Movable Thresholds: The Fluctuating Definitions of Women´s and Men´s Worlds in Spain

Honour and Gender: Mediterranean anthropology.

The issues that have stood out as important in the anthropology of gender in Spain are the same ones that have been in important in the anthropology of gender around the Mediterranean area - and indeed for Mediterranean anthropology tout court. Not that it is more legitimate in this part of the world than in others to study gender issues. It is rather that gender issues are culturally central, emphasized by both women and men, so it is difficult to describe any aspect of social life without touching on gender issues. However, they have had other labels, notably "honour and shame".

There is no room here for a critique of the ample literature on this topic. Let me just say that the idea of honour has been interpreted by anthropologists as functional for and a function of political relationships between men, the economy of shepherding and the requirements for peace-keeping in areas of inefficient state power, among other things. But, looking closer, the idea of honour is really about the relationships between women and men. The nucleus of the idea (described now as it is understood by Mediterranean peoples themselves, but simplified to the point of caricature for the sake of brevity) is that women and men are different kinds of human beings, and because they are different they are attracted to each other. But this is very dangerous, because men uphold social order while women disrupt it. Therefore, women have subversive power, and it is the duty of men to see to it that this power is kept in its place, closed in where it can do little harm. This means that both women and sexuality must be controlled, and the two are confused. All women are suspect of being creators of chaos until they can prove the opposite. Non-subversive women should therefore be ostentatiously submissive and obedient, spend little time outside their homes (or other areas which the husband and his kin control), and above all they should not tempt men sexually. They should have shame, i.e. they should hide their bodies and its charms and never use their attractiveness to obtain advantages from men. Men´s honour is dependent on women´s shame. A man who cannot control "his" women loses honour.

All of this is of course the male view. Women share much of it, including the idea that they are in some sense inferior human beings and dangerous for the social order, and that sexuality is as central as it is subversive. But they experience subordination, so they rebel. They search out the weapons for self-defense that the system allows them. They can build alliances among themselves, but usually patterns of kinship, marriage and residence make this
difficult. They can insist on equality with men, on the basis of human rights, but this is a novel idea in most Mediterranean countries, so not very effective. They can contest the division of tasks, or they can try to be very efficient in the tasks allotted to them. They can definitely insist on the dignity and rights due to them if they comply well with those tasks. (Cf Kaplan 1982).

But above all, and most immediately available for everyday purposes, there is one weapon which the whole complex of ideas places straight in their hands: sexual attraction and the talent for seduction and manipulation in general. In Spain, women’s traditional manipulative skills are labelled "left hand". By using their "left hand", i.e. smiling, hiding their intentions, ferreting out information that others may not want to give, promising and not complying, pressuring, blackmailing, conquering little things as stepping stones to larger goals, being verbally persuasive... women get their way, sometimes at least, even while apparently accepting that they have no authority to make decisions or any moral right to ask for things for themselves.

Now, of course, such techniques only work in face-to-face situations. They work best of all between husband and wife. In traditional Mediterranean societies, consisting of small communities where everyone knew everyone, where the complete set of social roles was there for all to see, where gender and age were the major principles for organizing socially necessary work, and where even persons in official positions could be approached personally, they did give women a chance. Some of the time, at least, and to the price of reinforcing the image of femininity as being about duplicity and indirectness, and women as untrustworthy by nature.

The techniques of left hand cannot accomplish very much outside the family, and in urbanized, complex, industrialized, capitalist societies, the family represents a diminishing part of the total set of social relationships. "Left hand" is consequently on its way out. It is seen by many Mediterranean women as undignified and ineffectual, dangerous, old-fashioned. At the same time, however, that which might replace it - in Spain, mainly the "justice", "equality" and "human rights" of Enlightenment discourse - is very far from being effective in these societies and even less guaranteed for women than for men. So it is dangerous for women to give up their old defenses.

This is important for policy makers to understand. Resistance to reforms may be due to patterns of acting, thinking and feeling based on experience (in Bourdieu’s term, dispositions) that are not easily unlearned, and that is something that should be respected, too. But there are also "rational" reasons. What look like gains must be carefully scrutinized, because they may be losses. And Mediterranean women are wary, because they are used to losing when someone in power tells them they are going to gain.

In Spain, there is a situation of wide and deep social change that translates to cultural change, i.e. a reinterpretation of practically everything, including gender. This change has generally been seen as improvement and been positively evaluated, since it coincided with economic improvement for wide sectors of the population and with the end of a forty-year-old dictatorship. But the improvement came to a halt during the 1980’s and may now be reversing itself, so pessimism is setting in.

It is a situation where ideas of masculinity and femininity, power relationships, social space (especially the division of social space into "public" and "private" spheres), the division of labour according to gender, sexuality, social change and the cultural renegotiation of all these things take centre stage - in discussions at the corner bar as well as in the mass media, in fiction as well as in social science literature.

The main issues treated in the anthropology of gender in Spain are the following ones: honour and shame; social change; work (division of, definition of); private-public; influence, power and authority; autonomy, emancipation, etc.; motherhood; language, metaphors and verbal behaviour; sexuality; complementarity versus hierarchy; and identity.
Instead of discussing the issues one by one - which would be rather boring and entail much overlapping - I will try to show how they are all connected to each other.

To do this, I have chosen one article that broached most of the issues at an early stage of the development of the anthropology of gender. Let us see what its author, Susan Harding, found important to discuss twenty years ago. Then I will complement her themes with those of a few other works, chosen not so much for their theoretical power as for their usefulness as examples here. With this background knowledge, the reader should be able to botanize according to her or his own interests in the accompanying commented bibliography.

**Village women: Oroel as a paradigm**

Susan Harding (1975) did fieldwork in a small agricultural village in northeastern Spain which she calls Oroel. There, the division of labour according to gender is strict: men are in charge of the work in the fields, women of all domestic tasks and all tasks of child-rearing, even when these tasks take them physically outside the dwelling. Men and women also have distinct verbal roles related to their social work. "The talk and thoughts of women are wrapped around people and their personal lives. The first thing a woman wants to know when she meets someone is about her family." (287)

Child-rearing is a verbal task as well as physical. Mind-reading is part of a woman’s task, too - a good woman should not have to be told what people around her want and need. She is emotionally, physically and verbally engaged with the concerns of others - so she develops "intuition". "Her role requires that she identify with her charges, especially her children, to such an extent that she may experience insecurities about them as insecurities about herself. Given her position and as a result of her worldly inexperience and primary cultural formation, a woman becomes unusually vulnerable to fear." (292) "Worry about well-being is distinctly on the women’s side of the division of labour." (292)

Since women are economically dependent on men, they also develop verbal finesse. They become good at obtaining information from others, even if they do not want to give it. They use this skill with husbands, sons, etc. as well as with their woman friends. Women also learn to fragment their demands. If the powerful person - usually the husband - does not want to give them what they want, they ask for something much less important and less dangerous in his eyes, thus getting first a tiny piece, then more and more.

Women build alliances among themselves, but there are also tensions. There is above all a structural tension between a woman and her mother-in-law. Since the married couple usually moves in with the husband’s family, and since the house is women’s territory, it is the wife and the husband’s mother who have to learn to get along. And that is difficult. For younger women it is above all the husband, for older women their sons, who are their main resource base, economically as well as socially. Men earn money, men represent the family in public contexts, so a woman without influence over a man is handicapped. In the conflict between a wife and her mother-in-law, then, the main object of the struggle is the husband/son. But he keeps on the margins, refusing to take part in what he sees as unimportant female squabbles. In this way he, and the rest of society with him, places responsibility squarely on the women.

In this territorial dispute, the main weapon is the tongue, says Harding. So it is yet another reason and opportunity for women to develop verbal skills.

This structurally inevitable conflict is the most serious one women experience in their lives. It is about the transfer of women’s most important property, the influence over a man, from one generation to the next. (Cf Rosander 1991 on Muslim women in Ceuta.) But there is little cultural elaboration of it, and there are no legal systems or institutions, as men have when it comes to the transfer of their property (mainly land). Harding concludes: "Not only are there no explicit or formal institutions to deal with the conflict, but there is no tangible
recognition of its importance; on the contrary, it is the subject of considerable mockery and derision. This is a general feature of other conflict situations that involve women in Oroel. The formal institutions for conflict resolution in the village are set up by the church and the state in the persons of the priest and the judge. Women generally do not resort to them with their disputes. If anything, a woman will consult the divinities or the priest for aid and advice. But even these petitions are ultimately not her own, for, in addition to being entirely controlled by men, the church, like the state, is ideologically committed to the principle of male domination." (294)

As to spatial mobility, women stay inside their houses or run errands on household matters. This means that they meet other women but in special spaces connected to work. It is not recognized as a public sphere, much less as a right to leisure. But they do have access to a world outside their own family and household. This gives them some chance to compare experiences and spread news, even though the talk on these occasions is largely confined to the issues presented by the task at hand.

