Relating as Conocidos

Observing a social practice in an island context

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines a form of relating, *relating as conocidos*, which involves requesting and granting favours and deals with issues of reciprocation across a temporal and spatial dimension. Conceptually, this research distances itself from normative and instrumental approaches to networks of relations. It proposes an understanding of relational processes in which non-unitary subjects engage dynamically in reciprocal activities which hold them accountable. The thesis draws on theories of reciprocation and gift giving, and resorts to Bourdieu's theory of practice as a frame for understanding relating as conocidos. The fieldwork relies on two complementary methods of investigation, participant observation and unstructured interviews, and was undertaken over the course of three visits to the rural towns of Hermigua and San Sebastián in La Gomera, an island of the Canarian Archipelago. Observations were recorded daily in a fieldwork diary, and the interviews were analysed with the help of ATLAS/ti. Empirically, the thesis explores the relevance of temporal and spatial markers in practising relations. It looks at the contextual code of practice, within which people engage in intricate strategies in order to perform relating as conocidos under community surveillance. Finally, the thesis examines the discursive realm in which relating as conocidos is understood, identifying the *citizen's discourse*, based on ideas of equality and the *islander's discourse*, based on ideas of fairness and performed through trust. The thesis ends with a discussion of the relevant conceptual and empirical contributions, and provides alternative ways of making sense of the practice of relating as conocidos. The tensions and co-existence of these two discourses introduce relating as conocidos as an accepted practice in caring for others or as an unacceptable form of corruption.

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A FOREWORD OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

During these years of study, the most difficult, and often asked, question was 'what is your PhD about?' One such instance was particularly enlightening when, in Spain, I answered 'it is a study on relating as conocidos', which I thought was uncompromising and concise. The reply was 'but everybody knows how to do that!' This, precisely, was the most frustrating and rewarding part of my work. Everybody knew how to do it, but it was difficult to 'think' about it, or transform the 'doing' into textual language. However, although studying the 'tacit' proved to be demanding, the benefit was that people shared with me the same intuitions on the issues at stake in this thesis. Thus, even if it took me time to find an academic language to talk about relating as conocidos, I had real life, and real people to talk to and explore the research with.

In this academic and personal journey, I've taken wrong paths, which were corrected. I've got distracted when finding and enquiring about the world. However, despite the falls I've ploughed through. This is the space to acknowledge that, what can be seen as a story of survival and personal achievement, is rather a story of support, friendship and having the privilege of going through life being the recipient of infinite generosity. People say that doing a PhD is a lonely process. I disagree. It is a process of uncertainty and discovery, of pushing the limits of knowledge and testing one's boundaries. But I have certainly never been alone. This work has come about through, and it is the result of, the attention and care that many people have directed towards me.

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My extensive and close family, in Madrid and in the Canaries have made me who I am. Alfonso and Adriana, Fernando and Mercedes and Iñaqui and Maria, as well as my niece and nephews, give me innumerable sources of joy. They, and my mother, have dimmed the longing of my absence by keeping me in their lives, despite the distance. The thesis is dedicated to my parents who have encouraged me in questioning life and who, till this day, stand as my models. They have taught me how to be a better person.

This piece of work is really a tribute and the result of the input of all the people mentioned above. I only hope I have matched up to their standards. What I learned, as well as their presence, I will carry with me in the life that now starts.

INTRODUCTION

This research focuses on a particular form of social relationship, which has been studied in the context of La Gomera, a small island in the Canarian Archipelago. This particular interaction is given the name of *relating as conocidos*. Just as we speak of friendship (and theorise about friends) or kinship (and account for kin relations), we can speak of relating as conocidos as a process where a *conocido* is a partner in the relationship. The particularity of this relationship lies in the fact that, although people can easily identify who constitutes a friend or kin, defining who is a conocido is a rather more ambiguous exercise, which reflects the blurred contours of the relation. Thus relating as conocidos implies an interaction in which people appeal for, and provide, favours. Moreover, in some manner, those engaging in this form of relationship would hold each other accountable and attempt ways of reciprocating, in a tacit manner, for the favour done.

The aim of the thesis is to present an account of how relating as conocidos, with its paradoxes and processual character, takes place. By emphasising the 'how' and by acknowledging the unique character of this relationship, which is enacted in 'place', the intention is to bring to the forefront two theoretical questions which will need to be tackled throughout this thesis. The 'how' stresses the processual character of the relationship. By putting the stress on the process, the sequential accountability of exchanges will endorse this relationship with meaning and visibility. The understanding of the relationship 'taking place' proposes the need for contextualising it in order to account for its experience as a practice. The context becomes a requirement, as it provides the frame to understand this relationship, as well as emphasises the constructed character of its practice. The study of a relationship in context provides the quality of transforming mere episodic transactions into processual activities which have to do with the continuous allocation of those relating as conocidos into varied positions, which are communally endorsed and strategically located through a set of codes.

