to go to college, he can be discriminated against due to racialization. On the other hand, race may lose relevance in micro-social settings, such as the neighbourhood where he lives or in his family relationships; in the case that in his micro-social settings, he is surrounded by Black people, and in that space, he being gay could become a more relevant category regarding the possibility of being discriminated. This openness and fluidity allow us to understand that people can be at the same time oppressed and oppressors (this same gay man can oppress women in his community), depending on their positioning in different contexts/relations of power (Mann, 2012).

Intersectionality theory aligns with advancements in post/de(s)colonial theory, which will be further examined in the subsequent section.

### **Theoretical Perspective. Post/De(s)colonial Theory**

In this research, I also adopted the perspective of post/de(s)colonial theory to inform both my methodological approach and the selection of study participants. Postcolonial theorists, influenced by Michel Foucault, underscore that hierarchical knowledge systems perpetuate power dynamics that subtly dictate inclusion and exclusion (Mann, 2012). Within qualitative methodologies, researchers and theorists recognize the value of diverse forms of knowledge production, particularly valuing techniques such as interviews with people who possess unique experiences (De la Maza et al., 2018). Postcolonial theorists further highlight that knowledge production occurs within specific power relations that often marginalize minoritized groups (Spivak, 2011). This consciousness is essential for researchers seeking to amplify the voices of subaltern peoples (Spivak, 2011). We must remain cognizant of the power dynamics between researchers and participants, ensuring that oppressive or colonial-extractive knowledge-generation processes are not replicated in our studies (Mohanty, 2008). Postcolonial theory serves as the foundation for a participatory research methodology. Moreover, postcolonial theory underscores that subaltern groups can enact resistance to combat their marginalization (Mohanty, 2008; Spivak, 2011). This research aimed to illuminate the resistance strategies and agency of TP in their lives and parenting experiences, refraining from portraying them solely as powerless subjects or victims of an unjust system devoid of agency.

Spivak (2011) posits that the concepts of the "Self" and the "Other" are interdependent; meaning the existence of a white settler necessitates the presence of a non-white subaltern. This

understanding underpins the construction of the "Intersectional Loom," the methodological framework employed for data production and analysis in this study (further details provided in the methodology chapter). Colonialism and imperialism, as emphasized by Spivak (2011), do not homogenize colonized peoples but instead foster hybridity between colonizers and colonized, potentially enabling latent resistance among the colonized. TP have similarly employed resistance strategies in their pursuit of parenting, as acknowledged in prior research (Alday-Mondaca, 2022; Alday-Mondaca & Lay-Lisboa, 2021a, 2021b; Condat et al., 2020; Condat et al., 2018; Imrie et al., 2020; James-Abra, 2015). These resistance tactics serve as the central focus of this research.

Spivak (2011) urged feminist thinkers to be critical of potential imperialist logic in feminist research, especially when speaking for/about others. To address this concern, a participatory dialogic methodology was implemented where participants could review and contribute at various research stages. This ensured that the conclusions of the final report were not solely the researcher's, but rather a collective analysis of all participants, combined carefully and respectfully.

Some Latin American authors who shared a critical assessment of colonialism and colonial practices called for an anti-imperialist approach through decolonial or descolonial theory (Lugones, 2010; Rivera Cusicanqui, 2010; Segato, 2013; Zapata, 2018). Decolonial/descolonial theory seeks to challenge and dismantle the enduring legacies of colonialism and imperialism in knowledge production, power structures, and social practices (Lugones, 2010; Rivera Cusicanqui, 2010; Segato, 2013; Zapata, 2018). Post/de(s)colonial and intersectionality theories formed the foundation of this research, underpinning the design and

production of the Intersectional Loom. They served as the guiding frameworks for data production, analysis, and the final research report.

## **Chapter Two. Literature Review**

This literature review aims to contextualize the PE of TP in Latin America by exploring the ideological assumptions about motherhood and the unique challenges faced within the Latin American socio-cultural landscape. This chapter is structured around two main themes: the ideological assumptions of motherhood and the PE of TP, and the Latin American context that shapes these experiences.

### **Ideological Assumptions of Motherhood and Trans People Parenting Experiences**

Adrienne Rich (1995) draws a distinction between the institution of motherhood and the act of mothering. According to Rich (1995), the institution of motherhood comprises a set of impositions, demands, and regulations that are (re)produced to maintain male control over women's reproductive potential. In contrast, mothering pertains to the "potential relationship of any woman to her powers of reproduction and to children" (p. 30). Rich acknowledges the intricate nature of motherhood and mothering, emphasizing their multidimensionality.

Building upon Rich's analysis, Andrea O'Reilly (2016, p. 14) posits ten ideological assumptions about motherhood as an institution, which are in line with the standards of intensive motherhood: 1. Essentialization; 2. Privatization; 3. Individualization; 4. Naturalization; 5. Normalization; 6. Idealization; 7. Biologization; 8. Intensification; 9. Expertization; and 10. Depoliticization.

Previous research (Alday-Mondaca, 2022; Alday-Mondaca & Lay-Lisboa, 2021a, 2021b; Condat et al., 2020; Imrie et al., 2020) confirms that the institution of motherhood imposes significant burdens on women and the LGBTIQ+ community. Non-hetero-cisgender people who become parents are subjected to high standards of intensive motherhood. TP and non-binary

people face even stricter parenting expectations and are often compared to idealized mother figures rather than less demanding fathering standards.

Understanding TP PE is vital as they provide fertile ground for exploring alternative parenting approaches (Alday-Mondaca, 2022; Parks, 2020). These approaches have the potential to challenge and transform traditional patriarchal parenting norms prevalent among cisgender mothers and fathers. This aligns with bell hooks' (2007) vision of achieving a gender-neutral understanding of "parenting."

### **Latin American Contexts. Parenting Experiences of Trans People**

Under the ideological model of colonial imposition, the transgender population faces elevated levels of stigma, prejudice, and discrimination in Latin America (Barrientos, 2015; Barrientos et al., 2019; Brito, 2019; Tomicic et al., 2016). Furthermore, discrimination against trans women who are perceived as Indigenous is particularly severe, as they embody two social identities devalued since the Spanish invasion: femininity and indigeneity (Alday-Mondaca, 2022; Segato, 2013). In comparing the experiences of lesbian/gay and TP parenting, participants emphasize the heightened social stress faced by TP parents, particularly exacerbated for trans women due to the compounded oppression experienced by feminized bodies in our societies (Alday-Mondaca, 2022; Alday-Mondaca & Lay-Lisboa, 2021b).

Specific circumstances of TP PE heighten levels of tension, such as the societal scrutiny of the parent-child relationship stemming from the absence of a biological connection in cases where a child is conceived through assisted fertilization procedures (Alday-Mondaca et al., 2024). Additionally, the prospect of conceiving and experiencing pregnancies in non-traditional ways,



such as pregnancies of transgender men, challenges hegemonic norms (Alday-Mondaca, 2022; Alday-Mondaca & Lay-Lisboa, 2021b).

In previous studies, it was found that Latin American LGBT people accessed parenting through six main avenues: 1. Previous heterosexual relationships; 2. Agreements; 3. Intra-family adoption; 4. Extra-family adoption; 5. TP relationships; and 6. Assisted fertilization<sup>6</sup> (Alday-Mondaca, 2022; Alday-Mondaca & Lay-Lisboa, 2021b). Depending on the socio-structural circumstances intersecting in TP PE, highly protected or vulnerable parenting situations were identified (Alday-Mondaca, 2022; Alday-Mondaca & Lay-Lisboa, 2021a, 2021b; Condat et al., 2020). In previous research, interviews were conducted with people who had become parents through only two of the various methods available to TP: assisted fertilization and intra-familial adoption. Therefore, it was deemed crucial to explore other PE that had not been fully investigated, such as those resulting from previous heterosexual relationships, agreements, extra-family adoptions, TP relationships, and any emerging methods. Additionally, demographic factors that were not initially considered in the research, such as class, education, location, legal structure, ethnicity, among others, were incorporated (Alday-Mondaca, 2022; Alday-Mondaca & Lay-Lisboa, 2021b).

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<sup>6</sup> Previous heterosexual relationship: The TP had a relationship with a person of a different sex before transitioning, resulting in one or more children; Agreements: Different-sex couples agree to conceive a child and undertake parenting without forming a partnership; Intrafamilial adoption: Taking care of a child who is the offspring of another family member by blood or affinity, which may or may not involve legal adoption of the child; Extrafamilial adoption: Parenting a child with whom a relationship is established through legal extrafamilial adoption procedures; TP relationships: Conception of a child based on sexual difference between members of a couple that includes one or more TPs; Assisted fertilization: Medical procedure to support conception (Alday-Mondaca, 2022; Alday-Mondaca, Lay-Lisboa, 2021a, 2021b).

## **Chapter Three. Methodology**

### **Objectives**

#### ***General Objective***

To comprehend the PE of TP in Latin America considering the challenges they encounter, the resources at their disposal, and the strategies of protection, agency, and resistance they employ.

#### ***Specific Objectives***

1. To describe the obstacles and challenges faced by TP concerning PE, considering the intersectional effects of their different social locations/identities.
2. To analyze how TP articulate the resources they have to address the obstacles and challenges of PE, considering the intersectional effects of their different social locations/identities.
3. To analyze the strategies of protection, agency and resistance that TP employ in their PE.

### **Guiding Questions**

#### ***Research Question***

What are the PE of TP in Latin America considering the challenges they encounter, the resources at their disposal, and the strategies of protection, agency and resistance they employ?

#### ***Specific Guiding Questions***

1. What obstacles and challenges do TP face concerning PE, considering the intersectional effects of their different social locations/identities?

2. How do TP deploy the resources they have to face obstacles and challenges regarding PE, considering the intersectional effects of their different social locations/identities?
3. Which are the strategies of protection, agency, and resistance that TP employ in their PE?

## **Methodological Strategy**

### ***Type of Research: Case Study***

Case study research, as defined by Yin (2008) and Flyvbjerg (2004), involves an in-depth examination of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, emphasizing relevant contextual conditions. This approach is particularly pertinent for studying specific collectives or communities, such as TP parents (De la Maza, De Cea, & Rubilar, 2018). This study employed a holistic multiple case design, focusing on central units of analysis that could not be decomposed into subunits (Castro, 2010; Yin, 2008). The research design was flexible and allowed for adjustments based on emerging needs (Verd, 2021a), combining an abductive logic with an emergent design at the microsocial level (Verd, 2021c). The comparison was horizontal, treating TP and their PE as equivalent units of analysis (Rubilar, 2021). The case study method was chosen for this research due to its suitability for in-depth exploration of complex social phenomena, as it emphasizes the importance of contextual conditions and allows for a nuanced analysis of individual cases (De la Maza, De Cea, & Rubilar, 2018). This approach also allows for the identification of patterns and variations across different cases, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of TP PE (Yin, 2008).

### ***Sampling: Socio-Structural Sampling Logic***

The sample was constructed based on Mejía's (2000) socio-structural sampling logic, derived from the case selection approach in comparative case studies (Neiman & Quaranta, 2006; Stake, 1999; Yin, 2008). The sample was selected according to theoretical parameters to identify cases that represent conditions considered relevant. This approach, aligned with Mejía's (2020) concept of structural representativeness, involves a conceptual approximation to the study universe by clearly defining the key characteristics that delineate its structural levels. This method systematically chooses interviewees based on these predefined criteria. The intention is to ensure that the sample covers a broad spectrum of conditions to comprehensively explore the phenomenon under study by including new participant(s) who embody a position within a category that is different from the positions that embodied previous participant(s). For instance, efforts were made to include participants from countries with and without gender identity laws in operation, to explore the effects of such laws on TP PE. Data production involved iteratively searching for different cases, providing conclusive information to complement the insights from participants' narratives during data analysis. Methodological decisions regarding sample inclusion were made within a flexible projected model, considering both initial sample design and data production procedures (Verd, 2021a).

The selection of cases was guided by a theoretical, non-statistical sampling approach, aiming to maximize learning opportunities about the phenomenon (Castro, 2010). The initial sample design involved considering two key characterization conditions: gender identity and access to parenting methods. Barrientos and collaborators (2019) propose three main umbrella concepts within the identification as TP: Trans woman, Tran man, and non-binary/gender-nonconforming/queer TP. I considered having TP who self-identify within one of these three

categories. Regarding the forms of access to parenting, previous studies (Alday-Mondaca, 2022; Alday-Mondaca, Lay-Lisboa, 2021a, 2021b) indicate that TP access parenting through one of the following routes: 1. Prior heterosexual relationship; 2. Agreements; 3. Intrafamilial adoption; 4. Extrafamilial adoption; 5. TP relationships, and 6. Assisted fertilization. I aimed to include TP who have accessed parenting through any of these routes.

Based on the iterative data production process, involving constant revision and reflexivity by both the researcher and participants (Letherby, 2003; Quaranta, 2021), new cases were considered for inclusion in the sample. This decision was guided by the search for diverse cases, as proposed by Yin (2008), where theoretical replication allows for the exploration of cases expected to behave differently based on theory. Given the complexity of the phenomenon, multiple theoretical replications (more than five) were deemed necessary to cover various conditions that could differentiate the cases.

Previous research (Alday-Mondaca, 2022; Alday-Mondaca & Lay-Lisboa, 2021a, 2021b) has shown that the legal framework surrounding LGBTIQ+ parenting, including gender identity, conjugality, and filiation laws, significantly influences the PE. Therefore, cases of transgender parents from various Latin American countries were included to compare the effects of different legal frameworks, since states, through their public policies, can either exacerbate or mitigate conditions of inequality for minoritized social groups (De la Maza et al., 2018). Analyzing how the phenomenon occurred under different conditions unveiled whether the phenomenon of TP parenting behaved differently in various contexts/circumstances (Flyvbjerg, 2004; Verd, 2021b). The contrast was possible by considering that all TP participating in the study shared the experience of exercising parenting, as posited by Piovani and Krawczyk (2017); cases could be contrasted as soon as they had a property in common.

Efforts were made to ensure that study participants represented a diverse range of conditions relevant to the study's objectives, such as varying levels of income, social class, and education. This was achieved by disseminating the invitation to participate through networks of LGBTIQA+ associations that operate in various Latin American contexts. By leveraging these diverse networks, I aimed to reach a broad spectrum of TP, intending for a representative sample across different socio-economic backgrounds and educational levels. This approach helped front-load diversity into the recruitment process and to mitigate homophily.

### ***Temporal Scope: Twenty First Century***

In terms of temporal scope, the research aligns with Lucca and Pinillos's (2015) proposal for a synchronic comparison, focusing on a simultaneous temporality where the same phenomenon occurs chronologically in different locations. As parenting extends from assuming the role until the end of one's life, the research covered an extended period, since PE may have been generated from the last century to the present.

### ***Quality Assurance***

The research design underwent evaluation based on Yin's (2008) and Quaranta's (2021) criteria: trustworthiness, credibility, confirmability, and data dependability. These were ensured through various stages, which will be described next.

First, in the research design phase, existing theory was reviewed, theoretical replication was employed by seeking diverse cases, a data production protocol was designed, and procedures were documented. Developing a rigorous research process in which all steps taken and the rationale behind investigative decisions were thoroughly documented strengthens the

study and facilitates the evaluation of its quality by other researchers familiar with qualitative research procedures. This comprehensive documentation ensures transparency and allows for a detailed assessment of the methodological rigor and adherence to qualitative research standards, thereby enhancing the credibility and replicability of the findings (Yin, 2008; Flyvbjerg, 2004).

Second, during information production, multiple sources of evidence were utilized, a chain of evidence was established, interviews were coded, and a comparative case study database was developed. The use of diverse sources of information in research allows for the coverage of the broad spectrum of conditions that affect people's experiences, which is particularly relevant for the PE of TP studied here. The generated chain of evidence maintained clarity in the decision-making process (e.g., determining when to end participant recruitment upon reaching saturation) and allowed for quality evaluation by external reviewers (e.g., thesis supervisor and committee). The interviews were coded in three stages (open, axial, and selective coding), which facilitated the creation of the comparative case study database and supported study's conclusions over the participants' narratives. The logic behind these conclusions can be traced through the generated code trees, which also served as the framework for structuring the chapter four of this document.

Third, information analysis involved generating trees of codes, including researcher memos, triangulating data analysis with participants, maintaining constant reflexivity, and considering divergent information. The triangulation process consisted of participants reviewing their transcribed interviews, intersectional looms, lifelines, summaries of their stories included in this document, and the overall results. They were given time to correct, modify, or eliminate information if they felt it could negatively affect them, jeopardize their integrity, or compromise confidentiality. Participants took advantage of these opportunities for continuous exchange to

add new information (as photographs, documents, recent life events, among others which can be found in Appendix 7), which provided a deeper understanding of their personal experiences. The reflexive process allowed for the comparison of new data with previous data, supporting the codes generated during open coding with new information from subsequent interviews/contacts and organizing the codes during the selective coding stage; both convergent and divergent information was considered.

A recursive process was employed in data production and analysis, allowing participants to contribute to emerging categories to validate results (Letherby, 2003; Quaranta, 2021). Feedback from participants was valued for enhancing research quality (Flyvbjerg, 2004; Letherby, 2003). Data dependability is relevant to avoid misrepresenting the participants' communicative intentions, which is why I will present extracts of the interviews that might be considered long with the intention to open the space, so TP voices are heard as clearly and unmodified as possible.

Transferability is being addressed through detailed descriptions of the research process, data, ethical considerations, and political implications (Arthur, 2005; Hammersley, 2007; Rice, 2009). However, it is recognized that achieving complete transparency may pose challenges for some readers who lack sufficient background knowledge to grasp the intricacies of a qualitative research procedure (Hammersley, 2007). Previous research experience in the area also contributed to research quality (Flyvbjerg, 2004; Letherby, 2003).



### ***Data Production Tactic: Semi-Structured Biographical Interviews and Intersectional Loom***

Data production encompassed two primary strategies: semi-structured biographical interviews<sup>7</sup> and the Intersectional Loom tactic<sup>8</sup> (Alday-Mondaca & Lay-Lisboa, 2022a, 2022b). Semi-structured biographical interviews, conducted in Spanish via video call in February of 2024, were enriched by reviewing personal and public documents to deepen understanding and unveil convergences and divergences (Yin, 2008). These interviews delved into various aspects of parenting experiences, including expectations, ways of accessing parenting, conditions of the exercise of parenting, and insights gathered from other TP PE, focusing on the study's objectives (Castro, 2010; Yin, 2008).

Interview length varied based on participants' narrative capacity and PE. The Intersectional Loom method was employed to uncover identity/social positions categories influencing parenting, considering the fluid nature of interactions between categories (Alday-Mondaca & Lay-Lisboa, 2022a, 2022b). Additionally, personal documents such as family photographs, songs, and letters, among others, were reviewed to gather relevant information on parenting experiences.

Secondary data analysis involved examining public documents, including legislation and opinion articles, to understand the sociological context of parenting (Letherby, 2003). The qualitative-interpretative approach was employed, utilizing the Intersectional Loom method to analyze subalternity implications from an intersectional perspective, considering hierarchies of

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<sup>7</sup> The semi-structured interview guide is in Appendix 1.

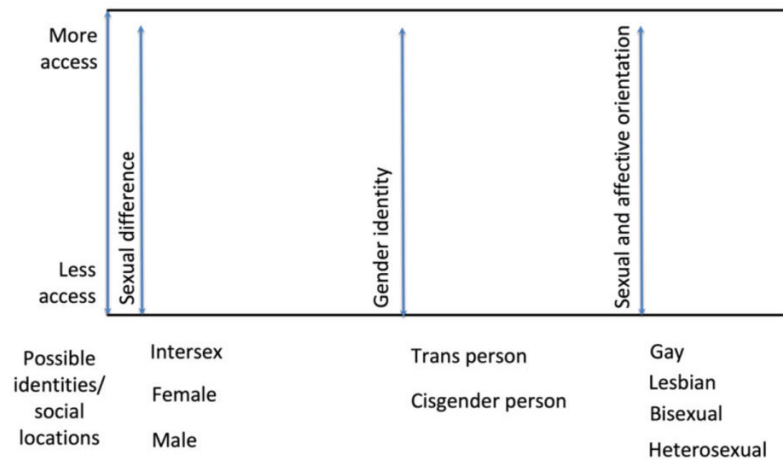
<sup>8</sup> We (Alday-Mondaca & Lay-Lisboa, 2022a, 2022b) call this a 'tactic' based on Michel de Certeau (2000), who proposed that in power relations, tactics and strategies manifest. Strategies are used by those in positions of power to impose a status quo, while subaltern groups use tactics to resist these strategies. Recognizing that Latin American knowledge production occupies a subaltern position within the global power-knowledge order, we refer to our methodological proposal as a 'tactic' from a position of resistance.

identities and fluid category interactions shaping personal experiences of rights access (Alday-Mondaca & Lay-Lisboa, 2022a, 2022b).

Initially, to construct the Intersectional Loom, we began with an interview called the “Intersectional Biographical Interview.” The discourses produced in this interview served as input for the biographical interview focused on the research objectives, which was conducted later. To start, participants were told that we all exercise various identities/social positions in different spaces of our lives, referring to an example that may be relatable and easy to understand for the participants: The differences in access to rights between being a man/woman/intersex person. Each of these identities/social positions facilitates certain actions and hinders others. Participants were asked to identify a current identity/social position they exercise and provide an example where they have perceived differences in terms of the possibility/limitation of access to rights/social benefits, to ensure they understand the rationality of this exercise.

Following this, each participant is invited to reflect on the identities/social positions they exercise in certain areas of social life (areas related to the specific research theme, parenting, given that the categories have a changing nature and that the categories relevant in one area may not be so in another). They were also asked to consider other identities/social positions within the same category and to rank these identities/social positions in terms of how they access or are limited in accessing certain rights or social benefits. Those with greater access are illustrated at the top and those with lesser access at the bottom of the Intersectional Loom.

**Figure 1.** *Intersectional Loom base* (Alday-Mondaca & Lay-Lisboa, 2022a, p. 23)



Given that the study participants are TP, I considered three predefined categories: Sexual Difference (which was used as an example, answered by me at the beginning of the interviews, and then removed from each participant's loom), “Gender identity”, and “Sexual and affective orientation”, as the literature suggests these would be social identities that allow for relevant distinctions when analyzing social inequities experienced from LGBTIQ+ people. Subsequently, the emergence of successive new categories and social identities/positions pertinent to each participant is promoted, respecting how they have been named by the participant (which is why it can be seen in some looms that the same category may have different names even though they refer to the same thing, and the same happens with the identities/social positions mentioned by the participants). Throughout the interview, all categories and identities/social positions referred to by each participant according to their experience are included. I specifically mark the identities/social positions that the participant exercises in each category (highlighted with a coloured border), drawing a route that rises and falls depending on their description of the position they occupy in each category (for example, a white woman may position herself lower in the “sexual difference” category and higher in “racialization,” creating a

complex or zigzagging view of her own experience). This way, the diverse positions each participant experiences are identified. Additionally, consideration was given to situations where people navigate multiple paths within a single category; for example, TP who are “cis passing” may experience different interactions based on whether they are read as cisgender or TP in different contexts.

The second part of the interview (focused on PE) provided an opportunity to reflect on the discourses and review points of contradiction, ambivalence, and imprecisions that can be supplemented with new emerging information, acknowledging the inherent flexibility of the subjects and their discourses and the possibility of re-signifying their own history through telling it. This process allows for the saturation of multiple identities/social positions and a deep understanding of the intersectional weavings that occur among the categories. The dialogic process concludes when each participant feels they have provided all relevant information regarding their PE as TP.

In the theoretical-methodological realm, employing the Intersectional Loom tactic (Alday-Mondaca, 2022; Alday-Mondaca & Lay-Lisboa, 2022a, 2022b) facilitated the recognition of experiences shaped by intersecting differences, visually representing various positions of oppression within minoritized and subalternized communities. This approach offered a flexible format to observe both the structures upholding social hierarchies and the tactics people employ to challenge these institutions, acknowledging oppressed subjects as active agents capable of resistance (Lugones, 2010).

### ***Data Analysis Methodology: Constant Comparative Method (CCM)***

The constant comparative method (CCM), rooted in grounded theory, was rigorously applied in the data analysis process of this study (Piovani & Krawczyk, 2017). This method involved several key steps to ensure thorough and nuanced analysis. Initially, open coding was conducted using NVivo (QRS International, 2020), where interviews were meticulously reviewed to identify and label distinct concepts and phenomena. This was followed by axial coding, where these concepts were grouped into related categories, establishing connections between them. Selective coding was the final stage, where the core categories that represented the central themes of the study were identified and refined.

Throughout the analysis, an iterative process was employed to compare new data with existing categories continuously. As new interviews were conducted and additional data were collected, they were compared against previously coded data to refine and adjust categories. This constant comparison allowed for the identification of patterns and divergences, ensuring that the evolving categories accurately reflected the participants' experiences (Piovani & Krawczyk, 2017).

Additionally, the triangulation process involved participants reviewing their transcribed interviews, intersectional looms, lifelines, and summaries of their stories included in this document. Participants were given opportunities to correct, modify, add, or eliminate information, which provided further insights and enhanced the depth of the analysis. The continuous feedback from participants facilitated the integration of new information into existing categories, supporting the development of a comprehensive understanding of their experiences. This iterative process ensured that the final categories were robust and grounded in the data, reflecting both convergent and divergent perspectives (Piovani & Krawczyk, 2017).

Analysis was conducted within the framework of Post/Decolonial theory (Lugones, 2010; Rivera Cusicanqui, 2010; Segato, 2013; Spivak, 2011; Zapata, 2018) and Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991; Hancock, 2007a, 2007b), focusing on the categories and identities perceived by participating TP to be intertwined in their PE. Transcriptions, images, results, and conclusions underwent participant review to minimize the risk of misrepresentation and to address power imbalances embedded in data analysis processes, which are usually dominated by researchers even in some studies claiming to be participatory action research (Rice, 2009; Spivak, 2011; Zapata, 2018). This approach fostered a dialogical research process (Arthur, 2005).

### ***Participants***

Previous research (Alday-Mondaca, 2022; Alday Mondaca & Lay-Lisboa, 2021a, 2021b) comprised interviews with four TP. Two were non-parents, discussing their journey towards parenting, emotions, and challenges. The other two had parenting experiences (one via artificial insemination, the other through in-law niece/nephew adoption), who explored parental experiences and challenges. The units of analysis in this research were people who meet the following inclusion criteria: 1. Being a TP; 2. Have exercised or being exercising parenting of one or more children at least one year in Latin-America through one of the six ways that we described in previous research (Alday-Mondaca, 2022; Alday Mondaca & Lay-Lisboa, 2021a, 2021b); 3. Speak Spanish.

After the publication of recruitment invitations (see Appendix 5 and 6) on social media, 22 persons expressed interest in participating in the study, to whom the informed consent was sent. Out of these 22 TP, nine confirmed their availability to participate in the interview within the temporal framework of the research data production. Finally, the sample consisted of nine

TP, four Mexican (44.4%), three Chilean (33.3%), one Venezuelan (11.1%), and one Guatemalan (11.1%). Four identified as trans women (44.4%), and five as trans men (55.6%). Their ages ranged from 35 to 69 years old, with a mean age of 49.22 (standard deviation 11.75). They had been parenting for between one and 43 years, with a mean of 18 years and a standard deviation of 12.25 years. After transitioning, the interviewed participants had been parenting for between one and 16 years (mean 6.88, standard deviation 4.30). The number of children varied between one and three, with a mean of two and a standard deviation of 0.67. The ways in which they accessed parenting were through a previous heterosexual relationship (six persons, 66.67%) and through intrafamilial adoption (three persons, 33.33%). Detailed information for each participant is provided in Table 1.

Pseudonym	Age	Nationality	Type of TP	Length of Parenting (years)	Time of parenting exercise as a TP (years)	Children in Care of the TP parent	Country(ies) where Parented	Time Parented in LA (years)	Path to Parenting
Debbie	51	Chilean	Trans woman	21	3	3	Chile	21	Previous heterosexual relationship
Francisca	39	Chilean	Trans woman	14	6	1	Chile	14	Previous heterosexual relationship
Pascal	35	Chilean	Trans man	13	5	1	Chile/USA	8	Previous heterosexual relationship
Victor	41	Mexican	Trans woman	1	1	2	Mexico	1	Intrafamily adoption
Isa	36	Mexican	Trans woman	19	4	2	Mexico	19	Previous heterosexual relationship
Alex	53	Guatemalan	Trans man	33	11	2	Guatemala	32	Previous heterosexual relationship
Hall	36	Mexican	Trans man	9	9	2	Mexico	6	Intrafamily adoption
Luis	43	Venezuelan	Trans man	9	7	2	Chile	9	Intrafamily adoption
Sophia	69	Mexican	Trans woman	43	16	3	Mexico	16	Previous heterosexual relationship

**Table 1.** *Participant Characterization Data*

### ***Ethical Considerations***

Regarding ethical safeguards, this research was approved by the Research Ethics Board (REB) of the University of Northern British Columbia, File No: 6009278, complying with the safeguards specified by law. Before the implementation of the information production instruments (interview and Intersectional Loom), research participants signed an informed consent (see Appendices 1 and 2). This was facilitated by sending a blank copy of the informed consent to the participants, who completed it with their details and signed it manually or electronically. Upon receipt of the signed informed consent, interviews were scheduled. Informed consents were stored in a way that no relationship could be found between them and the transcripts of the interviews, to safeguard the confidentiality of personal data.

Interviews were recorded in audio format and subsequently transcribed into digital format, the interviews were conducted in Spanish via the Zoom platform and were transcribed using the closed caption tool integrated into Zoom to generate a transcript of the interview. The transcriptions were reviewed, corrected, and organized to separate the comments of the participants from those of the interviewer. The interviews and transcriptions were conducted by me. Recordings and transcriptions will be stored in digital format on electronic devices with access codes and will be destroyed once the legal deadlines for data protection requirements have been met.

To ensure confidentiality, participants were asked to choose a pseudonym; these pseudonyms were used to refer to them during the application of interviews, so that - in the recordings and subsequent transcriptions - only the pseudonym appears, and no personal identification data are included.



## **Chapter Four. Results**

Below, I will proceed to detail the results obtained from the research. I have divided this section into four subsections: 1. Case studies, 2. Obstacles and challenges, 3. Resources, 4. Strategies of protection, agency, and resistance.