Along with the practical talk, however, women enjoy telling stories. They are about personal intimate matters, but the characters are anonymous. They are the myths of women, because they instruct as they entertain, says Harding. Now, even though they deal with the major problems in women’s lives, there is a tendency for them not to resolve the problems, just raise them. This suggests that the contradictions which they treat are not resolved in reality. (Cf Juliano 1992 on how women’s stories can constitute a kind of covert and careful, yet resistance to dominant gender ideas.) Gossip is another genre of speech, not unlike the stories, but with named local characters. These stories are more abbreviated, yet more detailed. The women are participants, not just observers.

It is possible for a woman to call on a woman friend in order to tell her something "in confidence". But talk in larger gatherings is more licit and more appreciated. Now, there is a gradual loss of collective women’s spaces, and this impinges on women’s possibilities of giving and receiving information and interpreting it together. The village bakery had already replaced the collective bread baking, ready-made clothes were on their way to making sewing sessions unnecessary, even the village wash-place was less frequented as more and more women got electric washers...

Some men define all women’s talk as gossip and they dislike it. There is a basic contradiction between women and men concerning talk. Men’s work depends on individual decisions, says Harding, so for men privacy and silence mean power and self-defense. In privacy is peace and order, as they see it. Their inclination is towards isolation and self-sufficiency. (301) But there would be no village society if the families were isolated from each other. Gossip is a system for circulating both information and evaluation. And this is women’s task. They are responsible for the integration of the village play. (302) This is necessary work, objectively, and experienced as such, but simultaneously it is considered unhealthy and dangerous by both men and women. It is a sort of underground activity.

Women operate with their family interests in mind. They are not outside the value system. But, "in gossiping, women are behaving politically because they are tampering with power. Their words are the stuff that reputations are made of, and in small communities reputations are powerful because they, in part, determine one’s relations and behaviour. But power is not the cultural prerogative of women; it is men’s. Gossip is potentially a challenge to the male hierarchy, a challenge to men’s control of the hierarchy. It is the politics of the officially powerless, and thus is imbued with the connotation of malice, wickedness, sin and pollution. Gossip is dirty work in Oroel, not because it is so intrinsically but because women do it." (303)

All the village women do not have an equal voice in this play. Their influence depends on their situation in village networks, who they are related to, neighbours with, how these relations work out, etc. And on their own talent for obtaining information.
How then do men find out about what is going on in the village? In part, certainly, by talking among themselves, cf below on Driessen, but Harding says little about that. She focuses on how women’s information reaches men, and how women can influence men to make the decisions the women want. "The primary circulation of these images and interpretations is restricted to women themselves. The way they reach and exert any influence over men is on a one-to-one basis; specifically, by wives talking to their husbands. A man who is not married has no direct access to the pool of information, images and interpretations of village events that women command; likewise a woman who is not married has no direct access to male-dominated decision-making processes.” (304) There are other channels (mother-son, sister-brother, etc.) but not as effective.

Women are not powerless in village society - the question is what kind of power they have and how much. Harding criticizes the argument that has it that women "really" have as much power as or more than men, and that the appearance to the contrary is something men build up in order to compensate themselves for this uncomfortable fact. (Her references are to Friedl 1967 and Rogers 1975, but the idea has been developed later by several others, especially Sanday 1981.) "First, it seriously underestimates the power in men’s hands in the household economy and the village polity. Second, it isolates the village from the larger structural context from which men derive much of their economic, political and ideological power in the village. In this larger context, the role of women in the running of everyday life in the village is dwarfed by the role of men in running the structures that determine the conditions of everyday life. Finally, male dominance is not just a myth in European peasant societies; it is a structural fact. Women may not experience themselves as subordinate, but they are structurally in a subordinate position with respect to men.” (306-307)

Gossip is a double-edged weapon, too. Women wield it to their own advantage. But their constant search for information gives everyone a sense of being always watched. This restricts women’s behaviour and helps to keep them in their place, much more than men. "The irony is that it is the collective effect of their own behaviour that restricts them as individuals." (307)

I would say the irony is deeper yet: it is their own best advantage, their verbal skill, that is to their own major disadvantage in social life.

Variations among Spanish gender orders. 2 Change as emancipation.

Harding’s Oroel can be seen as a paradigm of village life - the details vary according to regions and types of villages, and of course very much according to the date the descriptions refer to, but the main outlines are similar. Gender is a basic principle for social organization in Spanish village life, and it separates women and men into two contrasted

1 I would add that this theory resembles the male discourse on women in Mediterranean society too closely for comfort. Cf below on Gilmore. In my own experience (over twenty years of living in Spain), it is the idea that women are subordinated, not the idea that they are powerful, that encounters fierce resistance and is experienced as dangerous criticism.

2 I follow Connell (1987) in preferring the term gender order to the more common gender system. A gender order is that aspect of social life that has to do with (is organized according to, based on, symbolized with, etc.) the fact that the members of the society belong to different (usually two) gender categories. To what extent it constitutes a system is an empirical question to be answered for each case. But as far as we know there is some sort of gender order in all human societies, i. e they all do something with gender. I will also use the verb genderize. Something is genderized when gender categorization is relevant for it. For example, a bar is very much a genderized space in Spain (male), much less so in Britain and hardly at all in Scandinavia. Other things that can be more or less genderized are for example a profession, the labour market as a whole, a colour, a type of garment, a way of moving the body or moving in space, a political or religious opinion, and so on.
categories with different responsibilities, different physical spaces and different skills, personalities and opportunities to influence the decisions that affect them. There are only two genders in this world view, they are sharply contrasted, and the dualism and the clear line of separation are experienced as necessary for sexuality to exist and thus as necessary for humanity to exist. Almost all spaces and activities are genderized, there are few neutral things. Women are mothers above all. The relationship between husband and wife is in a sense rather distant, since a man and a woman have difficulties understanding each other, being such different types of creatures, but it is culturally emphasized, and it is socially central in that it is mainly through it that information can flow from one gender world to the other.

One could even say that this is one way the centrality of the couple and the family is maintained. Social life is dependent on functioning husband-wife links.

But village life is no longer the main context for Spanish life. Most Spaniards live in big cities. So, if we want to understand gender in Spain, we must first realize that there is a major difference between urban and rural life, second that for many urban people the move to the city has been recent, so the contrast is not so much between different persons as between compartmentalized experiences, third that both in rural and urban contexts there is a sharp contrast between the working class and the rest. But whatever variables we use to describe differences, we must above all realize that the whole complex is changing. Village people move to the cities, the cities are industrialized,³ a large and powerful middle class has been formed in a matter of a couple of decades, the political system has been thoroughly changed, and the resources that count for individuals and families are consequently different.

Legislation is changing in such a way that the basic unit of social life is no longer the family but the individual. The consequences of this are still not clear to everyone, but they are slowly entering everyday experience and thus cultural interpretations are beginning to grow up around them. The fact that marriage is no longer guaranteed to be life-long, for example, is making even conservative middle class women concede that it might be a good idea to have a salary in your own name in order to ensure an old age pension. But since most of them have few marketable skills and have spent their whole life developing skills and satisfactions around personal relationships, they still place "family" and "love" first, and they cannot see (nor can anyone else) how dedication to the family and employment could be easily combined without loss of quality of life. Time schedules as well as personal dispositions clash. (Cf Thurén, forthcoming.)

The change to a different kind of gender organization entails, in fact, an invitation to both women and men to enter the social spaces of the other gender. Social life is being degenderized to some degree. There is redefinition and renegotiation going on of the degree of genderization as well as the meaning of gender in the still genderized spaces. This is a most important fact and one that has been very little analyzed or even described in anthropological literature (the main exceptions are Masur 1984, Miranda 1987, Narotzky 1988, Sundman 1994, Thurén 1987, 1988, 1991, 1993, 1994 and forthcoming, del Valle 1985, 1990).

The invitation is difficult to accept, however, even if one approves of it. Because men and women have been socialized as very different kinds of human beings, both men and women find it uncomfortable to work within the premises and on the conditions of the other gender. Men mostly refuse, and they are able to refuse and are seen to lose little by refusing. They are asked to enter domestic work, and that is devalued work. Women are asked to enter a "male" world, redefined now as "human" and always seen as conferring prestige on its inhabitants. To enter it is usually expressed as "ser persona" = to be or become a person. That means to obtain the right to take part in public life, especially to earn money of one’s own and

³ And recently de-industrialized, with the whole new set of problems that entails.
to administer it, to act in one’s own name, and to participate in collective decision-making. To be able to to "become persons", women are asked to give up powers they have monopolized in order to obtain powers men have monopolized and are still not very willing to give to women. So, it is a risky step to take. Also, for many women it implies a loss of an important part of their personal identity. It may imply a loss of chances to talk to other women, the greatest entertainment, source of influence and source of identity and security in relations with others that women have had.

In my current work with women in a political movement, the neighbourhood movement (movimiento vecinal), I move between different towns and cities. Women’s circumstances and outlooks vary greatly. But they can all be placed - and see themselves to be placed - on a continuum of "emancipation." For example, in the small but industrial town of Elda (Alicante), where women have traditionally worked in the shoe industry and are used to having an income of their own, a common comment is: "When we meet women from the movement in other towns, we are always surprised at the problems they want to talk about: about how to convince their husbands to let them participate in the association, about jealous husbands, about how to fool the husbands, about how the men inside the movement do not want women on the boards, and so on. Here in Elda, we have left such problems far behind! Here we are all persons!" This is certainly an exaggeration, but the fact that it is an oft-repeated phrase is significant in itself, especially when compared to what is said in other places.