1. THE BACKGROUND

Academic research is subject to fashion and personal interests. People's research concerns have to do with their lives and histories, and this gives a value to social

scientific research. The aim of this section is to account for how this PhD came into being. In order to do this, I have to locate this relational practice historically in the context in which I grew up: Spain in its transition from a dictatorship to a democracy, and from a Hispanic referent to a European one.

Context-dependent forms of relationships parallel to that of relating as conocidos can be found in every society, when relationships are understood in terms of the use of informal channels throughout formalised social structures. However, when studying social processes, the researcher may gain understanding by examining how they came into being, by following the thread of history and of culture particular to sub-universes of social action. Hence, relating as conocidos, with its particular form, ways and rituals, only makes sense through a study of the processual engagement of the subject in her/his social context.

Engaging in relations with conocidos is a social reality I have encountered throughout my life in Spain. Only at a later stage in my life did I learn to qualify and question it, once it became a matter of public concern in the country. The problematic nature of this relationship is, partly, the result of transformations within Spanish society in recent historical times. Spain is a country which has had to reinvent itself over a relatively short period of time. It went from a civil war to a dictatorship with a strong Catholic flavour that lasted around forty years. Today, in less than thirty years, Spain has become a state of 'autonomies' which does not exist as a nation. It is also part of a modern, changing, and so-called united Europe.

These changes were also expressed by the way Spanish people make sense of their lives, not only in terms of national identity, but also in the context of everyday relationships. Over a short period of time we had to make sense of our lives by moving from the referential point of the Hispanic connection – the 'brother continent' of Latin America, the remains of the remorseful past of the conquistador – to a geographical identity centred on Europe. Hence, while the memory of dictatorship was fresh and while my generation was expected to study the great history of Spaniards with a high nationalistic pitch, there were subtle changes going on in society. We heard it everywhere: Spain is opening up. By choice we moved from being Hispanic to being European. When Spain first joined the European Community we could not come to terms with the fact that we were the lowest in the hierarchy, the ones that needed subsidies. We had to prove ourselves to be worthy of European trust. Pride was

something of the past; the Spanish were lost and felt threatened. From then onwards things started to change. Popular theories circulated about erasing our culture (with bullfighting being the prime target), folklore and ways of doing. It was as if the Spanish citizen had to come out of her/his shell finally, to acknowledge the end of the empire and the decadence of the patriotic propaganda of grandeur. These became only echoes from the past.

Part of this atmosphere was created by news of corruption and fraud all around. Yet these cases I understood to be natural – there was no sense of responsibility towards a State, as this State was mainly a repressive entity that dictated what was or was not permissible. However, after years of political and social control, people were used to finding ways of getting round these many prohibitions. The domains of 'legality' simply conveyed that the Spanish had to work within the threads of a parallel reality. For example, part of the perks of being in a powerful job was to be able to help those around you. After all, there was a clear link between issues such as nepotism and the way we got around life on a smaller scale. Settlements of this nature were (and are) common practice and, although they were not formally acknowledged, everybody publicly supported and exploited them.

The resolution of this conflict came about initially as a matter of maintaining a life of double standards. Appearances mattered and, thus, public figures had to keep their faces clean. The conclusion reached was that there is a price to be paid for having power. Hence, the powerful have to keep up a façade of neatness and being followers of rules. It was just at a superficial level, a question of manners and good taste. Those in positions of power just had to appear to be humble and hide their power, but they still helped people when they could because we all do for each other what we can; it is part of how life is. If someone is in trouble and it is within one's capacity to help, how can one be so arrogant as to deny a favour? It was only later that we came up with an alternative explanation: if the new dominant ethic secured the value of equality, doing favours could be seen as breaking the warrants of our brand new system of principles. But how were we to know all the ramifications of these principles? We had just started to move within the democratic system ourselves.

2. THE RESEARCH

The thesis proposes to study relating as conocidos as a process – as this will provide a sequence – and as practice – as a frame of understanding. The implication of studies on 'processes' is a continuous motion, which links theory and practice in providing explanations of reality. This motion has carried this research forwards and constitutes the thread of the thesis. Moreover, the process highlights the nature of relating as conocidos as lacking a character of permanence. The practice endows the relationship with a 'tacit' existence, as the relationship does not exist outside potential or real interactions. Therefore, although the relationship becomes visible with requests for single favours, it requires – as a transaction – the ability to draw on a common past, if not whole life histories. Relating as conocidos needs understandings of context to acknowledge its localisation in space and time.