### **Case Studies<sup>9</sup>**

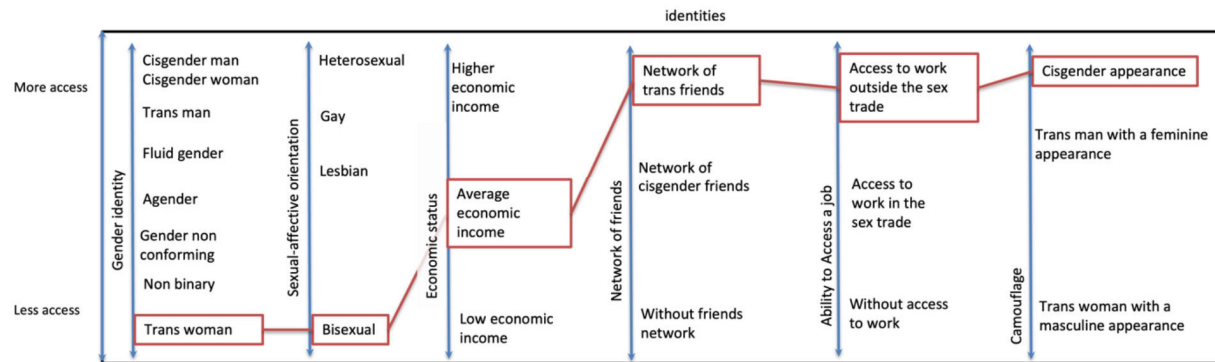
#### ***Case 1. Debbie***

Debbie is a 51-year-old Chilean bisexual transgender woman residing in Chile. She began her transition at the age of 49. Currently, she has three children: two sons, aged 20 and 18, and a daughter, aged 12, from a previous heterosexual marriage prior to her transition. Debbie is divorced from the biological mother of the children, maintains contact with them, and has court-regulated visitation rights. Her relationship with her ex-partner and her sons is complicated which Debbie attributes to their affiliation with an evangelical church.

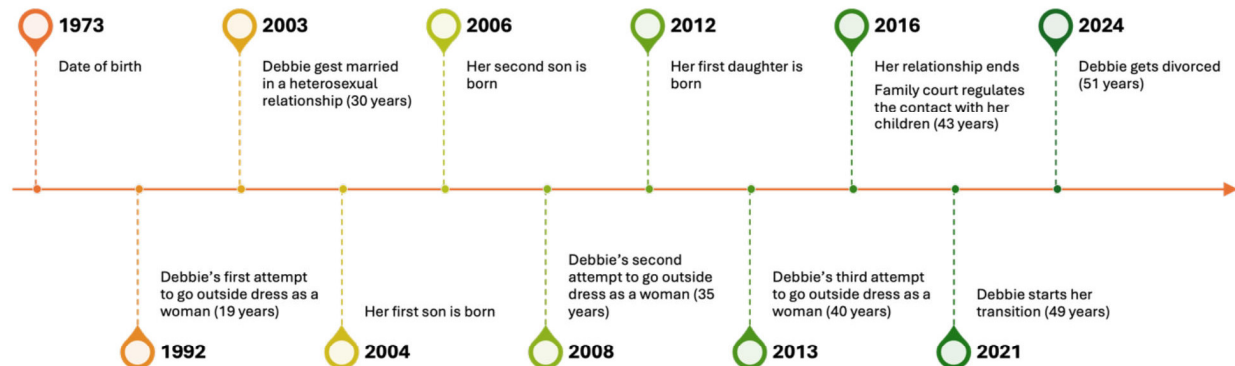
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<sup>9</sup> A more detailed description of all cases is provided in Appendix 7.

**Figure 2. Debbie's Intersectional Loom**



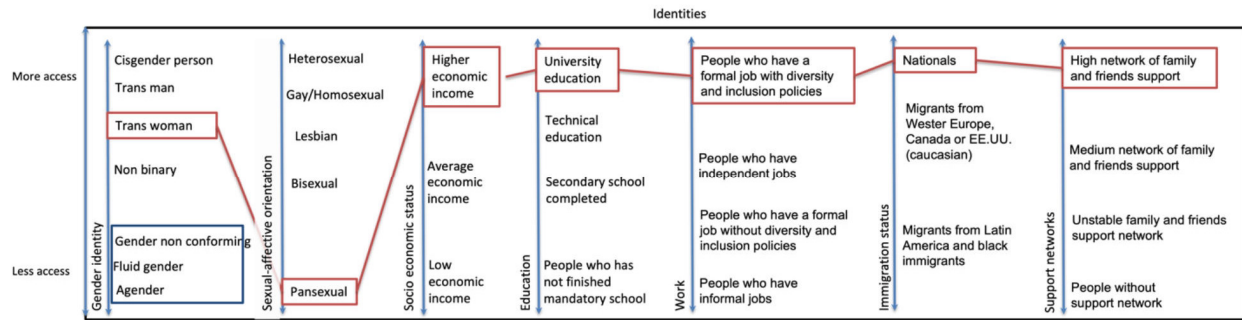
**Figure 3. Debbie's Lifeline**



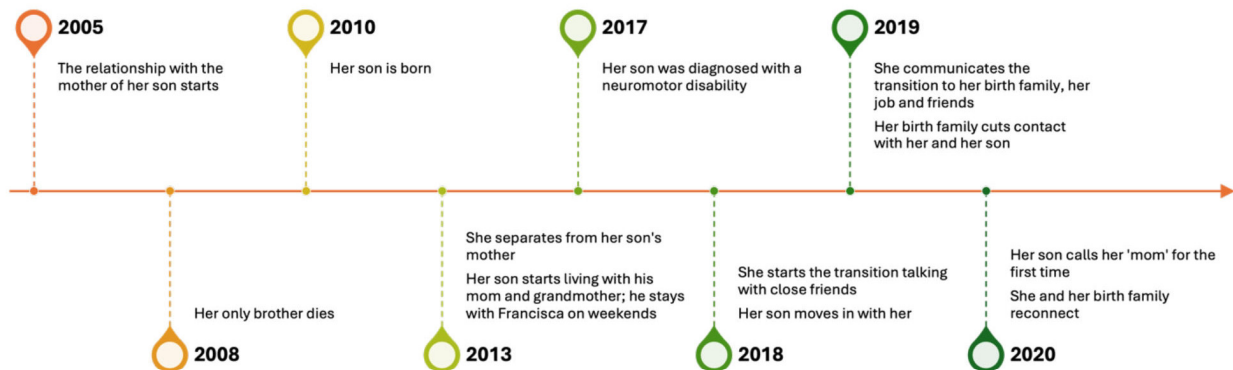
## Case 2. Francisca

Francisca is a 39-year-old transgender woman from Chile who identifies as pansexual and is on the autism spectrum. She began her transition at the age of 33. She has a 14-year-old son from a previous relationship that ended in 2013. Her son was diagnosed with a neuromotor disability, so he moved in with her in 2018 (the same year Francisca was transitioning). When she revealed her gender identity, her family cut off contact with her and her son for two years. They have since re-established contact.

**Figure 4. Francisca's Intersectional Loom**



**Figure 5. Francisca's Lifeline**

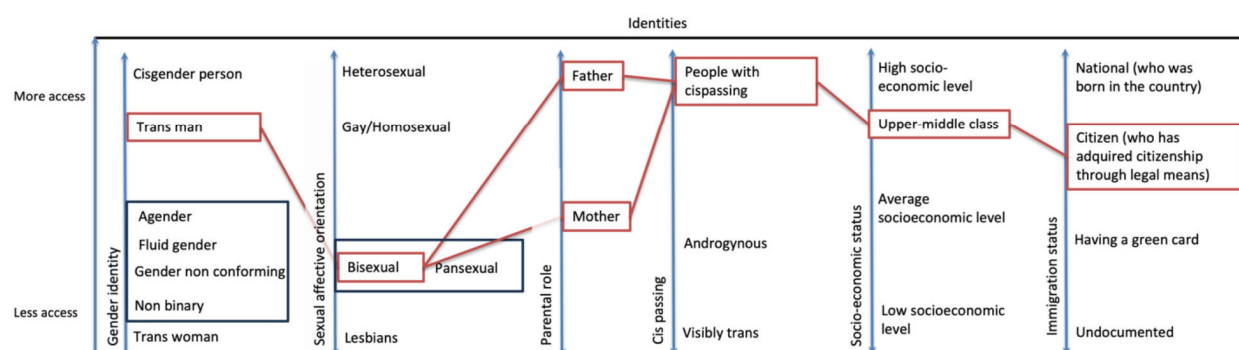


### Case 3. Pascal

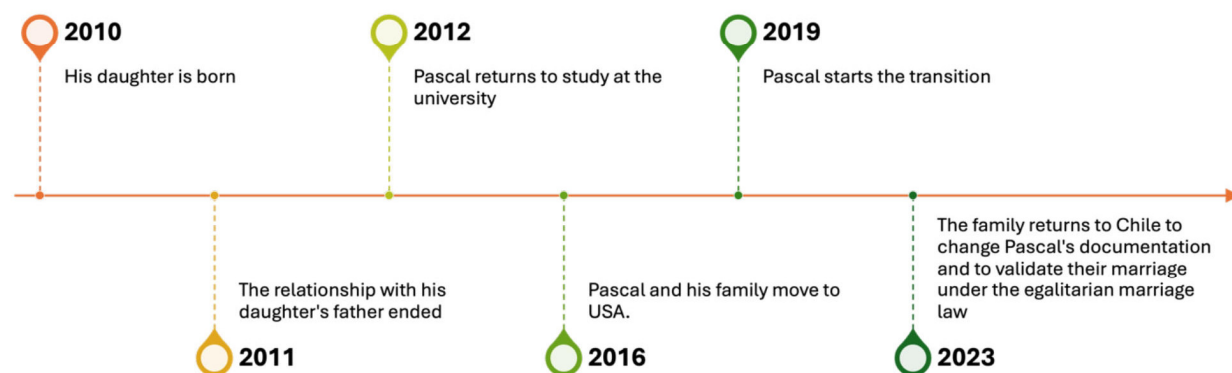
Pascal is a 35-year-old bisexual transgender man from Chile who resides in the United States with his American husband and their 12-year-old daughter, whom Pascal carried during pregnancy. The decision to migrate from Chile to the United States arose from Pascal's realization of his diverse gender identity. Due to the lack of protective legislation for LGBTQ+ people in Chile at that time, Pascal chose to migrate with his family to transition and live in a more supportive environment. However, upon Chile's approval of gender identity and marriage equality laws, Pascal encountered difficulties aligning his official documentation with his gender

identity. This included the need to travel to Chile for in-person administrative procedures and the removal of his name from his daughter's identification documents, preventing them from returning to the United States until the issue was resolved by the Chilean civil registry.

**Figure 6.** *Pascal's Intersectional Loom*



**Figure 7.** *Pascal's Lifeline*

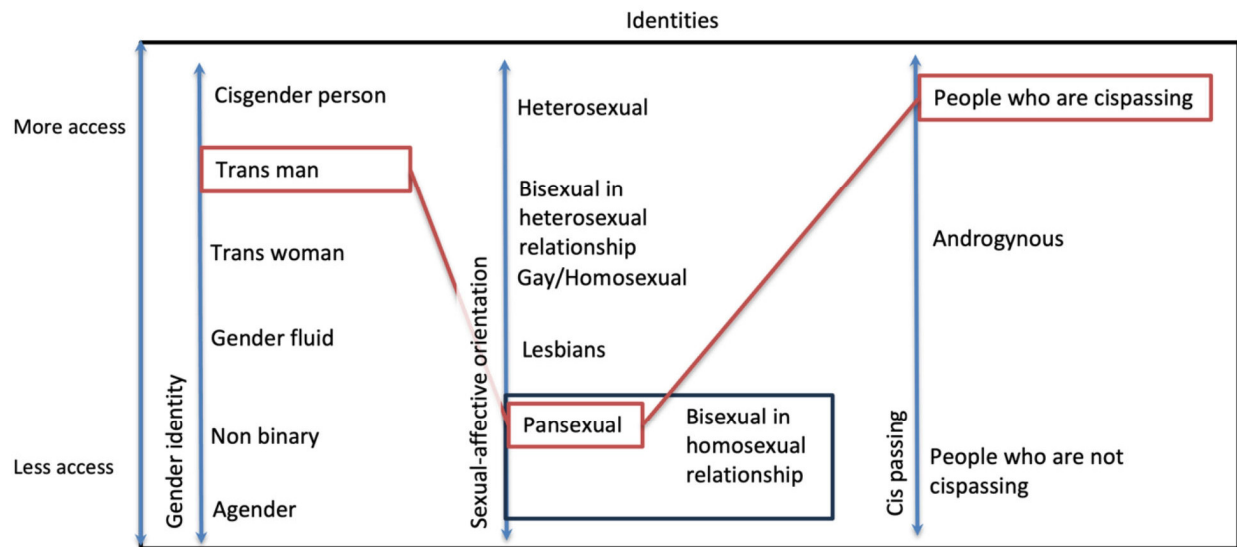


#### **Case 4. Victor**

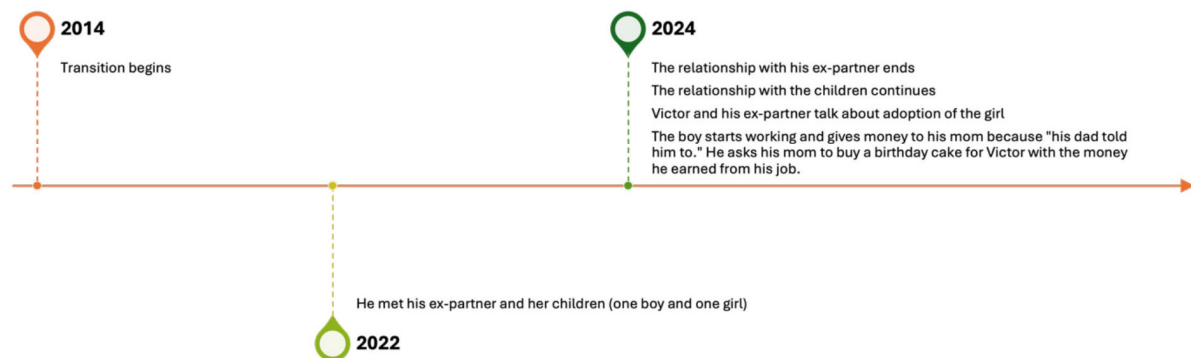
Victor is a 41-year-old pansexual transgender man from Mexico, residing in Mexico. He transitioned at the age of 31. Victor was in a relationship with a woman who had two children from a previous relationship (currently aged 13 and 10). He formed a strong bond with the

children, and although the couple is currently separated, they have discussed the possibility of Victor adopting the children.

**Figure 8.** *Victor's Intersectional Loom*



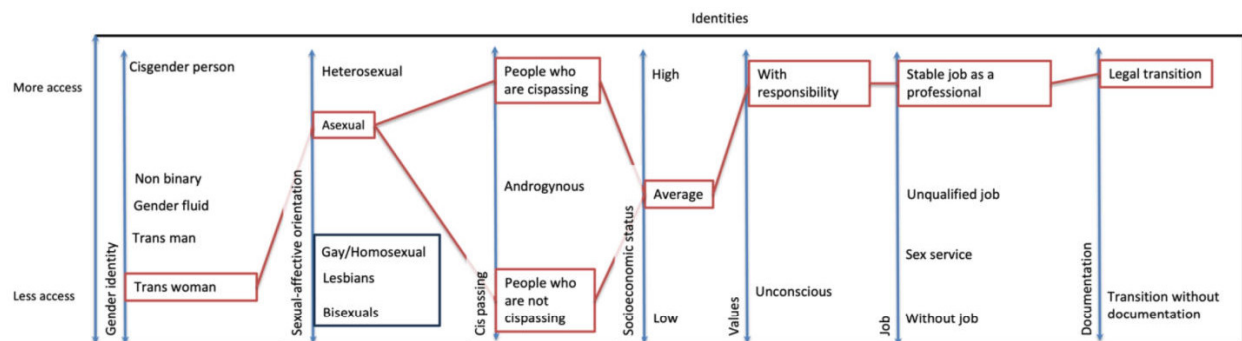
**Figure 9.** *Victor's Lifeline*



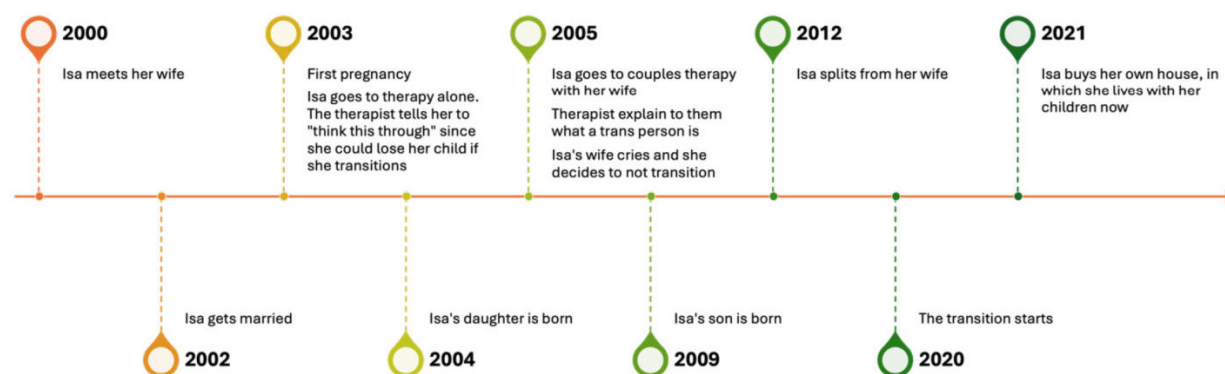
### Case 5. Isa

Isa is a 46-year-old asexual transgender woman from Mexico, residing in Mexico. At the age of 22, Isa married the mother of her children. At that time, she was unaware of what it meant to be transgender. She attended individual therapy sessions several times in her life before deciding to transition because the first therapist she saw, while her wife was pregnant with their first daughter, told her that transitioning could be a reason for her to lose custody of her child. The relationship with her partner ended in 2012, and they have not yet finalized their divorce. Her eldest daughter is 19 years old, and her younger son is 15; they currently live with her.

**Figure 10.** *Isa's Intersectional Loom*



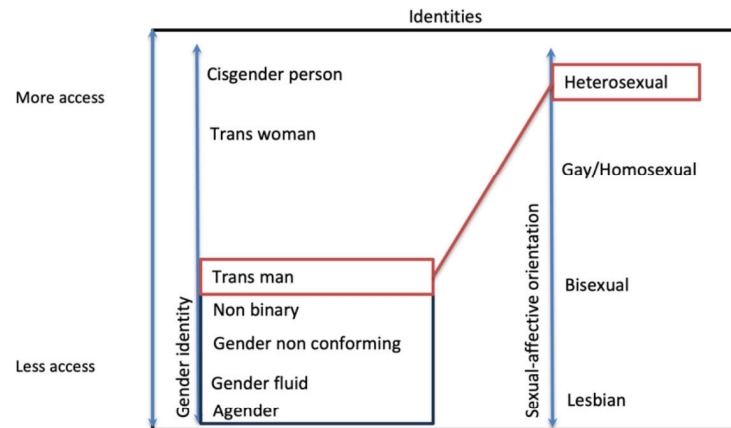
**Figure 11. Isa's Lifeline**



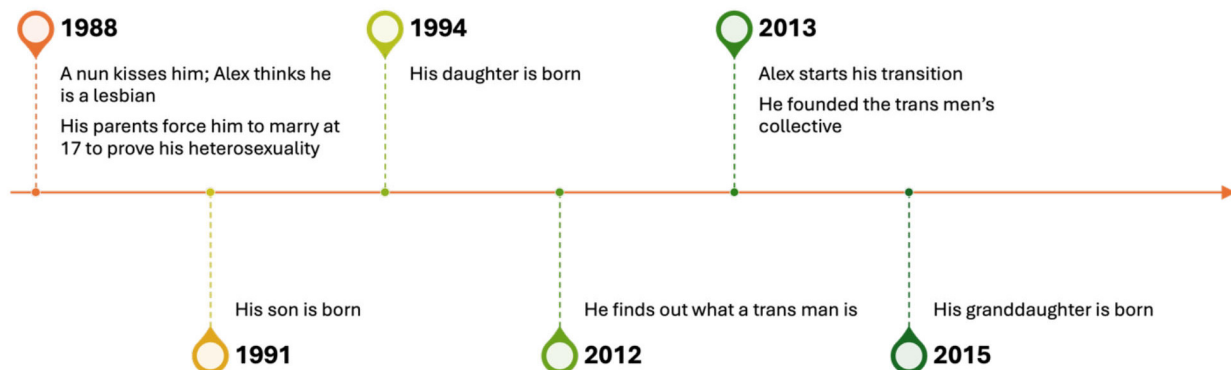
### **Case 6. Alex**

Alex, a heterosexual transgender man from Guatemala, currently residing in his home country, was coerced by his parents into a heterosexual marriage (at the time, they believed he was a lesbian). During this marriage, Alex endured domestic violence and became pregnant with his son and daughter, now 33 and 30 years old, respectively. At the age of 43, Alex came to terms with his identity as a transgender man and legally changed his name. However, due to limitations in Guatemalan law, he was unable to update his official documentation to reflect his gender identity, causing complications when dealing with official paperwork, such as visa applications. Recognizing the challenges he faced, Alex took initiative by establishing the first organization dedicated to transgender men in his region and founding the first specialized clinic for transgender men, aiming to address the unique needs of his community.

**Figure 12.** *Alex's Intersectional Loom*



**Figure 13.** *Alex's Lifeline*



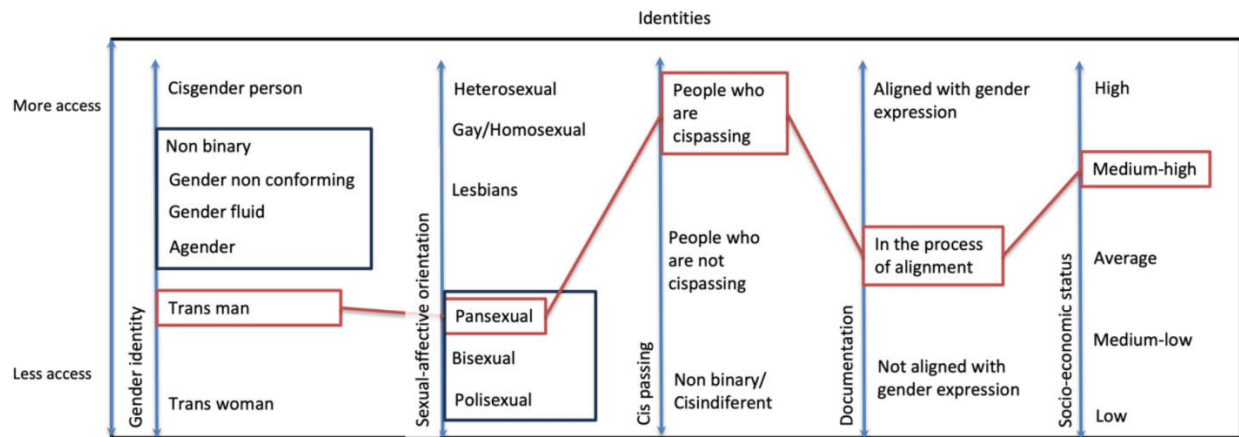
### ***Case 7. Hall***

Hall, a 36-year-old pansexual transgender man residing in Mexico, began his transition in 2010. He was in a relationship with a woman who had two daughters from previous relationships, currently aged 22 and 11. Due to concerns about potential negative reactions, Hall did not disclose his gender identity to the girls or their biological parents. The relationship ended due to

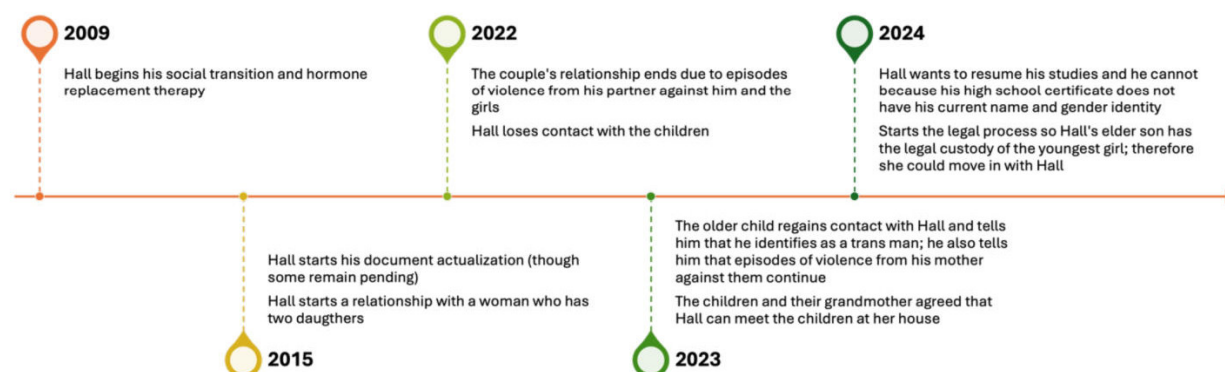


violence towards him and the girls by his partner. After losing contact for about a year, the elder daughter contacted him in 2023, revealing ongoing violence from her mother and her own identification as a transgender man. Hall now supports his older son (former daughter), and Hall is helping in the process of him gaining custody of the younger daughter to protect her from her mother's violence. They've started therapy to support the older son's transition, and they hope both children, or at least the younger one, could move in with Hall in 2024.

**Figure 14.** *Hall's Intersectional Loom*



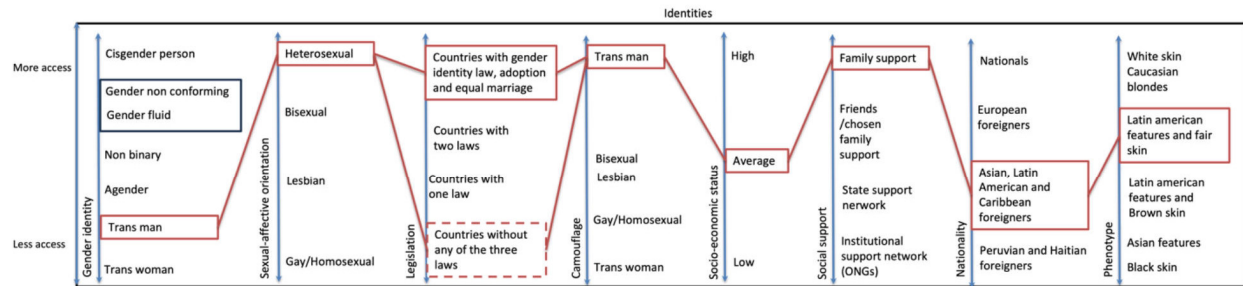
**Figure 15. Hall's Lifeline**



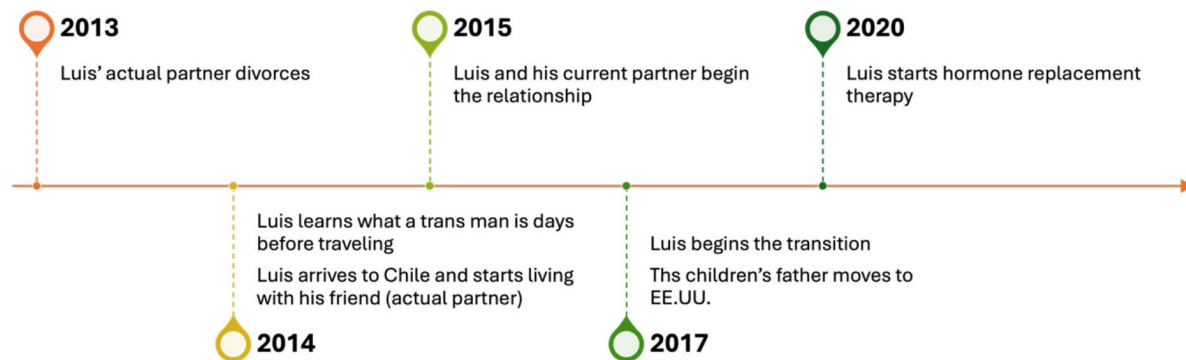
### **Case 8. Luis**

Luis, a 43-year-old heterosexual transgender man from Venezuela, resides in Chile. He formed a relationship with a childhood friend who had migrated to Chile earlier, bringing along her children from a previous marriage (aged 14 and 11). Luis transitioned after arriving in Chile, with crucial support from his partner and the children. Despite his active role in caregiving and daily parenting tasks, there is no legal recognition of his relationship with the children due to shared custody with their biological father, who resides in the United States. While his Chilean documents align with his gender identity, allowing travel within Mercosur countries, they pose challenges for international travel outside this treaty, and he is unable to practice his profession in Chile due to issues with his Venezuelan documentation.