For example in Linares (Jaén), also an industrial town of southern Spain and of similar size, but where the industries have mostly employed men, the problems the women in the movement wanted to talk about were indeed precisely the ones the Elda women had "overcome" already. For the Linares women, they were real. Their husbands really did not want them to participate in association life and at least some men inside the movement tried to keep them out.

But where the Elda women wanted to "be persons" and use straightforward techniques of influence, the Linares women used "left hand". They explained to me how they convinced their husbands little by little. First they might say they would only leave the house in order to have a cup of coffee with a woman friend. "That has been acceptable for years now," they said, but most of them, even young ones, had taken that step in their own life time, it was not something their mothers had done. Then they might conquer the right to go out with a whole group of women to have coffee in a cafeteria. "That was something we obtained three or four years ago," I was told. And since many men found that their wives were happier and "had more interesting things to talk about," they could then be persuaded to let them participate in special women’s organisations. In 1994 some women, in some associations, were moving onto the boards, working together with the men. It was still a controversial and difficult step, but it was just becoming possible.

The two worlds. Is private to public as women are to men?

Women must move into male public spaces, because they are losing their own, women-only spaces. As Harding described it for Oroel, it was happening already twenty years ago inside the villages. The process has now gone much further. And for the many Spanish women who have had to leave their villages to go to live in cities, the loss has been abrupt and painful.

One hardly sits on the sidewalk in front of one’s house sewing in the afternoon, waiting for female friends to come by and drag out another chair to sit down, if one lives in a ten-story apartment building on an asphalted street where cars are parked all along the curb and strangers are walking in out all the time. But it is not easy to invent replacement fora of sociability quickly. So there is loneliness, confusion, loss of self-esteem. An apartment is a
kind of dwelling that is much less visible than a village house - one cannot look in through the
windows from the street, the doors are kept closed and even locked, and it is not possible for
people in the street to know at a glance who is at home and who is not. There are no wash-
places at all in the city, so if some woman does not have a washer of her own, she must wash
by hand in the loneliness of her own kitchen or bathroom. There are no collective ovens at all,
nor any excuse to gather around the public fountain. The loss of collective women’s spaces
impinges on women’s possibilities of giving and receiving information and interpreting it
together. But women have found some substitutes - they meet and talk in the food stores and
around the schools where they take and fetch their children. (Cf Thurén 1988a.)

What is still much the same is that women have to find excuses for leaving the home
and for meeting each other. Men continue to gather in the bar, that is their right. Women need
excuses, so they find them. But some women also contest this asymmetry. Some women - in
some parts of Spain a majority - go together in groups to cafeterias or meet for coffee in each
other’s homes, with no other excuse than that of wanting to get together. Young unmarried
urban women use public space very much in the same way as men of their age.

Because men’s and women’s spaces have been so well differentiated, and because the
common expression for this has been that "women are of the house, men are of the street", it
has been all too easy to interpret it as a division of social life into two spheres, one private,
one public. This has been a general theme in Western feminist writing, and it has been rightly
criticized for being closer to ideology than to real life. In the Mediterranean area, however, it
has been seen as much more of an incontestable social fact. Women do stay more inside their
houses than northern European women do, and much more than the men of their own kind. In
some parts they are even literally enclosed within the walls of their home. Even where they
have always had some freedom of movement, as in Spain, their presence in "the street" has
always been somewhat suspicious and in need of a good excuse. And in Spain "the street"
means all space beyond the door of the family dwelling: the stair case, the park, the tennis
club or the neighbourhood association are as much "the street" as the bar or the factory.

On the basis of this empirical fact, much theory can be built. It is indeed a
fundamental fact of all Spanish gender orders and must be taken into account even today,
even in the analysis of urban contexts. (Cf Thurén 1988a.) But much anthropology of gender
in Spain has been about teasing out the subtleties of this division, showing that it is far from
clearcut even as a fact, and that the consequences are therefore also manifold.

For example, Sánchez Pérez (1990) analyzes the cultural construction and use of space
in a small traditional Andalusian village, just the kind of place where "change" is minimal.
And indeed he finds that the contrast between inside and outside is of central importance for
all sorts of activities in the village. The line of demarcation is usually clear in each instance.
However, the place where the line is drawn moves around.

For example, the house is associated with women and privacy. When the husband
leaves in the morning, the house is converted into the wife’s working place. But this is when
women visitors may come. When the husband comes home, there is a meal and rest and very
seldom any visits. So it looks as if it is the presence of a man which gives intimacy to the
dwelling, in spite of the association house-woman-privacy.

Women spend about twenty-two hours a day in the house, men about ten. Discounting
eight hours of sleep, it turns out that men are in the house about the same amount of time as
women are outside, some two hours a day. This would indeed seem to prove that women are
of the house and men of the street, empirically. And when husband and wife are in the house,
they may not be together. If he comes into the living room she may go into the kitchen, and
when she comes back, he may go out into the yard. This is especially so if there are visitors.
When women visit each other, they may walk straight into the kitchen, but a man who
approaches a house will call from the street, and the woman will then hurry out to the door
and try to settle whatever is the issue there, on the threshold. If for some reason a man has to
go inside a house when the husband is absent, the wife will leave the door wide open, to show that nothing is going on that cannot be allowed to be seen.

We can see that the picture is complex. There is indeed a line of demarcation that is carefully upheld, but it moves, according to the time of the day, the purpose of the activity, the number of people present or within sight or earshot, and so on. What is feminine or masculine depends on who is where in each moment. And the husband must always be further out than all the other members of the family. When he goes out to work in the fields, his wife can leave the house to go shopping or talk with other women. When he comes into the village, she will stay near the house, perhaps in the yard. If he is in the yard, she will be indoors. And when he retires to bed, so must she and the children.

The author tells about one man who got very angry with his daughter who stood for hours talking to her boyfriend at the doorstep. This is normal behaviour and the family had accepted the boyfriend. But the father was tired and wanted to go to bed, and he could not do that as long as the daughter stood in the doorway. It was not so much a question of controlling what the couple did - there were plenty of other eyes watching - as of maintaining the symbolic edifice of masculinity as that which surrounds the private. The private, the daughter, could not be allowed to be further "out" than the public, her father.

Sánchez Pérez also describes the greater rigidity of spatial-sexual organization in the outlying areas around the village as compared to the village itself. Where many people are, in the village centre, the borders can move according to time, tasks and relationships. Where few people are, the borders have to be more strictly maintained.

A corollary of this might be that in a city there can be even more flexibility. This is not quite true. Press (1979) says that in Seville, men tried to control women much more rigidly than they had in their village before migrating, because they could no longer trust gossip to do it for them. On the other hand, my own work and that of others indicate that city mores are indeed flexible, but that this is probably due to the fact that in the big cities of Spain today live people from different villages and different regions. There can be no agreement on what the street means, so the street becomes denuded of meaning, culturally neutral, or a space to be negotiated little by little. This makes both men and women prefer the private dwelling, in a way, because there they can maintain their own meanings. On the other hand, they both love the street because there is so much going on there. Again, contradictory tendencies. I think there are more contradictions and negotiations than Sánchez Pérez recognizes in a small village, too, but there must certainly be much more in a big city. Complexification undermines the possibilities of richly overlaid meaning structures.

In my own work in the cities of Valencia and Madrid, I have often run into women who complain that their husbands get angry when they come home and find that the wife is not there. This seems to be a minor but common irritation in marriages both in the working class and the middle class. Most women, even the not-very-feminist ones (according to self-description) find this absurd. They say that such behaviour is old-fashioned, that their husband wants to control them and that they will not accept that, they were not doing anything bad, they were only out shopping clothes for the children, and so on. The husbands usually deny any intention to control the wives and are at a loss to explain their reactions. Some deny them, others just say that everyone suffers from inner contradictions these days. Sánchez Pérez’s analysis might give an explanation. We might postulate that a feeling for space as organized around a movable but very important borderline between something inner and feminine and something outer and masculine is a deep-seated disposition (in Bourdieu’s

4 In this type of village, an unmarried couple must be careful with genderized space. If she spends time with him in the street, she is on his turf, which might be risky. As soon as he steps inside her home, he has “entered”, which is the usual word for becoming engaged, and the relationship cannot be broken easily. The logical and common solution is for the couple to get to know each other first standing at the very borderline, the doorstep.
sense). It is based on village life of the type Sánchez Pérez and Harding describe. It does not work well in the city. Women, who have always moved around much more than the ideal description allows for, find new opportunities and new responsibilities that require new patterns of movement, and they have little trouble in redefining their movements more in terms of types of activity than actual physical space. For men, whose prestige is more shaky and more dependent on women’s behaviour than vice versa, the redefinition is harder to accept even when they recognize its "rationality".


Meanwhile at the bar. Or: men, too are gendered.

The anthropology of gender grew out of the anthropology of women (cf Moore 1988, Mukhopadhyay and Higgins 1988, Quinn 1977, Thurén 1993), so it is only logical that its focus is usually on women. Most of its practitioners are women, too, and they usually have more access to women than to men in the field. But the stated aim of the anthropology of gender is to analyze the relationships between women and men (and whatever other gender categories might be found). So men, men’s activities, cultural constructions of manhood and masculinity etc. must also be placed under the critical gaze.