This thesis is composed of eight chapters. Chapter I provides the bedrock from which to start thinking about relating as conocidos. It starts with an instance of this relationship, which is taken forwards as a form of definition. It also approaches this way of relating from different standpoints, and demonstrates to what extent conceptual terms close to relating as conocidos contribute to uncovering its domain of existence. The chapter centres on a discussion of relating as conocidos seen (i) from the point of view of a normative system, (ii) as part and parcel of networks, and (iii) as a basis for a system of support. However, elements such as the influence of the context in marking the shape and pace of the relation, the need to maintain a level of ambiguity in its practice and its processual character, are not answered from these perspectives. These three different theoretical lenses match different levels of explanation, but relating as conocidos needs to be seen from the perspective of process, insofar as the relationship is enacted through the application of a set of discursive and performative actions. The chapter finishes by placing the research problem within a wider tradition of social psychology.

Chapter II aims to theorise on the issues mentioned above. Hence, this chapter presents an assessment of relevant topics pertaining to relating as conocidos, such as the making of friendships and theories on reciprocation. Issues such as the liability involved when doing someone a favour – i.e. recommending, using your name or position to help another person – or repaying a favour are considered here. The investigation of these

issues leads to a proposal which understands relating as conocidos as a form of practice. Practice, according to Bourdieu (1977), requires engaging in strategies by performing within a certain code of practice. The codes of practice endorse conduct by delimiting fields of relational activities and presenting the acceptable way of posing a request. These unwritten codes, and their strategic performance, are relevant because they require a context to find expression. They convey a need to be constantly subjected to negotiation. This chapter finishes with a framework for the study of relating as conocidos as well as a proposal for its empirical exploration.

Chapter III discusses the procedure for the empirical exploration of the thesis and explores a methodological claim. This claim relates to the need of the researcher to be located as a part of the context, as the object of study can only be investigated through this position. Accounting for reflexivity will help in providing internal checks for the research. However, the claim of internal positioning has to do, again, with the nature of this research project. The product of the research, an explanation of how relating as conocidos happens, and the production of the research endeavour, are part and parcel of the same process. The study of relating as conocidos as a practice requires the researcher to immerse her/himself in relations of the kind. I shall claim that my research position guaranteed the access to the workings of this relationship, as I was at the same time the 'known outsider' and the 'insider living abroad'. It provided me with an improved understanding or pre-judgement of how to extract meaning from relationships of this kind. The empirical basis of this research is 30 unstructured interviews with inhabitants of the island, and an ethnographic study. The interviews inform us on the processual and discursive character of relating as conocidos. The ethnographic account, founded on participant observation, aims to deal with the construction of spaces and temporality in the community of study.

Chapter IV aims to localise relating as conocidos in the place where the fieldwork was undertaken (i.e. La Gomera). I shall provide a theoretical analysis which aims to consign this research to part of a bigger tradition of island research. The decision to conduct research in an island milieu has important consequences which are acknowledged here. The chapter provides a theoretically driven discussion on island spaces. It also provides an entrance to the next stage of the thesis: the analysis and interpretation.

Chapter V introduces the context of the research through the aid of the ethnographic material. Through the ethnography I shall present the co-ordination of relating as conocidos through the axes of space and time. Space, or rather the way in which people construct it within a community, will be the subject of discussion. Time marks continuance and perpetuity within the daily life of the community. These axes provide the markers which knit people together and, in this manner, they expose the concealed and constructed features of this relational practice.

Chapter VI and Chapter VII deal with the interpretation of the two analyses carried out on a group of 20 interviews with the islanders, the Gomerans. These two analyses, together with the previous chapter, are guided by the theoretical elaboration on practice provided in Chapter II. Through the analyses and interpretation of the respondents' text, relating as conocidos is endowed with a frame of conduct (by the codes of practice in Chapter VI) and a performance of action (by the strategies in Chapter VII).

Thus, Chapter VI will inform us on the visual and verbal conventions when relating as conocidos. The chapter identifies the scripts of the relationship, the codes of practice. The relevance of codes of practice on appropriate behaviour informs us of the necessity of relating with a generalised other. The codes provide information on the way to conduct such relationships. They confer an understanding of interactions built upon constraints, endorsed by community surveillance, and dependency, informed by conventions. The surveillance of the gaze enforces and assesses the implementation of the codes of practice; it presents the power of visual accountability. The conventions, in their unquestionable nature, tell us of the extent the respondents (i) are dependent on others and (ii) required to build relationships by assuming generalised reciprocation. The surveillance and the conventions together shape the way people manage relating as conocidos.

Chapter VII presents the performance of strategies. Two main types of strategies are identified when relating with conocidos: strategies of localisation and strategies of requests. The former referred mainly to the interactional play antecedent to the engagement in exchanges whilst the latter referred more specifically to ways of achieving access to favours – or claiming requests – from others. Relating as conocidos requires people engaging with others to take on different subject positions. The relationship is shown to be partially reciprocal but not symmetrical. Given the island context, at some point a particular person might occupy the subject position of the

priest's helper, the shopkeeper, the second cousin or the sister of someone one needs to contact. The occupancy of these subject positions, the variation on locations and the appropriation – and award – of trust played upon by the respondents present the researcher with a powerful tool to investigate agency.

