

## ***Body trouble: Functional diversity as a challenge to gender identity***

**Andrea García-Santesmases Fernández**

Universidad de Barcelona

[andrea.gsantesmases@gmail.com](mailto:andrea.gsantesmases@gmail.com)

### **Abstract:**

This research aims to analyze how the acquisition of a physical disability affect the gender identity of a subject. Specifically, it seeks to investigate three areas: femininity and masculinity imaginaries, relationships and affective-sexual practices, and body self-concept. It starts from the assumption that there is a gender difference which is key to understand the experience of these three areas by the subjects: women, following the acquisition of physical disability, experience more barriers in satisfactorily building and reshaping their emotional and sexual life, and sustaining a positive body self-concept, than their male counterparts. Physical disability involves the passage of possessing a "valid" body (capable, productive and reproductive) to a "non-valid" one (conceived as incompetent, unproductive and non-reproductive). This research raises as hypotheses that resulting bodies pose a challenge to the dichotomous model and sex-gender binary as they do not meet the defining precepts of hegemonic masculinity and femininity. To test this hypothesis we proceeded to the application of a qualitative methodology through performing six "body routes", three men and three women with spinal cord injury.

**Keywords:** body/ gender identity/ disability/ functional diversity/ sexuality.