Spain is one of the places where this has actually been done. As a matter of fact, there are more studies on masculinity than on femininity in the anthropology on Spain. One might speculate about the reasons, but let us look instead at the results.

Brandes (1980, 1981) describes a masculinity racked by fear: fear of women’s insatiable sexuality and therefore of wives’ infidelity and the terrible social consequences, fear of women’s dark powers of manipulation, fear that the wife wants to get rid of the husband and live the good life of a widow, fear of not being able to live up to prerequisites of masculine strength, pride and responsibility, etc. It is easy to see that these themes are related to the general Mediterranean honour-shame-complex. One could even say that it is the normal fear the oppressors always have that the oppressed want to and perhaps can take revenge. Brandes does not delve into this, he mostly describes the expressions of the fears, but he does point out that they are not very realistic. The main one, that of a wife’s "putting horns" on her husband, for example, is hardly a probable event, seeing the long workdays of the village, their limited movement in space and the strong social control.

The themes have been taken up by other authors. Driessen (1991) offers good ethnography from the central forum of men’s life, the bar. His material is also from an Andalusian village, but I dare say it is valid, with minor variations, for all of Spain, including working class districts of the big cities.

Mostly men go to the bars and only men use them as a central forum for sociability and the place to learn, develop and display their gender identity. Masculinity is a central theme in everything that happens in the bars, Driessen shows: the drinking, the card playing, the negotiations around who pays for what and how, the handling of rhythms and sounds... One can only become a respected adult man if one participates in the sociability of bar life (Gilmore also treats this theme, 1990a, chapter 2), and when one does, one is judged according to criteria having to do with being a "real man".

The first duty of a real man is to be heterosexual. He must also show this clearly by talking about his desire for women and his contempt for women’s interests, telling anecdotes of sexual encounters and calling the women in them whores. He must demonstrate that he is ready to use violence if needed to defend his reputation and status among his peers - but
actual violence breaks out very seldom. Restraint and cool calculation of what a situation allows for is as manly as the readiness to threaten violence, and most manly of all is to know when to use which.  

Like Harding, Driessen argues against the interpretation of machismo as a "myth" of male dominance. It is more than a myth, it is reality, even if women may have another view of things and even if part of the need for such masculinist bragging and segregation may stem from the fact that women do have much power inside the family, and in the case of working class men, women may also have as much or more earning power as they themselves, and this needs cultural compensation. "The marginality of the workers in public and in private life helps to explain why they get involved in a more intense form of bar sociability than men of middle or high class with more stable positions of power and influence. The rituals of masculinity in the cafés hide the reality of the worker´s dependence on the women of his family and his weak economic and social position in local society. In spite of all of this, I would not say that male domination in Andalusia is a "myth". The rituals of masculinity recreate masculine identity. They have force and they are effective in the sense that they contribute to keep women in a subordinate position. They truly work." (717 - my translation)  

The same themes, based on similar ethnography of men´s sociability at the bar in Andalusian villages, are taken up by Gilmore (1990b), and he too addresses the issue of gendered power. But unlike Brandes and Driessen, he takes the men´s discourse as a direct reflection of the actual distribution of resources. The result is that he subscribes to the theory Driessen, Harding and others have criticized. Gilmore believes that women have more power than men, because women dominate the domestic sphere.  

The main example he gives is that of a conflict between a young man and his fiancée over the wedding date. The men at the bar eagerly expect the young man, who is seen as very manly, to win the conflict, but he loses it and his friends are disappointed, but after some discussion they agree that this could be expected because women usually win when domestic issues are concerned, and this was defined as such.  

Gilmore interprets this as proof that women have more power than men over domestic concerns, and that the men know it and acknowledge it, and furthermore that the men have nothing that compensates for this in any other sphere so that the sum total comes out in favour of women. It is certainly true that poor rural Andalusian men have little power in society as a whole, but on the village level they do have resources that more than match the women´s. Gilmore mentions women´s alliances, but forgets that men have alliances, too and that he himself is describing the main male resource, that very powerful village forum, the bar, to which women have much less access than men do to their homes and where collective interpretations are arrived at and collective decisions sometimes taken that affect all villagers, men and women.  

I would make a different interpretation of Gilmore´s example. In this complementary gender order, the domestic sphere is indeed women´s territory, the public sphere is men´s. But as we saw, the border between them moves contextually. And in Gilmore´s example, it seems as if the men at the bar were hoping that in this case the wedding date would be defined not as a domestic, female concern but as a public, male one. This might well have happened in other cases in the village, Gilmore says nothing about that. What we have then is a case of a contested definition of an issue. If the men really considered it domestic, their comments show that they wanted to encroach on that female area. They lost, and they then had to rationalize the loss in order not to lose collective face, of course. If they had considered the issue unequivocally domestic to start with, why did they hope the young man would win?  

I think we have a trade-off here: the men contemplate contesting a piece of women´s territory, and had they decided to back the young man collectively they could have. (Gilmore forgets the whole issue of what each party loses if the wedding does not come off. Since a woman stands to lose much more than a man, consistent pressure from a man, especially if
backed by general male village opinion, would make her give in.) But in the end they decided that the gain was not worth the risks. What must really be upheld was the division of responsibilities according to gender, backed by stereotypically negative portraits of powerful women, such as mothers-in-law. The location of the boundary can be contested, but if one does not manage to conquer new territory, at least one wants to make sure that the boundary as such remains meaningful.

It is certainly true, as Gilmore says, that many men turn over their entire wages to the wife for her to administer and that in return they only get a small allowance for their expenses at the bar. In this trade-off the men gain the advantage of not having to worry about how to make scarce money stretch to cover all the family needs, and they can still have their bar life. Women, on the other hand, as Gilmore forgets to tell us, have that responsibility, and are liable to punishment from the husband if they do not administer the money well. And even when a woman does, she can seldom set aside anything to use as she sees fit. Men who earn money that goes a bit further than mere survival (even if we are still talking about the working class), tend to reverse the procedure, giving their wife a "wage" to administer for household needs, keeping the rest for their own allowances and larger expenditures, such as a car, and the wives often do not know how large that rest is. (Thurén 1988a.)

The view from the city in the 1990's

I began this summary with a view from a small village in northern Spain twenty years ago. Most of the other examples have been from small villages in southern Spain. Change has been hinted at as a major factor, but it has not often been the central focus of anthropological work in Spain. Nor has such work very often been done in the cities, where most of the population now lives. Those were the reasons that made me concentrate on urban gender orders.

My latest book, not yet published, is based on field work in middle class Madrid, 1990-1992. The project was conceived as a complement to the earlier project in an urban working class district (Thurén 1987, 1988, 1991). Except for the rural-urban dimension, the most important factor that differentiates experiences for Spaniards is class. And the urban middle class gender order has been even less studied than the working class one. My analysis starts out from the dramatic changes in Spanish society that have also meant dramatic changes in the gender order, and the common interpretation of this as improvement. But the middle class was more polarized on the matter than the working class, and in 1990 a pessimism had set in that was barely present ten years earlier.

One part of the book describes the gender order of a social club - the approximate middle class equivalent of barrio social life - and comes as close to traditional ethnography as possible in a big city and with informants with more money and power than the anthropologist. But that club was very conservative. It was necessary to contrast it with other types of situations, since the major feature of middle class Madrid is ideological variation.

Talk is a major factor in everyday life for Madrilenians (and for all Spaniards): it is entertainment, it is the stuff of which social relations are made, and in the situation of disturbing cultural change it is mainly in talk that one negotiates interpretations of what is happening. So I describe talk, the contents of various types of discourse, in order to find out what major ideas about gender are seen to need renegotiating. Access to the socially most decisive arenas for talk is also described and analyzed for its repercussions on the power balance.

The complexification of society is shown to make older versions of the gender order unworkable. But no aspect of social life can be invented from scratch. The middle class is polarized around gender ideas, because more than other classes in Spain today it has a vested interest in Enlightenment ideas like "justice" and "human rights". They have helped legitimate
their rise to powerful positions (conquering what used to be the privileges of people born to them), and they also undermine segregation by gender. Yet the middle class also has an interest - at least as many see it - in maintaining social hierarchies.

And women are more polarized than men on the gender issues. Some are conservative, some are hesitant, some are ready to go all the way, opposing anything that sorts men and women into different compartments. Men do not cover the whole range of opinions. Even men who like to see themselves as "progressive" and use an Enlightenment type of discourse on most issues, hedge around gender and prefer to see the "traditional" division of labour that gives women the whole responsibility for housework and children as "natural". One must not tamper with nature, so women had better continue to take responsibility for child care, and with that all other domestic duties, no matter what new social spaces they may also want to conquer, and have a right to conquer, these men say. If not, everyone will be unhappy.