These three chapters construct a narrative on how relating as conocidos is performed. They inform us on (i) how people position themselves in reference to others by their links to a contextual space and historical time, (ii) how subjects share a code of practice and a relational history, and (iii) how they require prudence and denial of the action in order to engage in the practice of relating as conocidos.

The last analytical chapter, Chapter VIII, provides the discursive realm pertaining to relations, and specifically that of conocidos. This chapter is based on 30 interviews with respondents grouped as elderly Gomerans, young Gomerans and outsiders. Their different discourses when understanding relations, and the way these discourses present a different understanding of the social subject, the other and the social context, provide explanations of why this practice is conflictual. The discourses are given the name of *islander's discourse* and *citizen's discourse* and they provide two ways of understanding the social world: one anchored on a system of kindred (the islander's discourse) and one anchored on a formalised democratic system (the citizen's discourse). Relating as conocidos is conflictual (and balanced) because it is justified by traditional ways of doing (the practice), or it is assessed as a practice breaching the principles of equality.

Chapter IX cements the link between the empirical and the theoretical parts of the thesis. It elaborates on relating as conocidos as a practice and also explores its conflictual expression in current societies by locating it within the two discourses: the islander's discourse and the citizen's discourse. It draws on the theoretical and empirical chapters, which provided the stage upon which relating as conocidos happens, the script of its practice, its performance, and its conflicting significance within two discourses. This final chapter produces an account of the occurrence of relating as conocidos in everyday life. It brings the thesis to a conclusion by elaborating how this practice takes place in the contemporary context of La Gomera, and beyond, as well as the reasons why it generates conflicts when rendered visible.

I

CONCEPTUALISATION

BECOMING ACQUAINTED WITH THE TOPIC OF RESEARCH

The general purpose of this chapter is to present relating as conocidos as a research topic and to outline why this phenomenon is worth studying. It is important to clarify that this chapter does not, *per se*, aim to provide the theoretical bedrock or structure of the thesis. Although the chapter will deal with some theoretical concepts, its main purpose is to discuss the domain around relating as conocidos. The need for a discussion space comes as a consequence of the nature of the research. This chapter is best thought of as proposing to develop a set of ideas, rather than trying to frame a body of knowledge. Hence, it will provide a lay understanding of this form of relating, and a brief elaboration to distance it from other conceptual referents, such as networking.

Relating as conocidos has only been accounted for publicly, insofar as it is talked about but has not been the subject of research. Thus, it gains reality in the shape of an ongoing conversation. It therefore makes sense to write a part of the chapter in the same manner. This will guarantee a common forum from which to speak. Those lacking the experience of relating as conocidos – not as object of scholarly inquiry (which is non-existent to date), but in everyday conversation – might then move from a peripheral understanding to a commonly shared and central one.

Relating as conocidos might be something unfamiliar to many of us, a phenomenon belonging to the everyday realm of another cultural context. However, relating as conocidos has a high incidence as a phenomenon, and it is a widespread occurrence in Latin societies, where the lay person knows of its existence and practice. For this reason, the thesis will start with a guide to what a lay understanding of this phenomenon is. Once the stage of 'thinking about' this form of relating has been overcome – consisting of pointing out generalities – the thesis will continue by underpinning theoretical contributions towards an understanding of relating as conocidos. This chapter, then, discusses this form of relating and finishes off with a general understanding of what is at stake. The relevant conclusions will be theorised upon subsequently.

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part involves a narration of an instance of relating as conocidos. This provides, on the one hand, an introduction to the topic, and, on the other, a guide for discussion. Also, it warrants a wide overview of those conceptual elements which might – or might not – throw some light on the way of relating under study. Following from this instance, and using it as a guide for reference, the second part takes the shape of a survey of the relevant literature. It will specifically address theoretical concepts which are related to relating as conocidos. This survey will (a) acknowledge research where relating as conocidos has been taken into account (namely the Theory of Perverse Norms) and (b) look at studies on relational networks, a concept which might inform research on relating as conocidos. Finally, the third part will offer a discussion on relating as conocidos as an issue of social psychological interest.

1. An Instance of Relating as Conocidos

The instance of relating as conocidos takes the form of a narrated story which unfolds in a community in La Gomera, the context where the research was conducted. The story offers, in a concise manner, a preview of the issues at stake and the elements which are relevant to the research. It also presents a clear picture of the form of relating under study and provides a sketch of the context (social rather than physical) in which it is practised.

a. The Story of Doña Dolores and the Colonel

Colonel Roberto Padron[1], aged 57, is originally from the Upper Valley, Hermigua, on the island of La Gomera, though he now lives in Tenerife. He still enjoys going back to La Gomera on summer breaks to see his elderly mother, who lives with another daughter in the same house where they have always lived. Life has not been easy for him, his wife passed away 23 years ago leaving him with the responsibility of raising three little girls. Being a responsible father in Tenerife is not the same as being one in Hermigua; things have changed so much. The only way he knew of providing a solid moral upbringing for

[1] Throughout the thesis, the names of the characters have been changed. Whenever possible, other details which are not relevant for the research have also been changed in order to protect anonymity. Moreover, the research uses common surnames on the island, but they have been randomly ascribed to the characters.

these future ladies was through restrictions.

