

Hello to all.

My name is José Catalão, I come from the University of Coimbra. I am a master in sociology, researcher and PhD student in Law, Justice and Citizenship in the Twenty-First Century, and I am part of a team that until recently developed two projects, "Being citizens of Europe in Portugal" and "Mapping European Citizenship", supported by the European Union, and coordinated by my colleague Ana Almeida, PhD psychologist, researcher and lecturer at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of the UC.

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I want to begin this presenting showing you a toy that I'm sure you all know.

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This is Matryoshka, the Russian doll.

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A set of matryoshkas consist of a wooden figure which separates, top from bottom, to reveal a smaller figure of the same sort inside, which has, in turn, another figure inside of it, and so on. The number of nested figures is traditionally at least five, like this one, but can be much more, up to several dozen with sufficiently fine craftsmanship.

For many people, the Russian dolls are a reminder of distant lands, a motif that is placed in a glass case. It is

certainly a wonderful way to preserve a bit of Russian at home, but in fact their purpose is mesmerizing, illustrate, educate and amaze.

Even today, there are teachers in Russia who still use the nesting dolls as teaching material. If you have ever watched a small child trying to fit the pieces patiently of Russian dolls, understand how something so simple can captivate and fascinate.

And now, for a moment I will leave this doll here, on the table.

I want to talk about

Anne Fausto-Sterling and her book *Sexing the Body* (2000) in which she relates the case of Maria Patiño, a Spain top woman hurdler. This woman, in the rush and excitement of leaving for the 1988 Olympics, forgot the requisite doctor's certificate stating, for the benefit of Olympic officials, what seemed patently obvious to anyone who looked at her: she was female.

But the International Olympic Committee (IOC) had anticipated the possibility that some competitors would forget their certificates of femininity, and so, Patiño had only to report to the "femininity control head office", scrape some cells off the side of her cheek, and all would be in order – or so she thought.

A few hours after the cheek scraping she got a call. Something was wrong.

Patiño may have looked like a woman, had a woman's strength, and never had reasons to suspect that wasn't a woman, but the examinations revealed that her cell sported a Y chromosome, and that her labia hid testes within. Furthermore, she had neither ovaries nor a uterus, and so, according to IOC's definition, Patiño wasn't a woman, and had to be barred from competing on Spain's Olympic team.

Spanish athletic officials told Patiño to fake an injury and withdraw without publishing the embarrassing facts. When she refused, the European press heard about it and the secret was out.

In consequence, Spanish officials stripped her of past titles and barred her from further competition, and after the facts are revealed by press, her boyfriend deserted her, she was evicted from the national athletic residence, her scholarship was revoked, and suddenly she had to struggle to make a living.

She was erased from the map, after twelve years dedicated to sports. In an interview, made by a reporter, she told: "I knew I was a woman, in the eyes of medicine, God and most of all, in my own eyes."

So, she decided to spend thousands of dollars consulting doctors about her situation. Patiño resolved to fight the IOC ruling.

With the help of Alison Carlson, a former Stanford University tennis player and biologist opposed to sex testing, they began to build a case.

Patiño underwent examinations in which doctor's checkout her pelvic structures and shoulders to decide if she was feminine enough to compete. After two and a half years the International Amateur Athletic Federation reinstated her, and by 1992 Patiño had rejoined the Spanish Olympic squad, going down in history as the first woman ever to challenge sex testing for female athletes.

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Until 1968 female Olympic competitors were often asked to parade naked in front of a board of examiners. Breasts and a vagina were all one needed to certify one's femininity. Some woman complained that this procedure was degrading. Partly because this complaints, the IOC decided to make use of the modern "scientific" chromosome test.

The problem, though, is that this test, and the more sophisticated polymerase chain reaction to detect small regions of DNA associated with testes development that the IOC uses today, cannot do the work the IOC wants it to do. A body's sex is simply too complex.

Like the author says: there is no either / or.

Anne argues: how scientists, medical professionals, and a wider public have made sense of (or ought to make sense

of) bodies that presents themselves as neither entirely male nor entirely female.

So, one of the major claims of Anne, in this book, is that labelling someone a man or a woman is a social decision. “We may use scientific knowledge to help us make the decision, but only our beliefs about gender – not science – can define our sex.

Furthermore, our beliefs about gender affect what kinds of knowledge scientists produce about sex in the first place.

Over last decades, the relation between social expression of masculinity and femininity and their physical underpinnings has been hotly debated in scientific and social arenas.

“In 1972 the sexologists John Money and Anke Ehrhardt popularized the idea that sex and gender are separate categories.