For most "progressive" women, excepting only the most radical ones, this discourse constitutes a dilemma. They, too, would like to retain an idea of femininity as something nature has given to them and which gives them certain social advantages, but they experience mostly the disadvantages. So they criticize "traditional sex roles" mercilessly, aggressively, sometimes bitterly. Yet, just like the working class women in Valencia (Thurén 1988a) and the traditional-minded women of middle class Madrid, they know how to use manipulative skills and they know that such skills are essential in order to defend themselves, even their most basic "human rights", in a gender order that is "still" they usually say, thus unwittingly revealing some residual optimism - set up in such a way that men get crucial advantages.

The aspects of the gender order that are seen by almost all to need renegotiation are those of work and sexuality, and most of the discussions centre on these. But an analysis of the arguments used, of the references to things felt to be effective as arguments, shows that what is negotiated at a deeper level is a new idea of femininity.

Masculinity is not, however, on the cultural agenda to any great extent. This is a new type of contradiction that will surely become central soon if the renegotiation of femininity continues. And a renegotiation of masculinity will be necessary if new ideas on femininity are to have any chance of becoming translated into practice. One half of a complementary system cannot change if the other half does not. And I do believe that what keeps Spanish women so hesitant in face of the many changes in their view of themselves and their duties and possibilities is precisely this. They want what they see as beautiful new promises, but they are afraid of abandoning old privileges and old defenses.

As one informant in Valencia put it to me in 1983: "I want to change, oh yes I do. I see so many good things coming. Young women now are much happier than we used to be, much freer. But my husband is not changing. He is the old model. And what will happen to me if I change and other people around me do not? I want to change, but I can’t."

Naturally she had changed already, or she would not say such things, and she can hardly avoid changing more, since persons and circumstances around her do change. But she expressed the dilemma succinctly. Changes come in uneven rhythms, and that may spell disaster for a person who reaches out too soon for things too new. The awareness of this sits deep among subordinated social categories of all kinds, in all societies.

The issues of gender in the anthropology of Spain.

This discussion about women’s words, about social change, about private and public spheres and about the distribution of power and work is meant only to give an approximate idea of what the anthropology of gender in Spain has so far been mostly about. Entwined in these major themes we have found other recurring ones, such as honour and shame, the importance of motherhood, the cultural emphasis on sexuality and the tensions between the
two basic principles of the Mediterranean type of gender order: complementarity and hierarchy.

All of these issues are in fact common in the anthropology of gender all around the Mediterranean. What is most specific about Spain is probably the intense economic, political, social and therefore also cultural change of recent decades. My own work has concentrated on that, and many of the other works cited in the commented bibliography also search for ways of handling the complexities of continuity, rupture and innovation.

Most texts on Spain start with some sort of reference to recent changes. Whatever the topic, renegotiation of old certainties is the order of the day. The whole situation is fluid. But it is especially true for gender. Since gender is a central principle of social organization, it enters most fields of activity.

Both men and women are experiencing new risks and new opportunities. The power balance between the genders is clearly shifting, but it is not clear who is losing or gaining most. What is clear is just that both gender categories are losing some old privileges and gaining some new ones. In such a situation, power becomes a central concern but also that which is most difficult to talk about (Thurén, forthcoming).

The commented bibliography is not meant to be exhaustive. It contains works by foreign and Spanish anthropologists, works that either focus explicitly on gender or else are clearly relevant for central gender issues. My comments are short and meant more as a guide to further reading than as summaries or evaluations.

I have marked the main themes of each work in capital letters, in the following way:

HONOUR (honour and shame)
CHANGE
WORK
PRIVATE-PUBLIC (including gender segregation in other ways and also its methodological implications for anthropologists)
POWER (power, authority, etc.)
LANGUAGE (language and verbal behaviour, also metaphors)
SEXUALITY
COMPL. (complementarity versus hierarchy)
IDENTITY (individual construction of own gender, psychological repercussions)
THEORY (texts that concentrate on theoretical aspects, esp. the concept of gender. I have only included Spanish texts of this kind, since the ones in English are innumerable and better known internationally)
MEN (masculinity, manhood, male activities and spaces)

************************************************************

REFERENCES in the article, not included in commented list:

PART II

PRESENTATION OF THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF GENDER IN SPAIN
by Britt-Marie Thurén, PhD.
Dept. of Social Anthropology
Stockholm University, Sweden

This presentation consists of two parts: "Movable Thresholds" (main text) and "Commented list of readings."

COMMENTED LIST OF READINGS


CHANGE; SEXUALITY; IDENTITY

Prostitution is seen as one aspect of general social change and of change in the gender order. In the city of Bilbao, the older type of prostitute, who was marginalized and who saw her life very much in terms of her prostitution still exists but is being replaced by newer types for whom prostitution is more of a profession, and who keep it separate from the rest of their lives and do not build their identity and social existence around it. The main reason to become a prostitute is now economic, and no longer being already stigmatized persons (Gypsies, unwed mothers). Since the phenomenon of prostitution has to do with varying definitions of women and their sexuality, it cannot be abolished through legislative reform but only through radical change in the very basis of the definition of woman, the authors conclude.

Two volumes from the IV Congress of Spanish Anthropology, held in Alicante in 1987. The 1988 volume contains a selection of the papers presented at the symposium called "women and change"; the 1990 volume contains a selection of papers from the symposium on family structures.


PRIVATE-PUBLIC; CHANGE

A short case study of one of the most markedly feminine spaces in traditional Spanish culture, both urban and rural: the sewing shop. It was a way for young women to get out and meet women from other families, to learn what was seen as essential women’s skills and to be socialized as women. This has changed, it is no longer a central feminine space. To take a sewing course today is seen in a much more instrumental way, as a way of having a chance to be employed in textile industry.


LANGUAGE; SEXUALITY; COMPL.; IDENTITY

See main text and next reference to Brandes.


SEXUALITY; COMPL.

Analysis of expressions of masculinity, especially the central place of genitalia in the discourse of the men and their express fear of what they take to be women’s characteristics: strength, hostility to men, unlimited sexual appetite.


POWER

What is the good life, emically defined? And: to what extent can women obtain it? For Andalusian village women, marriage is the best solution, both in practice and ideology. Unmarried women and widows do not fit the image, so they cannot obtain the good life. But neither can married women. They are under strong control - so they escape in fantasy. Brandes makes an attempt to transcend relativism, showing that even women who subscribe to the reigning ideas on women’s place and what ought to be their goals, are not satisfied.


HONOUR

We should stop talking about honor and shame, says Brandes, since there is not much left of it, it is not relevant any longer. He does not recognize that the dispositions live on in new guises (cf Thurén 1988a).


PRIVATE-PUBLIC
Methodological article about access to the spaces of the opposite gender. Some women anthropologists say they have access to men’s worlds in the field. Brandes did not have access to women’s worlds in his field. He was warned, too, that it would be wrong to try. He now thinks that perhaps he should have tried harder, but that he was socialized and became more Andalusian than the Andalusians, so that he did not see or did not dare to explore certain openings.


LANGUAGE
Possibly the first book on the anthropology of women by a Spanish anthropologist. But not the general treatment of it that the title seems to promise. The purpose is to explore women’s cognitive and linguistic behaviour. Buxó sees variations in speaking as systematically related to cultural patterns, social structure and cultural ideology, and therefore women’s social status is revealed in linguistic discrimination. This has been a common topic in Spanish feminism, generally. The special feminine ways of talking, that have been described in many societies, feminolects, are interpreted by Buxó as a solution to the specific problems women encounter because of contradictions in the gender order. Her conclusions have universal ambitions. There is an initial biological propensity for women to talk more and better than men, and this is later combined with a sex-specific socialization which develops this propensity further.


THEORY
Based on a course given at the women’s studies seminar in San Sebastián, which like its equivalents all over Spain is interdisciplinary, but in this case several of the leading figures are anthropologists. Articles about women artists and women in the Basque nationalist movement, but mostly reviews of different areas of feminist theory. In an epilogue Méndez relates what happened at the last day of the course. The main topic for discussions throughout the course was that of the meaning of the concept of "gender" and the idea that "sex" is also a cultural construct. The teachers of the course tried to relativize "sex" and "sexuality" along with gender. The participants felt this almost unanimously as a step backwards. They wanted to differentiate between sex as something biological and gender as something constructed. (Cf Méndez 1991)


PRIVATE-PUBLIC
This interesting article centres on women’s use and definitions of the space inside the "corrales", the communal housing units where the poorest of the poor live in Seville. It is a kind of intermediate between private and public. The door between the patio (central courtyard) and the street marks the limit between the exterior space of men and strangers and the interior space of neighbours who all know each other, women’s space. But this is still a public space, in that it is common for many families. Each family has its own one-room dwelling. Yet the patio is part of the dwelling; much of everyday life (cooking, washing, personal hygiene, sociability, etc.) takes places there, not inside the family room. In front of each door there is a mediating space, which is public because it is part of the patio but private because the family occupies it with their persons and their things and it is not quite licit for
other neighbours to be there. A short but suggestive study of the many mediations possible between private and public.


HONOUR
This is the book which got the great debate on honor and shame started, in the early days of Mediterranean anthropology. Caro’s article reviews the concepts of honor and shame in Spain from medieval times. The aim is conceptual and historical clarification rather than ethnographical analysis.


MEN; PRIVATE-PUBLIC
Cf main text.