Of the three girls, the oldest followed his path and pursued a military career. She has therefore been heavily criticised by the people of Hermigua. It is not, indeed, something that a girl of her background should be doing and 'if only her mother could talk' she would certainly put an end to it. The two younger girls have given numerous problems to the Colonel. Since a very early age, they have been continuously engaged in long and serious relations with suitable bachelors, usually older than them. These potential saviours of the girls' honour have not succeeded in making wives and mothers out of them, and after every single breaking off of these engagements, originally induced by the Colonel, the girls' reputation has been damaged more and more.

Doña Dolores Padilla[2], now 55 years old, also divides her living arrangements between Tenerife, over the winter, and La Gomera, in the summer. She is from the Lower Valley, in Hermigua, and from the same generation as the Colonel. She never really thought much of him but, within the community, a sign of good education was to behave in an undemonstrative manner towards others. On the other hand, there was not much possibility of making choices. While growing up, access to places other than Hermigua was limited, and there were already too many community divisions that needed to be taken into account before making more personal ones. The community was divided economically (landowners and land workers), topographically (Upper Valley and Lower Valley), and by gender domains. If one adds family disputes which went back for generations, such as the one running between the Armas and Lopez families[3], then the spectrum for potential meaningful relations was not that rich.

Doña Dolores is married and has a family of four: three young boys and one girl. At one point, two of the boys had to do military service, and she decided to contact the Colonel. Like any mother, she did not want her boys to go too far from their home, even to 'serve their country'. She and her husband knew that, although the Colonel would not help to get the boys out of military service – as he claims that it is the best way to become a man – he could, at least, find an easy military placement for them close enough to home. Hence, the two oldest boys of the family, with one year difference between them, both became altar boys in the church of the regional military base, located in Tenerife.

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[2] *Doña* is a respectful term to address a female person of a certain age or position.
[3] See Chapter V.

Doña Dolores was extremely grateful, and sent a couple of expensive bottles of whisky to the Colonel on each occasion. She also made sure to attend to the commitment of providing courtesy to the Colonel by passing this message of gratitude around to the rest of her relatives. Also, whenever the Colonel's family came to Hermigua, she made sure 'the kids' (her sons, daughter, nieces and nephews) took his daughters out and introduced them to their friends. However, Doña Dolores did not take into account the fact that the Colonel's daughters were slightly conceited and did not make good company. They soon failed to integrate and were excluded by the rest of the youngsters, including the two young men, now with the status of bachelors and with their military service completed. There was never a complaint made and the relations between the two extended families kept on being polite and visually cordial. Eventually, the time came for Doña Dolores' youngest boy to do his military service, and she contacted the Colonel again. However, this time the Colonel dutifully informed her of how strict things had become and of the impossibility of meeting a similar request this time.

b. Unravelling the Story

The story tells us of a place, a restrictive space or community, where people behave according to some communally agreed code of practice. The ascription to, or rejection of, community rules is publicly known and accepted. People within the community are the judges of behaviour within an environment with many divisions and boundaries. Within this context, relations are enforced and need to be acted out. This sense of performance seems to be enhanced because manners and good behaviour are valued more highly than other qualities, such as genuineness. One person, Doña Dolores, has a request. The favour asked is not, by definition, anything which could compromise the values of the person receiving the request. Once the favour – which also could be considered as a challenge – is met, there is a need to repay. However, after various attempts, there is a failure to reciprocate adequately. This eventually provokes a straight rejection the next time a request is made.

Q_1: What makes Doña Dolores and the Colonel relate as conocidos?

When people are asked who constitutes a partner when relating as conocidos, the reply is usually something along the lines of 'somebody whom you know but who is not really a

friend' (Fernandez-Dols, Amate, Caballero, Ruiz-Belda, Sell-Trujillo and Oceja, 1994). In fact, according to the dictionary, a *conocido* is 'a person with whom one has dealings or communication but not friendship'[4]. One needs to ask: what is particular about this form of relating that distinguishes it from other forms, such as kinship or friendship? What does it take to relate as conocidos? Although at this stage we can only provide partial answers, we can see through the story that a particularity of this form of relating is its transactional domain, by which someone (Doña Dolores) contacts someone else (the Colonel) in order to request a favour. Moreover, the transaction tends to be camouflaged under other acceptable forms of relating, such as kinship or friendship. Aiming to establish some common ground, we could say that the most puzzling characteristic of relating as conocidos is the ambiguity of its contours.