**Figure 16. Luis' Intersectional Loom**



**Figure 17. Luis' Lifeline**

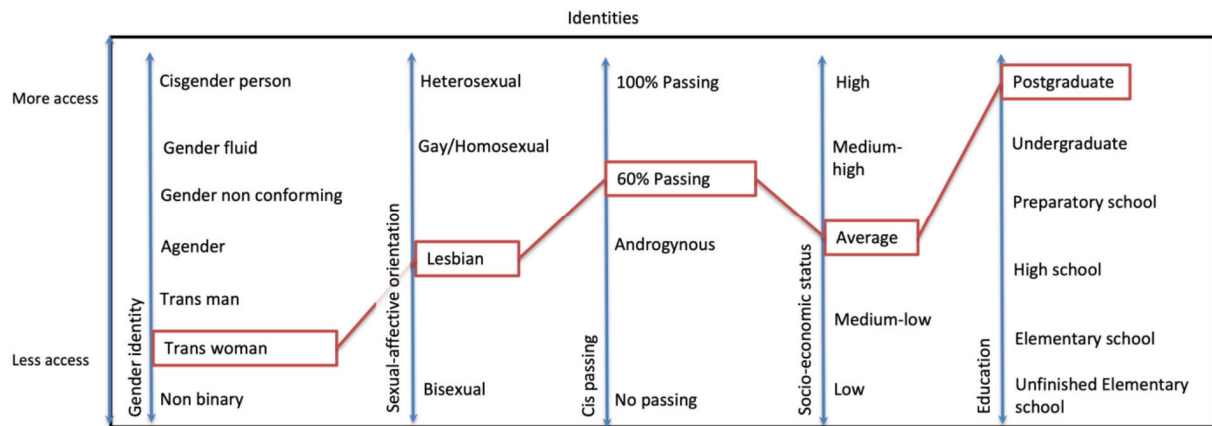


### Case 9. Sophia

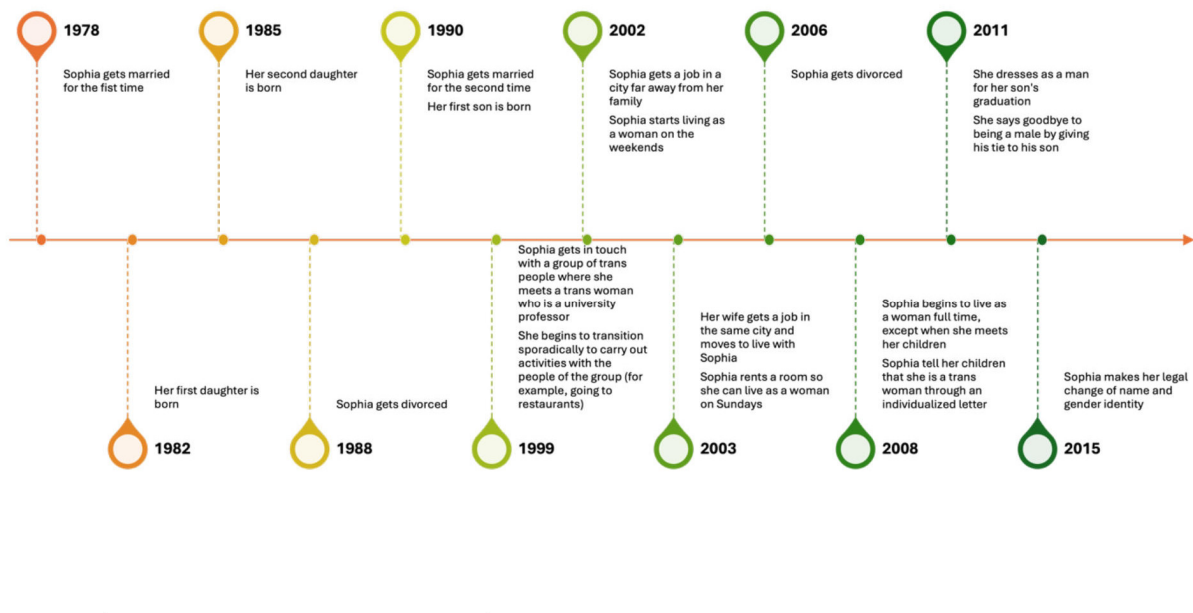
Sophia, a 69-year-old transgender lesbian woman from Mexico, resides in her home country. She married for the first time at 23 to a cisgender woman, with whom she had two daughters (now 42 and 38 years old). After eight years, they divorced, and Sophia remarried at 35 to another cisgender woman, with whom she had a son (33 years old). Upon revealing her gender identity to her partner, conflicts arose in the relationship, leading to divorce in 2006. From 2008 onwards, Sophia began living full-time as a woman but continued dressing as a man for a period, at her children's request, during their meetings. Currently, her children use female pronouns when referring to her, though they still address her as "dad," but she stills has to dress as a man when

she knows her ex-partner will be present, which leads to problems sometimes<sup>10</sup>. Sophia proudly declares herself as a "proud dad" ("una papá orgullosa") of her children.

**Figure 18.** *Sophia's Intersectional Loom*



**Figure 19.** *Sophia's Lifeline*



<sup>10</sup> For instance, Sophia's son had an accident, and she had to go to the hospital dressed as a man to avoid being seen as a trans woman by her ex-partner and her family. Since her ID aligns with her female gender identity, the hospital did not allow her to see her son because her ID did not match her appearance.

The case studies reveal the diverse and complex realities faced by TP in Latin America. Key findings include the critical role of social and legal support, the impact of religious and cultural contexts, and the varying degrees of acceptance and resistance from family members. These insights highlight the resilience and strategies employed by TP to navigate their parenting roles amidst socio-structural, state-institutional, and microsocial challenges. This section transitions to the broader analysis of the study, connecting individual experiences to wider social patterns and implications.

### **Obstacles and Challenges**

In the context of TP assuming parental responsibilities, numerous factors negatively impact their experience. I have categorized these factors into three main sections: 1. Socio-structural conditions, 2. State-institutional conditions, and 3. Microsocial environment conditions. As a consequence of these challenges, TP develop a range of concerns, which will be exposed as the fourth point in this section.

#### ***Socio-Structural Conditions***

The socio-structural condition that lays the groundwork for the (re)production of stigma and violence is discrimination towards what is considered "Other" (Spivak, 2011; Viveros-Vigoya, 2016) or "Otherness" (Foucault, 1977), as Alex states, "Because at the end of the day, we [the LGBTIQ+ community] will always be seen as weird, complex, diverse, and anything strange in this world will always be treated differently" (Alex, personal communication, February 19, 2024,

own translation<sup>11</sup>). I have decided to divide this section into two main subsections: 1. Discrimination based on socio-structural conditions and 2. Discrimination towards the LGBTIQA+ community. It is important to clarify that this distinction is only for explanatory purposes. While these forms of discrimination can be analyzed separately, the participants experience them as a seamless whole, intricately affecting their lives simultaneously. This is reflected in their discourses, where the various discriminations are not perceived as distinct entities.

Regarding discrimination based on socio-structural conditions, the interviewees indicated that they have experienced discrimination due to factors such as nationality or migratory status, phenotype, social class, and being part of what is socially considered as a non-traditional family structure. This discrimination occurs even when their LGBTIQA+ identity is not disclosed, such as when they are parents or guardians without a biological connection to their children, step-parents, or single parents. The study participants' narratives reveal a nuanced expression of the complexities of intersectional discrimination, highlighting how these intersecting forms of discrimination shape their experiences.

If they are a trans person within a low socioeconomic status and on top of that, if they are a Latin American immigrant, it's like ... it's the worst of the worst in that aspect, and they are looked down upon in that regard, which is different, for example, from a trans woman who may come from a European country like Germany or France, perhaps there wouldn't be as much questioning. (Francisca, personal communication, February 6, 2024)

I used to attend some trans groups here in the United States. And there are people here without documents, undocumented, and it's different because you can't access certain medications, you can't access certain health treatments. However, if you're here with a green card you can become a citizen. So, you have fewer risks. And there are many people who, for example, flee from El Salvador or Honduras or even from Mexico,

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<sup>11</sup> All interviews were conducted in Spanish. The excerpts presented in this work were translated by me, aiming to respect the communicative intentions and colloquial language of the interviewees.

because they are trans and there the transphobic violence is much greater. So, they come here, they can't do the mountain of paperwork ... they ask for a green card. So, they cross the border, but it's to save themselves. So, in these groups, I heard the stories. And they are really heavy stories of people who crossed simply because staying where they lived, they were going to be killed because of transphobia. And even so, the government doesn't grant them asylum. So, it's a very different experience to come here all cool, 'Oh, yeah! I have health insurance. And there's a cool plastic surgeon here, I can transition, and everything is cool', versus really having crossed the border on foot, getting here and still not having any benefits ... you'll always be a foreigner. You'll always have an accent, always ... and culturally you're also a foreigner ... because even with a green card, if you mess up, they can kick you [him and his daughter] out. (Pascal, personal communication, February 9, 2024)

There's quite a bit of xenophobia. And obviously, it's like... 'Wow! Besides being transgender, Venezuelan.' The color matters a lot, besides being transgender and Black. Everything matters, everything adds up there too. Everything counts. (Luis, personal communication, February 27, 2024)

[It goes] beyond phenotype ... because in other words, phenotype is also a factor that helps but doesn't scale as much, in the sense that, of course, a person maybe with a dark complexion, from a high socioeconomic level born in Las Condes [affluent neighborhood of the capital city], will perhaps have more opportunities and rights, or greater acceptance than a blonde person with fair skin from La Pitana [low-income neighborhood of the capital city], for example. (Francisca, personal communication, February 6, 2024)

The participants in the research acknowledge the existence of multiple family models, of which they can be a part. However, whenever they form a family that diverges from the traditional nuclear model consisting of a cisgender heterosexual couple and their children, they are susceptible to experiencing violence and discrimination. This occurs even if they are not openly identifying as TP, but it is known that they are the stepfather rather than the biological progenitor: “In, for example, the school, just to pick up the girl from school or to enroll her, little things like that, I went through the same difficulties that any stepfather goes through” (Hall, personal communication, February 20, 2024).

There is a violation there ... I have talked about it ... at school... ‘When you only talk about family as mom and dad, you are making my son invisible because that's not his reality. So, try to talk about diverse families ... be mindful of your words in that regard.’ Because it could also be, not just for me, but a person who could be a boy or a girl with a

single mother, who doesn't know that either. So, you have to be very careful, especially given the reality of Latin America; it's not new, I mean, children raised by two moms, meaning with the mom and the grandmother, it's an everyday occurrence. (Francisca, personal communication, February 6, 2024)

While discrimination towards the LGBTIQ+ community is also a manifestation of discrimination towards otherness, it manifests in different ways, intersecting with the bodies of TP due to their gender identity and exacerbated when they have diverse sexual orientations, which increases the suspicion with which their relationship with their children is scrutinized, associated with pedophilia or child abuse; also, involving that they do not have strong support networks as they need:

I think there's a lot of stigmas regarding anyone who isn't heterosexual, cisgender, they associate it with pedophilia or associate it with cases... well, also with any stepfather, I mean, they do it with those cases where the stepfather commits violence, really ugly, you know, almost ending up killing their stepchildren. And I think the innocent pay for the guilty. (Hall, personal communication, February 20, 2024)

People who are gender fluid, well, society still doesn't understand them well, and the same goes for non-binary people; they're not understood, even within the same [LGBTIQ+] community. They're not understood in that sense. And well, agender people, even more so, right? We still don't have that open-mindedness to understand other people. And well, without understanding, obviously there's no support system. (V́ctor, personal communication, February 12, 2024)

While bisexuality could be seen as having a sort of escape route to be more socially accepted, I believe the issue arises when it's questioned within the same [LGBTIQ+] movement, and that, I feel, puts it on a lower rung, because then within your own movement, you lose rights in that regard, because this same person might be questioned by gays or lesbians, being told to 'make up their mind,' that 'it's just a phase,' that ... 'How can you also like men?' ... a bisexual person ... within the movement, they have much less support and visibility. (Francisca, personal communication, February 6, 2024)

Added to the general stigmas that the Latin American society has regarding LGBTIQ+ people in general, it (re)produces a series of stigmas associated with transgender people:

The conflict lies in how we have been educated through television, right? where the crazy person in the movie or show was portrayed as transgender, or the psychopath in the movie was portrayed as transgender, correct? or even the comedians through all their



comedy routines, until recently, always portrayed transgender people as ridiculous, crazy, sick people, people that the other comedian had to mock or hit. So, society has been programmed in this way. (Debbie, personal communication, February 1, 2024)

These stigmas subsequently have tangible effects on the exercise of parenting by TP, such as missing important family events or experiencing violence from both family members and their own children.

When my daughter had her baby, I didn't go to meet my granddaughter at the hospital, so that her spouse's family wouldn't realize that I am transgender. I was prohibited from seeing my granddaughter during the first year ... She [her daughter] didn't want to tell [her husband and in-laws] that I was trans ... The toughest moments have been those, not being present at my son's graduation [from medical school], someone I supported all my life and love so much. Nor at the birth of my little granddaughter. (Alex, personal communication, February 19, 2024)

I know that if I had continued my life as a man, there wouldn't be discrimination towards me, there wouldn't be violence towards me from my children, right? There wouldn't be any of this. I only receive all the violence just for being a transgender person. (Debbie, personal communication, February 1, 2024)

A specific aspect of violence towards transgender people arises from the fear of contagion, that is, the belief that being transgender can be transmitted to the children. This was the case for Debbie, who was a victim of verbal abuse and physical violence from her older children (20 and 18 years old) and her ex-partner because she gave her younger daughter a haircut:

My daughter asked me to give her a Korean-style haircut, which is short but not military-style ... I cut her hair, and when I took her home, her mother and two brothers were there. They asked me why I had cut her hair like a man's, accusing me of trying to influence her to be like me. That's when the violence started escalating ... I felt awful ... the relationships are broken because they treated me very badly, and without reason, because I cut my daughter's hair the way she asked me to. (Debbie, personal communication, February 1, 2024)

The socio-structural conditions represent the space in which institutions are formed. As such, the stigmas (re)produced by a society also manifest within its institutions, as I detail in the following section.

### ***State-Institutional Conditions***

State and private institutions alike may harbor internal systems or policies that obstruct or outright prevent TP from engaging in parenting. I will begin by exploring the conditions linked to states, as they impact the broader population, while delving into the internal operational systems or policies of private institutions that affect TP associated with them follows.

Within the state-related conditions highlighted by the research participants as negatively impacting their parenting, we find: 1. Heterosexual cisgender centred state benefits, 2. Inconsistent laws or public policies, and 3. Discrimination in Family Courts.

Regarding state benefits, these become problematic when the state apparatus or the associated public policies are geared towards the nuclear family composed of a heterosexual cisgender couple: “Many of the social benefits are primarily structured around the reality of a man and a woman [relationship]; it's built that way from the perspective of state benefits.” (Francisca, personal communication, February 6, 2024)

Inconsistent laws or public policies can arise within a country, after the modification of a law; among states (in federal-type divisions); or between countries:

It's a problem with the Gender Identity Law in Chile, where there was ... a colossal mistake, where they forgot or didn't consider that trans people can have children. This is a reality, but one that's so rendered invisible ... So, when this happens, two laws come into conflict: the gender identity law and, on the other hand, a law related to the child's best interest, which is practically up to the judge on duty, if they believe this affects the child's best interest. And that's where the whole problem arises because there was the power to modify the birth certificate of the person undergoing a change of identity through the

gender identity law, but there was no document that allowed modifying the birth certificate, in this case, of my son. There was nothing about that ... The birth certificates said 'mother', 'father' ... when I got my son's birth certificate, 'father' disappeared, it is not even like it said 'Father: Francisca' and it remained as an inconsistency ... I started giving arguments [to the civil registry official] about 'what are you going to do about this? and where is the child's best interest in this regard? Where is the well-being? Leaving him without inheritance rights because there's no recognition on his birth certificate, he has no way to prove that I'm his father, mother, however you want to call it,' I said, 'I'm not even asking for two mothers to be listed, just put my name and my ID number, so that he has proper protection.' (Francisca, personal communication, February 6, 2024)

[His daughter's name] is legally my daughter, it was a terrible issue because every time you make your change, the civil registry erases you from your children's birth certificate ... It's complicated because, before gay marriage existed in Chile, when the gender identity law was passed, if you were married, you couldn't make your gender change, they wouldn't allow it. Because if you changed and were going to, for example, from woman to man, you would have a marriage with two men and that wasn't allowed ... So, we had to wait a long time, because I couldn't divorce, because I would have lost my green card, and, therefore, [his daughter's name] would have lost her green card, and we would have had to leave the USA. (Pascal, personal communication, February 9, 2024)

For example, if I want to, I can use my name [his two names], here in Chile and in the Mercosur area, which covers the Andean region, because I can travel with the Chilean ID card to Argentina, Bolivia, and Colombia... Bolivia, of course. But if I want to leave, for example, go to Canada ... if I want to go to the United States, or Europe, I have to go with my Venezuelan passport and it's like going backward, because in the Venezuelan passport, I can't change the name. In my professional title, I can't change the name, those things, for example, I can't do them because there is no law in Venezuela for that. So, I can't do it ... When I change nationality, I'll be able to use the passport, and everything will be fine ... those things are complicated when countries don't have the same laws. (Luis, personal communication, February 27, 2024)

I have my name change, but not a gender identity change ... In Guatemala, you can put whatever name you want, but you can't change your identity ... I applied for the American visa. And when they told me I had made a mistake on the form, I said, 'Why did I make a mistake?', 'Because you put female gender', and I said, 'Well, yes, because that's what my documents say.' The American went away, turned off the microphone. He left for like 15, 20 minutes, when he came back, yes, they gave me the visa, but my visa says 'male'. And you can imagine the problems I'm facing now if I want to travel ... I did travel, but at the airline, they almost pulled down my pants ... they gave me the visa with another [gender identity], supposedly respecting, according to them, but what they did was expose me more. (Alex, personal communication, February 19, 2024)

Another difficulty that TP face involves the obstacles they encounter when trying to align their documentation with their gender identity, this might include moving from one city to another in the same country, having to start lawsuits so their identity is respected, or going back to the country of origin to run in-person request for a change of gender identity, all of which implies to locate one-self and sometimes children, in a vulnerable position:

It's kind of complicated because I made my change in [capital city]. I'm from [city]. So yeah, I had to ... travel and get proof of residence from there, which obviously wasn't mine, to complete the process. And since I was one of the first to do it, I had to arrive here, and nobody wanted to respect it. I had to file a lawsuit and continue with the legal process for a while ... Now that I asked about the documents, if they were aligned, they were supposed to be aligned. But now ... it turns out they're not, it turns out that, for some reason, someone made a mistake and didn't preserve my previous identity. So, the other identity is floating around, and I can't continue to update the high school certificate, which is what I need to continue my studies, because the other identity is floating around. (Hall, personal communication, February 20, 2024)

When they managed to pass the gay marriage law in Chile, there was the possibility, because when you live abroad, they don't let you make the change abroad. You have to go to the civil registry; they force you to go to the civil registry to make the change. So, we grabbed our things, me with my passport that, by the way, my passport had the previous name and photography [he transitioned in USA after leaving Chile], I mean completely different from how I was then. So, I was ready to give all the explanations, which is also super humiliating, because you go with a feminine name, with a feminine photo, and you look completely different. But the Chilean government forces you to do that. It forces you, if you live abroad, you have to do it. Okay, civil registry 'Hello, I'm here to do this. I'm here to change my name and my gender identity. But I'm flying back to the United States in two weeks. Am I going to have problems? I'm with my daughter.' 'No, you won't have any problems. Don't worry, this takes months to change in the system.' Lie, it changed in a week ... and we only found out because we were filing a lawsuit for child support, and I was looking for my daughter's birth certificate. And one, my new name appeared, but I didn't get any document reflecting the change. So, technically, they left me in limbo, without an ID card, without a passport ... they wouldn't let me take [daughter's name] out of the country. I said 'But it's the same RUT [national identification number] it's the same RUT. So, use a little bit of judgment.' 'No, it can't be. It must be the same name on the passport,' and I said 'okay, but they have the same last names, come on. It's super obvious what happened,' [I went to] international police, I mean, the PDI [Investigative Police, in charge of border control], nothing. 'Ask the civil registry,' the civil registry 'No, it depends on the PDI,' and they bounced us around for a week. We spent the last week in Chile doing paperwork, begging people to let us go. The solution they gave us was to wait in Chile for three months, I said 'Dude, but I don't live

in this country, and I can't leave my little girl here for three months, she has to go to school.' Zero solutions, zero willingness to solve, zero willingness to help. And my marriage, for example, was annulled, it didn't exist, I looked in the civil registry, and I was single [laughs]. Also, my green card depended on the marriage. So, if I didn't need to prove that I had a marriage certificate, it didn't exist. So, when they passed this law ... or due to the lack of will from the civil registry, they erase all your financial, filial ties, they don't care. And when I complained to the civil registry, 'hey, you know what? I have to take my daughter with me.' They say 'oh, but why did you change? It's like your fault.' ... that was my experience in a Chilean civil registry, horrible. (Pascal, personal communication, February 9, 2024)

Another obstacle that TP face when exercising parenting is having to access Family

Courts to carry out procedures and being exposed to discrimination and violence:

It's not easy because even in the courts, discrimination occurs. There are judges who address you by your former male name, despite having my ID card with my current name. They also use male pronouns when referring to me, even though I appear very feminine. So, there's still a long way to go in this regard, and I could honestly fight with half the world. But that would also affect me, you know? Sometimes, I prefer not to pay attention to the provocation and keep moving forward, to achieve my goals [obtaining custody of her younger daughter]. (Debbie, personal communication, February 1, 2024)

For example, when I came out of the closet, my dad said, 'Oh, we're going to take [name of his daughter] away from you ... you're not capable of taking care of your daughter because this is like a perversion. This is an illness, you're sick. This is a psychological issue. No! We're going to take away your custody.' And I said, 'Okay, go ahead.' But deep down, I was afraid because the Chilean system is so discriminatory, so transphobic, that I thought, 'Maybe they'll succeed.' So, it's complicated. (Pascal, personal communication, February 9, 2024)

TP also face discrimination and violence in healthcare systems, whether public or private.

In the experience of interviewed participants, private healthcare systems are more expensive, implying a higher financial investment, but they may result in a more protected healthcare experience:

When it comes to hormone therapy, it's different to undergo it privately with the peace of mind that you can schedule a doctor's appointment, and if you don't like it, you can change it, compared to having to wait in the public system and if you don't like the person

and the mistreatment, you more or less have to endure it. These are very different realities in that aspect. (Francisca, personal communication, February 6, 2024)

Within state or private institutions, TP who are parents may encounter two problems: binary systems and lack of training for staff to provide care to LGBTIQ+ people: “All forms, especially in this region, say 'father's name, mother's name'.” (Alex, personal communication, February 19, 2024)

The system wasn't prepared, the technological system wasn't ready... My son was one of the first ones who also appeared with two parents ... it's super complex because all systems are created with 'mother, father', the computer systems ... in his birth certificate, of course, it appears that there are two parents, that it's their biological mother and me. So, from that side, that issue is resolved, yes, but it was a problem, at the time. It wasn't something easy, it had to be fought for, and it's frustrating because ultimately, you're in a process, that is positive for you. And you must deal with this thing. And it's like you must to fight for something that is your right, like having to justify yourself, having to threaten sometimes, it's unpleasant, it's exhausting, ultimately. (Francisca, personal communication, February 6, 2024)

It's a problem in Mexico, there's the written law and the law that's practiced. I mean, there's always, you know, a lot of corruption ... you work so much, but so much to achieve this identity where no one questions you anymore. I mean, they already call me as 'man', 'sir,' well, 'young man,' whatever, and having to abandon it again, even if it's temporary, even if it's just while I talk to... to the secretary that I'm going to fix those documents and, fortunately, the times I've gone they've been super kind, I mean everything, everything is a fear of mine, but it's like feeling trapped again. (Hall, personal communication, February 20, 2024)

In situations of conflict, LGBTIQ+ individuals often adapt by fearing the worst for safety's sake, as they cannot rely on the "kindness of strangers." Consequently, self-advocacy becomes necessary, but not everyone can think quickly or be assertive in these moments:

It's very frustrating, they're very negligent in doing their job... Zero solutions, zero willingness to solve, zero willingness to help ... I even told people, 'Forget it, change it back [his name and gender identity], I don't care, change it back to how it was, but I have to take my daughter with me. No, I can't leave her here' ... and then they wanted to stop me like, 'No, you can't go on the plane, because then your documents won't match your green card. So, they won't let you in.' And I said 'Well, that will be decided by the government of the United States, not you, a Latam Airlines flight attendant.' But they

really wanted to stop us a lot, just, obstacles, just lots of problems. (Pascal, personal communication, February 9, 2024)

The existence of binary systems for recognizing parent-child relationships poses limitations when a person begins a caregiving and nurturing relationship with a child. The lack of recognition of extended family relationships -such as acknowledging a third parental figure- exposes children to vulnerability and prevents them from accessing more supportive experiences, for example, having an state recognized extended family that cares for and takes responsibility for them:

Both kids have a dad registered. And the little girl's dad hadn't wanted to give up his rights as a father. He was the one who abused the older one. And well, there was also a whole process, right? Of suing, of putting him in jail, all of that, uh... But at that time, he hadn't abandoned his rights, or they hadn't taken them away. So, I can't adopt someone who already has a mom and dad. (Hall, personal communication, February 20, 2024)

[Daughter's name] thinks she has three [grandmothers] because there's my mom in Chile, there's her paternal grandmother as the biological one, who's cool, zero drama, I mean, she's very loving. So that's her ... and then there's her American grandma, who's her granny [laughs]. So, she's got, like, three, I tell her, 'Cool, you've got three gifts, make the most of Christmas!'. (Pascal, personal communication, February 9, 2024)

Alongside the state and institutional conditions affecting TP and their exercise of parenting, there are certain conditions within micro-social environments where transgender parental figures conduct their activities that can also become obstacles or impediments to parenting. These conditions will be reviewed in the following section.

### ***Microsocial Environment Conditions***

Micro-social environments are the spaces where TP who are parents interact face-to-face with others. In these micro-social settings, violence can be (re)produced. Study participants identified

three conditions that may lead to discrimination: 1. The presence of certain evangelical groups<sup>12</sup>, 2. The segregation of TP within the LGBTIQA+ community, and 3. Intrafamilial violence. We will now examine each of these conditions.

Regarding the evangelical groups, interviewees stated that the teachings people receive in evangelical churches support people to exert violence against TP, even when they are family:

The people who have discriminated against me the most, it has been the evangelical community. Even on social media, they bully me ... And well, I have had violent episodes with my son, which I had to report [to the police]. I reported him last year. Now I also filed a complaint against them, on January 26<sup>th</sup>. Because they hit me and everything ... they tell me I'm a disgrace, or they call me 'mariconas' [a derogatory term for gay men]. Or they have called me a man, they address me by my male name ... a lot of obscenities, they headbutted me last year ... they have told me about the Romans thing, I don't know what, that degenerate people will not go to heaven, that God created man and woman, and that the rest go to hell. That's the mildest thing they have said to me. But they always treat me like a degenerate person. And I'm not like that. (Debbie, personal communication, February 1, 2024)

Regarding the pro-LGBTIQA+ rights movements, some of the study participants indicated that there has been a segregation of struggles within the LGBTIQA+ community, which has been detrimental to TP and the achievement of their rights. This stark contrast highlights the urgent and life-threatening issues that some within the LGBTIQA+ community continue to face. This discrepancy underscores the critical need for a more unified and inclusive approach to advocating for the rights of all members of the LGBTIQA+ community:

When the Gay Power movement emerged, it gradually displaced other diversities, which leaned more towards the feminist movement because they didn't find a place within it ... They appropriated the movement, and as a result, they forgot about the rest. Ultimately, here, the focus is on dissidences, while organizations like Iguales and MOVILH [NGOs associated with the gay movement] are thinking about getting married, transgender women are being killed ... There's a lack of policies within these organizations dedicated to this issue. I think it's an unknown territory, something that isn't addressed or discussed

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<sup>12</sup> Evangelical churches in Latin America have grown rapidly in recent decades. These churches often adopt a literal interpretation of the Bible, shaping their conservative views on social issues, which can affect their societal interactions (Freston, 2001; Pew Research Center, 2014).



enough, and there's very little available. In fact, I've had many disputes with Iguales because when they talk about families as 'homoparental', they always refer to couples conformed by lesbians or gays. What about transgender people who don't fit into this concept? It's as if they don't exist. So, I believe it's a problem because trans people don't know where to start, and they face the dilemma of having a child to care for, and many things can happen. (Francisca, personal communication, February 6, 2024)

There are very few resources because the resources always go to the LGBTI movement for gays and for trans women. So, much of our [trans men] work is done out of goodwill and such, it's very difficult for us to obtain resources, and in fact, the [trans men focused] clinic doesn't have many accessories. (Alex, personal communication, February 19, 2024)

TP are susceptible to experiencing intrafamily violence, which can take various forms, including family rejection, severed relationships, threats to take away their children, parental alienation dynamics, psychological violence, physical violence, verbal abuse, among others:

Family rejection is very painful in that aspect. Because one thing is not being understood, and another thing is, for example, when violence arises, or when they kick you out of the house, but I think it's something very difficult. So I believe family support is fundamental in that sense ... when I finally came out and started my transition, at that moment, my mom and dad stopped talking to me, I mean, my family practically disappeared, my sister too, it was like a cut-off and on top of that, the pandemic added to the situation, so, by losing contact with me, not because of me, but because of them, they automatically cut off contact with my son as well, it severed the entire bond ... I am an adult who can reflect, who can understand the behavior of my dad, my mom, or my sister ... But my son doesn't understand. And it's not fair either, because I never closed the doors. So, something was lost, and it's difficult to repair and recover. And I feel like my parents also see it as a mistake. Ultimately, they know they made a mistake with that, but it was like a backlash, a consequence that hurts me because it happened, after all, he [her son] didn't deserve it, especially considering that he was going through a very tough process with the diagnosis of his disability, his illness, where what he needed most was family and he lost a part of it. (Francisca, personal communication, February 6, 2024)

According to them [his parents], what I wanted to do was something sick, something perverted, you know? A depravity. So, they said it wasn't right for me to be ... influencing my daughter in a bad way by doing this. So no, they were going to take her away from me ... they went with a lawyer, they went to a trans organization. They talked to a psychiatrist and the psychiatrist was like, 'What's wrong with you guys?' and they came back home defeated like, 'Oh no! We won't be able to take your daughter away even if you're a good father and simply have a different gender identity. Oh no!' And I was like, 'Okay, I'm going to the United States in about a month' ... Besides, they didn't respect me either, they didn't care. It was like they kept calling me by my old name, 'My daughter', you know? And it was like, 'Okay, well, I gave them the ultimatum', like 'You

guys have been really unpleasant to me. And if you don't want to change, that's fine, don't change, but I'm not going to continue exposing myself to this, I'm not going to expose [daughter's name] to this either. Because letting you disrespect me also teaches her that it's okay, that you disrespect me, so, no'. And then my grandmother, she has Alzheimer's and she started to get really bad. And my other grandmother, on my dad's side, passed away. So, it was like they said, 'Oh! Life is so short, maybe we should respect and love the people we have around us, instead of being so discriminatory.' And then they sort of accepted it. (Pascal, personal communication, February 9, 2024)

Her mother blocks me from everything, you know? In fact, she has told the school that I can't pick her [her daughter] up ... She doesn't tell me about any of her activities, nothing, like she erases me from my daughter's life ... with my middle child, the mother did everything possible to prevent me from attending his graduation ... sometimes it happened to me that when I have to go to something important with my daughter, her mother takes her away ... she always exerts violence in that way; because if my daughter gets ready and dresses up, she is happy, she will go out with me to one side and she takes her and takes her to a cousin's, takes her to her sister's ... I try not to generate problems, actually, not to create chaos, because in the end, the fight affects my daughter ... between last year and this year with her, I have had many acts of violence ... this would be the second time I report her to the authorities, and I don't want that treatment anymore, I prefer to lose my children, and I don't want them to offend me the way they have done, you know? ... last week, they even kneed me, hitting me in the legs, head-butted me, and no. I prefer not to have children than to have children like that ... if I had more time with them. For example, if they lived alone with me, not with their mother, they would really see who I am ... they changed their mindset for the months of October and November, when I had to live with them because their mother had a problem. And they saw, they saw me as I was... when I was with my children in October where everything was fine, they greeted me with a kiss, used my feminine name, and then things changed when they went back with their mother. But ... someday they will understand. (Debbie, personal communication, February 1, 2024)

The various obstacles faced by TP in their PE often interact and compound each other, creating a complex web of challenges that reinforce and perpetuate discrimination and marginalization. The socio-structural discrimination towards TP, deeply rooted in societal norms and stigmas, lays the groundwork for similar biases within state institutions. For instance, societal stigmas regarding the "Otherness" of TP (Spivak, 2011; Viveros-Vigoya, 2016) are mirrored in state policies and legal frameworks. Alex's statement, "Because at the end of the day, we [the LGBTIQ+ community] will always be seen as weird, complex, diverse, and

anything strange in this world will always be treated differently" (Alex, personal communication, February 19, 2024), encapsulates how these societal views seep into institutional practices.