SEXUALITY
The authors are not anthropologists, but they use qualitative methods, and the book is one of the best existing analyses of middle class urban Spanish ideas about love, marriage and sexuality during the 1960’s and 1970’s.


CHANGE; PRIVATE-PUBLIC
This book is not mainly about gender. It is about egalitarianism and sociability and the organization of agricultural work in a small village organized as a corporation since medieval times. But the author cannot avoid saying something about the division of tasks according to gender. It has always been quite rigid, she says, sex being the foremost factor along with age to organize tasks, but it is more so today (=late 1960’s), when the material conditions have improved. It means that women can concentrate on work inside the house, which they have always done but had to combine with other tasks. (Cf Méndez 1988, Narotzky 1988, and Thurén 1988a for later corroborations of the same trend.)

FRIGOLE REIXACH, Joan: Aproximación a un sistema conceptual tradicional de la mujer y de la reproducción en el área mediterránea. (Published where?)

THEORY; LANGUAGE
Many examples of conceptual metaphors around women and femininity. Most of them are from Spain, but the ambition is to cover the whole Mediterranean area as to conclusions. One example: there is a common cultural association of menstruation with warmth and dryness. It follows that menstruating women should not eat food that is defined as humid or cold. (This is still so in Spain, for many women, even if many also laugh at such ideas and call them "old taboos"; cf Thurén 1994.)


HONOUR; SEXUALITY
A careful overview of this custom in southern Spain. F. does not agree with Pitt-Rivers' analysis mostly based on honor. Instead he analyzes it as a phenomenon related to class structure, Church policy and cultural practices. Given certain circumstances related to the difference or similarity of class background of the couple, the relative and absolute material recourses at the disposal of the families, and the phases of the courtship, to "steal the bride" may be a very responsible act and therefore, in the eyes of the actors of both sexes and both families, it may not diminish the woman's honor at all.


PRIVATE-PUBLIC

One of the books published from the annual interdisciplinary congress on women's studies in Madrid that started in 1981. The editor is a geographer and writes a geographical-minded introduction. The other twenty-four papers are sorted in four sections: "language, space and sexual segregation", "the use of urban interior and exterior spaces", "collective equipment and everyday life" and "women's spatial mobility, migrations and travels". Two of the papers are by anthropologists and a few more have anthropological references and/or methods. The quality is uneven. Most of the articles are relevant in one way or another for the anthropology of gender, however, since they make an effort to describe social and cultural links between space and gender.


MEN; POWER; HONOUR; PRIVATE-PUBLIC

This book is not mainly about Spain, but since the author has done fieldwork in Spain, he uses Spanish examples, esp. in chapter 2. The theoretical discussion is quite ahistorical and its universalistic ambitions makes it fall into some of the same traps that the anthropology of women fell into in the early 1970's and that have since been overcome. Gilmore has apparently not done his reading homework. The examples from Spain illustrate the importance for Andalusian men of "sallying forth into the fray", not staying too much at home, not avoiding confrontation and competition.


POWER; PRIVATE-PUBLIC

Cf main text. Gilmore sets out to analyze the power balance between men and women in an Andalusian village, but using as his empirical material exclusively what the men say among themselves at the bar, he ends up describing something else, namely men's collective ambivalence towards women and towards the issue of power in general. (Parenthetically, the bad translation of some quoted verses does little to improve the impression.)


MEN; SEXUALITY

An analysis of drag shows and the cultural interpretation of homosexuality in general and especially transvestism in Seville. The part of this short article that is most interesting for gender analysis is Haller's discussion of what is communicated about sexuality in one kind of drag show where the audience is heterosexual. The drag artist, "is the mouthpiece of a hidden dimension in Andalusian culture: she expresses sexuality in front of both men and women. Her discourse on masculinity and femininity is complementary to the traditional Andalusian
values of male superiority and female subordination. Having a clearly non-male identity, she expresses desires and fears of sexual identity by making men into sexual objects. She communicates on the one hand tabooed desires of the female audience to males, and on the other hand male sexual fantasies about female sexuality to the women." Haller also describes how stereotypes about non-males (women and homosexuals) abound in the drag shows, and how they are directed mainly to a male heterosexual audience, reinforcing their belief in their own right to enjoy themselves and fulfil their sexual desires. Penetration is seen as a male prerogative and as the only dignified sexual activity. Those who are penetrated are inferior, whether homosexuals or women.


Ethnography from an urban prostitution quarter about how prostitutes and clients talk about each other, about sexuality and about themselves. The clients considered it masculine to have a voracious sexuality that spouses cannot always satisfy. There was a hegemonic discourse on natural male sex drive that all shared. But the prostitutes had a more negative view of it and tried to work out to what extent the category "clients" coincides with that of "men", and if they should hate them all or not. Clients avoided the issue of responsibility and tended to blame women: wives were blamed for lack of sex inside marriage, prostitutes were blamed for prostitution. (The prostitution quarter was of the "marginalized", "traditional" kind; cf Andrieu-Sanz and Vázquez-Antón 1989.)

IZQUIERDO, María Jesús: Las, los, les (lis, lus). El sistema sexo/género y la mujer como sujeto de transformación social. LaSal, Barcelona, 1983.

THEORY: LANGUAGE

The author is a sociologist, but uses qualitative methods. I include this work also because it is one of the earliest Spanish efforts to theorize the concept of gender and its implications. The author differentiates between biological sex, social gender and psychological identity and invents a set of new words and a piece of new grammar to fit. Slightly tongue in cheek. It is not necessary to be either a man or a woman, there are other possibilities, she says. The gender option is not the same as the sexual option, either. It is necessary to deconstruct and relativize in order to struggle against patriarchy - which is not just for women to do, but for everyone who is against "genderism", which is defined as the dictatorship of cultural categories that limit people´s possibilities to develop their unique personalities.


LANGUAGE; POWER

Juliano´s interest centres on what could be called folklore: folk tales, religious myth, embroidery, etc. But her interest is not just descriptive; she sees this focus as a feminist method. Her point of departure is that women are and have been for centuries a dominated social category. Dominated sectors of any society always try to defend themselves within the limits imposed, she points out, but one must remember that those limits exist, so one cannot
expect the oppositional discourse to be evident. In the Mediterranean area, the separation of the private sphere from the public is a major method through which men keep women disarmed. The principal obstacles placed in their path are: devaluation of messages originating from women, not assigning any legitimate times or spaces for women’s exchange of information among themselves, confiscation of leadership in women-dominated public spaces such as the Church, insistent messages that contradict women’s own messages and show them only as happy and passive mothers and wives. But women defend themselves, creating communicative networks, inventing less negative self-images, recovering spaces, attempting to build alliances with other critical sectors and struggling for legal reforms. Not all strategies are possible at all times. Juliano’s own empirical work centres on folk tales which seldom express open rebellion but often picture women in non-feminine situations or with non-feminine features as winners.

POWER; THEORY; COMPL.
The author makes a useful distinction between feminist and female consciousness. Feminist consciousness strives to change the premises of the gender order, while female consciousness stays within it. But it can still be revolutionary, for it permits women to defend the rights accorded to them, specifically the rights/duties to ensure the well-being of their children. If that right/duty is threatened they can struggle fiercely, as examples from Barcelona show.

HONOUR; WORK
Another article that tries to prove that the honour-and-shame concept is not relevant, and perhaps has never been. Yet Lever almost manages to prove the opposite. Her examples from a Castilian village are meant to show that the ideas adapt to economic circumstances and historical conjunctures - but that could be interpreted as proof that the concept, readapted, is still there.

THEORY
Another example of interdisciplinary feminist Spanish work. Only one anthropologist participates, María Jesús Buxó, but several of the others ask similar questions. According to the editor, the main issues in the course on which the book is based were: criticism of androcentric epistemology, exploration of the diversity of social stratifications, the need for theoretical eclecticism, space, work, family, female culture and above all the theme of power. The concept of gender was debated and found more promising than a focus on women only.

THEORY
Another one of the volumes from the interdisciplinary women’s studies encounters in Madrid. This year there was a special section on anthropology. As usual, the emphasis is on Spain and on theory. The theoretical interest centres on the concept of gender: definitions, discussions in foreign literature, the relationship with age.

CHANGE; IDENTITY

One of the few texts about young urban Spaniards. Based on group discussions, mostly, exploring their attitudes. In a context of strong distancing from the adult world, not through confrontation but through pragmatism and dislike, plus general attitudes of ambivalence and criticism, it is noteworthy that the theme of relationships between women and men arouses strong feeling among the young people. It is also the one topic that differentiates women’s and men’s discourse. They do not believe in innate gender characteristics and they are convinced that they will not repeat the relationships of hierarchy, domination and sacrifice that they see in their parents. But the young women think the young men still take advantage of the privileges that are offered to them as males, while the young men think that they have a right to certain privileges because the most arduous lives are reserved for them and that the young women are the first to wish for this to be so. Further, the young women see that their mothers are frustrated as women, while the young men tend to see their mothers only as mothers and think that they find satisfaction in serving their children. There is obviously gender conflict ahead.


WORK; CHANGE; COMPL.