Hence, although a favour done for a family member is not thought of as an instance of relating as conocidos, as long as there is only a sense of 'connectedness' among its members, this form of relating can take place in a family (in its widest sense). In-law connections and third cousins are also, theoretically, valid family members. In fact, the in-law status of a person (or 'political' status in Spanish) reflects quite accurately the negotiated character, which is also conveyed by this form of relating: they exist and are accounted for, but need to be worked upon. In the story, given the constraints present in the community, it is not difficult to think of both characters as sharing – at some level of the lineage – a common relative.

Apart from kinship, another relational referent is friendship. In relating as conocidos, the participants are – literally – people who are known. There might be some commonalties of interest which limit this form of relating to certain localised spaces. There might also be some common friends shared by both parties, hence the rule of transitivity is likely to be applied: 'the friends of my friends are my friends too'. So relating as conocidos can occur among people who belong to certain consistent contexts, or they could be friends-of-friends or friends-of-family. In short, a requisite can be established: those who call up this form of relating and access a conocido do not make claims of friendship between them, but behave as if this relation existed.

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[4] *Real Academia Española* (1992).

Q_2: Why does Doña Dolores contact the Colonel?

Following up on the relational character, it is also important to look at the transactional dimension, which emphasises the element of intentionality. The Colonel is contacted by Doña Dolores for a purpose; the relationship is instrumentalised and played upon by both characters in the story. Furthermore, the conditions of the relational game are complicated: even though the partners relating are not friends, there is an implicit understanding that they *could* become friends. The social space covered by this form of relating seems to be defined through an interactional social process with a strict set of characteristics. There seem to be two parallel understandings of the term: (i) at one level, we have relating as conocidos as just a particularly vague form of relating socially, and (ii) at another level, we have the understanding of this form of relating in its functional form. Both levels are interconnected and rather blurred, but somehow work side by side in differentiating this form of relating from any other.

Understanding relating as conocidos as a transactional process enriches it with agency. It starts from action, where conocidos appear when the subject wants to achieve something or is facing a concrete problem. It is a functionalistic definition with the intentionality domain at the forefront and the concept of 'friend' being almost a post-justification. The person accessed is not accessed as a 'professional', but as somebody who can help. S/he plays a part outside her/his professional role, but this role is what determines the access in the first place; their positioning within the social structure is what defines them as valuable. The Colonel's status within the hierarchical military system is what defines him as an army professional. He follows an un-bendable martial code of practice, which Doña Dolores respects by fitting her request within those limits. He uses his position to move within a system, which is accessible only to him, but not to those outside middle ranking military systems, such as Doña Dolores. This position will facilitate access to certain resources. Both aspects, the subject's position within the social structure and the use of it to favour someone, are somehow linked in shaping the space of action of relating as conocidos. This form of relating is acted out by a conocido, who seems to be someone known and with whom a person transacts. Here, a transaction is taken to be a form of interactional exchange in order to gain something one could not achieve by following other standard principles, such as those prevailing in the free market.

Q_3: Why does the Colonel choose to relate as conocidos?

There appears to be nothing obvious for the Colonel to gain from relating as conocidos. One could say that he is put in a difficult situation by Doña Dolores, and is forced to assist her. But who or what is forcing him? This form of relating seems to have a meaning which evades the outsider. Somehow, it gets activated due to a common sense of duty shared by the two characters in the story. Both were brought up in the same community, though neither of them is a permanent member of it today. However, this so-called sense of duty is mainly activated through the eyes of those relevant others who still, like Doña Dolores and the Colonel, conform to a set of codes within the community. These codes are not imposed but practised and subject to the surveillance of the people. People are witnessing, assessing, and – in general – collectively accounting for, what goes on in their community. There still seems to be a remaining link to this spatial environment. Within this environment, there is a record or history of relations which ties people together through numerous and different links, such as once-removed relatives, friends, neighbours, etc. These two elements, the record of a negotiated space and a shared past among them, seem to be enough to allow for the exchange of favours.

In sum, the story tells us what relating as conocidos looks like. It is a form of relation which involves a transaction with some instrumental character. It takes place among two people, who share a code of practice and whose relational history is somehow linked to a shared space, where time plays a part in shaping the form and character of this way of relating.

c. The Story as the Definition

To begin the discussion, and in order to prepare the ground for planting a shared understanding, an instance of relating as conocidos was provided[5]. The role of the instance was to fulfil the need for a working definition. The emphasis on *not* providing a definition at this stage stems from the conflictual character of this form of relating. Eco (1984) emphasises that, when trying to define, it must also imply interpretation; it includes a process of making sense. The definition, as an interpretation of relating as

[5] Other authors from varied disciplines, such as Foucault (1973), Fiske (1991) and Weick (1995), have also favoured this route as an introductory clarification upon which to theorise.

conocidos, needs to emerge after the interpretational stage is finalised. In order to define, we need first to uncover the processes of signification. Signification here is the link joining the sign and conventional knowledge (Barthes, 1972). When the sign stands on its own, it takes possession of the whole richness of signification.