The heteronormative biases in state benefits, as mentioned by Francisca, "Many of the social benefits are primarily structured around the reality of a man and a woman [relationship]; it's built that way from the perspective of state benefits" (Francisca, personal communication, February 6, 2024), highlight how socio-structural norms influence policy-making. These policies fail to recognize the diverse family structures of TP, thereby denying them essential benefits and protections.

Inconsistent laws and public policies further exacerbate the challenges faced by TP. For example, the requirement to align official documentation with one's gender identity often necessitates navigating bureaucratic hurdles, which can involve relocation, legal battles, and significant financial and emotional strain. This situation is compounded by the socio-structural stigma that positions TP as outsiders, making them vulnerable to discrimination and violence during these processes.

State-institutional discrimination also interacts with microsocial environment conditions, amplifying the challenges faced by TP in their daily lives. For instance, the lack of legal recognition for diverse family structures exposes TP to additional risks within their immediate social environments. The binary systems for recognizing parent-child relationships limit the acknowledgment of extended family roles, leaving children vulnerable and depriving them of supportive networks.

The presence of some evangelical groups which (re)produce anti-LGBTIQA+ rights discourses, and promote violence against TP, further complicates the social landscape for TP parents. The segregation within the LGBTIQA+ community, as highlighted by the participants,

demonstrates how intra-community dynamics can also reflect and reinforce broader societal biases, leaving TP without adequate support from their own community. Intrafamilial violence, a significant issue identified by the participants, is another manifestation of how state and societal norms influence private spheres. The threats of parental alienation, psychological and physical violence, and verbal abuse are compounded by the lack of legal protections and societal acceptance, creating a hostile environment for TP and their children.

The interaction between socio-structural, state-institutional, and microsocial environment conditions creates a reinforcing cycle of discrimination and marginalization for TP. These interwoven challenges underscore the need for comprehensive legal frameworks and social policies that recognize and protect the rights of TP and their families. Only by addressing these multifaceted issues can we create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all members of the LGBTIQ+ community, which is relevant because from the conditions that negatively influence the exercise of parenting by TP, they develop a series of concerns that sometimes are threatening to their integrity, which will be detailed in the following section.

### ***Concerns of Transgender People Regarding Parenting***

The concerns of TP regarding parenting stem from the awareness of navigating potentially hostile environments, prompting a series of apprehensions about their physical and psychological well-being, as well as that of their children. I have categorized the concerns expressed by TP in interviews into two groups: 1. Personal concerns and 2. Concerns regarding TP parenting, which we will now review.

Within the realm of personal concerns, given the societal discrimination towards Otherness prevalent in Latin American society, TP develop internalized stigma leading to

feelings of guilt about their identity, which subsequently impacts their familial relationships and interactions with their children:

Even shortly after my first daughter was born, I found out that in Mexico... I don't know if you're familiar with rugby, it's a sport, um... Well, it's somewhat rough, maybe even violent, very forceful, which, let's say, emphasized what is stereotypically considered masculine. So, I got into playing... I'm talking about around '83 [1983], thinking that would make me a man, that with a sport of that nature, I would finally be a real man. Because, well, what a shame, right? That my daughter has a dad who dresses like a woman? Anyway. And if my wife found out, I mean, I lived with a lot of conflict, my gender identity. So, I tried... Well, I'll also use the not quite appropriate word in quotes, that I really 'liked' being a man, and well, I loved rugby, but I didn't become a man. I mean, my gender identity didn't change, right? ... I traveled for work and would buy women's clothes to wear in the hotel. And that was what kind of satisfied me a little bit, but then those feelings of guilt would come. So, um... I didn't want to talk to anyone about it. I mean, I thought it was a problem I had to solve and that, maybe at first, 'when I get married it will go away'. Well, I got married and it didn't go away, 'when I have daughters, um... Well, I'll buy them lots of dolls and dresses and everything I would have liked to have', so I did. But well, my identity didn't change either, right? So, I was very confused. (Sophia, personal communication, February 1, 2024)

I think something fundamental, if I could talk to trans parents, I would tell them that... I believe that a very delicate and important issue is guilt. Guilt makes you not do [things], right? But sometimes it's essential to do, because when your children see that you're happy, you also lift a weight off their shoulders. (Isa, personal communication, February 17, 2024)

The internalization of stigma may result in TP experiencing suicidal ideation. The elevated rates of suicide within the trans community become apparent to their children, posing a concern for TP who are parents and their offspring. Children often internalize fears and experiences related to their parents' struggles but may not openly share them, leading to a ripple effect of emotional fallout that can impact their well-being:

I remember once when [her daughter] came home, crying, when she was about 10 years old. She was very depressed and didn't want to tell me what was wrong ... Eventually, she said, 'I know that transgender people commit suicide ... and I don't want you to kill yourself.' She, you know, was nine, 10 years old, and she had to experience all of that ... I can tell you that if I hadn't transitioned, I don't know, maybe I would have ended my life. It was a very sad life. I weighed over 100 kilos, and I had to do it [transition], because I was dying. (Isa, personal communication, February 17, 2024)

The fear of transphobic attacks can lead TP to conceal their identity in various social settings, which may even prevent them from accessing opportunities to become parents—such as through adoption—due to fear of discrimination:

At the beginning of our relationship, which should have been a time of bliss and happiness, I could have formally requested adoption of at least the youngest child. I discussed it with her, and she was thrilled. However, at that time, I didn't have my papers in order. So, making those moves would have meant revealing to the girls that I am a trans man, which would eventually become known to their parents. You know, there's all the discrimination that could come with that ... I fear that if I start the process to legally adopt any child, the moment it comes to light that I am a transgender person, I'll become vulnerable to the biases of the person evaluating me ... It may sound cheesy, but I have so much paternal love to give. I'm not wealthy, but I'm doing okay. I could make a huge difference for one or two children in a shelter or orphanage. But it does scare me. I don't know how to explain it, but it feels like a risk. If I openly tell them, 'Look, I'm a trans man.' It's like exposing myself directly to them even questioning the legality of it ... And if I don't openly disclose it upfront, I don't know if it will come out during the investigation, and they might say, 'oh wow! Why did you hide it?' And it looks even more suspicious. (Hall, personal communication, February 20, 2024)

The fear or past experiences of facing transphobic attacks, along with the difficulties in establishing friendships with other TP or forming a romantic relationship, lead some transgender people to isolate themselves or resign themselves to the idea of being alone, even with family/children, because they will drift away. Therefore, loneliness becomes a significant concern:

I, at least, feel that, although I had a very good support network, in the long run, one still experiences a certain level of solitude. Especially because within my networks, there are no transgender people... in my closest circle ... so it's ... equally difficult to explain what one is going through, even physically ... it's complex. (Francisca, personal communication, February 6, 2024)

Most transgender people always feel alone, they are terrified of loneliness, many... because many die alone too, their adult life is always solitary. Many have pets and all that, and in my case, I've had to discuss this issue with friends I have on a WhatsApp group where there are quite a few trans people, because there are others who also have children, there are several trans people who have children, I would say two out of 10 have

children, or maybe three. So, they are also happy that we can have a family, because transgender people know that the fate is to end up alone ... in fact, we know people who are like that ... I also have the clarity that, well, with my children, they will drift away when they finish university, both of them, I know that my daughter may also drift away at some point, and transgender people know that that is our fate: to end up alone ... yes, I would like [to have a partner], because... I mean, you miss giving love and receiving love, you understand? ... I sabotage myself; I realize, it gives me a bit of a feeling of... [sighs] Well, look, the truth is that among trans women, eight out of 10 suffer violence from their partners, we've talked about it in the chat many times, and the people who approach trans women are violent people, you know? I've seen at gatherings, sometimes when we've gotten together, scenes of violence ... there are guys who, although they like me, because it's happened to me that they are heterosexual, they are cisgender, you know? The burden of having a trans partner is very heavy. And it's happened to me, I've liked guys, you know? And they've told me, literally, that it's heavy for them, you know? that they like me a lot, that they prefer to have me as a friend... So, I don't have much hope. (Debbie, personal communication, February 1, 2024)

Concerns regarding TP parenting include apprehension about the potential consequences of gender affirmation surgeries and their impact on the children of TP:

If, for example, I undergo sex reassignment surgery, there are risks involved in that surgery ... There's a risk that a surgery that ... is delicate in that aspect, that something could happen to me and run the risk of leaving my child alone ... So, every decision that one makes, I think it's also important to question it and do it responsibly. (Francisca, personal communication, February 6, 2024)

Another concern expressed in the discourse of interviewed TP refers to the additional expenses associated with exercising TP parenting, ranging from the possibility of egg freezing, surrogate rental, therapy costs, hiring lawyers to support certain processes, among others: “We even considered with my current partner, renting a womb, but we saw that it is very, very, very expensive.” (V́ctor, personal communication, February 12, 2024)

I could freeze them [eggs], but it's quite expensive ... Socioeconomic factors are really important, having a lawyer, in case they want to sue you for any reason, money for therapy as well, because your children may need more support or they might be advised to do activities, to meet more people. All of that entails costs. (Pascal, personal communication, February 9, 2024)

The interviewed participants also pointed out that the potential negative consequences of undergoing a non-traditional pregnancy also become a concern in the case of trans men: “Why not gestate? It's just that at this point, I think there are already many things against me, both the years I've been on hormones and my physical age.” (Víctor, personal communication, February 12, 2024)

I am very satisfied with having a uterus; I actually like it. So, I had considered that I wouldn't want to remove it all. I like having the possibility of giving birth ... it's strange because the pregnancy and being quite masculine, it's very noticeable, at first, it's like ‘oh no! I'm getting chubby,’ you know? But then it becomes very obvious. But I think that scares me a bit, but it's not something I completely rule out; I think I would do it. (Pascal, personal communication, February 9, 2024)

A concern that TP who lack a biological connection with their children have is not being the biological parent of their children, which is compounded by the lack of recognition of the parent-child relationship:

[One of the] obstacles, well, since they are not biologically my children... I feel like I do hold back to a certain extent when it comes to disciplining them ... well, indeed, I am not their dad, even though they see me that way, but there will come a time when they say ‘well, what do you tell me? You're not my dad’. (Víctor, personal communication, February 12, 2024)

In some cases, the TP is responsible for ensuring stability in the home or providing a safe environment for the children. When the parental bond is questioned or denied due to the absence of a biological connection, the children involved lose that protection and may be exposed to violence and various dangers:

And I know that I loved them [his children], and I love them more than any other man in the world, literally. And even the eldest, if he has hinted to me, well, that things with his mom are very, very difficult and ... he understands everything I did to try to bring a little stability to the home, and that, well, when we separated, sadly, I don't know... sadly, that stability was lost ... It frustrates me ... to think that their mom, their biological parents, well, literally, abandoned them or caused them a lot of harm, their biological mom too, well, is harming them in one way or another. If I were to tell you the things they did... And I don't know, I mean... Not being able to give them more... Not being able to do



more for them, because I could never claim legal rights. (Hall, personal communication, February 20, 2024)

Although all these concerns weigh heavily on TP who are parents, the one that affects them the most is the transfer of stigma to their children:

I was afraid that if I openly talked about being trans or pansexual, the discrimination wouldn't just be directed at me, but also at the girls ... my in-laws didn't know either. So, I was very careful not to let them know, and the same goes for our mutual friends, our partner's friends, they didn't know either. On more than one occasion, they made homophobic comments, and I tried my best not to say ... 'well, you know... I'm trans, I'm pansexual.' It would have been great to do it, to say, 'stop being ignorant, we're not what you're saying we are,' but doing so would have exposed the girls the most, because they were the ones playing with their kids. So, I felt like it wasn't just my decision anymore who I told I was trans ... what I used to do so openly, like, 'I'm trans and that's it!' During that relationship, it was more like, 'okay, I'll participate and support however I can, but please don't make it public'. (Hall, personal communication, February 20, 2024)

And I also understand that children carry all that, all the stigma, and surely they must hear a lot of awful things about trans people, and living with that is tough ... it's a very heavy burden ... It must be complex for my children too when they hear, 'hey, your dad is now a woman, trans people are like this, they're like that,' all of that. I understand that it must be stressful for them too ... With my daughter ... now that she's in seventh grade, there's middle school if her classmates find out that I'm transgender, I sometimes think they're going to bully her a lot, give her nicknames. Because you know how kids are, they harass a lot about those things ... Or like, for example, if I go to meetings and you know how people are, they might tell their child, 'look...' that I become news, because wherever I go, I'm news, because transgender people are few ... It's very complex, and for the children too, because they also carry the same burden, they get thrown into the mix of what they say we are. That's tough. (Debbie, personal communication, February 1, 2024)

When he knows that you actually experience the discrimination and aggression that transgender people face, it's like 'wow, my mom could be in danger' or 'I'm also at risk, my own safety. So, I'll spend less time with her.' All those things can happen ... how to create situations where you don't expose yourself, where you don't expose him. It's dull, because ultimately, of course, you shouldn't have to live with that fear, but it's also a reality. From an idealistic perspective, saying 'no, we should go out into the street without fear,' but the reality is that we go out and there's still a long way to go ... it's not about passing on that fear to my son, but rather the appropriate precautions that can be taken. (Francisca, personal communication, February 6, 2024)

It was my decision, and I am openly a transgender man, but they, I always call them collateral victims of my decision. For example, my son is a doctor, he graduated, and I didn't even attend the graduation so that he wouldn't face the conflict of revealing who I

was, because of my masculine expression. I knew that, although I was always supporting him financially, morally, and in every way, I preferred not to go to avoid subjecting him to jokes, mockery from his friends, because of my masculine expression, and his dad went there, who was never there financially, but was present at that event ... in the case of sons and daughters, everything they have to face, for being children of transgender people, because of social violence, because of state violence. I think that is the most important thing because before having a son or daughter, I think one should know everything they will also have to face, that they become collateral victims of all the violence experienced by transgender people. (Alex, personal communication, February 19, 2024)

At first, when I started the transition, people who knew me and all, did see it a bit... not bad, but yes, strange. It was like, 'can it be that the children won't receive a good education? They might get confused'. At first, yes, it was a bit difficult. People saw it negatively, like... 'no, don't do that, because you will harm the children, their minds will get messed up. They will start to believe... to want... to see other things... to see bad things.' And that, but over time, people have realized that we were raising them well, they are good kids, they are polite, they are good students, they win awards at school for being the best student, for being kind, for being good classmates. So, there it's more of a social issue than what it really is ... for us, it was difficult to take the step of telling people, precisely because of the children's care. We didn't want them to have their heads poisoned. (Luis, personal communication, February 27, 2024)

Subalternity theories (Spivak, 2011; Mohanty, 2008) propose that people are not passive victims of their social or material conditions but are also active agents in shaping their social experiences. In the following section, we will review the resources that TP have identified, which TP employ/benefit from because they play a positive role in their exercise of parenting.

## **Resources**

Within the conditions that positively influence the exercise of parenting by TP, three main categories were identified: 1. Social conditions, 2. Legal protection, and 3. Personal conditions. These categories will be examined in detail in the following section.

## ***Social Conditions***

Within the conditions that, if present in the social environment, facilitate the exercise of parenting for TP, participants highlighted: 1. Social support, 2. Education, 3. Formal or institutional support networks, 4. Mental health services, 5. Medical services, and 6. Opportunities to access formal employment.

Regarding social support, participants stated: “Obviously, those with a higher support network, and ideally, if the support is also from family, it is more significant. I believe that when there are support networks, both from family and friends, that work together, it is better.”

(Francisca, personal communication, February 6, 2024) “For me, family is paramount... and family is not always... simply blood-related, you can ... have a family because you created it ... there are many who don't have blood-related family, but families are the friends you've made.”

(Luis, personal communication, February 27, 2024)

The study participants underscored another social factor that positively influences the practice of TP parenting: Education. This encompasses several dimensions. Firstly, it involves the ability of TP to pursue formal education. This not only fosters an understanding of their gender identity and rights but also facilitates access to higher-quality employment opportunities and socioeconomic advancement through professional training and educational attainment:

As a child, I would have loved to have had this information, and wow... It would have been extremely helpful. But, well, it didn't exist back then. So, thankfully, it's available now. And future generations will be able to access this type of crucial information. (Luis, personal communication, February 27, 2024)

I have a postgraduate degree, so yeah, I'm doing well [laughs] ... I'm privileged. Having the opportunity to study, it's not that people don't want to do it, you know? ... It's not that they lack the ability, they lack the resources. (Sophia, personal communication, February 1, 2024)

In a second sense, participants highlight the importance of education since an educated society translates into lower levels of discrimination towards TP, including professionals working with the TP population:

It's in the curriculum too, in California, for example, or in Oregon, they teach you, 'These are LGBT identities.' They teach it to kids from a very young age... they say, 'Look, there are gay couples, there are lesbian couples, there are bisexual people, there are transgender people.' There are books in public libraries like 'I Am Jazz' ... books for children to understand, there's a lot of literature. So, there's more willingness for acceptance. (Pascal, personal communication, February 9, 2024)

I've always said, 'I've been the psychologist's teacher,' because many times within psychology itself, they don't understand trans issues. So, more than ... they accompanied me. I think I ended up being the teacher for these people. (Alex, personal communication, February 19, 2024)

Another aspect related to education is the presence of inclusive schools, providing a safe environment free from prejudice, where both children and transgender parental figures can thrive with the necessary support:

They were initially enrolled in an inclusive school where they interacted with children with ASD [Autism Spectrum Disorder], Down syndrome, and transgender children ... The school helped us a lot in ... figuring things out. My daughter's school now has a transgender boy, and everything's fine. They don't see being transgender as a bad thing ... they [his children] know stealing and violence are bad, but being transgender isn't. (Luis, personal communication, February 27, 2024)

Another element facilitating the exercise of TP parenting is the existence and availability of formal or institutional support networks with expertise to assist in navigating challenges encountered, such as those within governmental systems:

Well, first off, we hired a lawyer ... and got in touch with this organization called OTD, which stands for Organizing Trans Diversities. They've dealt with this kind of thing with the civil registry before. They've got their own lawyers because this happens so often. They [OTD] shot them [the civil registry] an email like, 'Hey, this thing happened again, Francisca changed her legal names and gender identity, and now her kid's birth certificate info got wiped out. Can you fix it?' ... Nowadays, the support networks aren't really government policies; they're more like private groups offering help. They're basically

trying to do some damage control in these specific situations. (Francisca, personal communication, February 6, 2024)

Despite the importance placed on support networks, they aren't always present or readily available. In such cases, some TP have taken the initiative to create their own NGOs and institutions to support others in the trans community when these resources are lacking:

I founded the first collective of trans men in [region] because I didn't want any more [his name]s to be forced into marriage, to have children, and all that. I started creating that movement ... We have the first comprehensive differentiated care clinic for trans men in Latin America. We were the first collective of trans men in [region]. We created a network in Latin America for trans masculine people. (Alex, personal communication, February 19, 2024)

A crucial facilitator of parenting for TP is the accessibility of mental health services tailored to their needs. These services play a pivotal role in assisting TP parents in addressing personal issues related to their transition, experiences of violence, discrimination, and the heightened risk of suicide. Furthermore, these services offer vital support in navigating complexities associated with forming diverse families and disclosing gender identity to their children: “It's important that you have psychological and psychiatric support. It's really crucial. Generally, transgender people suffer from depression and anxiety for many years without even realizing it.” (Luis, personal communication, February 27, 2024)

We really need better mental health support here in Chile, especially for folks like us. Personally, I'm doing okay mentally, but most of my friends are really struggling ... People just don't get what we're going through, so they can't really help us ... Some of my trans girlfriends have even resorted to taking pills because they feel so overwhelmed. (Debbie, personal communication, February 1, 2024)

Related to the health topic, participants emphasize the importance of the existence and availability of health services with professionals trained and prepared to assist TP who are or want to become parents: “What happens if a trans man decides to become a gestational person? There will be questioning, there will be issues.” (Francisca, personal communication, February 6,

2024), this testimony aligns with previous research findings (Alday-Mondaca et al., 2023; Alday-Mondaca, 2022; Alday-Mondaca, Lay-Lisboa, 2021a, 2021b). In this regard, economic affordability of health services is also a significant element, according to the discourse of the participants:

Health insurance should cover treatments related to gender identity, hormones, surgeries ... I'm sure that in Chile they don't cover it and that private insurance covers nothing, and the public one doesn't consider this as an important necessity, which is health, in the end. It's not only your emotional health, but physical as well, because otherwise, you will seek alternatives in the black market for hormones. So, that should change because it should be covered. (Pascal, personal communication, February 9, 2024)

Finally, the interviewed TP emphasized the importance of having the opportunity to access formal employment to exercise parenting from a place of economic and social security:

I have the opportunity to work under a formal contract, you know? But ... out of 10 trans women, only three have jobs. The rest either can't find work, or they get fired when employers find out they're trans. (Debbie, personal communication, February 1, 2024)

What they had to resort to was engaging in sex work because there was no other way to survive. It wasn't really a choice; it was the way to make ends meet ... with all the risks involved in terms of personal integrity, physical health, and so on ... Professional development can be a protective factor, but it's not a guarantee, especially if there aren't appropriate working conditions and laws to protect diversity. The profession you have becomes meaningless ... I used to work in two places ... and I had to quit not because they asked me to, but it was obvious, given the environment, that it would be impossible. My transition was incompatible with that type of work. It just wasn't viable in any way ... If that had been my only job, I would have been in trouble. (Francisca, personal communication, February 6, 2024)

In addition to the previously discussed social conditions, interviewees pointed out the necessary legal protections for the exercise of TP parentings, which we will review in the following section.

## ***Legal Protection***

The study participants emphasized the necessity of specific laws to ensure the safe and protected exercise of parenting. It is crucial that these laws are developed alongside coordinated public policies to avoid incongruities that may lead to new instances of vulnerability and discrimination. The legal protections considered most necessary include: 1. Gender-neutral official documents, 2. Gender Identity Law, 3. Equal Marriage Law, 4. Parentage/Adoption Law, and 5. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Laws and Policies.

The official documents that (re)produce gender binarism undermine the rights of TP and intersex people (Butler, 2004). Conversely, when gender-neutral documentation is available, TP can exercise their parenting in safer spaces: “In transgender parenting, well, now with same-sex marriage being recognized, it's easier. Before, you had ‘father’ and ‘mother’ on the birth certificate, but now you have ‘parent one’ and ‘parent two’ ... to protect the children.” (Pascal, personal communication, February 9, 2024)

In countries without gender-neutral legal documentation, situations arise that violate the rights of both TP and their children:

For them [his children], it has been very challenging because the State, obviously, doesn't recognize me, so they still have to put [on documentation] the name of their mom, they have to put my name, which is masculine, because legally my name is [full name], and yes, it causes them a lot of problems. (Alex, personal communication, February 19, 2024)

The approval of gender identity laws allows TP to obtain legal recognition of their name and gender identity, which has real-life implications such as the ability to secure stable employment or access education:

A lot of people physically transition, especially sex workers, but they don't change their documents, you know? So, you show up at a company, with your 34C cup and your ID that says ‘John Doe,’ and that's where it can get a bit complicated ... In my case, when I started, I went all in. I mean, both physical and legal transition ... It took me over two

years... to have all my documents ... But it was crucial, I mean... having your papers in order, both for the law and for yourself. I mean, seeing your voter ID, or your birth certificate, your identity documents matching the identity you identify with, phew! You don't know how much of a relief that is, you know? I mean, it really boosts your morale. (Isa, personal communication, February 17, 2024)

Along with the Gender Identity Law, the approval of the Equal Marriage Law is paramount, as its absence engenders instances of vulnerability and rights infringement when a person transitions prior to or subsequent to establishing a partnership:

You couldn't change your name if you were married, as I was married in a heterosexual marriage [prior to my transition]. To address the gender identity issue, you had to get divorced. And I was here [in the United States] on a green card, you know? So, if I got divorced, they would basically kick me out [deport me] [laughter]. So, I couldn't change my name until there was gay marriage in Chile. (Pascal, personal communication, February 9, 2024)

Additionally, the enactment of an Adoption Law is crucial to legally acknowledge the parent-child relationship between TP and their children, irrespective of whether it is biologically related, similar to the recognition afforded to cisgender people:

The gender identity one [law], the... well, being able to adopt, uh... And the same-sex marriage one, I also think that's important, because often for adoption they require marriage. But if there's no marriage law, then, how can you adopt? So, it's like a lot of things they ask for, but if they're not approved in the country, how do you do it? How do you follow the steps to do something if the laws don't allow it? (Luis, personal communication, February 27, 2024)

In addition to these legislations, it is important to have Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion public policies that reach within institutions to prevent situations of discrimination in the workplace, for example:

You know what worked in my favor in my case? I transitioned when I had been with the company for about 15 years already. So, everyone already knew me and, well, even though it was difficult because I remember when I went to human resources, they didn't even know how to act, you know? They actually told me, 'You can use the restroom, but not the one in the building,' they said, 'you have to go to the one at the back,' which was like ... 500 meters away from my office ... and thinking about it now, it was



discriminatory, right? But well ... the last thing you want is to cause problems or draw attention. So, obviously, I said yes. (Isa, personal communication, February 17, 2024)

There are times when the legislation in the country where TP reside lacks these protections, but some private institutions or organizations have developed Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policies based on their own values. This becomes protective for TP who are parenting more safely if, for example, they can secure income through these internal policies:

I bought a car and started doing Uber... The Gender Identity Law hadn't been approved yet. So, I couldn't change my name, but Uber had a policy of accepting social names, so I had to talk to Uber and tell them I was a transgender man, and they accepted me without any problem. (Luis, personal communication, February 27, 2024)

In addition to the social conditions and legal protections detailed above, the interviewees mentioned that there are personal conditions that can facilitate the exercise of parenting from a transgender perspective, which will be detailed below.

### ***Personal Conditions.***

The participants of the study also indicated that there are two personal conditions that influence the possibility of exercising their parenting in a protected manner: 1. Cis passing and 2. Having a medium or high socioeconomic level.

Regarding cis passing, appearing as a cisgender person or not being noticeable after the transition, the participants stated: “The more cis you look, the more possibilities you have, the more accepted you are.” (Debbie, personal communication, February 1, 2024) “People with cis passing ... well, in my experience, they can acquire a little more rights.” (Isa, personal communication, February 17, 2024)

Cis passing can impact the PE of TP in multiple social situations, for example, in securing a safe housing where they can raise their children:

When I found the apartment where I was living, I was in the midst of my transition, some days presenting as a woman, others as a man. So, as I was walking down the street, I saw a sign that said ‘Apartment for rent. Women only.’ Initially, it puzzled me that it said it was only for women. But then I thought, ‘Well, I am a woman too.’ So, I went to see it that day. Yes, I dressed in my women's clothes and made myself look as feminine as possible to meet with that man. So, speaking of passing, he didn't object at all; he spoke to me in feminine terms the whole time. He agreed for me to rent it. (Sophia, personal communication, February 1, 2024)

Regarding cis passing specifically, interviewees indicated that trans men generally cis pass and are less likely to face discrimination. Therefore, they believe that trans women people have less access to rights. Debbie mentioned, “The person who still has masculine traits. That's the person with the least access. They are discriminated against a lot.” (Debbie, personal communication, February 1, 2024) Victor added, “I think lately... personally, I've seen greater benefits as a man than as a woman.” (Victor, personal communication, February 12, 2024)

It happens a lot, especially for trans women who transition after adolescence. There are characteristics that don't change. However, for trans men, it's a bit easier for us because our voice changes, we... well, then we pass under the radar, we grow hair, beard, and have top surgery. So, you can pass really unnoticed. Nobody has figured it out here ... I mean, people ... when you're visibly trans, they let you know right away ... if they can screw you over, they will, that's the truth. If they can use their power against you, they'll do it. That's why camouflage is so important, being able to change your name is so important. Passing under the radar is so important because it affects your parenting too. (Pascal, personal communication, February 9, 2024)

One of the participants presented a dissenting view from most other TP interviewed. In his case, he believes that trans women have greater access to rights and social benefits due to the visibility they have gained from HIV-related struggles and from having been assigned male at birth: “Trans women, I think, have greater access to rights and social benefits, mainly due to HIV-related issues ... There are very strong organizations. And generally, those who were assigned male at birth have more opportunities in this world, always.” (Alex, personal communication, February 19, 2024)

To address the challenges obstructing or limiting the ability of TP to engage in parenting and to alleviate their concerns, the interviewees have developed a set of coping strategies that have proven beneficial. They expressed a willingness to share these coping mechanisms with other TP contemplating parenting. These strategies will be explored in detail in the subsequent section.

### **Strategies of Protection, Agency, and Resistance**

With the aim of exercising parenting in an environment that can be hostile or adverse, TP develop coping mechanisms that I will present in this section divided into two subsections: 1. Coping mechanisms at a personal level and 2. Coping mechanisms at a relational level.