An analysis of the division of tasks and the gender-specific definitions of what constitutes work. For men it is something organized, limited in time, recognized and usually paid. For women it is something flexible. They try to be everywhere and do whatever is needed. When moving from a village to a town or city, or when the economy of the village changes, both men’s and women’s tasks change, but the basic definition of the structure of their work remains gender-specific. Women still have to be flexible, but what that flexibility entails is now something else. Their main responsibility continues to be to the household, and their work is always seen as complementary to the husband’s main responsibility of providing. A woman is always responsible for household tasks, whatever else she may also be doing. "Before the 1960s, women’s work meant strenuous physical labor in agriculture or the house, and unskilled wage labor as domestics or harvesters. What women did was not restricted to household tasks, despite ideas about the sexual division of labor. () Now wage labor has become a high priority among the tasks available to Las Cuevas women. () As educational opportunities arose and jobs in service or industry became available, ideals could be partially or wholly attained in the realm of wage labor, not just in unpaid work for the family or in conspicuous consumption of leisure." (37) Security used to lie in being able to make do with what you had. Now it lies in a wage. So women want wage work even at the price of a double load. They strive to give their daughters and sons education so that they will be better able to obtain wage jobs and preferably less strenuous ones. Both education and wage jobs are more available in towns and cities, so people migrate. All of these changes are superficial, according to Masur. The basic evaluation of what constitutes work, what is good about it, and what are men’s and women’s duties, remain the same.


CHANGE; COMPL.; POWER

This study of women in a Galician province takes up two classical topics: women’s indirect power and matriarchy. Méndez rejects the popular idea that there is or has been a matriarchy in Galicia (cf del Valle on the Basque country, where a similar myth thrives). Women in Galicia have worked hard and have had a say in family matters to the extent that
their men have been absent (fishermen or emigrated). There are some ideas on sexuality and inheritance that are very different from those of the rest of Spain (although they vary within Galicia too). This hardly constitutes matriarchy. During the forty years of the title, everyday life for women in this rural area has changed. The major factor of change is mechanization. What it means for women is that they no longer have to do much work in the fields. But it does not mean any change in the female basic tasks. They are and have always been those in the house. The work outdoors was a matter of survival, and as soon as the men can do it on their own, with machines, the women are allowed to and want to concentrate on the tasks considered feminine. (Cf Masur 1984 - the similarities between the two analyses of women’s work are striking, in spite of the contrasts between Galicia and Andalusia.) The women have always been excluded from financial and political decision-making, and they are as convinced as the men that they are inferior, that they should obey, that their only influence is through indirect means.


THEORY

Méndez questions the object of study "women" and finds that of "gender" a better alternative. In the Spanish context, this still has to be argued carefully in order not to be interpreted as anti-feminist. The author argues that in using "women" as the main focus, there is a great risk of falling in the old trap of making women something close to things, objects, not active human beings, and of not questioning our own Western conceptions of naturalized sex.


CHANGE; LANGUAGE; WORK

Written by a journalist in a sociological mode, this book nevertheless uses qualitative data and asks an anthropological question: what is the relationship between social change and gender? The social changes of recent decades have forced changes in the gender roles, and this has caused disconcertedness. Urban, mostly working class women, discuss this in groups, covering the usual topics: space, complementarity versus hierarchy, the division of tasks and the unfair loads that fall to women, sexuality, etc.


COMPL.; LANGUAGE; SEXUALITY, etc.

This book offers a descriptive catalogue of all aspects of life for the Andalusian immigrants to Madrid who settled in a self-built barrio outside the city in the 1950’s. The main role for a woman was to be a Mother, the axis of her family. The father was the official head of the family, but he could maintain his status only as long as his was the only income. And it was generally too low for a family to live on, so as soon as the children, or at least the sons, reached the legal age of fourteen, or often earlier, they went to work. These were the times when there were plenty of jobs to be had. So the family income often consisted of four or five salaries, of which the father’s was only one. The mother and the sons would then run the family, supporting and helping each other. The relationship between a mother and her daughters was usually tense, according to Molina. The women favoured the sons over the daughters. Young widows, and unmarried or separated mothers had to work very hard, “sacrifice themselves”, for the sake of their children. If they did this, they gained prestige, even when their work was prostitution. Molina says that in courtship the girls took most of the initiatives, being very outspoken among themselves but playing a game of feminine purity in front of the boys. Many married young, often because they were expecting a child. The
girls then accepted the role of family matriarch, and were hardly ever adulterous, while most of the young married men were, because it was harder for them to accept family responsibilities. More established couples were seldom adulterous, according to Molina, but she also says that the women "forgave everything" in order to keep the family together. The only thing that could break up a family was if there was a conflict between the father and the children, "then the thing was decided for her. In favour of the children, naturally." (176)
Talking about adultery, Molina comes close to saying, like Brandes, that the constant talk about adultery, in evident contradiction with the scarce material opportunities people had for it, seemed like a collective fantasy. This is but a small sample of the rich ethnographic information in this book, unfortunately unsophisticated in its analyses.


THEORY; PRIVATE-PUBLIC; WORK

An overview of how anthropology in Spain (both Spanish and foreign) has handled the issue of "identity" - understood as a multiplication of those principles of social organization that shape experience. These principles are not innumerable, says Moreno. The non-reducible ones are ethnicity, gender and processes of work. Moreno is mostly interested in ethnicity, but the article also contains a short discussion of the central problem of gender in Mediterranean-European-North American societies: the old conception of humanity as consisting of two fundamentally opposed genders, seen as sexes, i.e. naturalized and mythologized.

Anthropologists working in Spain have usually written as if men constituted the whole of humanity. And when gender became an important theoretical issue, in Spain, significantly, it has been masculinity that has attracted most attention. Moreno emphasizes that much of the work in Spanish anthropology on public rituals, festivities and associations has in fact been about how men organize themselves in order to exclude women, but this has not been analyzed as such. To analyze men as a part of society, not as the whole, is a step forward. But women are still invisible. Moreno thinks that the most interesting angle is that which centres on work, since it is the old association of men with production and women with reproduction that has been at the base of so much else.


WORK; THEORY

Somewhat ahistoric but interesting analysis of women’s work. Perhaps the title should have been instead "women’s work is only help", because that is the key metaphor discussed. However, the author specifies under what conditions women’s work comes to be seen as only help, no matter how many hours women work, how hard the work is or how much money they earn or what proportion of the family subsistence they contribute. It is only help, she suggests, as soon as the man is defined as head of the family and main breadwinner. Thus Engels was wrong; to work for a wage is no way for women to liberate themselves. And when the man is defined as the main provider, women’s work is adapted in a number of ways that further reduce it to "only help".


LANGUAGE; SEXUALITY; CHANGE; IDENTITY
Adolescents’ discourse about couple relationships is analyzed in order to uncover their ideas about gender. What characteristics are preferred by boys in a girl depends on what kind of relationship they want with her, whether steady or temporal. Both boys and girls are wary of binding ties, which is to be expected at their age, 16-18, but the girls are more romantic, wanting deeper involvement, while the boys want to avoid that. To have many short term relationships enhances a boy’s reputation but sullies a girl’s. So boys try to "win" girls and girls try to avoid "losing too much". In a relationship, both boys and girls think that both boys and girls ought to be faithful to each other, but both expect boys to be unfaithful more often than girls. My comment: On the surface of it, young Madrilenians today live a very different life from that of their parents, when they were young. They go out much more, they spend much more money, there is more similarity in the patterns of going out and spending between men and women, women feel less restrained by moral precepts, and both sexes feel much less constrained by religious ideas on sexuality. They have more sexual knowledge and more sexual experience. Still, as analyzed by Orgaz, the underlying patterns of gender definitions and evaluations of behaviour seem to survive.

HONOUR  
The classical work of anthropology in Spain. But there is little on gender aside from the usual type of references to honor and sexuality.

HONOUR  
Further analyses of honor and shame and especially a new face of the syndrome, formerly only hinted at, namely grace. Interesting observations about hospitality through history. Much of it based on old literature, like the Odyssey, but there are also examples from Spain.

HONOUR; SEXUALITY  
This article analyzes the phenomenon of marriages that are effectuated by "stealing the bride". According to the author, in Spain it is seen to be logical for a man to take a woman away from the house of her parents, if he wants to marry her against some opposition. The opposition might be that of the woman herself, in which case he may be forced to rape her, but it may be that the issue of honour has such weight that she concedes to marry once she realizes that her honour has been compromised. She now has no chance of marrying anyone else. But it is often also the case that the woman herself wants to be "stolen" and the opposition comes from her parents, or only from her father. (Cf Frigolé 1986.)

COMPL.; PRIVATE-PUBLIC; SEXUALITY; POWER; CHANGE  
A book about Arab-speaking Muslim women whose main networks are on Moroccan soil. But they live in Ceuta, a Spanish enclave, and they are influenced by Spanish mores through television, other inhabitants of the city, the work some of them and most of their husbands do for Spaniards, etc. It is theoretically interesting for its discussion on the relationship between gender and ethnicity and for how it shows, through rich ethnography, how the women manage the parcels of power they are given and accept their roles as
guardians of Muslim identity and tradition. From the point of view of this essay, however, its main interest is as a sort of counterpoint. Much of what the Muslim women consider traditional is traditional, too, in mainland Spanish thinking. But in Spain, for most people, tradition is now that which must be transcended, because change comes whether you want to or not, while for the Ceuta Muslims it is a value under siege that must be defended. In both cases this struggle to come to terms with profound social and cultural change, is grafted onto the gender order.