In order to dig out all the richness of an ambiguous form of relating, such as that of conocidos, and make sure we are travelling through its process of signification, we could distinguish between the two types of knowledge mentioned by Barthes (1964). These two different knowledges correspond to two domains of signification. One of the domains – the denotative – requires of the subject a linguistic knowledge, while the second domain – the connotative – demands a more refined type of knowledge, a cultural knowledge. This latter form of knowledge is also referred to as *lexicons*, which are 'a portion of the symbolic place (of language) which correspond to a body of practices and techniques' (Barthes, 1964, p. 46). We shall thus use the instance of relating as conocidos as a vehicle of signification. It will open up a route to connotative meaning. Furthermore, it will make it possible to discover those procedures, modes or manners which form part of the body of practices and techniques of relating as conocidos.

Language, in itself, requires the acknowledgement of definitions as being shaped by words but intending to stand as signs, which are first and foremost channels of interpretation (see Eco, 1984; Barthes, 1972). Hence, a definition requires accountability as an explanatory and interpretational device. Eco proposes that a definition, as a sign, 'is not only something which stands for something else; it is also something that can and must be interpreted' (Eco, 1984, p. 46). The instance, presented as a story, will provide us with a 'criterion of interpretability' which will allow us 'to start from a given sign to cover, step by step, the whole universe of semiosis' (Eco, 1984, p. 46). The story (the instance) needs to be considered as taking the position of a sign; we shall then be able to deconstruct its semiotic universe as a tool of interpretation. A further benefit provided through the narration of an instance of relating as conocidos is that it conveys the sequential movement of this form of relating. The best way of providing the essence, and identifying the main elements, of relating as conocidos is by allowing the story to mark the field of signification.

i) An etymological note

Before engaging in a conceptual assessment of those terms which could add significance to relating as conocidos, there is an urgent need to clarify why this research has kept a term which has no adequate translation in English. It seems that the English language lacks a term which might encompass relating as conocidos as a phenomenon[6]. There is some terminology, which is connected to the different understandings endorsed by relating as conocidos, but it does not succeed in providing the full contour of the lay term. Grammatically, *conocido* is the past participle of the verb *conocer*. Also, etymologically, *conocer* comes from the Latin root *cognoscere* which, itself, is derived from *noscere*. Furthermore, although *noscere* seems to be the common root of its English equivalent 'to know', the translation proves to be problematic. The conflict arises because the verb 'to know' in English encompasses two quite different words in Spanish and other Latin languages (see also Jovchelovitch, 1997). If you know something, you are certain that is correct, it implies the generic knowledge of a fact. You have learned the object at some point and may even possess the skills to reproduce it in an oral or manual way (*saber* in Spanish, *savoir* in French, *sapere* in Italian and *wissen* in German). However, to know something also means to be familiar with it, to be acquainted with it, to recognise it. In this sense, the relation to the 'known object' does not concern its truthfulness but its closeness to one's own experience of the object (*conocer* in Spanish, *connaître* in French, *conoscere* in Italian and *kennen* in German)[7]. The derivation of the second meaning of the verb 'to know' is closer to what is implied by *conocidos*. There is a term within the English language which reflects an equivalent level of knowledge about someone, namely an *acquaintance*, but it lacks the social implications of relating as conocidos. The actual term can be crudely translated into English as 'instrumentalisation of acquaintances', though a more literal translation would be 'the known ones' or 'those who are known'. Somehow, both translations provide different significances, both of which are related to relating as conocidos. 'The instrumentalisation of the known ones' could then be the most accurate translation when portraying the linguistic boundaries of the field in which relating as conocidos exists.

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[6] This is consistent with results from a cross-cultural study of Britain and Spain (Fernandez-Dols *et al.*, 1994).

[7] Foucault (1989) also makes a distinction between *savoir* and *connaissance* as two different forms of knowledge, where *savoir* is the condition for the practice of everyday forms of *connaissance*.

2. A SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE

This sections deals with a preliminary literature review in reference to the topic of study. The aim is to assess to what extent the concepts behind relating as conocidos have referents in varied and often divergent academic disciplines. Briefly, we shall see how research has been carried out on (i) accessing someone within one's domain of relations and (ii) posing a request. The concepts or theories reviewed have elements which could be seen to apply to relating as conocidos. These referents will be sketched out and theorised upon in order to connect them adequately to the form of relating being studied. Whenever relevant, I shall bring in the instance presented as the chosen definition – the story of Doña Dolores and the Colonel – to refine some points.