Sex, they argued, refers to the physical attributes and is anatomically and physiologically determined. Gender they saw as a psychological transformation of the self – the internal conviction that one is either male or female (gender identity) and the behavioural expressions of that conviction.”<sup>1-3</sup>

Meanwhile, the second-wave feminists of the 1970s also argued that sex is distinct from gender – that social institutions, themselves designed to perpetuate gender

inequality, produce most of the differences between men and women.

The tree, Money, Ehrhardt, and the feminist set the terms so that the sex represented the body's anatomy and physiological workings and gender represented social forces that moulded behaviour.

Feminists did not question the realm of physical sex; it was the psychological and cultural meanings of the cultural differences pointed – gender differences – that was at issue.

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For Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann sociology of knowledge must concern itself with everything that passes for «knowledge» in a society, without regard to the validity or non-validity of this last knowledge, whatever the criteria. The sociology of knowledge must therefore engage in the «social construction of reality».

The ideas that emerge from the theoretical thinking developed in universities, are not so important in a society. Although all societies contain these phenomena, the production of theoretical thinking is only a small part of the total sum of what is considered 'knowledge', including gender differences and other conceptions as social constructions of the reality.

The fact is, different societies produce different constructions of reality, and the same applies to different countries or communities. There's no way to fight against

that – tanks god, because in other way we will tend to be all equal, and one of the most beautiful things in the world is the diversity of cultures, and other differences that characterises and distinguish people and societies.

Individually and culturally we may not understand and accept some of that differences or conceptions of other individuals or societies. The fact is, we may be thin, fat, white, black, Portuguese, French, gay, lesbian, or believe in different gods and we cannot deny or ignore that diversity, and we all must understand and accept that there are different characteristics which made us different and distinguish us all. The world is made of diversity, of all kinds – natural and the others that are social constructed.

We all pass through and lived different experiences and that means we may not have equal thoughts or think equally. Even living in democracy that doesn't mean we all have to submit to the thoughts of a majority, which will rule all particular aspects of our lives. If we want to respect diversity, which is so important for a better and a beautiful world, majorities can never decide without respect for minorities. The rule should be that, and we should fight against any attempt to break it. In fact, that's what move social movements.

But if, like Berger & Luckmann argues, our conceptions and even the reality of our knowing are based on social constructions, we may think we need more often try to mould, reconstruct or build that social constructions

instead of trying only to fight against this or that; people or politics actions, what else. But for that we need to try to enrol all citizens of a community in the process of changing some institutionalised social constructions, for instance, about sex, gender or other aspects in which our societies were building up.

In a way, I must say, one of the most important aspects we found about European citizenship, in our recent projects “Being European Citizen in Portugal” and “Mapping European Citizenship”, is the way found by the Union for effectively support, give voice, strength and power to European citizens and organizations like ILGA, for instance, in a way defending and supporting Initiatives that promote the respect for Human Rights and diversity within Europe, meanwhile, the European Citizenship.

Back again to the Russian dolls, we can use it, like Anne Fausto-Sterling did to talk about gender, but in this case as a metaphor for the Europe.

Like she says, in her book, these dolls are fascinating, because as we take apart each outer doll, we wait expectantly to see if there is yet a smaller one within, and as dolls get tinier and tinier we can marvel at the delicacy of the craft that produce successively smaller dolls.

But displaying them could be a dilemma: should we leave each doll separate but visible, lined up in an ever-diminishing row?



This display could be pleasing, because it shows each component of the largest doll. But dissatisfying, because each individual doll, while visible, is empty.

The complexity of the nesting is gone and with it the pleasure, craft, and beauty of the assembly structure.

For Anne, the Russian nesting doll was useful for envisioning the various layers of human sexuality, from the cellular to the social and historical. She metaphorically uses dolls to say that academics can take the system apart for display or to study one of the dolls in more detail. But an individual doll is hollow. Only the complete assembly makes sense.

We can use the same metaphor in reference to Europe and to the European citizenship. And we can use Russian dolls to talk about our project of Mapping European citizenship. In fact, as we explore and analyse each, let's us say, parts of the European citizenship represented in the maps, they have meanings that could be very important individually, but in fact is the whole that fascinates us, and better expresses the importance of the development of European citizenship.

For that, when we are talking about active citizenship and if we have to say something about how to act, we are shore that all of us individually, in group and social organizations, as a part active of this whole, have to look and to concern with your peers, not only in here but also with the others that you don't know. When you are fighting for your rights, you certainly are fighting you're

your rights and with the rights of others, for a better whole, wish means for a better Europe. And, concluding, you are doing it very well.

## Bibliografia

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Nota importante: Alguns excertos do texto são citações da bibliografia referida.

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