#### ***Coping Mechanisms at a Personal Level***

Within the coping mechanisms at the personal level, one that has proven useful for the study participants is being able to channel and share their experiences through artistic expression:

I, last September, recorded an album. It's a solo album. In that solo album, I made a song for trans children and youth, where they talk to their parents, you know? And it was from a conversation I had with a group of trans kids ... they didn't know how to approach their parents. And that song talks to them ... And the song has been good because some kids have used it to talk to their parents ... in another song, I talk about when I transitioned, why I didn't transition, when I decided, what happened after I came out. I also have another song that talks about sexual diversities, which says: 'Be whoever you want, live however you want. Be whoever you want, love however you want' ... I made that album with a lot of gender perspective because some people find it hard to express themselves, always. So, I tried to put myself in their shoes, you know? to communicate with other people. And the album has been well received [Debbie says with pride]. So somehow you have to do activism. (Debbie, personal communication, February 1, 2024)

The TP who participated in the interviews also emphasized that they take a series of self-care/self-protection actions, which take various forms, such as trying to blend in as much as possible:

[Camouflaging] That's like a rule [mandatory] ... like permanent. Only my mom and a friend we had in common knew. Because yeah, the circles we moved in were like, very, as they say, heteronormative, cisnormative, ... I mean, it was very like very closed. And I was afraid that if I openly talked about being trans or pansexual, the discrimination, well, it wouldn't just be for me, but also for the girls. (Hall, personal communication, February 20, 2024)

Not telling anyone... Camouflaging, because I did this, but I moved to another country. I mean, nobody knew ... not many people can do that because they stay in the same [social] circles. Their kids go to the same school and it's super visible what's going on. I left the country and on top of that, we had the coronavirus. So, all that hormonal change, I went through it during quarantine. So, nobody saw me [laughs] you know? Entered quarantine as a woman and came out as a dude [laughs]. (Pascal, personal communication, February 9, 2024)

I'm 1.70 meters tall, so sometimes my height can, even though it's not much, be taller than the average for women in Mexico. So, ... if I'm on the subway, well, I try to hunch down a little bit ... you try to, like... to blend in as much as possible, right? And when you achieve that, Caro, when you manage to make people, well, ignore you, don't bother you, it feels so nice! ... you feel a lot of peace, a lot of tranquility... I never make eye contact because I already know those looks, right? The lascivious looks from people who, well, don't agree with trans people, I already know those looks. So, I try never to look, never to look them in the eyes. (Isa, personal communication, February 17, 2024)

Another protective tactic TP deploy is to take care of the times they go out with their children, and ignoring microaggressions:

I highly doubt going for a walk at midnight or one in the morning with my son down the street because things can happen... If one day someone is saying something in the distance, what's the point of confronting them? But if I see that the danger is imminent, no. (Francisca, personal communication, February 6, 2024)

Finally, in an effort to exercise their parenting with as few questions as possible, TP strive to maintain a flawless lifestyle, as highlighted by the participants, they feel the need to lead

a meticulously perfect life, without any time off from being perfect, and even then, it might not be good enough:

[I go] from work to home and with the bands on rehearsal days and when I play, you know? But I don't party or anything like that. In fact, I exercise, I go running ... I try not to give any reason, really take care of that, and make sure nobody has grounds to talk about me, but even then, it's not enough ... I work hard to take care of myself, you know? I have the opportunity right here to do things, and I don't do them. That's where I sacrifice myself day by day, more than a cis person, you know? Because yeah, because I know I have kids behind me, and like I said, I don't want anyone making fun of them or spreading rumors about me. (Debbie, personal communication, February 1, 2024)

I probably would have tried to be a person... I don't know if the word is successful. Maybe not, but a productive person, someone who contributes to society. I mean, I think, anyway, I would have done it out of conviction. But there are two more reasons that lead me to do it, one of them, and the most important one, is that my kids, my son, and my daughters, are proud of me ... that's my interest in being different, you know? dressing differently [from other trans women], being recognized, having an education. (Sophia, personal communication, February 1, 2024)

Considering migrating to a country with more or better protective laws for the trans community is another tactic TP employ to protect themselves and their family:

I married a gringo... And we thought, what were we going to do? Because deep down, there was the possibility that he would go to Chile, or that we would come here [to the U.S.]. And I already had, like, as the Americans say, like, my egg had cracked, you know? And that's when, like, you realize that these feelings of something not being right inside you, it's not because ... you're depressed for no reason, but because you realize you're trans. And when I realized that ... I said, 'No, I can't do this in Chile. In Chile, there isn't much legislation.' We left before the gender identity law was passed ... Besides, we went from being a heterosexual marriage to a gay marriage. So, being gay, with a little girl, I said, 'We can't do this there, it would be very difficult.' We came here. We decided to stay here ... [in Chile] there was nothing. Hormones were super hard to get, eh... It was like, 'okay, there are no alternatives here. I don't see a light at the end of the tunnel' ... my husband is American, so he was already here, and [daughter's name] is already American at this point ... it was leaving a lot of people behind too, that's always hard. But it was trying to find a better life here. At least [daughter's name] also has more opportunities, educationally ... and I don't regret it in any case ... it's still tough leaving everyone behind. (Pascal, personal communication, February 9, 2024)

In Venezuela it would have been impossible for me to have made the change... at this moment, there are no laws, there's nothing in Venezuela ... here in Chile, I was able to have top surgery recently, I did it through the hospitals here in Chile ... in Venezuela, that

doesn't exist. For example ... I think in Venezuela they would see me terribly, horribly. I think it [LGBTIQA+ rights laws] has a lot to do with it, because little by little that helps people see the issue as more normal, you know? There are many people who have been changing their perspective on the issue, because of the laws that have been passed ... people have gradually been seeing it as more normal, because they're starting to understand it. (Luis, personal communication, February 27, 2024)

Along with the coping mechanisms developed at a personal level, TP devise a series of coping mechanisms that involve other people in a real or symbolic way. Therefore, I have labeled them as relational coping mechanisms, which we will review in the following section.

### ***Coping Mechanisms at a Relational Level***

In order to cope with hostile environments, discrimination, and violence, TP who are parents employ a series of coping tactics that I have named relational, as they involve other persons from their environment or community, either in a real or symbolic manner, to generate strength and continue their parental role. We will now review coping mechanisms that TP apply in both extra-familial and intra-familial contexts.

In the extra-familial context, one of the relational tactics mentioned by the interviewees was the possibility of building friendship networks with other TP who are also parenting. This allows them to feel understood and provides an opportunity to learn about other experiences of conflict and problem resolution:

We share our experiences on WhatsApp or when we get together. Well, several of us have had similar issues ... we give each other advice, help each other out, and all that stuff. And sometimes, when someone is feeling down, we get together, you know? Make something to eat, have a beer, and laugh about everything, right? When someone is feeling low, we always lend a hand ... we give each other advice and share information about many things. We always support each other. (Debbie, personal communication, February 1, 2024)

Another tactic applied by TP in non-family environments is education, which can be beneficial when it helps create networks of protection in micro-social settings: “Helping people understand things a bit. But how do you teach? Well, by talking, conversing, and sharing your experience, I think that's the best way.” (Luis, personal communication, February 27, 2024)

I seek to make myself known wherever I go to build a network of protection ... I try to converse, talk with people ... because I'm also building a network of protection for my son ... I think it's also about educating because there's a reality that some people will misgender you out of ignorance or lack of knowledge ... I believe it's important to educate. If someone treats you in a certain way, referring to yourself in feminine terms, it helps. It has happened to me. For example, at the gas station here, initially they addressed me in masculine terms. I had two options: either I confront them and lose the possibility of a connection, or I gradually correct them ... When I talk about myself, I use feminine language, and gradually they start to understand almost by osmosis. I think that has also helped me dispel any prejudices they might have about transgender people because they get to know me. This has also led me to build this corresponding network, and eventually they can understand without me having to say, ‘Treat me as female,’ which could be a clash of dispositions that is completely legitimate. (Francisca, personal communication, February 6, 2024)

Always, always throughout my life. I've tried to be very charismatic, very friendly, and polite with people. And I've always tried to ... instill in the kids, telling them ... ‘Well, it's just that everywhere you go, you'll be treated better if you arrive with a smile and treat them kindly.’ (Hall, personal communication, February 20, 2024)

The tactics that TP apply in the intrafamilial sphere depend on the condition in which they became parental figures and whether they have a blood bond with their children. In all cases, the interviewed TP indicated that good communication with (ex)partners is fundamental: “[With] my partner, it was also like, ‘look, I want to do this [transition], but I don't want to lose you. So, let's see... let's see if you still like me,’ because that's the other thing. We didn't know if he would still like me.” (Pascal, personal communication, February 9, 2024)

In my case, maybe that would have been a problem if the attitude of the mother of my children had been different ... other trans people I saw, well, they totally lost any rights over their children, right? In my case, no, well... Why? I don't know, I appreciate it, because I know she could have made even more aggressive decisions. And she didn't. (Isa, personal communication, February 17, 2024)

The relationship with the biological father of the children is very good, it's good, because we've known each other for many years. So, I met them when he was dating [his current partner]. And we get along well. Then, being the husband, it was also good, they separated but it wasn't a bad breakup, they ended up ... well, they didn't end up in conflict. In the end, he got married again and moved to the United States, he has two children there and it's fine. He contributes monthly what he owes without fail, so... we're good on that front. (Luis, personal communication, February 27, 2024)

Another tactic that TP apply in the intrafamily sphere is the constant deconstruction of rigid binary parental roles:

The eldest experienced sexual abuse by the second husband of my then-partner. So, he had a lot, but a lot of resistance towards all male figures, adult figures ... And even though he didn't know that I was trans, I don't know, I believe that not being someone who was born into that male role helped me be more sensitive to his needs ... to be able to connect more with my feminine side, to approach her [when Hall meet his oldest child, she identified as woman, afterwards, she identified as a trans man] more from the perspective of 'look, I'm not an oppressive macho' [laughs]. And she also had, from the beginning ... even before the relationship started. She had certain doubts, expressed having certain doubts about her gender identity ... I believe it was the best support I could have given her, to say to her 'you identify as you feel comfortable' ... And by saying, 'well, if you're not so sure, let's try it out, let's make some changes... subtle changes, um... So, you can see how you feel' ... I think it was good support. (Hall, personal communication, February 20, 2024)

Indirectly, because I was in a certain way and that way was 'dad', and his other mom ... was very associated with that box. So, for him, of course, when I act in a certain way and he associates it right away with the 'dad' figure, then it creates a bit of dissonance for him ... I think a lot of it also involves grieving [for losing his father] and a process of deconstructing roles. (Francisca, personal communication, February 6, 2024)

Specifically, regarding the relationship with their children, the interviewees indicate the importance of respecting the timelines and processes of their children. To achieve this, they employ a series of tactics that begin with fostering secure attachment between the parental figure and the children:

I believe there was a very close attachment. When [daughter's name] was born, I stayed with her for about two years. I didn't work, I didn't do anything ... And then I went back to university when [daughter's name] was two years old. So, we had a very prolonged attachment. And I think that also helped establish this bond of trust. ... to tell her, 'I am



the same person as before, I have a beard, but I am the same person.’ So, I feel that our bond did not deteriorate with the transition, not at all. [Daughter's name] is still this very affectionate little girl ... she comes close and hugs you and says, ‘I love you very much.’ And I think that is super important, having generated such a strong bond in early childhood. (Pascal, personal communication, February 9, 2024)

For them, I am their dad, and [daughter's name] one day told me ‘I'm afraid of losing my dad’ and I said ‘no, your dad will still be there, maybe wearing a skirt and heels, but I'll be there’ and here I am. (Sophia, personal communication, February 1, 2024)

Another tactic that the interviewees highlighted was considering the age of the children at the time of transitioning or revealing their gender identity. In the case of older generations of TP, there is a tendency to wait until their children reach near-adulthood age before transitioning or disclosing their gender identity, while younger TP living in countries with protective laws tend to discuss sexuality, gender identity, sexual orientation, and related topics at children’s younger ages: “During the time I was responsible for my children, well, everything was for them. I also denied myself the ability to live my gender identity ... But now that they were older, everything was also set to do it.” (Debbie, personal communication, February 1, 2024)

It kind of happened naturally, but I believe I would have waited. I mean, when I talked to my son, he was 18 years old. I wouldn't have talked to him at 16. I would have waited ... it coincided with my process. I don't know what would have happened if [son's name] had been 12 years old when I started my transition; maybe I would have waited ... Yes, I probably would have waited. (Sophia, personal communication, February 1, 2024)

The TP interviewed indicated that it was very helpful for them to consider the transition process as a familial one, recognizing that, similar to their individual transition journeys, it can involve highs, lows, setbacks, challenges, and moments of joy:

The key to navigating this process is realizing that it's not just about you; it's about the whole family ... Just like with trans kids, the journey involves everyone at home. You can't just decide to dive into everything without considering how it affects those close to you ... It's not just about your own happiness but also about looking out for someone who might not fully get what's going on ... especially when there isn't much support out there. So, you gotta take care of yourself while making sure to support those around you. (Francisca, personal communication, February 6, 2024)

When you transition, especially for us older folks, you know? Who had no clue what was up, like, 20, 30 years ago ... You go from being a victim of your own ignorance to hurting the ones you love the most, right? Your partner, your kids ... And maybe you didn't mean to, but that's just how it goes ... When you've got kids, everything changes. I mean, transitioning when you don't have kids is a whole different ball game, not that it's easy. It's tough if you don't have family support, etcetera. But transitioning with kids? Man, that's a whole other level of tough. But hey, in my case at least, it's all been worth it, you know? We're a happy family. (Isa, personal communication, February 17, 2024)

To cope with the challenges of this family transition process, TP emphasize the importance of keeping communication channels open and strong. They utilize supports such as preparing for the disclosure moment to make it special or pleasant, or writing letters to carefully choose the language to use:

When we told them that their mom and I were in a relationship, first I bought a picnic basket ... And there I told them that I was a transgender man ... I explained to them what it meant to be a transgender man; they were little... They were, what? around five, eight years old when we told them. And then we explained about our relationship, when I told the kids that I was a transgender man, [son's name] was like, 'I already know that you're a man. No need to tell me' ... They understood it really well. We've always been very clear with them. I think that's the most important thing for a child, to talk to them clearly, as things are ... they understand, you might not think so, but they understand everything. (Luis, personal communication, February 27, 2024)

What I chose to do was write a letter, to carefully choose my words, so as not to say things that could be misinterpreted and lose the main idea along the way. So, I wrote one for each of them, very similar, but with certain different details. And I asked them to accompany me to a very nice park, kind of close to where I lived, and I preferred to do it one by one. So, we went first with [daughter's name], the oldest, let's say in order of appearance. And I gave her the letter to read while I was there, and I asked her not to say anything, not to ask me anything until she finished reading it, and that after she finished reading it, she could ask me any questions. The thing is, when she finished reading it, she said, 'well, I already suspected it ... but well, if that's how you're going to be okay, if that's how you'll be better, well... there's no problem.' It made me very happy. I felt really good. (Sophia, personal communication, February 1, 2024)

Another tactic that TP have used to navigate parenting with support has been seeking therapeutic assistance for themselves, their children, or the entire family: "I knew a sexologist psychologist here in [city], I went to him for advice, and we had several sessions to have a better

understanding of how to handle the situation” (Sophia, personal communication, February 1, 2024) Alex stated, “In my particular case, I have had the fortune of receiving a lot of psychological support. I have experienced a lot of violence. However, I have had company and have been greatly supported, and I now talk about it as very natural.” (Alex, personal communication, February 19, 2024)

Before saying anything, we started seeing child psychologists who were specialists in transgender issues, precisely to help us understand how to approach the topic with them, how to talk to them, what to say, because we didn't want to handle things poorly. And all they told us was ‘speak the truth, tell them things as they are, they understand.’ And that's what we've done. And look, it's been perfect. The kids have understood it perfectly. (Luis, personal communication, February 27, 2024)

I told her, ‘I will always be your mom. I mean, that doesn't change ... the packaging changes, but I'm the same person.’ I told her, ‘If you want to call me mom, cool, as long as you and I are okay with it. If you want to call me by my name, you can call me by my name, whatever makes you comfortable.’ And she also has a therapist, because it's a heavy issue, so she can have support during this process. And she took it really well, actually ... she still goes to therapy, because now she's a teenager and needs people to talk to. (Pascal, personal communication, February 9, 2024)

Among the tactics mentioned by the interviewed TP, one stands out: Giving a degree of control over the situation to the children, allowing them to adjust to the changes according to their developmental level, life stage, and individual needs:

Part of the approach, I believe, to that mourning is initially ... giving a bit of control over the situation ... it could be a mistake, putting your own well-being first like ‘my child can't misgender me’, no, it's your child, who is eight years old in that regard, I wouldn't give them that burden, ultimately. So, if they referred to me in masculine terms, or somewhat ambiguously, treating me as feminine, but still as ‘dad’. So ... [that] allowed for a certain gradualness so that, ultimately, the change wouldn't be abrupt ... ultimately, he said the key word, he wanted to be prepared. (Francisca, personal communication, February 6, 2024)

‘I'm not gonna make you call me 'dad,' like, no, you figure out what feels comfortable for you.’ ‘Okay, I'll call you by your name,’ ‘Okay, cool.’ So, there's no ‘dad’ here, it's [his name] and [his husband's name] [laughs] ... Also, the emotional and psychological support of ‘okay, whatever feelings you have now, it's normal and it's okay. It's okay if you don't like this. It's okay if this makes you angry. It's okay if you don't care.’ I told her

this, 'I'm not expecting you to be like, 'oh, great, whatever,' but 'I know this is complicated. I know... you'll see me change and it may stir up mixed feelings, and I've always been your mom and now I'm not your mom.' So, it's like... maybe it's the name, I told her, 'But well, I'll always, like, in essence, I'll always be your mom, like, I gave birth to you, you know? I carried you in my belly.' (Pascal, personal communication, February 9, 2024)

They still call me dad. And that's okay, I'll never force them to call me in a way they don't want, you know? ... I don't want to tell them 'Call me this way' or 'don't call me that,' not with them. It's different with other people, you know, with anyone else, I expect them to respect my identity, right? But with the kids, it's very different. (Isa, personal communication, February 17, 2024)

[To attend a family event] I dressed as a man with much affection, for their sake. But I would have liked to be there as a woman, you know? ... [it helps] To have patience, to be flexible... Without neglecting my personal process, right? Because well, I didn't give up being [her name]. If they had told me not to change my birth certificate, Oh! I don't know, there, I can't assure you that I would have stopped, you know? Maybe there I would have said to them, 'you know what? But this, excuse me, is a personal matter, right? You will continue with your birth certificates saying that your dad's name is so and so, right? But I also have the right to my own identity, right?' So that reconciliation and flexibility, I think, helps a lot. (Sophia, personal communication, February 1, 2024)

Ultimately, what motivates and enables TP to exercise parenting in hostile and discriminatory environments is giving and receiving love:

My youngest son really surprised me. When I explained everything that was happening with me, I asked him, 'Hey, sweetheart, do you know what a transgender person is?' He explained it to me in his own words. Then I said, 'Hey, honey. How would you feel if I told you I'm transgender?' He was very casual, playing with his Nintendo Switch, and he said, 'I don't know, dad, whether you're a man or a woman, I love you.' That was his entire response. We didn't need anything more ... I found something I had lost, which was self-love, you know? I love myself at this moment in my life; I'm very happy. I have many projects, and I love that my children see that, you know? That they love themselves, that they love themselves above all things. Because when you live that lie of being someone you're not, Caro, well, yes, maybe it serves you for a moment, you know? But then what? I mean, you end up with a huge void, and well, there are many people who even lose their lives, you know? So, taking the plunge, Caro, there's no other option ... What I always told my kids, that love has no gender, you know? And the love for a child is immense. Whether you're a man or a woman, when you have a child, well, your life changes completely. Whether you like it or not, your life is no longer yours, because there's a little person who will depend on you, at least for the next 20, 25 years, and you can't abandon them, but you also can't abandon yourself, you know? I think it's something that goes hand in hand. (Isa, personal communication, February 17, 2024)

The interaction between socio-structural, state-institutional, and microsocial environment conditions creates a reinforcing cycle of discrimination and marginalization for TP, necessitating various coping mechanisms and strategies of resistance.

In response to socio-structural discrimination, which includes stigmas related to nationality, phenotype, social class, and diverse family configurations, TP often seek therapeutic support to manage trauma and build resilience. Artistic expression also serves as a vital outlet, allowing TP to communicate their experiences and foster understanding within their communities.

To navigate daily life amidst pervasive discrimination, TP employ strategies such as blending in, avoiding confrontation, and meticulously maintaining a flawless lifestyle to avoid scrutiny. These tactics are crucial for protecting themselves and their families from societal judgment and violence.

State-institutional challenges, such as heterosexual cisgender-centered benefits, inconsistent laws, and discrimination in Family Courts, further complicate the exercise of parenting for TP. Consequently, some TP choose to migrate to countries with more supportive laws, seeking a safer environment for their families.

In the microsocial environment, the presence of certain evangelical groups, segregation within the LGBTIQ+ community, and intrafamilial violence necessitate building support networks with other TP parents and engaging in educational efforts to create protective networks. Maintaining good communication with (ex)partners and respecting children's timelines are essential tactics for fostering a supportive family environment. By considering the transition process as a familial journey and seeking therapeutic assistance, TP can navigate the complex

dynamics of their family relationships. Ultimately, the love and acceptance within the family serve as the most powerful coping mechanism, motivating TP to persevere in their parenting roles despite the numerous challenges they face.

These multifaceted strategies underscore the resilience and resourcefulness of TP parents in creating supportive environments for themselves and their families. In the following sections, I will engage in a discussion about the results and conclusions of the study, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the research conducted.

## **Chapter Five. Discussion**

This study aimed to enhance the understanding of TP PE from the feminist post/de(s)colonial perspective, theories of subalternity, and intersectionality. The main question guiding this research was: What are the PE of transgender parents in Latin America, considering the challenges they encounter, the resources at their disposal, and the strategies of agency and resistance they employ? Additionally, the study addressed the following support questions: 1. What obstacles and challenges do TP face concerning PE, considering the intersectional effects of their different social locations/identities?; 2. With what resources do TP face obstacles and challenges regarding PE, considering the intersectional effects of their different social locations/identities?; 3. How do TP articulate the resources they have to face obstacles and challenges regarding PE?; and 4. What are the strategies of agency and resistance that TP employ in their PE?

Nine cases of TP from four Latin American countries were presented, all of whom exercised their parenting in Latin American countries for at least one year, including one person who exercised it within the United States afterwards. The interviewees varied widely in age, years of PE, ages of their children, time since transition, educational level, and employment. Participants became parental figures through either their own previous heterosexual relationship or by forming a partnership with someone who had children from a previous relationship. It is noteworthy that, despite the different backgrounds of the interviewees, their discourses converged regarding the obstacles and challenges, resources, and strategies of protection, agency, and resistance.

Understanding the PE of TP in Latin America requires a thorough examination of the multifaceted obstacles and challenges they face. These challenges are deeply rooted in socio-

structural, state-institutional, and microsocial environment conditions, each contributing to the pervasive discrimination and marginalization experienced by TP. In this chapter, I will explore these obstacles and challenges in detail, shedding light on how they intersect and compound to create a complex landscape of adversity for TP parents. By dissecting these conditions, I aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the barriers that hinder TP in their pursuit of fulfilling parenting roles, setting the stage for a discussion on the resources and strategies they employ to overcome these challenges.

### **Obstacles and Challenges**

Regarding the obstacles and challenges, I found that there are 1. Socio-structural conditions, which encompass discrimination based on socio-structural factors such as nationality or migratory status, phenotype, social class, and belonging to a diverse family. Discrimination towards the LGBTIQ+ community is exacerbated when diverse gender identity and sexual orientation are present in one person. Stigmas existent in Latin American society regarding TP result in family distancing, loss of significant family events, or experiencing violence from family members, along with fear of transmitting being transgender to their children. 2. State-institutional conditions involve state-related factors that negatively impact TP parenting, such as heterosexual cisgender centered state benefits, inconsistent laws or public policies, and discrimination in Family Courts. Additionally, discriminatory institutional conditions may exist, such as in healthcare services, binary systems, and lack of training for staff to provide care to LGBTIQ+ people. 3. Microsocial environment conditions include the presence of certain evangelical groups, the segregation of TP within the LGBTIQ+ community, and intrafamilial violence.



The interaction between socio-structural, state-institutional, and microsocial environment conditions creates a reinforcing cycle of discrimination and marginalization for TP. These interwoven challenges that intersectionality theory highlights (Crenshaw, 1991; Hancock, 2007a, 2007b; Viveros-Vigoya, 2016) underscore the need for comprehensive legal frameworks and social policies that recognize and protect the rights of TP and their families. Only by addressing these multifaceted issues can we create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all members of the LGBTIQ+ community.

From these adverse conditions, TP develop a series of personal concerns, including internalized stigma, suicidal ideation, fear of trying adoption, and loneliness. Additionally, they have concerns regarding TP parenting, such as the consequences of gender affirmation surgeries, additional expenses associated with exercising transgender parenting, potential negative consequences of undergoing a non-traditional pregnancy, questioning the parent-child relationship based on lack of biological relationship, and the transfer of stigma to their children.

This section has outlined the various obstacles and challenges that TP face in their PE, emphasizing socio-structural conditions, state-institutional conditions, and microsocial environment conditions. Each of these factors plays a critical role in shaping the lived realities of TP, underscoring the pervasive nature of discrimination and marginalization in Latin America. In the following section, we will explore the resources available to TP that can help mitigate these challenges and support their efforts to exercise their parenting rights effectively.

## **Resources**

Within the conditions that positively influence the exercise of parenting by TP, what I have termed resources, three main categories were identified: 1. Social conditions: This includes

social support, education, formal or institutional support networks, mental health services, medical services, and opportunities to access formal employment; 2. Legal protection: This encompasses gender-neutral official documents, Gender Identity Law, Equal Marriage Law, Adoption Law, and Diversity and Inclusion Laws and Policies; 3. Personal conditions: This refers to factors such as cis passing and having an average or high socioeconomic level.

Social support, legal protections, and personal conditions can significantly enhance TP experiences and resilience. These resources provide a foundation for TP to navigate their parenting roles despite the myriad challenges they face. The next section will delve into the strategies of protection, agency, and resistance that TP employ to cope with and counteract these obstacles, illustrating their active role in shaping their parenting journeys.

### **Strategies of Protection, Agency, and Resistance**

Regarding the strategies of protection, agency, and resistance that TP parents develop, two main categories were identified: 1. Coping mechanisms at a personal level: This includes engaging in artistic expression, attempting to blend in as much as possible, being mindful of the times they go out with their children, ignoring microaggressions, striving to lead a flawless life to prevent being questioned, and considering migrating to a country with more or better protective laws for the trans community; 2. Coping mechanisms at a relational level: In the extrafamilial context, this involves the possibility of building friendship networks with other TP who are also parenting and creating networks of protection in micro-social settings. In the intrafamilial level, strategies include maintaining good communication with (ex)partners, constantly deconstructing rigid binary parental roles, respecting the timelines and processes of their children, considering the age of the children at the time of transitioning or revealing their gender identity, viewing the

transition process as a familial one, keeping communication channels open and strong, seeking therapeutic assistance, giving a degree of control over the situation to the children, and giving and receiving love.

### **The Institution of Motherhood and the Parenting Experiences of Trans People**

In this research, I followed the guidelines of Rich (1995), who posits that there is a difference between the institution of motherhood and the act of mothering. The institution of motherhood is a heavy burden over mothers' backs and LGBTIQ+ people. As has been established in previous research (Alday-Mondaca et al., 2023; Alday-Mondaca, 2022; Alday-Mondaca, Lay-Lisboa, 2021a, 2021b; Condat et al., 2020; Imrie et al., 2020), and confirmed by the results of this study, all people who are not hetero-cisgender men exercising parenting are measured against intensive motherhood standards described by O'Reilly (2016), but in different ways.

Regarding essentialization, this ideological assumption establishes that motherhood is the foundation of women's subjectivity (O'Reilly, 2016). Nevertheless, this assumption only applies to cisgender-hetero women since the CHNJCM does not allow lesbians and trans women to be mothers and does not consider motherhood an aspect of their subjectivity development as adults or it to be viewed as an expected stage of their vital cycle. Trans men's pregnancy experiences are also forbidden under this ideology, as has been stated by the participants. The ideological assumption of individualization establishes that maternal labour is exclusive to the mother or some other caring woman (O'Reilly, 2016), is also directed only to cisgender-hetero women and leaves out lesbians and TP, as the interviewees stated.

In the case of privatization, this ideological assumption determines that maternal labour must be limited to the private, domestic sphere (O'Reilly, 2016). Nevertheless, TP parenting

experiences are demanded to be lived in the public sphere, where all the eyes can be attentive to the parent-child relationship and the development of the child since it is assumed that TP (and other people that do not conform to the CisHeteroNorm) are not suitable parent figures, so they must be negated to have a family and, in the case they do have children, they must be kept on the public scrutiny to secure the child well-being/best interest as has been indicated by previous research (Alday-Mondaca, 2022; Parks, 2020) and the participants of this study. The interviewees experienced a series of scrutiny regarding themselves (as being questioned in airports, civil registry or family courts) and about their parenting or their intention to parent.

Naturalization, the ideological assumption that links motherhood with the natural female sex and locates maternal love and instinct in the womb (O'Reilly, 2016) is directly challenged by trans men's pregnancies. Paradoxically, even though, according to this assumption, maternal love and instinct are in the womb, it is not considered that trans men -who have wombs- can be parental figures. A womb is not enough to be regarded as a viable parent figure because neither trans men -who have a womb- nor trans women -who do not have a womb- are considered possible or trustworthy subjects of parenting. The participants indicated that it is so apparent to them, that it prevents them to even try to adopt through formal procedures, because they anticipate a potentially discriminatory response, which might be the cause why it was difficult to contact participants that have become parents through adoption in Latin America, as Pascal stated:

In certain parts of the United States, people are much more used to visibly gay or lesbian couples because they've had marriage equality for many years. And they've had adoption for many years too, unlike in Chile where we only recently got adoption rights. So, you see couples with very young children there. In the U.S., you see kids who are already grown up, adults now, who were raised by lesbian or gay couples. (Pascal, personal communication, February 9, 2024).

Normalization is the principal ideological assumption that is challenged for TP parenting experiences. This assumption establishes that motherhood must be exercised within a heterosexual nuclear family with the traditional sexual division of labour (O'Reilly, 2016). Families with one or more TP members who often do not accommodate to binary sex roles (Alday-Mondaca, 2022; Parks, 2020) certainly discard that someone who exercises those roles is even necessary to raise a child, putting in risk all the building of these ideological assumptions and the CHNJCM ideological hegemony, possibly, that is why TP parenting is so rejected by conservative groups of the Latin American societies.

