

TRANSGENDER PERSONS IN VENEZUELA: COPING WITH LACK OF LEGAL RECOGNITION IN TIMES OF FOOD RATIONING AND SHORTAGES

An Abstract of the Thesis By
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The transgender population of Venezuela has not yet been allowed to change their legal name to make it congruent with the gender identity on their identity cards. This restricts their access to many human rights within their own country, such as health or education. Nonetheless, during the food rationing implemented in Venezuela between 2014 and 2016, the transgender group saw themselves struggling in a brand new scenario: access to food. Since the state regulated rationing by the identity cards of each consumer, some transgender people reported that staff in supermarkets were discriminating them in different forms, apart from also threatening their access to these important supplies. Yet again, this manifested the urgent need for this group to obtain legal recognition of their self-perceived gender identity. Thus, the aim of this thesis is to open a space for the transgender population of this country for them to narrate their own experiences from that period. It also aims to portray the Venezuelan crisis from a transgender perspective, which has barely been covered by the media. The implemented research method was the interview and the contributions of the nine participants analysed through the concepts of power, to discuss the leading functions of the state to conduct its members through cisgender patterns; and through gender performativity, to analyse how gender is reproduced in society, in which transgender existence challenges restrictive gender norms. Finally, I applied citizenship theory to analyse three roles that the identity card plays for the state: as an identifier, as a guarantee of full membership and entitlement to rights and as a discriminatory tool against transgender people in Venezuela.

Keywords: transgender, legal recognition, gender identity, power, performativity, identity card.