CHANGE; IDENTITY

In Spain, women have hardly participated in sports at all. This is changing. This book describes women’s participation in federated sports, in municipal sports centres and in university sports activities in the Basque country. Socio-demographic data about the participants are given along with the practitioners’ own motivations. The book is mostly sociological but contains an anthropological discussion about the world of sports as gendered space.


PRIVATE-PUBLIC

A study of space in a small Andalusian village. Cf the main text.


POWER; IDENTITY

The author analyses First Communion as a rite of passage which emphasizes the future roles of women and men. Girls are stressed more than boys, but not in an empowering way. Instead it is their greater future subordination that is underlined in the rite. This is possible because the positive values of love and solidarity are seen to be deposited in them. At the same time the religious view of life is an image of a hope for a better society with more love for all, including women. The hope they are given makes the girls accept. It may even be that the whole society deposits some hope for a future of more communitas in the emphasis given on the girls’ role in this ritual, concludes Sau.


POWER; SEXUALITY; CHANGE

Based on fieldwork in the feminist movement in Madrid, this text discusses mainly the public debate around the abortion issue, showing how different interpretations of human rights come to the fore. Men and women have not been constituted as "persons" by the same set of values in traditional Spain. Feminists construe this as proof of devaluation of women and of femininity. Much of the ideology that has made this acceptable to women themselves has to do with certain interpretations of motherhood and sexuality. Feminists therefore try to renegotiate the meaning and social practice of motherhood and sexuality through the application of individualistic ideas. In the feminist discourse, women should be persons, i.e. full participants in society, not just mothers, and they should be sexually active, exploring their own bodies. A key value for the feminist is freedom of choice, but re-valuations of femininity and solidarity among women are also necessary in order to avoid the trap of
"becoming like men". (Sundman is working on her Ph.D. thesis which will be a fuller account of the feminist movement in Madrid in the late 1980’s.


CHANGE; LANGUAGE; POWER

Four life stories show how women construct change as improvement. The idea of "progress" is shown to be a double-edged sword for Spanish urban working class women who want to find a new way of being women, since they consider the "traditional" ones unworkable after the changes Spain has gone through.


CHANGE; SEXUALITY; POWER; WORK; IDENTITY

My Ph. D. thesis. Based on fieldwork in a working class area of Valencia, 1982-83, this is to my knowledge the first attempt to describe the gender order of a Spanish city. I tried to show the interconnections between such things as urban space, labor market organization, traditional and recent associations, the organization of daily life inside the household, the general social, economic and political changes in Spain, and so on, and showing the repercussions of it all on women’s position relative to men’s in daily life. This study object was too big, so it was limited first to women’s perspective, then to the contradictions between what women said and what they could really do and the contradictions among the ideas on gender themselves. They no longer make up a stable ideological base for the gender order. Because there are many contradictions that have to be worked out, change continues, I wrote. Most of the women in the barrio felt that the changes they saw were positive, but they were unsure of how much of it they could apply in practice in their own life and what consequences such attempts might have. I constructed a typology of women according to their views on these things, ranging from those who valued the former complementary gender order, without seeing the hierarchization it contains, to those who are in open opposition to it. The whole range of types could be found in the barrio, but few women could be placed at either extreme. The majority were very unsure. They knew how to defend themselves with manipulation and seduction, and they were wary of giving up this type of security for a more abstract and as yet not very workable new one. Those old manipulative skills are often called "left hand" in Spanish, and I chose the title of the book because I consider these skills necessary for the complementary hierarchical type of gender order to work. Most women of this barrio, even the unsure ones who actually used these skills, felt that they were going out of fashion and could now be seen clearly for what they had always been, undignified.


CHANGE; LANGUAGE; POWER

One woman’s story about the violence her husband subjected her to for many years and how she was finally able to break out of the situation. A discussion on what aspects of the gender order worked to keep women like the protagonist in such subjugation, and what fac-
tors have now changed so that those old factors are no longer effective. The protagonist’s own interpretation of the change is shown to use old ideas (motherhood, religion) to legitimate new types of action (divorce, freedom of movement).


THEORY
A presentation in Spanish of the development of the anthropology of women and gender, in English-language anthropology. I took on this task since this development had been little known and was seldom referred to, and Spanish anthropologists were duplicating some conceptual efforts already made in other countries. A fuller account is my book on the same theme, Thurén 1993.


THEORY; CHANGE
A presentation in Spanish of the development of the English-language anthropology of women and gender, based on a course I gave at this Institute. Unlike the article published in Antropología, (Thurén 1992), this book is directed more to feminists than to anthropologists, and I try to show what the contribution of anthropology can be for the feminist project. Chapter 5 is a summary of Thurén 1988a, used here as one of several examples of how anthropological descriptions can be critical even while professionally relativistic, and as an extended example since it is about Spain and the participants in the course could relate to the reality described.


PRIVATE-PUBLIC; CHANGE; POWER
A presentation of the project I am currently working on. Spanish women have traditionally participated very little in activities defined as political. To the extent that the gender order really defined public space as male, this was logical. Today it is a problem for a country that wants to be democratic and where the constitution prohibits discrimination. But women do act politically, only in different spaces and for different reasons than men. In these female spaces, men usually participate little, which is even more logical, since the basic tenet of Spanish gender is dualism. Now, there is one space which is at least partially defined as political and where each gender makes up about half of the active participants. This is the so-called neighbourhood movement (movimiento vecinal). The purpose of the project is to describe women’s participation and motivations and find explanations for this unique phenomenon - explanations that might become valuable in the efforts to ensure that women’s experiences do not remain invisible in the processes of high level decision making.


CHANGE; SEXUALITY
The experience of first menstruation has usually been traumatic for Spanish women. This is still so, but to a much lesser degree. I analyze, first, how the ideas of menstruation are linked to ideas of sexuality and female subordination, and how this explains why the experience has been so traumatic in the past, and, second, I discuss why and to what extent this is really changing.
THUREN, Britt-Marie: Women, Men and Persons: Managing Gender Meanings in Middle Class Madrid. Forthcoming.

LANGUAGE; POWER; CHANGE
Cf main text.


POWER; CHANGE; WORK; IDENTITY
The most thorough work on the Basque gender order to date. Del Valle and a team of other researchers did fieldwork in the three ecological-economic areas of Basque society: small agricultural villages, where life is centred on the homestead; fishing villages, where the men fish and the women clean, can and sell; and cities where the men do wage work, and most of the women are housewives. One starting point was the old debate about Basque matriarchy. Del Valle concludes that the Basque Woman seems to be something Basque men have defined according to their ideological needs, an image that has little to do with real Basque women’s lives. The empirical part of the book shows the complex reality. There are differences in the degree of autonomy for women according to where they live and what their husbands do, and there are also differences in the kind of autonomy they enjoy, i.e. over which areas of life they can decide. The two main axes of the work are: the relationship between economic activities and women’s autonomy, and social change as it affects both women’s reality and women’s perceptions of themselves and of change. A positive correlation was found between the degree of decision-making power and the degree of incorporation in economic activities outside the home, albeit with nuances according to civil status. The women of the agricultural homesteads have the greatest autonomy but it has diminished lately. The women in fishing villages have more economic autonomy and manage larger sums of money, they also work in more public places. The city housewife is the most isolated and least autonomous woman, but she has more access to sociocultural activities and leisure activities and to some professions which give more prestige, autonomy and money. A married woman’s salaried work does not give her any extra prestige, but it does improve the prestige and the economic base of the whole family. In the case of unmarried women, salaried work is always seen as a good thing and will increase her autonomy both inside the family and in society at large. As to values, there is continuity with traditional values in all three sectors for women over forty years old and acceptance of new values among women under thirty. The contradictions between generations are sharper in the rural areas. The things that confer most prestige on women is marriage and motherhood, in all cases. An unmarried woman over thirty is devalued socially unless she has a prestigious occupation. All women must be seen as "clean" and "laborious". It is also important for a woman’s prestige what her husband and sons do.


LANGUAGE; POWER; CHANGE; SEXUALITY
Like Juliano, del Valle thinks that women, even politically committed women, must find indirect means of expression. She describes graffiti made by feminist groups in Bilbao as being about that which is usually denied women in the patriarchal discourse and stereotyping: having a body of one’s own, opposition to the assigned role in the family, and women’s legal problems, like abortion. Compulsory heterosexuality is scorned. Del Valle concludes that the analysis of subversive and marginal situations can turn up elements for change. "It is in the extreme situations that the deepest structures come to the surface."

CHANGE

Unfortunately I have not been able to find this book; it is sold out. But it is sure to be interesting, in view of the theme and del Valle’s earlier works. According to a library bibliography: "The author starts out from a recognition of the relation between a restrictive conceptualization of women’s space in the city and a hierarchical construction of gender systems. Through the views of women’s groups and creative women, new metaphors, necessities and meanings of the city are emerging. Analysis of the degree of participation in associations and the contents of the processes of creation, transformation and change." (My translation.)

***************************************************************************