The ideological assumption of idealization is present in TP's experiences of parenting since TP feel the social pressure to accommodate to the unattainable standards for women and mother blame that O'Reilly (2016) has described and that are present in the compulsory intensive motherhood. In this research, several participants indicated that they must commit to an impeccable lifestyle, so their parenting is less challenged or questioned, although their parenting will inevitably be mistrusted until social change occurs.

Biologization appears as a two-sided knife for TP parents. O'Reilly (2016) describes this ideological assumption that gives excessive relevance to the blood ties between mother and child, making the biological mother the most suitable caregiver. On the one hand, this meant that TP parents who are not blood-related to their child are always under suspicion, and their relationship with the child is always questioned socially and legally. This assumption also generates that TP who have been parenting a child cannot obtain custody when the biological parent is alive, even when they are not present, close to the child, or exercising parenting, as Luis and Pascal explained. On the other hand, TP who do have a blood relationship with the child needs to face complicated legal systems that are not prepared to recognize the relationship, as

Pascal, Francisca, and Alex stated, regarding their odyssey they have to encompass after changing their names or gender identity in their official documentation; and also health systems that are not prepared to face contra-hegemonic pregnancies, as trans men gestations (Alday-Mondaca, 2022; Alday-Mondaca, Lay-Lisboa, 2021b; Condat et al., 2020; Imrie et al., 2020; Parks, 2020).

Intensification, the ideological assumption that the child must be the mother's priority and consume her time and have her devotion and emphasizes the prominence of consumption (O'Reilly, 2016), goes directly to TP's burden on their parenting experiences. Since TP feel that their parenting roles are always under the scrutiny of other people when they accomplish parenting, TP tend to make extra efforts to demonstrate that they are suitable parents, so they prioritize their children and their children's well-being, sometimes putting themselves in danger or vulnerable spaces, as Isa, who following her separation, faced a period of housing instability, since she left her children and ex-partner live in the house she was renting while she resorted to living in her car and spent nights at her workplace because she could not pay two rents at that time.

The ideological assumption of expertization, establishes that motherhood must be expert-driven (O'Reilly, 2016), as many participants stated, it is very usual to maintain focus on following experts' lead in how to raise their children, some of them counting on individual or family therapy to help them in the conformation of the family and to help in the “getting out of the closet” process. Certainly, intersectional considerations must be made in this regard since families with better socio-economical and educational backgrounds tend to have access to expert help more easily, especially in countries where these services are private/expensive.

Maybe the only ideological assumption that does not diminish TP parenting experiences directly is depoliticization. O'Reilly (2016) describes this ideological assumption as the privatization and individualization of the maternal practice, denying the social and political importance of mothering and mothers. Since the legal and social recognition of diverse families and diverse parent-child relationships has been a political demand for TP for several decades (Parks, 2020), it is difficult for it to lose its political aspect. Several participants became activist since they realized they were TP and faced the difficulties that TP encounter in Latin American society, including Alex who established the first NGO and trans men focused clinic in his region since there was none civil organizations or state support for them back then.

The nurturing and caring activities related to children have been linked to mothering and not to fathering (that is more related to providing economic means to children). When TP aim to be parents, they are measured with the stricter model of being a parent; in other words, they are compared/measured against the ideal mothering figure, not the fathering standard (that has been considered easier). Since TP are not considered “natural child-rearers,” when they attempt to exercise parenting roles, they struggle to accommodate to the intensive mothering practices to prove they are viable parenting subjects. That is why the institutional aspects of motherhood and experiential aspects of mothering are the ones faced by TP parents.

The findings of this study underscore the persistent influence of the CHNJCM on the PE of TP in Latin America. As highlighted by Castañeda-Rentería (2016) and Mann (2012), the CHNJCM enforces rigid binary gender norms and heterosexual family structures, which continue to shape contemporary legal and social frameworks. This study reveals how these entrenched ideologies manifest in discriminatory laws and policies, such as those restricting gender identification options and marriage rights, thereby excluding TP from essential legal protections

and social benefits. These socio-structural conditions, deeply rooted in colonial history as discussed by Quijano (2014) and Sánchez-Recio (2019), continue to marginalize TP and impede their parental aspirations, reinforcing the need for comprehensive legal reforms and inclusive social policies (Alday-Mondaca & Lay-Lisboa, 2021a, 2021b).

Moreover, the study extends the intersectionality framework articulated by Crenshaw (1991) and Viveros-Vigoya (2016) by illustrating how multiple social identities intersect to compound discrimination against TP. The data show that TP, particularly those with additional marginalized identities such as being Indigenous or lower socio-economic status, face heightened stigma and barriers to parenting. The Intersectional Loom tactic (Alday-Mondaca, & Lay-Lisboa, 2022a, 2022b) employed in this study allowed for a nuanced analysis of these intersecting oppressions, contributing to the broader understanding of how socio-structural, state-institutional, and microsocial environment conditions interact to reinforce exclusion and marginalization of TP parents.

Additionally, this research contributes to the growing body of literature on LGBTIQ+ parenting by highlighting the unique strategies of agency and resistance employed by TP. As previously noted by Condat et al. (2020) and Imrie et al. (2020), TP demonstrate resilience and adaptability in navigating hostile environments. This study identifies specific coping mechanisms at both personal and relational levels, such as seeking therapeutic support, building protective networks, and engaging in activism, which resonate with the themes of subaltern resistance discussed by Spivak (2011) and Mohanty (2008). By documenting these strategies, the research not only sheds light on the lived experiences of TP but also underscores the importance of supportive networks and inclusive policies that acknowledge and protect the diverse family structures within the LGBTIQ+ community. This holistic approach to understanding TP



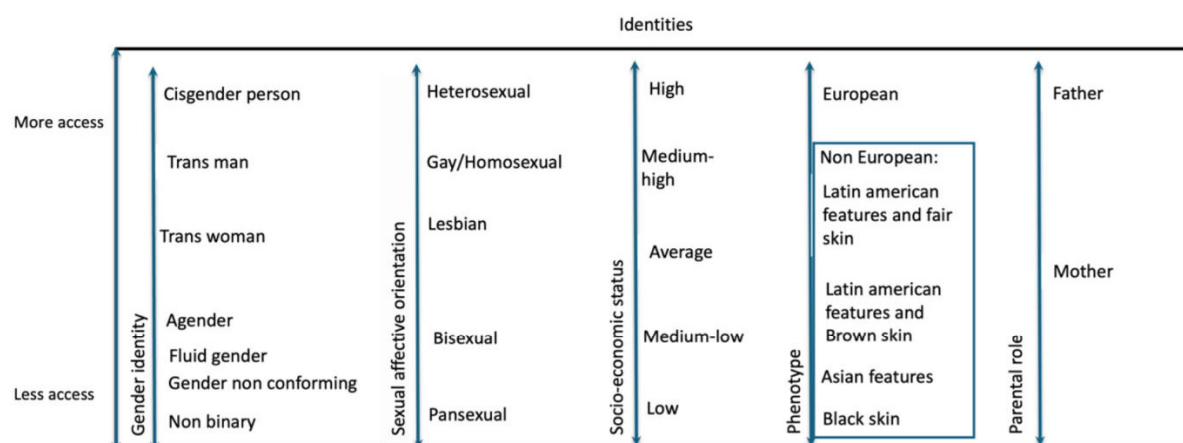
parenting experiences contributes to the ongoing discourse on social justice and the need for systemic change to foster inclusivity and equality.

Takševa (2018) has established that feminist theory and motherhood studies have not always been on the same road or addressing the concerns of women/mothers. I believe that researching and theorizing on TP PE is necessary because it can be a rich space where to find contra-hegemonic ways of parenting (Alday-Mondaca, 2022; Parks, 2020) that can lead to cisgender and transgender mothers, fathers, and parental figures to questioning and modifying the restrictive and patriarchal ways of being parents that have been hegemonic to these days. Doing this, maybe someday we will accomplish the ideal state that bell hooks (2007) delineates when she proposes the term “parenting” as a gender-neutral term that would invite all people to engage and participate in childrearing activities as a social project that emerges from children being a concern of all the society to which they belong.

Following the tenets of intersectionality theory (Crenshaw, 1991; Mann, 2012; Hancock, 2007a, 2007b; Viveros-Vigoya, 2016), I wanted to consider the intersectional effects of the different social locations/identities that TP exercising parenting embody. I posited that the tactic of the Intersectional Loom would allow for the identification of oppression dynamics rooted in sociostructural conditions and the positions that remain unaffected by such oppression because they represent "the One" (Viveros-Vigoya, 2016) in a specific context/circumstance. To achieve this, Intersectional Looms were constructed based on the experiences of each participant, ultimately generating a common loom that illustrates the convergences/divergences. In Figure 20, I present the Intersectional Loom related to the sociostructural conditions affecting the parenting of TP which could not be modified by themselves (gender identity, sexual affective

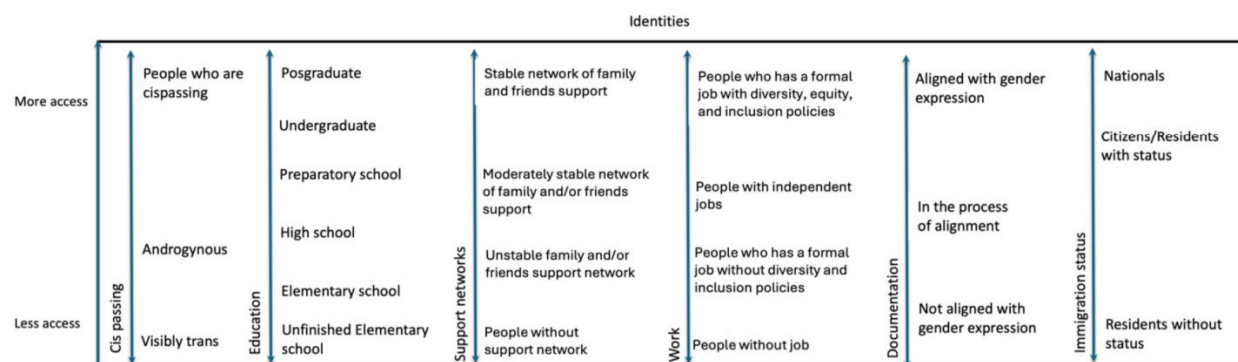
orientation), or that would imply hard work to modify (as changing one's socio-economic status, phenotype, or parental role).

**Figure 20.** *Sociostructural conditions Intersectional Loom*



Drawing from the theory of subalternity (Spivak, 2011), this research aimed not only to focus on the sociostructural elements that (re)produce oppression and discrimination towards people embodying otherness like TP but also to highlight the tactics and strategies of protection, agency, and resistance that TP employ to confront hostile environments, meaning the personal conditions that they can modify in some level. In Figure 21, the Intersectional Loom related to the personal conditions affecting the exercise of parenting by TP is depicted. Some of these conditions can be modified throughout the life course of a TP, whether through changes in legislation in their country of residence or through personal decisions (such as continuing their studies or migrating to a country with pro-LGBTIQA+ rights laws in place).

**Figure 21.** *Personal conditions Intersectional Loom*



It is essential to progress towards the establishment of legal frameworks acknowledging the existence of diverse families and affording them the protection and equality before the law demanded by TP communities. Furthermore, addressing unequal social, economic, and political circumstances is crucial for fostering a world where social justice is realized for us all (Grove, 2014; Hammersley, 2007).

Alongside the aforementioned considerations, it is necessary to improve healthcare, education, and social support services, including training for staff working in both public and private institutions, to ensure these services are inclusive and non-discriminatory.

### **Contributions to Scholarship and Implications for Policy Reform**

This research intended to contribute to the development of studies on diverse sexual orientation and gender, the exploration of diverse family dynamics, and qualitative research methodology by implementing and testing the tactic of the Intersectional Loom. Drawing upon the theory of subalternity (Spivak, 2011), I generated a dialogical and recursive research process in which research participants were able to confirm that their communicative intentions were respected at

various stages of the process (reviewing their transcriptions, Intersectional Looms, genograms, lifelines, and the research findings). I consider this to be a strength of the research process.

Another strength of the study is the implementation and testing of the Intersectional Loom tactic as an innovative methodological tool. This tool enables the production of data regarding the identities/social positions people occupy, distinguishing between those that are immutable (such as gender identity and sexual orientation) or difficult to change (such as the socio economic level) and those that allow for some degree of movement. Individuals can improve their social positions through personal initiatives (such as pursuing further education to access more stable jobs) or through social movements (such as the approval of pro-LGBTIQA+ rights laws after long years of struggle). These advancements facilitate the exercise of parenting for people who do not conform to CisHeteroNormative standards.

The implications of this research are profound for both academic scholarship and policy formulation in Latin America. Academically, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on LGBTIQA+ families by providing a nuanced understanding of the unique PE of TP in Latin America. It extends the theoretical frameworks of intersectionality and post/de(s)colonial feminism by illustrating how multiple axes of identity intersect to compound discrimination and marginalization for TP parents. This research underscores the importance of considering socio-structural, state-institutional, and microsocial environment conditions in analyzing the experiences of marginalized groups, thereby enriching the existing theoretical discourse. The use of the Intersectional Loom (Alday-Mondaca, & Lay-Lisboa, 2022a, 2022b) as a methodological tool further demonstrates its potential in capturing the complexity of intersecting oppressions, suggesting its applicability in future research on other subalternized groups.

From a policy and practice perspective, the findings highlight the urgent need for comprehensive legal and social reforms in Latin America to protect and support TP and their families. The study reveals significant gaps in the legal frameworks of many Latin American countries, such as restrictive identification laws, exclusionary marriage statutes, and inadequate adoption policies that fail to recognize and accommodate diverse family structures. Policymakers must address these gaps by enacting inclusive laws that acknowledge the rights and identities of TP, ensuring they can access legal recognition, social benefits, and protection from discrimination.

Specifically, policymakers should revise identification laws to allow for non-binary and gender-diverse options, ensuring that TP can update their documents to reflect their true identities without excessive legal or bureaucratic hurdles. In line with Judith Butler's (2004) perspectives on identification documents, it is also essential to consider a third gender option to prevent the surgical accommodation of intersex individuals into one of the binary categories, a practice currently prevalent. Marriage laws should be reformed to recognize unions beyond the heterosexual framework, thereby granting TP and other LGBTIQ+ individuals the same rights and benefits afforded to cisgender heterosexual couples. Adoption policies must also be updated to facilitate the inclusion of TP, ensuring that their parental rights are respected and upheld. Additionally, the legal recognition of extended families, including those with three (or more) parental figures, could facilitate the creation of larger and more robust protection networks for children.

For healthcare providers, it is crucial to develop and implement training programs that address the specific needs of LGBTIQ+ individuals, particularly TP. This training should cover respectful communication, understanding of diverse gender identities, and the provision of

inclusive and non-discriminatory care. Healthcare institutions should also ensure access to gender-affirming medical services and mental health support tailored to the needs of TP and their families.

Educational institutions play a vital role in shaping societal attitudes towards LGBTIQA+ individuals. Schools and universities should integrate comprehensive sex and gender education into their curricula, promoting an understanding of gender diversity and the challenges faced by TP. Educators and administrative staff should receive training to create inclusive learning environments where all students feel safe and respected. Additionally, support services such as counseling should be made available to LGBTIQA+ students, with specific provisions for TP to ensure their well-being and academic success.

By integrating these recommendations, Latin American societies can move towards greater social justice and equality, fostering a climate where all family structures are respected and protected. These reforms are essential not only for the well-being of TP and their families but also for the broader goal of creating inclusive, equitable communities for all individuals.

Based on the findings and limitations discussed, several future research directions emerge. Firstly, future studies should aim to include a more diverse sample of participants, both in terms of the countries of origin and residence, and the different ways in which TP can become parents. Expanding the geographical scope to include more Latin American countries and increasing the variability in the methods of accessing parenting can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the PE of TP across the region.

Moreover, future research should explore the experiences of TP who become parents through less common methods, such as assisted fertilization and extra-family adoption, which were underrepresented in this study. Investigating these experiences can shed light on the unique

challenges and strategies associated with these paths to parenting and provide valuable insights into the support systems needed.

Additionally, applying the Intersectional Loom tactic to other marginalized groups, such as indigenous peoples, migrants, or youth, could validate its applicability and usefulness in capturing the complexity of intersecting oppressions. This methodological tool can help uncover nuanced insights into the lived experiences of various subalternized communities and contribute to the development of targeted interventions.

Finally, longitudinal studies following TP parents over time can provide deeper insights into the long-term effects of socio-structural, state-institutional, and microsocial environment conditions on their parenting experiences. These studies can also explore how changes in legal frameworks and social policies impact the lives of TP and their families, offering evidence-based recommendations for policymakers to create more inclusive and supportive environments for all members of the LGBTIQ+ community.

## **Chapter Six. Conclusions**

This study aimed to enhance the understanding of TP PE from a feminist post/de(s)colonial perspective, theories of subalternity, and intersectionality. The primary research question was: What are the PE of TP in Latin America, considering the challenges they encounter, the resources at their disposal, and the strategies of agency and resistance they employ? The research was guided by three main objectives: 1. To describe the obstacles and challenges faced by TP in relation to their PE, with a specific focus on the intersectional effects of their different social locations and identities; 2. To examine how TP articulate and utilize the resources at their disposal to navigate these obstacles and challenges; and 3. To explore the strategies of protection, agency, and resistance that TP employ to counteract the challenges they face in their PE. By delving into these objectives, the research provided a comprehensive understanding of the unique PE of TP in Latin America, contributing valuable insights to the broader discourse on diverse family dynamics and social inclusion.

The research involved nine cases of TP from four Latin American countries, all of whom parented in Latin America for at least one year, with one individual continuing their parenting journey in the United States.

The findings revealed three main categories of obstacles and challenges faced by TP. First, socio-structural conditions encompass discrimination based on factors such as nationality, phenotype, social class, and belonging to diverse families. Discrimination is heightened for those with diverse gender identities and sexual orientations, resulting in stigmas that lead to family distancing, missing significant family events, and experiencing violence from family members. Second, state-institutional conditions involve restrictive legal frameworks and discriminatory practices within public institutions. These include heterosexual cisgender-centered state benefits,



inconsistent laws, and discrimination in family courts and healthcare services. Third, microsocial environment conditions consist of the influence of certain evangelical groups, segregation within the LGBTIQ+ community, and intrafamilial violence, further compounding the difficulties TP face.

In response to these adverse conditions, TP develop personal and parental concerns. Personal concerns include internalized stigma, suicidal ideation, fear of attempting adoption, and feelings of loneliness. Parental concerns revolve around potential negative consequences of gender affirmation surgeries, the additional expenses associated with transgender parenting, and the fear of transferring stigma to their children.

Conversely, three categories of conditions positively influence TP parenting. First, social conditions encompass social support networks, educational opportunities, access to mental health and medical services, and opportunities for stable employment. Second, legal protection includes gender-neutral official documents, gender identity laws, equal marriage laws, and diversity and inclusion policies that provide legal recognition and protection. Third, personal conditions refer to individual factors such as cis-passing and a stable socioeconomic status that facilitate TP's ability to parent.

TP parents also develop strategies of protection, agency, and resistance to navigate these challenges. These strategies are divided into two main categories. Coping mechanisms at a personal level include engaging in artistic expression, blending in as much as possible, being mindful of when they go out with their children, ignoring microaggressions, leading a flawless lifestyle to prevent being questioned, and considering migration to countries with better protective laws for the trans community. Coping mechanisms at a relational level involve building friendship networks with other TP parents, creating networks of protection in micro-

social settings, maintaining good communication with (ex)partners, deconstructing rigid binary parental roles, respecting their children's timelines and processes, considering the age of their children during transition, viewing the transition as a familial process, keeping communication channels open and strong, seeking therapeutic assistance for themselves and/or their family, giving a degree of control over the situation to their children, and emphasizing the importance of love and emotional support.

One unexpected finding in this study was the perspective of a trans man who expressed the belief that trans women have more rights than trans men. This view was unique among the participants and highlights an intriguing contradiction within the shared experiences of TP. This perception may stem from individual experiences and societal interactions that differ based on gender identity and expression. For instance, trans women might be more visible in advocacy and media, leading to a perception of greater rights or acceptance. Additionally, this viewpoint could reflect underlying tensions within the trans community regarding visibility, advocacy, and societal support. This contradiction underscores the complexity of intersectional identities and the varied experiences of oppression and privilege within the TP community. It suggests the need for further research to explore these dynamics and their implications for social policies and support systems tailored to the diverse needs of TP.

Like any research, this one was not without limitations. Firstly, my aim was to include participants who had become parents through each of the six methods detailed in previous research: 1. Prior heterosexual relationship; 2. Agreements; 3. Intrafamilial adoption; 4. Extrafamilial adoption; 5. TP relationships and 6. Assisted fertilization (Alday-Mondaca, 2022; Alday-Mondaca, Lay-Lisboa, 2021a, 2021b). Unfortunately, due to the self-selection of participants, I was unable to ensure variability in the ways of accessing parenting. This limitation

may have skewed the findings, as it did not capture the full spectrum of PE among TP in Latin America, potentially overlooking specific challenges or strategies associated with certain methods of becoming a parent. However, from the perspective of the researcher, this study represents the second phase of a broader investigation focused on LGBT parenting that began in 2017, and which has already produced several published articles (Alday-Mondaca et al., 2023; Alday-Mondaca, 2022; Alday-Mondaca, Lay-Lisboa, 2021a, 2021b). In the initial phase, TP who had accessed parenting through artificial insemination were included, providing complementary results to this study. Thus, the findings from this research build on the earlier work and extend the understanding of the diverse experiences and challenges faced by TP parents in Latin America.

Similarly, I encountered a dilemma regarding the country of origin/residence of the participants. Ideally, I would have included people from different countries, but the sample was limited to four countries of origin (Mexico, Chile, Guatemala, and Venezuela) and four of residence (México, Chile, Guatemala and the United States). This geographic limitation means that the findings might not be fully generalizable to all Latin American countries, as socio-legal contexts can vary significantly across the region. However, this limitation was not overly detrimental, as the legislation in the countries involved differed, allowing for the visibility of contextual differences that either facilitate or hinder the exercise of parenting for TP.

This research faced another limitation regarding its timeline. Due to the need to adhere to the academic calendar's schedule, it was not feasible to prolong the data collection period. This constraint potentially limited the ability to achieve greater diversity in terms of the means of accessing parenting, nationality, and participants' countries of residence.

One drawback highlighted by the participants themselves was the requirement by the Research Ethics Board to anonymize the data produced, which has two aspects. On one hand, TP have long struggled to conform to an identity that aligns with their expectations and desires, often undergoing complex procedures to change their name and gender identity (which may or may not involve legal processes). As a result, the request to self-assign a pseudonym and "lose" their hard-earned identity, even for the purposes of anonymity and confidentiality, was resisted by most participants. Only two out of nine were comfortable with choosing a pseudonym to be identified during the research, citing a preference to use the pseudonym to protect their children, not necessarily for personal protection:

I'm very open and public and... and everywhere, you know, I give my name and everything, but my daughters and my son, not so much, but well, you know, I don't know how much they want to appear with me in my stories, you know? So that's why I prefer it to be anonymous. And also, well, if the names of... of my daughters and my son appear, well, you should change them, you know, just in case. I mean, we never know who might get this information. And well, yeah, it could be a little awkward if someone says, 'oh, hey, I didn't know your dad was trans,' you know? So, yeah, better safe than sorry. (Sophia, personal communication, February 1, 2024)

Furthermore, the need to anonymize all personal material shared by TP as part of their case prevents positive actions undertaken with the aim of raising visibility and supporting the trans community from being recognized. For example, in this research, there were TP who served as faces of advertising campaigns, artists who produced music albums, activists who established NGOs and clinics exclusively for TP - initiatives that would have been valuable to share so that other TP could become aware of them and engage in protective networks or learn about initiatives being developed in their communities. However, the anonymization process of the cases prevented the desires of the participants to make their actions known from being fulfilled in this instance.

From an academic standpoint, it is necessary to question whether, in the effort to protect TP, we are once again rendering them invisible and limiting the spaces where their voices can be heard and their actions seen, specially, when they agree to participate in research because: “[it's] like telling the world, ‘Look, here I am, I do exist.’” (Isa, personal communication, February 17, 2024)

These limitations might have impacted the findings by providing a narrower view of the diverse experiences and challenges faced by TP in Latin America. Future research should aim to address these limitations by including a broader and more diverse sample, extending the timeline for data collection, and reconsidering ethical guidelines to balance anonymity with the participants' desire for visibility and recognition.

One potential line of future research relates to the application of the Intersectional Loom tactic to individuals belonging to other marginalized groups (e.g., children, youth, women, indigenous peoples, migrants), assessing the tactic's relevance for deepening knowledge about other social issues. Furthermore, the Intersectional Loom tactic could be implemented in action-research designs, serving as a tool for detecting common demands and interests and for articulating collective efforts towards achieving social rights.

It is necessary to continue research that analyzes the factors that hinder and facilitate the exercise of rights by LGBTIQ+ people, beyond parenting, which was the focus of this study. Such research could be used as input to promote and generate debates in the development and implementation of gender-focused public policies, contributing to the production of a legal framework focused on rights protection. This is especially important given that advancements related to the attainment of rights may always be at risk of being revoked by emerging conservative, populist, and/or anti-rights leaderships.

This study underscores the complex interplay between socio-structural, state-institutional, and microsocial conditions in shaping the PE of TP in Latin America. It highlights the need for inclusive social and legal policies that recognize and support the diverse family structures of TP. By shedding light on the unique challenges and strategies of TP parents, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of TP PE and advocates for broader social change to foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for all members of the LGBTIQ+ community. Furthermore, this research aims to contribute to the development of studies on diverse sexual orientations and gender, the exploration of diverse family dynamics, and to propose an innovative qualitative research methodology—the Intersectional Loom—that allows for the production and analysis of data regarding intersectional factors.

Researching and theorizing on TP parenting experiences is crucial as it reveals counter-hegemonic ways of parenting (Parks, 2020) that can lead to cisgender and transgender parents to challenge and transform restrictive and patriarchal parenting norms. This aligns with bell hooks' (2007) ideal of "parenting" as a gender-neutral term, encouraging all people to engage in childrearing as a collective societal responsibility.

Academically, it is essential to question whether efforts to protect TP inadvertently render them invisible and limit the spaces where their voices can be heard and their actions recognized, especially when they decide to participate in research, which is always a risky decision for people in vulnerable societal positions as any subaltern group member is.

The findings of this study underscore an urgent call to action for comprehensive legal and social reforms in Latin America to protect and support diverse families, including trans parents and their children. Establishing legal frameworks that recognize and protect diverse family structures is crucial to prevent children from falling into states of unprotection, as evidenced by

the testimonies in this work. This includes revising identification laws to acknowledge non-binary and transgender identities, ensuring marriage equality, and extending parental rights and benefits to all families, regardless of their composition. Public policies should prioritize inclusivity and support for LGBTIQ+ individuals in healthcare, education, and social services. By addressing these systemic barriers and implementing inclusive policies, we can create a society that values the diverse experiences and contributions of TP and their families, fostering a more just and equitable environment where all people, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation, can thrive and fully exercise their parenting rights.

Finally, I want to acknowledge and thank the courage and resilience of TP in their exercise of parenting, especially those who bravely participated in this study, despite the interviews being challenging and triggering strong emotions due to the multiple injustices they revealed; love, happiness, and bravery always proved to prevail. It is important to seek mechanisms to ensure that the voices of TP are heard, and their actions recognized, to promote a more inclusive and equitable society.

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1. Interview Script English

#### *Characterization Questions:*

1. Pseudonym
2. Age
3. How do you identify yourself (trans woman, trans man, non-binary, gender non-conforming, other)?
4. Number of children you have cared for, their ages
5. Period during which you have being a mother/father/parental figure
6. Circumstances under which you became a parental figure:
7. Was it planned or incidental?
8. Were you single or in a partnership/family living together/living separately?
9. Was there/is there a legal connection to the child(ren)?
10. Are you still in the parental role? If not, why?
11. What term do you/your children use to define yourself as a parental figure (mom, dad, other)?

#### *Research Questions:*

1. Could you please share your story as a mother/father/parental figure?
2. What difficulties/obstacles/challenges have you faced as a trans parent or parental figure?
3. What conditions do you feel have facilitated your role as a parent?
4. How have you utilized your strengths/resources/support systems, etc., in your role as a parent?
5. How have you protected yourself or your children from the challenges and obstacles of being a diverse family?
6. How have you overcome the difficulties/obstacles/challenges of being a parental figure in a diverse family?
7. In case you have been a parental figure to more than one child: How was the first time you took on the parental role different from the subsequent times?
8. What do you believe is important to be known about the parenting of transgender people?

## **Appendix 2. Interview Script Spanish**

### ***Preguntas de caracterización:***

1. Pseudónimo
2. Edad
3. Forma que usa para referirse a sí mismx (mujer trans, hombre trans, género no conforme, no binarix, otra)
4. Cantidad de niñxs que has tenido a tu cargo, edades
5. Período de tiempo en que ejerciste/ejerces como mamá/papá/figura parental
6. Condiciones en las que te convertiste en figura parental:
7. Fue deseado/buscado o incidental
8. Fue solx o con pareja/familia conviviendo/sin convivencia
9. Existe/existió un vínculo legal con lx(s) niñx(s)
10. ¿Sigues ejerciendo el rol parental? Si es que no, ¿Por qué?
11. ¿Qué palabra utilizas para definirte a ti mismx como figura parental? (mamá, papá, otra)  
¿Qué palabra utilizan tus hijxs?

### ***Preguntas de investigación***

1. ¿Podrías, por favor, contarme tu historia como madre/padre/figura parental?
2. ¿Qué dificultades/obstáculos/desafíos has enfrentado siendo mamá/papá/figura parental trans?
3. ¿Qué condiciones sientes que han facilitado tu ejercicio de la parentalidad?
4. ¿Cómo has usado tus fortalezas/recursos/figuras de apoyo, etc. en el ejercicio de la parentalidad?
5. ¿Cómo te has protegido a ti o a tus hijxs frente a las dificultades/obstáculos/desafíos de ser una familia diversa?
6. ¿Cómo has superado las dificultades/obstáculos/desafíos de ser figura parental en una familia diversa?
7. En caso de que haya sido figura parental de más de unx niñx: ¿En qué fue diferente la primera vez en que ejerciste el rol parental de las siguientes?
8. ¿Qué crees que es importante que se dé a conocer sobre la parentalidad de las personas trans?



## Appendix 3. Information Letter / Consent Form English



### Information Letter / Consent Form

October 2023

*PARENTING EXPERIENCES OF TRANS PEOPLE IN THE 21ST CENTURY IN LATIN AMERICA.  
CASE STUDY THROUGH THE BIOGRAPHICAL APPROACH*

#### Who is conducting the study?

Dr. Carolina Alday  
Master in Gender Studies  
University of Northern British Columbia  
Prince George, BC V2N 4Z9  
+17788831092  
[alday@unbc.ca](mailto:alday@unbc.ca)

Dra. Jaqueline Holler, Professor  
250-960-6343  
[jacqueline.holler@unbc.ca](mailto:jacqueline.holler@unbc.ca)

Dr. Theresa Healy, Assistant professor  
2509605936  
[theresa.healy@unbc.ca](mailto:theresa.healy@unbc.ca)

This research is part of the requirements of a master's degree, the research is part of a thesis (public document).

#### Why are you being asked to take part in this study?

This study will help us learn more about the parenting experiences of trans people in Latin America. You are being invited to take part in this research study because you are a trans person who has exercised or still exercising parenting of one or more children at least one year in Latin-America.

Your participation in this research is voluntary, you as a participants can refuse to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason. If you withdraw from the study, any information you have provided will also be withdrawn and securely destroyed.

### **What will happen during the project?**

If you say 'Yes', here is how the study will be conducted:

1. Participants will choose a pseudonym that will be used to refer to them in all the instances, so no record of their actual names will be kept.
2. Participants will participate in an initial in-depth interview made through video call, lasting approximately one and a half hours. Additional interviews, at the participant's discretion, may be arranged until they believe that further insights into their parenthood experience are unnecessary.
3. Participants also have the option to share personal documentation, such as photographs, legal documents, letters, personal diaries, among other materials, if they believe these resources would enhance the understanding of their parental experiences. Researchers will make reproductions of the materials to be analyzed, which will be storage using the pseudonym the participant has chosen. The original documents will be returned to participants after the reproduction has been made. The reproductions of the personal documentations shared by the participants and all the documentation generated through the research project will be destroyed two years after the final report of the research is done (December 2026). These documents will be included in the analysis grid that will be generated for each participant, to ensure that the participants met the inclusion criteria and to help to strengthen data analysis. Documents that include personal data that might lead to the identification of the participant will be included in the data analysis but not be included in the reports/public materials derived from the research.
4. The video calls will be video recorded. The recording will be stored on a computer that has a password within a secure domain. Only the researchers in charge of the study will have access to the recordings. The recordings will be destroyed once the final report of the research is done (December 2024). two years after the final report of the research is done (December 2026).
5. Following each interview, the participants will receive a transcript of the interview as an encrypted document and will be invited to dedicate approximately one hour to review and provide feedback. They will also be sent the code tree (a summary of the topics discussed during the interview) as an encrypted document and will be asked to spend approximately half an hour reviewing it. They can express their agreement with the points raised, decide to include additional information, or request the modification or removal of any research content. Participants are not obligated to review any of these documents.
6. Additionally, if final reports, scientific articles, presentations, or other means of disseminating the research findings are developed, participants will be asked to dedicate an additional half-hour to review the content and offer their insights.
7. At the end of the research, participants will have the opportunity to receive a summary report with the results of the study.

### **Is there any way that participating in this study could harm you?)**

We do not think there is anything in this study that could harm you. Some of the questions we ask might upset you. Please let one of the study staff know if you have any concerns. Some of the questions we ask may seem sensitive or personal. You do not have to answer any question if you do not want to. If, at any point in the study, you feel uncomfortable or upset and wish to end your participation, please notify the researcher immediately and your wishes will be respected. After the interview(s), there will be the possibility of attending a psychological support session provided by the Center for Intervention and Psychosocial Counseling (CIAP), affiliated with the School of Psychology at the Catholic University of the North (Antofagasta, Chile), through a video call, if the participant deems it necessary.

**What are the benefits of participating?**

Research into transgender parenting experiences is valuable as it can offer innovative parenting perspectives, challenging traditional norms. Also, it can unveil how societal inequalities can hinder trans people intentions to become parents and how social circumstances can impact their exercise of parenting. This can improve the experience of parenting for trans parents going forward. Many participants in research such as this find searching their experiences is beneficial and rewarding

Participants will receive a summary of the findings to use and share as they wish.

**Measures to maintain anonymity and confidentiality**

Your anonymity and confidentiality will be respected. Information that discloses your identity will not be released. Subjects will not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study. All the documents related to the participants' information will be coded using a pseudonym. Documents will be kept in a password-protected computer. The information gathered from this study will be kept for two years. It will then be securely destroyed by deleting all digital files.

**Will you be paid for taking part in this research study?**

We will not pay you for the time you take to be in this study.

**Study Results**

The results of this study will be reported in a graduate thesis and may also be published in journal articles and books. Participants will receive a summary of the findings to use and share as they wish; this summary will be sent to the email address they provide at the end of this document.

**Questions, Concerns or Complaints about the project**

If you have any questions about what we are asking of you, please contact the Principal Investigator Dr. Carolina Alday, +17788831092, [alday@unbc.ca](mailto:alday@unbc.ca), Dr. Jacqueline Holler 250-960-6343, [jacqueline.holler@unbc.ca](mailto:jacqueline.holler@unbc.ca), or Dr. Theresa Healy, 2509605936, [theresa.healy@unbc.ca](mailto:theresa.healy@unbc.ca).

If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the UNBC Office of Research at 250-960-6735 or by e-mail at [reb@unbc.ca](mailto:reb@unbc.ca).

**Participant Consent and Withdrawal**

Taking part in this study is entirely up to you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to take part, you may choose to pull out of the study at any time without giving a reason and without any negative impact for you.

## CONSENT

I have read or been described the information presented in the information letter about the project:

YES                      NO

I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this project and to receive additional details I requested.

YES                      NO

I understand that if I agree to participate in this project, I may withdraw from the project at any time up until the report completion, with no consequences of any kind.

YES                      NO

I have been given a copy of this form.

YES                      NO

I agree to be recorded.

YES                      NO

Follow-up information (summary of the interviews and the summary of the final report) can be sent to me at the following e-mail address:

YES                      NO

Signature (**or note of verbal consent**):

---

Name of Participant (Printed):

---

Date:

---

## Appendix 4. Information Letter / Consent Form Spanish



### **Carta de Información / Formulario de Consentimiento Informado**

Octubre de 2023

#### **EXPERIENCIAS DE PARENTALIDAD DE PERSONAS TRANS EN EL SIGLO XXI EN AMÉRICA LATINA. ESTUDIO DE CASO A TRAVÉS DEL ENFOQUE BIOGRÁFICO**

##### **¿Quién está realizando el estudio?**

Dra. Carolina Alday  
Magíster en Estudios de Género  
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Dra. Theresa Healy, Profesora Asistente  
250-960-5936  
[theresa.healy@unbc.ca](mailto:theresa.healy@unbc.ca)

Esta investigación forma parte de los requisitos para obtener un máster y será parte de una tesis de acceso público.

##### **¿Por qué se te pide que participes en este estudio?**

Este estudio tiene como objetivo aprender más sobre las experiencias de parentalidad de personas trans en América Latina. Estás siendo invitad@ a participar en esta investigación porque eres una persona trans que ha sido o eres figura parental de un@ o más niñ@s durante al menos un año en América Latina.

Tu participación en esta investigación es completamente voluntaria. Como participante, puedes optar por no responder a alguna pregunta que te haga sentir incómod@. Tienes el derecho de retirarte del estudio en cualquier momento, sin necesidad de dar una razón. Si decides retirarte del estudio, toda la información que hayas proporcionado se eliminará de forma segura.

##### **¿Qué sucederá durante el proyecto?**

Si decides decir 'Sí', así es como se llevará a cabo el estudio:

1. Lxs participantes elegirán un seudónimo que se utilizará para referirse a ellxs en todas las instancias, de manera que no se conservará ningún registro de sus nombres reales.
2. Lxs participantes participarán en una entrevista inicial en profundidad realizada a través de una videollamada, con una duración aproximada de una hora y media. Se podrán organizar entrevistas adicionales, a discreción de la persona participante, hasta que consideren que no son necesarias más aportaciones a su experiencia como madres, padres o figuras parentales.
3. Lxs participantes también tienen la opción de compartir documentación personal, como fotografías, documentos legales, cartas, diarios personales, entre otros materiales, si creen que estos recursos mejorarían la comprensión de sus experiencias parentales. Las investigadoras harán reproducciones de los materiales a analizar, que se almacenarán utilizando el seudónimo elegido por la persona participante. Los documentos originales se devolverán a lxs participantes después de realizada la reproducción. Las reproducciones de la documentación personal compartida por lxs participantes y toda la documentación generada a través del proyecto de investigación se destruirán dos años después de la finalización del informe final de la investigación (diciembre de 2026). Estos documentos se incluirán en la grilla de análisis que se generará para cada participante, para garantizar que cumplan con los criterios de inclusión y para fortalecer el análisis de datos. Los documentos que incluyan datos personales que puedan llevar a la identificación de la persona participante se incluirán en el análisis de datos pero no se incluirán en los informes/materiales públicos derivados de la investigación.
4. Las videollamadas se grabarán en video. La grabación se almacenará en una computadora con contraseña dentro de un dominio seguro. Solo las investigadoras a cargo del estudio tendrán acceso a las grabaciones. Las grabaciones se destruirán dos años después de la finalización del informe final de la investigación (diciembre de 2026).
5. Después de cada entrevista, lxs participantes recibirán una transcripción de la entrevista como un documento encriptado y se les invitará a dedicar aproximadamente una hora para revisar y proporcionar retroalimentación. También se les enviará el árbol de códigos (un resumen de los temas discutidos durante la entrevista) como un documento encriptado y se les pedirá que dediquen aproximadamente media hora a revisarlo. Pueden expresar su acuerdo con los puntos planteados, decidir incluir información adicional o solicitar la modificación o eliminación de cualquier contenido de investigación. Lxs participantes no están obligados a revisar ninguno de estos documentos.
6. Además, si se desarrollan informes finales, artículos científicos, presentaciones u otros medios para difundir los hallazgos de la investigación, se pedirá a lxs participantes que dediquen media hora adicional para revisar el contenido y ofrecer sus comentarios.
7. Al finalizar la investigación, lxs participantes tendrán la oportunidad de recibir un informe resumido con los resultados del estudio.

**¿Hay alguna forma en que participar en este estudio pueda perjudicarte?**

No creemos que haya nada en este estudio que pueda perjudicarte. Algunas de las preguntas que haremos podrían molestarte. Por favor, comunica a una de las personas del equipo de investigación si tienes alguna preocupación. Algunas de las preguntas que haremos pueden parecer sensibles o personales. No estás obligadx a responder a ninguna pregunta si no deseas hacerlo. Si en algún momento durante el estudio te sientes incómodx y deseas finalizar tu participación, notifica inmediatamente a la investigadora y se respetarán tus deseos. Posterior a la(s) entrevista(s), existirá la posibilidad de asistir a una sesión de acompañamiento psicológico brindado por el Centro de Intervención y Asesoría Psicosocial (CIAP) dependiente de la Escuela de Psicología de la Universidad Católica del Norte (Antofagasta, Chile) a través de videollamada, en caso de que la persona participante lo considere necesario.



### **¿Cuáles son los beneficios de participar?**

La investigación sobre las experiencias de parentalidad de personas trans es valiosa, ya que puede ofrecer perspectivas innovadoras sobre la crianza, desafiando las normas tradicionales. También puede develar cómo las desigualdades sociales pueden obstaculizar las intenciones de las personas trans de convertirse en figuras parentales y cómo las circunstancias sociales pueden afectar su ejercicio de la parentalidad.

Las personas participantes recibirán un resumen de los hallazgos que podrán utilizar y compartir según lo deseen.

### **Medidas para mantener el anonimato y la confidencialidad**

Se respetará tu anonimato y confidencialidad. La información que revele tu identidad no se divulgará. Las personas no serán identificadas por nombre en ningún informe del estudio completo; todos los documentos relacionados con las personas participantes se codificarán con un seudónimo. Los documentos se almacenarán en una computadora protegida por contraseña. La información recopilada de este estudio se conservará durante dos años. Luego, se destruirá de manera segura eliminando todos los archivos digitales.

### **¿Recibirás pago por participar en esta investigación?**

No se te pagará por el tiempo que dediques a este estudio.

### **Resultados del Estudio**

Los resultados de este estudio se informarán en una tesis de posgrado y también pueden ser publicados en artículos de revistas y libros. Las personas participantes recibirán un resumen de los hallazgos para que lo utilicen y lo compartan según lo deseen; este resumen se enviará a la dirección de correo electrónico que indiquen al final de este documento.

### **Preguntas, Preocupaciones o Quejas sobre el Proyecto**

Si tienes alguna pregunta sobre lo que se te está pidiendo, comunícate con la Investigadora Principal, Dra. Carolina Alday, al +17788831092 o a [alday@unbc.ca](mailto:alday@unbc.ca), con la Dra. Jacqueline Holler al 250-960-6343 o a [jacqueline.holler@unbc.ca](mailto:jacqueline.holler@unbc.ca), o con la Dra. Theresa Healy, al 2509605936 o a [theresa.healy@unbc.ca](mailto:theresa.healy@unbc.ca).

Si tienes alguna preocupación o queja sobre tus derechos como participante en la investigación y/o tus experiencias durante tu participación en este estudio, comunícate con la Oficina de Investigación de UNBC al 250 960 6735 o por correo electrónico a [reb@unbc.ca](mailto:reb@unbc.ca).

### **Consentimiento de la Persona Participante y Retiro**

Participar en este estudio es completamente voluntario. Tienes el derecho de negarte a participar en este estudio. Si decides participar, puedes optar por retirarte en cualquier momento sin necesidad de dar una razón y sin ningún impacto negativo para ti.

### CONSENTIMIENTO

He leído o me han descrito la información presentada en la carta de información sobre el proyecto:

☐ SÍ ☐ NO

He tenido la oportunidad de hacer preguntas sobre mi participación en este proyecto y de recibir detalles adicionales que he solicitado:

☐ SÍ ☐ NO

Entiendo que si acepto participar en este proyecto, puedo retirarme del mismo en cualquier momento hasta la finalización del informe, sin consecuencias de ningún tipo:

☐ SÍ ☐ NO

Se me ha entregado una copia de este formulario:

☐ SÍ ☐ NO

Acepto ser grabado:

☐ SÍ ☐ NO

La información de seguimiento (resumen de las entrevistas y resumen del informe final) puede enviarse a la siguiente dirección de correo electrónico:

☐ SÍ ☐ NO

Firma (o nota de consentimiento verbal):

---

Nombre de la Persona Participante (en letra de imprenta):


---

Fecha:

---



## Appendix 5. Recruitment Image English



WE ARE LOOKING FOR  
**TRANS  
PEOPLE**


To participate in a research study on the **parenting experiences** of trans people in **Latin America**

Are you a transgender person who is or has been a mother, father, or parental figure to one or more children in Latin America for a year or more time? Do you have the time to participate in an research and share your valuable experiences (approx 3.5 hours)? Do you have a device with internet access and the capability for video calls? If you are interested in contributing to the understanding of dynamics within the families of transgender individuals in Latin America, we extend a warm invitation to be a part of our study. We hope to have you on board!  
Compensation for participation will not be provided.  
Profficiency in Spanish is mandatory.

Please get in touch with us at:  
**Email: [alday@unbc.ca](mailto:alday@unbc.ca)**  
**WhatsApp: +1 (778) 883-1092**

University of Northern British Columbia  
Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master's Degree in Gender Studies  
Faculty of Indigenous Studies, Social Sciences & Humanities  
REsearch Ethics Board (REB) Review Completed

## Appendix 6. Recruitment Image Spanish



ESTAMOS BUSCANDO

# PERSONAS TRANS

Para participar en un estudio sobre sus **experiencias de parentalidad** en **Latinoamérica**

¿Eres una persona transgénero que es o ha sido madre, padre o figura parental de uno o más niños en América Latina durante un año o más? ¿Tienes tiempo para participar en una investigación y compartir tus valiosas experiencias (aproximadamente 3.5 horas)? ¿Cuentas con un dispositivo con acceso a internet y la capacidad para realizar videollamadas? Si estás interesadx en contribuir a la comprensión de las dinámicas dentro de las familias de personas transgénero en América Latina, te extendemos una cordial invitación a ser parte de nuestro estudio. ¡Esperamos contar contigo!

No se proporcionará compensación por la participación. El dominio del español es obligatorio.

Por favor, contáctanos al:

**Email:** [alday@unbc.ca](mailto:alday@unbc.ca)

**WhatsApp:** +1 (778) 883-1092

Universidad del Norte de Columbia Británica  
Tesis presentada como cumplimiento parcial de los requisitos para obtener el grado de Maestría en Estudios de Género  
Facultad de Estudios Indígenas, Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades Revisión del Comité de Ética en Investigación (REB) completada

## Appendix 7. Case Studies

### Case 1. Debbie

Debbie is a 51-year-old transgender bisexual woman who resides in Chile. She began her transition at the age of 49 in 2021. With a 33-year career in music, she also works formally on electrical projects under an indefinite contract. At the age of 30, she entered into a heterosexual marriage. Although she knew she was transgender since then, she chose to adapt to a heterosexual life to avoid the discrimination she observed in her neighborhood, where she met a transgender woman who was a victim of discrimination, physical violence, and expulsion from her home, which influenced her decision.

During her marriage, she had three unplanned pregnancies with her former partner, from which her two older children, currently aged 20 and 18, and her youngest daughter, aged 12, were born. The relationship ended in 2016, and the divorce was finalized in 2024. Although there is legal recognition of her relationship with her children, custody is with her former partner, limiting her ability to travel abroad with them, among other things.

Currently, Debbie maintains regular contact with her children subject to regulations established by the Family Court. However, occasionally her former partner violates the mandate (for example, by taking her daughter to relatives' homes and preventing her from seeing her), making it difficult for her to exercise her parental role. Despite these difficulties, Debbie has avoided reporting the situation to avoid larger conflicts, as she has experienced discrimination in judicial instances, such as being called by her former name or referred to in the masculine.

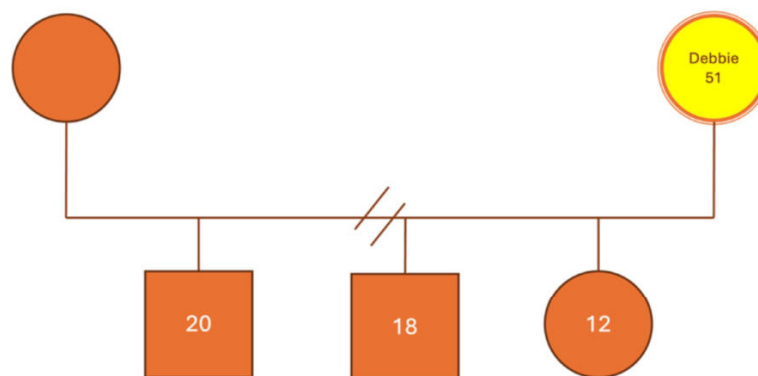
During her previous relationship, Debbie attempted to come out as a transgender person several times, facing police violence and from neo-Nazi groups. However, she was protected by other transgender women in those critical moments. She experienced episodes of depression and suicide attempts due to questioning her identity and associated unhappiness. She decided to postpone her transition while her children were younger, finally starting at the age of 49, considering it the right time.

Although her older children initially accepted her, this acceptance diminished over time due to the influence of her former partner, who professes an evangelical faith. This situation has triggered episodes of verbal and physical violence by her former partner and her children, which Debbie has reported to the authorities.

To avoid conflicts with her children, Debbie strives to lead an "impeccable" life, without a partner and focusing on her music career and her passion for running. Her relationship with her children is complicated: she has a tense relationship with her oldest son, attributed to the negative influence of her former partner, while she maintains a more balanced relationship with her middle son, although also influenced by the same reason. In contrast, her relationship with her youngest daughter is very close, and she aspires to obtain custody when she turns 14 (the age limit established by the Family Courts).

After completing her transition, Debbie feels happy and calm. She received psychological treatment during this process and has been discharged. Additionally, she has legally changed her name and identity. She has built a network of transgender friends both nationally and internationally, which provides her with emotional support and survival strategies.

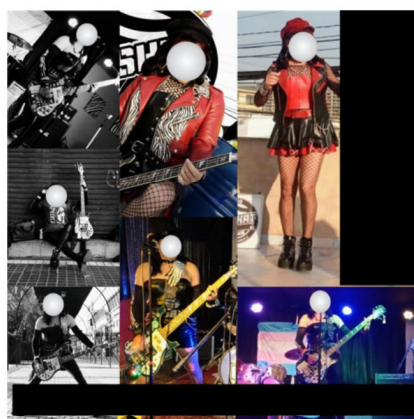
**Figure 22.** *Debbie's Genogram*



**Figure 23.** Collage Debbie made with pictures of her transition; it is also the cover art of her album (Source: Participant's files).



**Figure 24.** Collage Debbie made for the back cover art of her album (Source: Participant's files).



### **Case 2. Francisca**

Francisca is a 39-year-old transgender pansexual woman with autism living in Chile. Francisca had a partner whom she met during her university years, with whom she had an unplanned pregnancy, resulting in their first child. They separated when the child was three years old, and he went to live with his biological mother and maternal grandmother at that time. Francisca maintains a good relationship with her ex-partner and has regular contact with her son on weekends. In 2018, her son was diagnosed with a neuromotor disease, and due to practical reasons, he moved in with Francisca, who now has full custody.

She transitioned in 2018 due to two main events. Firstly, she worked in an environment mainly composed of women, where using feminine pronouns in the plural form was common. She began to feel comfortable when referred to in this way ("directoras" instead of "directores"). Secondly, she was completing her postgraduate training and required personal therapy hours, during which she addressed her doubts about her own gender identity and sexual orientation. This was also motivated by her work in an oncology unit, where she frequently heard patients reflecting on things they wanted to do but refrained from due to societal judgments, which lost significance in the final moments of life.

At the age of eight, she revealed her gender identity to her son, allowing him to decide if he would address her in the feminine. He used the feminine pronouns to refer to Francisca, but he continued to refer to her as "dad" for a while. In 2020, three days before Mother's Day, her son called her "mom" for the first time and said he would call her that forever from that day on. Francisca mentions that during moments of anger, her son has said, "You are not my mom; you are my dad," her response has been to understand that she is the adult, better equipped to comprehend that her son is going through a process. She believes it is part of adolescence to challenge boundaries using such phrases. They also mention the situation at school, which, being an inclusive institution, supported the family.



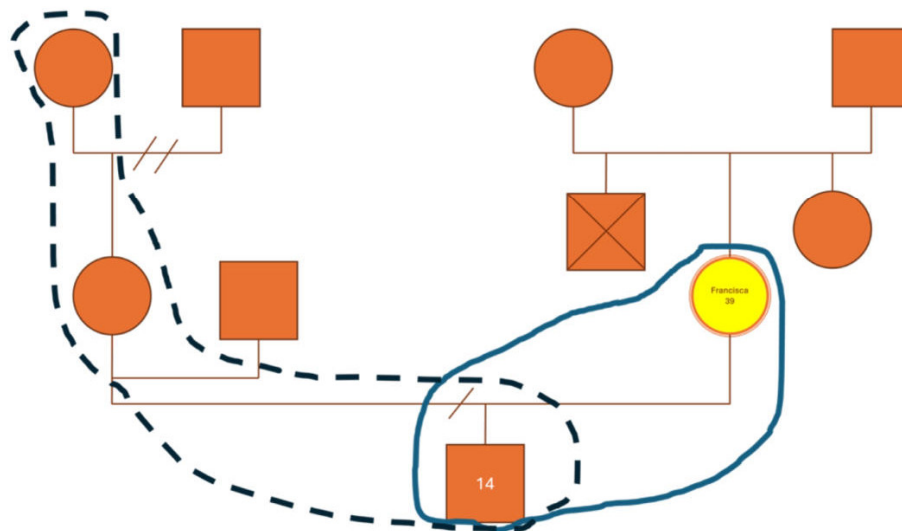
In 2008, her only brother died in an accident, which profoundly affected the family, and Francisca felt burdened as she was studying psychology and had to support her family while dealing with her emotional challenges. At the time of her transition, her family of origin stopped speaking to her for two years, which Francisca attributes to their feeling of experiencing another loss of a son (in addition to the accident in which her brother died). Although the relationship has now been restored on good terms, her son resents that they also cut off contact with him during those two years, a wound that remains open as they were not there to support him during his diagnosis and adaptation to his medical condition.

Francisca legally changed her name through the Gender Identity Law but encountered an issue with her son's birth certificate. When the Gender Identity Law came into effect, there was no consideration for transgender people with children, and there was no protocol in place to modify birth certificates. Her son's birth certificate only listed the biological mother as the parent. Hence, Francisca had to go to the civil registry to report that they were overlooking the child's best interests and leaving him unprotected by removing her from his birth certificate (which affects inheritance and health coverage, among other rights) due to a flaw in the technological system. With the approval of the Equal Marriage Law, birth certificates in Chile now include "parent 1" and "parent 2," partially resolving the issue (it was assumed that the change would be made automatically, but people have to request the change in person at the offices).

Her high socioeconomic background allowed her to pursue a university education, which is a protective factor in her situation. Additionally, she has favourable working conditions (diversity and inclusion policies) and laws that allow her to work in her profession. However, she had to resign from one of her two jobs when she transitioned. Protective factors include her good relationship with her son, who supported her during her transition, and the positive reception she received from her friends and work relationships.

As a protective strategy, Francisca strives to build networks in micro social spaces to feel known and protected by people in her community. She also carefully schedules her activities outside the home and always shares her real-time location when moving alone. Additionally, Francisca prefers to ignore microaggressions or covert violence to avoid endangering her son or her integrity. She tries to educate people with a positive attitude when they misgender her out of error or ignorance.

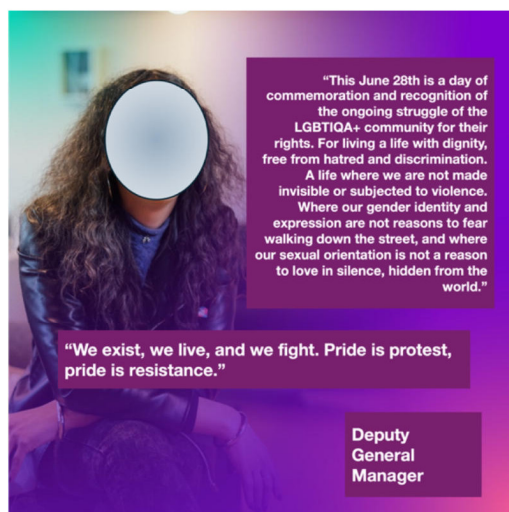
**Figure 25.** *Francisca's Genogram*



**Figure 26.** Facebook post that Francisca shared on the day her son called her “mom” for the first time (Source: Participant's files).



**Figure 27.** Francisca as the central figure in her company's diversity and inclusion advertising campaign (Source: Participant's files).



### **Case 3. Pascal**

Pascal is a 35-year-old Chilean bisexual transgender man who moved to the United States with his husband (a US native) and their 12-year-old daughter. At the age of 21, Pascal experienced an unplanned pregnancy, which he couldn't terminate due to the restrictions on abortion procedures in Chile. Although the biological father of his daughter initially expressed enthusiasm about becoming a parent, they separated as a couple a year after her birth, and Pascal assumed sole responsibility for her care and upbringing when the child's father entered a new relationship. The biological father signed papers allowing Pascal's husband (his current partner) to adopt the girl. Currently, Pascal's daughter and his former partner communicate through online video games. His daughter has a good relationship with her three grandmothers (Pascal's mother, her biological maternal grandmother, and Pascal's husband's mother), which they consider a positive aspect.

Later, Pascal met his current partner, and they got married. When Pascal realized he was a transgender man, discussions about his transition began with his husband. Due to the lack of legislation protecting transgender people in Chile and the unavailability of necessary medical treatments, they decided to move to the United States. They evaluated whether they could remain together as a couple after Pascal's transition and have stayed together since then. When Pascal informed his parents about being a transgender man, they threatened to take away his

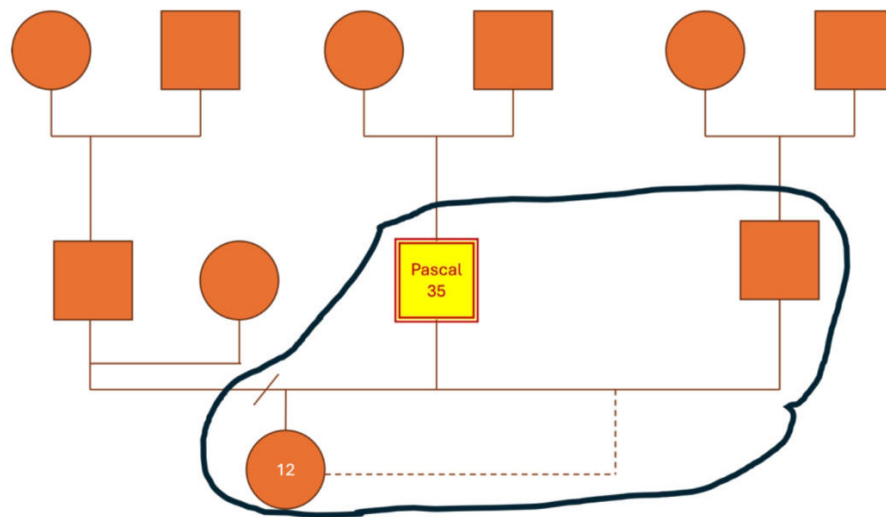
daughter. They sought help from a non-governmental organization (NGO) and consulted with a lawyer and a psychiatrist, who assured them that Pascal's transgender identity wasn't grounds for taking custody of his daughter away. Pascal faced this situation with fear that his parents could indeed find a court to support them in taking away his daughter. This incident was one of the reasons for their migration to the US. They didn't speak for two years until the death of a family member prompted them to reach out to Pascal and reconcile. Currently, Pascal gets along well with his mother, but his relationship with his father remains ambivalent, which Pascal partly attributes to his father's alcoholism.

Pascal transitioned when his daughter was six years old, and she was accustomed to calling him 'mom,' a practice she continued for a long time. Pascal feared that this might draw attention in public spaces, so they agreed that she would call him by his name. Pascal arranged for his daughter to receive psychological support throughout his transition process. She continues to receive psychological treatment, now focusing on her adolescence and personal issues. Pascal believes that the secure attachment he formed with his daughter in her early years has led to a very close relationship between them. He has also given her the opportunity to decide how she wants to handle the adaptation to his transition, such as not forcing her to call him "dad" but allowing her to decide how she will address him.

Since same-sex marriage wasn't legal in Chile when Pascal transitioned, he couldn't change his name. Despite the approval of the Gender Identity Law in Chile, their marital status transitioned from a heterosexual marriage to a marriage between two men, which wasn't legally allowed. To change his name, he needed to get divorced, but Pascal and his daughter were living in the United States, relying on a green card obtained through his relationship with his husband, so they couldn't divorce without risking deportation. When Chile approved the Equal Marriage Law, Pascal could change his name, but this required a personal visit to the civil registry offices in Chile for the entire family. This posed challenges, such as Pascal's passport bearing his previous photograph and name, which didn't match his current gender expression and name. Another problem arose when Pascal's name was removed from his daughter's birth certificate after his name change, preventing him from taking her out of the country to return to the United States. The civil registry changed his name but didn't provide a certificate confirming the change, leaving him without a national identification card or valid passport with his current details, nor did he have his marriage certificate. As they had already bought their return tickets, they needed to resolve the situation to travel back. Various institutions told them to handle their issues elsewhere, shifting blame when they complained about the lack of solutions. They had to contact an NGO and hire a lawyer to resolve the problem. Subsequently, the airline attendant initially refused to let them board the plane to the US because Pascal's new passport didn't match the information on his green card.

Pascal believes that transgender men gain benefits by becoming beneficiaries of social structures supported by patriarchy, such as differentiated expectations about motherhood and fatherhood. He considers cis passing, more common in transgender men than transgender women due to the effects of hormone replacement therapy, as a protective factor. His socioeconomic status enabled him to transition, and he had specific support (therapist, lawyer, etc.) at crucial moments of his transition. Migrating to a country with more laws directly associated with protecting transgender people, combined with having documentation allowing him to be legally in the country (Pascal is currently a citizen), is also considered a protective element. He notes that the situation is different for undocumented people in the US, who flee their home countries to avoid transphobic attacks but face a precarious and vulnerable situation. Pascal also considers transitioning outside Chile and during pandemic-related lockdowns as protective factors, as he didn't face discrimination to the extent he might have experienced if he had transitioned in Chile or if his bodily changes had been noticeable in everyday social settings. Pascal doesn't rule out experiencing a counter-hegemonic pregnancy as a transgender man, although he finds it challenging due to his age and current stage of studies (he recently started a doctoral program).

**Figure 28.** *Pascal's Genogram*



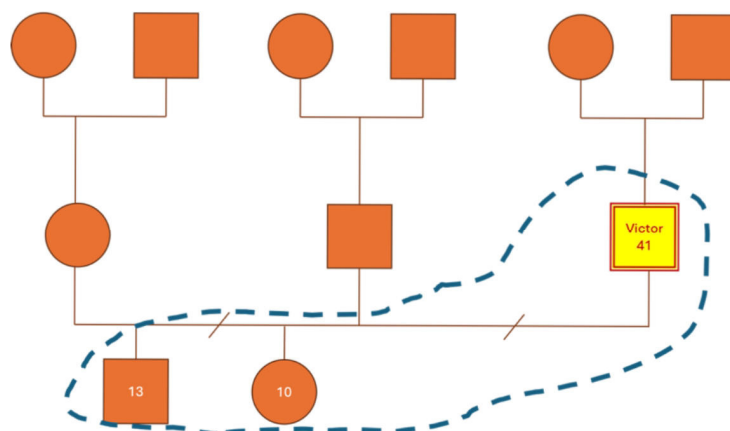
#### **Case 4. Victor**

Victor is a 41-year-old Mexican transgender man, pansexual. He transitioned at the age of 31 and has legally changed his name and gender identity. Victor met a woman who had two children (a boy, currently 13 years old, and a girl, 10 years old), with whom he established a romantic relationship that lasted approximately a year. Victor mentions that his ex-partner became a mother at a very young age (at 15 years old), so her children saw her more as an older sister. At the beginning of their relationship, Victor took on a role of authority with the children, providing discipline and care. Although their romantic relationship has ended, Victor maintains regular contact with both children, speaking with them over the phone during the week and visiting them at his ex-partner's house on weekends. Victor and his ex-partner have discussed the possibility of adopting the children (mainly the girl, who has documentation issues). This decision also stems from Victor's longstanding desire to adopt and the fact that the girl has sporadically started to call him dad. (After the interview, Victor contacted me to mention that his relationship with the boy has grown closer, and the boy has also started to call him dad).

Victor believes he is a positive influence on the children, as he encourages them to study, be responsible, disciplined, and they often seek guidance from him (for example, asking at what age they can have a boyfriend, get piercings; the boy has started working and uses his earnings to buy things for Victor as his birthday cake). Additionally, Victor feels that their upbringing is respectful and open-minded regarding diversity of identities and sexual orientations, and they are taught that they will always have their support. Victor believes that transgender men are more readily accepted in heteropatriarchal society than transgender women, largely due to the effects of hormonal therapy and passing as cisgender. He also acknowledges the impact of socioeconomic status, especially considering that much of the population in Latin America does not have good economic standing. He has considered the possibility of experiencing a counter-hegemonic pregnancy and discussed with his ex-partner the option of surrogacy, but they dismissed it due to financial considerations. Currently, he believes that due to his age and years of hormone replacement therapy, a pregnancy would be complex, but he remains open to the possibility of adopting his ex-partner's children or other children.



**Figure 29.** *Victor's Genogram*



**Figure 30.** *Victor and his children preparing the Christmas tree (Source: Participant's files).*



**Figure 31.** *Victor and his children walking in downtown (Source: Participant's files).*



### **Case 5. Isa**

Isa is a 46-year-old Mexican transgender woman who identifies as asexual. She completed her transition in 2020, including legal and documentation procedures, along with hormone replacement therapy.

Isa met the mother of her children when she was 22 years old, and they got married when she was 24. She confided her feelings to her spouse (at that time, Isa didn't know she was a transgender person), and they discussed that it might be something she would outgrow, which didn't happen. Isa sought therapeutic help during her first daughter's pregnancy (2004). At that time, the therapist explained what being transgender meant, warning her that if she chose to transition, she might lose custody of her daughter. Therefore, Isa decided not to take any action at that time. After her daughter's birth, Isa asked her then-wife to attend couples therapy (2005), where they discussed Isa's situation. Her spouse broke down in tears, leading Isa to suppress her feelings and not transition, trying to bury her emotions. Their relationship continued, and their second child was born in 2009. They separated in 2012.

Her ex-partner declined to sign the divorce papers; thus they remain legally married, a situation that doesn't perturb Isa. Following their separation, Isa faced a period of housing instability, as she was the primary financial provider for her children and ex-partner, leaving her unable to afford her own accommodation initially. Consequently, she resorted to living in her car and even spent nights at her workplace, enduring housing precariousness for approximately ten years. However, three years ago, she was able to purchase a house where she now resides with her children, occasionally receiving visits from her ex-partner. Initially, after the separation, Isa had visitation with her children every 15 days for about six months. Presently, her children reside with her, and she maintains an amicable relationship with her ex-partner. While she values being the legal guardian of her children, it does present challenges, such as navigating situations like completing school paperwork that explicitly requires designating roles as "mother" and "father."

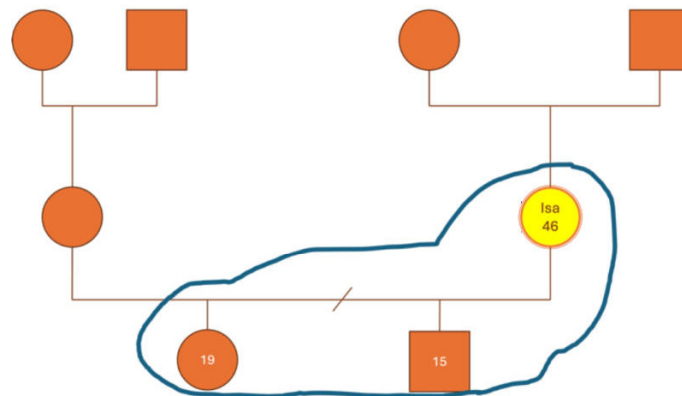
At the age of 10, her daughter shared her concerns after learning about the high suicide rates among TP. Isa feels that if she hadn't transitioned, she might have ended her life because she was extremely unhappy, stating, "I was dying." She indicates that after transitioning, her life is full of projects, and she has been able to participate in advocacy efforts for transgender rights, such as being the face of an internationally recognized hair care brand.

Isa understands that her transition has been challenging for her children, so she tries not to pressure them. She has chosen to give them control over the situation, including deciding what to call her (currently, her children still call her 'dad,' which doesn't bother Isa).

Isa believes that transgender women face greater difficulties with cis passing, leading to a higher risk of violence. Therefore, one of the protective measures she takes is to "try to blend in" in public settings, especially where there is a possibility of unwanted physical contact, such as on public transportation or in places she knows could be contentious, like public restrooms. Specifically regarding parenting, Isa emphasizes the importance of TP addressing any guilt they may feel during their transition. She also stresses that it's crucial not to place one's own happiness on their children, freeing them from that responsibility, which helps process guilt and transform it into responsibility for caring for the children. This opens up the possibility for TP to be an example to their children in seeking their own happiness.

Regarding protective factors, Isa has a stable job related to her professional studies and a decent salary for the past 20 years, which helped her through her transition and allowed her to support her children during this time. Additionally, she lives in a state with gender identity laws that enabled her to have her documentation in order. As a positive aspect of her transgender parenting, Isa highlights the communication with her children and the ease with which they have been taught about topics of sexual and gender diversity.

**Figure 32.** *Isa's Genogram*



**Figure 33.** *Isa as the face of an internationally recognized hair care brand (Source: Participant's files).*



**Figure 34.** *Isa and her family dressed up celebrating Isa's "quinceañera" party, sponsored by an internationally recognized hair care brand (Source: Participant's files).*



**Figure 35.** *Isa's documentary won a bronze award (Source: Participant's files).*

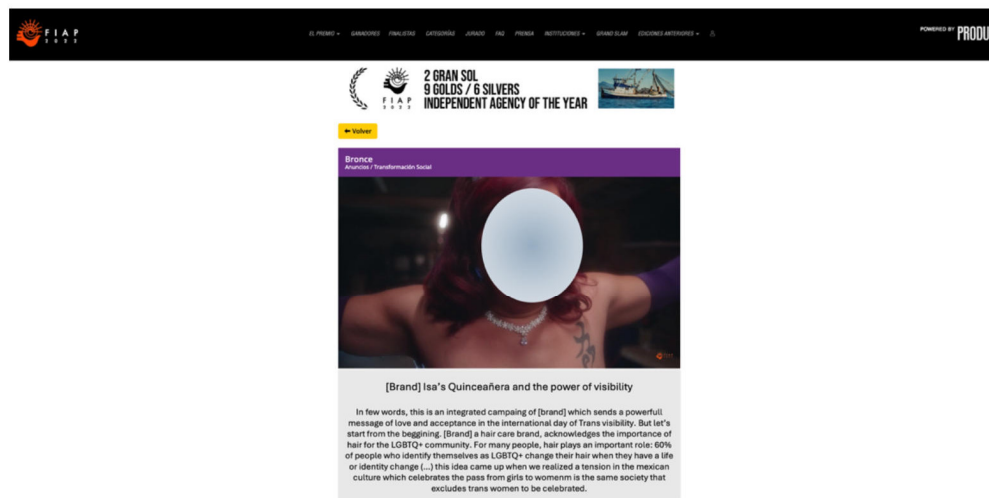


Figure 36. Isa's documentary presentation in Spain (Source: Participant's files).

**DÍA 3**

**JUEVES 15 DE DICIEMBRE  
MAÑANA**

**Programación Especial - Centros Educativos**  
**Sala: Auditorio Insular de Fuerteventura**  
**Dirección: Calle Ramiro de Maeztu, Puerto del Rosario, Las Palmas, España**  
**Hora: 10:00h**



**Dir.** [REDACTED]  
**Ficha Técnica:**  
**País:** México  
**Año:** 2022  
**Género:** Documental  
**Guión:** [REDACTED]  
**Productor:** [REDACTED]  
**Duración:** 9  
**Clasificación:** ATP  
**T**

**MATERIALES**

**Sinopsis:** Tendrá unos 20 años que el tema de las infancias trans comenzó a ser escuchado y visibilizado. Pero la situación trans no comenzó ahí, siempre ha estado presente, pero se mantenía oculta. La gran mayoría de las personas trans que nacieron antes de que el tema de las infancias trans se hiciera visible, no lograban entender lo que ocurría entre sus cuerpos y mentes. Las personas trans también se enamoran, se unen en matrimonio e incluso tienen hijos, sin haber resuelto las dudas que llevan en la mente y alma, por miedo, por ignorancia, por temor a ser rechazados. Y es ahí, justo en ese momento de volverse padres, que pasan sin darse cuenta, de ser víctimas de la ignorancia, a victimarios de aquellos a quienes más aman. Es por eso que muchas mamás y papás trans no encuentran otra opción que la de vivir en secreto su identidad de género, una identidad que muchos de ellos, a sus 50, 60 o 70 años, apenas empiezan a entender. [REDACTED] fue uno de esos casos.



**20**  
**MUESTRA DE CINE**  
**LGBTBI**  
DE FUERTEVENTURA



Figure 37. Isa's advocacy for trans people's rights (Source: Participant's files).



Note: Written in the mirror: If I have to die, I want it to be with myself.

#### Case 6. Alex

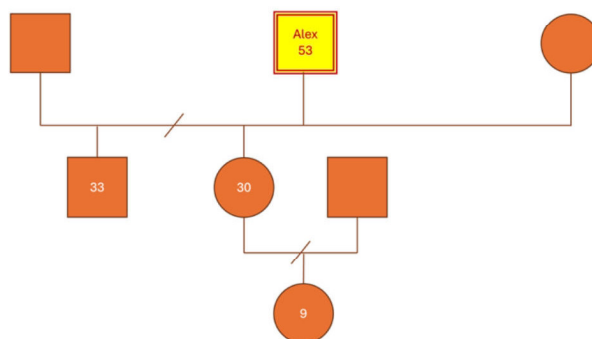
Alex, a 53-year-old heterosexual Guatemalan trans man, attended a convent school where an incident with a nun led him to question his sexual orientation, initially believing he was lesbian. At 17, under pressure from his parents, he entered into a heterosexual marriage with a Panamanian man seeking legal status in Guatemala. Throughout this marriage, Alex experienced two pregnancies while enduring physical violence from his partner. Following their separation, the father of his children neglected their financial and caregiving responsibilities, leaving Alex's parents to care for the children while he worked to provide for them.

At the age of 43, Alex discovered his identity as a trans man and realized he was heterosexual, not lesbian as previously assumed. Despite multiple conversations with his children, now 33 and 30 years old, they continue to address him as 'mom' and struggle to respect his gender identity, which deeply troubles Alex despite his love for them. Although Alex legally changed his name, Guatemala's absence of gender identity laws means his official documents do not align with his gender expression. Moreover, when his children must fill out paperwork requiring their mother's name, they face mockery, questioning, and violence due to Alex's male name.

Alex has taken painful protective measures regarding his children, such as abstaining from attending his son's graduation to avoid scrutiny over the presence of two fathers. Similarly, he refrained from attending his daughter's childbirth at her request, fearing her partner's family's judgment, and was unable to meet his granddaughter's father in person. While Alex has fostered a close relationship with his granddaughter, now nine years old, she remains unaware of his trans identity. Presently, Alex and his children avoid discussing his transition due to its contentious nature for them. Although his son, a medical professional, expresses concern about the effects of hormone therapy, they refrain from delving further into the topic.

Lacking support networks, Alex founded the first collective for trans men in his region, establishing an NGO and a specialized clinic with the assistance of his spouse, a physician. Despite encountering challenges in securing resources compared to movements supporting gay and trans women, Alex believes women trans have greater access to rights and social benefits. He stresses the urgent need for gender identity legislation in Guatemala to protect TP and ensure their rights. Facing discrimination during the U.S. visa application process due to incongruent gender markers on official documents, Alex emphasizes the importance of educating psychologists and therapists on gender diversity, as many lack adequate training to support trans patients, leaving them to educate their providers.

**Figure 38.** Alex's Genogram



**Figure 39.** Activities that Alex's collective promotes through their social media (Source: Participant's files).



### ***Case 7. Hall***

Hall is a 36-year-old Mexican pansexual trans man. He began his transition in 2010, for which he had to invent a false address in the capital city (as it was the only one with a gender identity law in effect at the time). This demonstrates that when countries have inconsistent legislation, they force people to carry out unnecessary procedures, such as changing their address or inventing a false one, which violates their rights. Adjusting his legal documents to his name and gender identity took four years, and he still has documents pending adjustment, including his high school diploma, which has so far prevented him from continuing his studies.

Hall entered into a relationship with a woman who had two daughters (4 and 15 years old at the time) from previous partners. The relationship lasted for seven years, during which the girls began to call him "dad." During the relationship, Hall intended to marry and adopt the girls, but he couldn't because his documents were not aligned with his gender expression. He also feared what the girls' biological fathers might say when they found out that a trans man was trying to adopt them. The girls did not know that Hall was a trans man during the relationship. The relationship ended due to episodes of psychological, verbal, and economic violence towards him and physical violence towards the girls. Hall lost contact with the girls for approximately a year, despite proposing alternatives to maintain contact and financially support the girls, his ex-partner refused.

The eldest daughter (now 21 years old) experienced sexual abuse by her younger sister's father, which led to her rejection of adult male figures. Hall believes that they were able to form a close bond because he was not the typical "oppressive male." His daughter expressed doubts about her gender identity, and Hall supported her through her experience, accompanying her through small changes to see how she felt. She ultimately decided to continue identifying as a woman and did not transition while Hall and her mother were still together. In 2023, his eldest daughter contacted him, saying he was "the closest thing I've had to a dad" and expressing her desire to reconnect. She also revealed that she identified as a trans man. Hall reiterated his support and accompanied him in the early stages of his transition (therapeutic support). His eldest son informed him that episodes of violence from his mother continue, so they discussed the possibility of him living independently with Hall's support. They also considered the possibility of his younger daughter (currently 11 years old) living with her maternal grandmother since Hall lacks legal recognition of his relationship with the children and cannot seek custody of the youngest. Currently, Hall maintains contact with the younger daughter through the eldest son via WhatsApp. They have agreed to meet at the maternal grandmother's house, experiencing a very emotional reunion for all three. The biological mother of the girls is unaware of the resumed contact, nor is she aware of the transition process that her eldest son has initiated. The younger daughter knows about it and supports her older brother in this regard, which Hall sees as a sign of the trust and good upbringing the girls received from him, as they sought him out in times of difficulty and support each other.

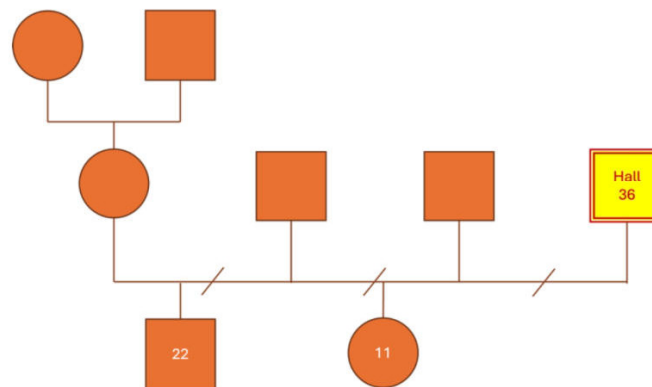
Hall believes that trans men are "invisible" and have better cis passing than trans women, exposing them to less violence. Regarding documentation and social services for the children, he faced the same difficulties as adoptive parents who have no legal bond with their children, adding to the prejudices that the person attending to them may have regarding TP. Therefore, Hall uses secrecy as a defense mechanism to protect himself and prevent stigma from being transferred to his children. He comments, "It was no longer just my decision whom to tell I am trans." While still participating in pro-rights activities for the LGBTQIA+ community, Hall was cautious not to be photographed at such events while in a relationship with his ex-partner, to protect the girls.

Hall would like to adopt or serve as foster care for children in need of a home but has not dared to inquire or initiate the procedures for fear that his gender identity may be an impediment or that he will be discriminated against or considered a pedophile by state personnel managing these institutions. Given that Mexican legislation is not clear regarding adoption, he feels that it will depend on the criteria of the person attending to him, as there are no clear guidelines established at the state level.

Among the protective circumstances, Hall highlights his socioeconomic status, which allowed him, for example, to hire a lawyer to handle his document changes, avoiding direct confrontation with administrative or governmental personnel, as he fears discrimination and violence due to previous experiences of discrimination when seeking employment or meeting potential partners who reject him upon learning he is a trans man. He also attributes this to the violence towards lesbian and trans women that he has observed. His socioeconomic status also allowed him to undergo surgeries, attend psychologists and psychiatrists to obtain approval for surgeries, and undergo hormone replacement therapy. A protective mechanism he has developed is being charismatic, kind, and polite to people, allowing him to build protective networks in microsocial environments.



**Figure 40.** *Hall's Genogram*



### **Case 8. Luis**

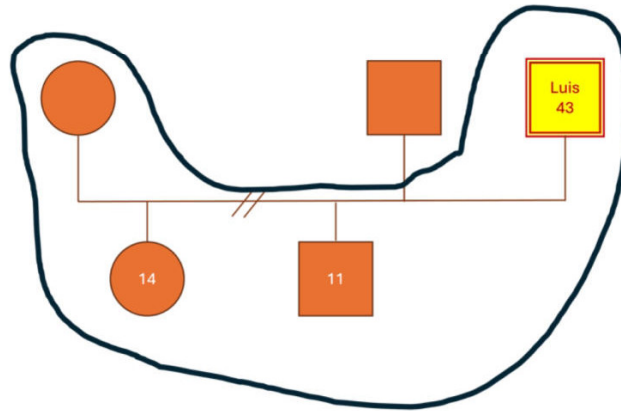
Luis is a 43-year-old heterosexual trans man from Venezuela who has been living in Chile for 10 years. Luis, his sister, and his current partner have been friends since childhood. His friend moved to Chile, got married, had two children, and divorced, during which time she made sporadic trips to Venezuela to visit Luis and his sister, who also traveled to Chile to see her. Luis decides to immigrate to Chile and moves in with his friend, agreeing to help each other with house chores and childcare. Eventually, Luis and she decided to form a romantic relationship. The children's father (also Venezuelan) lived in Chile for three years after the separation and then immigrated to the USA. Luis had known him since he was dating his current partner and describes their relationship as good, which has aided him in his parenting role. Although Luis has no legal relationship with the children, he performs parental tasks, such as attending school meetings, as their biological father is out of the country. This lack of legal recognition of his relationship with the children prevents them from doing things like traveling abroad, as the children's father must give authorization.

Luis talked to the children and told them he would not force them to treat him in any particular way. However, the children alternately call him by his name, call him dad, and his daughter calls him "opa" (dad in Korean). Luis began his transition while living with his children, so it was important for them to know beforehand what was going to happen. The children took the conversation well, and his daughter's supportive words encouraged him to continue with the transition. Luis believes that his family's support has been crucial in his process. His children are currently going through hormonal changes typical of their age, and as Luis also experiences effects related to hormone replacement therapy, he comments that they support each other through these changes as a family.

As a protective measure, Luis keeps his trans identity secret in certain public spaces. He acknowledges that some family members initially expressed concerns about the impact of his transition on the children, but seeing their positive development has dispelled those doubts. Another protective element is the existence of specific support networks, such as NGOs for trans people, and access to physical and mental health care services offering psychological and psychiatric support. Legal protections, such as gender identity, marriage equality, and adoption laws, in his country of residence contrast with his country of origin (Venezuela) but pose specific vulnerabilities due to discrepancies in documentation. While Luis can travel to certain countries with his Chilean documentation (Argentina, Peru, Brazil, Bolivia), he cannot visit others that require a passport (e.g., Canada or the USA) because his Venezuelan documentation still reflects his previous identity. This also affects his ability to practice his profession in Chile, as he cannot change his name on his professional title. Luis believes that transitioning in Venezuela would have been impossible due to the lack of laws and societal judgment, making migrating to a country with pro-rights laws a protective action. Before Chile's gender identity law was passed, Luis chose to resign from a job with constant public interaction to work as an Uber driver. Fortunately, the company had a policy respecting drivers' gender identity, allowing him to use his name and gender expression on the platform, even without local legislation, which was another protective factor. The existence of inclusive schools, where his children have not faced questioning for having a trans parent, has also been protective. Although he considers himself among the less vulnerable due to his light skin as a Latin American migrant, Luis recognizes that discrimination based on phenotype or migratory status, combined with being trans, increases the risk of experiencing discrimination and violence.

Luis believes that trans men have better cis passing than trans women, resulting in greater social acceptance. He emphasizes that communication and education are key weapons in eliminating violence against trans people.

**Figure 41.** *Luis' Genogram*



### **Case 9. Sophia**

Sophia is a 69-year-old lesbian trans woman. Sophia recalls not knowing she was a trans woman; she thought she was a cross-dressing man, as there wasn't much information available about gender identities when she was young. Since childhood, she enjoyed playing with girls'/girls' toys, and wearing her mother's clothes.

Sophia got married for the first time at 23 to a cisgender woman, with whom she planned to have two daughters. This relationship lasted eight years, after which they divorced. She attended therapy to deal with the emotions the divorce brought up, and during one session, the topic of cross-dressing came up. However, Sophia didn't return to therapy out of fear of facing the issue.

At 35, Sophia remarried, because they unexpectedly became pregnant, leading to an early marriage and the birth of her first son. Due to economic reasons and her partner's health issues, they couldn't have more children, so Sophia underwent a vasectomy. Throughout her marriages, Sophia would dress in her wives' clothes or buy women's clothing for herself, considering it a perversion and a problem she needed to solve, causing her much guilt. She tried various methods to "fix her problem," including getting married, having daughters, and buying them girls' toys she wanted as a child, even joining a rugby team to "become a man." Sophia traveled frequently for work and would buy women's clothes to wear in the hotels she stayed in, which brought her satisfaction but also guilt.

In 1999, while looking for a job, Sophia found an offer seeking staff to provide counseling to LGBTQIA+ people via phone and email. She contacted them by email to seek treatment (still with the idea of "curing" herself) and began receiving information, eventually attending in-person meetings where she met other trans women, what brought her much relief. Meeting a trans woman who was a university professor was particularly reassuring for Sophia, as she had believed trans women only worked in sex work or beauty, whereas she wanted to pursue a professional career. Starting in 1999, Sophia began sporadic outings dressed as a woman, accompanied by this group of trans women.

In the group, Sophia learned about the right to identity, and since her wife worked in a human rights office, Sophia thought she would understand her situation. However, when Sophia discussed it with her wife, it caused conflicts in their relationship. In 2002, Sophia was offered a job in another city, which reduced tension in the relationship and allowed Sophia to live as a woman on weekends, realizing it was how she truly felt comfortable. Ten months later, her wife also found a job in the same city. Sophia proposed renting a room to live as a woman on Sundays, and although her wife initially agreed, it caused further conflicts. Her wife expressed that she loved her but was not a lesbian and fell in love with a man not the woman that Sophia was becoming, leading to their divorce in 2006. After long years of conflict during the marriage, they reconciled and now they remain close friends.

Before the divorce, while her wife and son were on vacation, Sophia told her boss she was a trans woman and asked if she could come to work dressed as a woman on the week her family was away, to which her boss agreed. Sophia felt at peace and realized there was no turning back in her transition. In 2006, she lost her job and realized how difficult it would be to find work as a trans woman until a friend offered her a partnership in a magazine, providing her with financial security and allowing her to fully transition.



From 2008, Sophia began living full-time as a woman, except when meeting with her children, for whom she would dress as a man. Her daughters temporarily lived with her during this time, and Sophia returned to live as a man, telling them she had a friend who visited often and left her clothes and wigs at her apartment, to avoid revealing her identity. Sophia rented an apartment that was for women only, having her daughters stay meant she had to change clothes to go to her office, pay rent as a woman, change back to male attire, and return home with her daughters, all as a protective strategy for them.

Sophia considered her transition slow but at the right pace for her and her children's process. She wanted to prevent her children from finding out through others or the media (since she had participated in some media interviews), so she sought therapy for advice on how to talk to them about her situation. She decided to write individualized letters to each of them, offering to dress as a man for certain occasions if they wished (such as their marriage or graduation), and took them to a park to read the letters and ask questions. Her eldest daughter suspected she was a trans woman and had no problem with it, while her youngest daughter was surprised but accepting. Her son cried during the reading, which Sophia attributes to the realization that his main male figure was actually a trans woman, understanding the reason behind his parents' fights and subsequent divorce. Sophia was nervous when her daughters, despite living with her, didn't ask questions about her situation until they reassured her, and they replied, "You'll see." That year, for Father's Day, they gave her a doll, showing their acceptance, and they began meeting with Sophia without her needing to dress as a man.

Two or two and a half years ago, Sophia visited her son's city to participate in a panel discussion, and she asked her children to accompany her, marking the first time her son saw her in person as a woman. After that, Sophia stopped dressing as a man when meeting her son, and they have since gathered as a family, celebrating holidays and year-end festivities with Sophia dressed as a woman. She changed her legal documents in 2015 (confirmed after the interview). Her children refer to her using female pronouns, and her son still calls her dad. Sophia sees herself as a proud dad ('una papá orgullosa') of her daughters. She believes it was important to consider her children's ages when revealing her gender identity, exercising patience, conversation, and negotiation, giving her children some control over the process (such as not forcing them to call her mom, offering to continue dressing as a man for special events, or not forcing her children to change their birth certificates to include her female name) but without giving up her own transition process.

Sophia believes that trans men have better cis passing opportunities due to the effects of surgery and hormonal treatments, making them less visible and exposed to less violence than trans women. This, combined with the fact that trans women have fewer rights than men, like cisgender women, has led Sophia to use being a successful/productive person who contributes to society as a defense mechanism, so her children are proud of her and to avoid falling victim to the negative stereotypes and stigma that affect trans women.

**Figure 42.** *Sophia's Genogram*