The academic concepts about to be mentioned do not share the same bedrock. In fact, the only thing that ties them together is the form of relating under study. Hence, there is not necessarily a paradigmatic unity in this review, but rather a thematic one. In the first section, I shall talk about relating as conocidos as an indicator of badly functioning normative structures. This has been the hypothesis of the Theory of Perverse Norms (Fernandez-Dols, 1993). In the second section, we shall see how, if we understand a conglomeration of instances of relating as conocidos as a system, literature on the access and use of networks needs to be accounted for. Hence I shall start with an individualist understanding of networks, and later examine how the literature on the networking society treats the concept of network. Then, we shall examine how the mapping of networks has provided insights in uncovering patterns of relations within a sociological tradition. Finally, I shall review the literature on social support, with its emphasis on the use and creation of networks as a way to enhance the development of deprived areas and communities.

a. An Understanding Within a Normative Framework

There seems to be a vacuum in the academic literature regarding relating as conocidos. However, the figure of the conocido has been looked at, not focusing on its character or conceptual universe, but as a consequence, or part and parcel, of other social phenomena. This is the case in the research done by Fernandez-Dols (1992) on the Theory of Perverse Norms. Traditionally, socio-psychological research considers norms as spontaneous processes, which are set to solve ambiguous situations in group settings (see Sherif, 1936,

Sherif and Sherif, 1965; Rommetveit, 1955). Norms are set and administered under shared group agreement where deviance is punished and fulfilment rewarded (Homans, 1961). Norms, as rules, are only understood under a collective conception of society where actors construct the meaning of social reality from their perception of value and fact, actively searching for a cohesive localised knowledge within their context[8]. Hence, they create their contexts and are created by them in a relatively legible and coherent way.

Fernandez-Dols (1993) postulates that social norms are not always either functional or attained through group consensus. These norms (called perverse norms) are explicitly transgressed by most of the group members (Fernandez-Dols and Oceja, forthcoming). They are defined as those formal or informal norms that are universally infringed by a social group (Fernandez-Dols, 1992) due to the impossibility of applying them, even though they are institutionally supported through coercive pressures (Fernandez-Dols and Oceja, forthcoming). Fernandez-Dols *et al.* (1994) suggest the study of perverse norms as an explanation for certain phenomena which are characteristic of – but not exclusive to – Hispanic cultures. Within these phenomena, they are especially interested in the figure of the conocido, since

> it is rare to start some business dealings without first going mentally over all our possible conocidos in a given context. This habit is so much extended that, usually, it forms part of our everyday routine in thousands of dealings and we are not conscious of its peculiarity.
>
> (Fernandez-Dols *et al.*, 1994, p. 206, my translation).

In this light, relating as conocidos is the outcome of processes which start by a set of perverse norms. Oceja and Fernandez-Dols (1992) propose that the effects of perverse norms are (i) a widespread mistrust of the validity of those bodies inflicting the norms and (ii) a higher tolerance towards other forms of transgression. When the individual is faced with a set of rules which cannot be fulfilled, expectations are betrayed, provoking a high degree of uncertainty. In order to resolve this unhappy state of affairs, people will try to surpass the difficulties and resolve situations by resorting to those in positions of power who are, in the first place, friends. However, when friends are not available, people look for the next level of personal closeness or implication. The request is extended to those relevant others, such as friends-of-friends, friends-of-family, or family friends and so on,

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[8] For a discussion on norms, law and ethics, see Rommetveit (1955), Sherif (1965) and Sherif and Sherif (1936).

until it reaches somebody able to resolve it. Here we have relating as conocidos as a guarantee of success in these endeavours, when there is a need to resort to alternative sources of power to surpass the normative blockage. Relating as conocidos within formalised contexts (i.e. contexts which are normalised or regularised) is favoured when institutional and social bodies are failing to permit, or are blocking in some ways, certain channels of access.

Furthermore, Fernandez-Dols suggests that the social effect of this perverse normative system is a general degree of demoralisation. This causes a prevailing ambivalence towards otherwise unacceptable forms of corruption, understood as 'the systematic and generalised infringement of formal norms for personal benefit' (Fernandez-Dols & Oceja, 1994, p. 4), which is seen as an unavoidable cost. The widespread transgression of norms through varied settings leads to situations where social life becomes mostly focused on resolving concrete issues through exchanging favours, particularly in those settings ruled by coercive alternative norms (Fernandez-Dols, forthcoming). Fernandez-Dols *et al.* (1994) conclude that to relate as conocidos within formal institutions – such as those which give us credit, enforce sanctions, or give us medical treatment – is not anecdotal. The misuse becomes visible when these circumstances become the standard procedures, when only those selected through contacts are able to succeed in making claims, obtaining mortgages or getting jobs.

Although Fernandez-Dols sees relating as conocidos as the outcome of another phenomena, i.e. a defective normative system, and the intention here is to make it the core of the research, the academic accountability of this form of relating *per se* is still relevant and needs to be reviewed. The main point of convergence between research on perverse norms and this thesis is the acceptance of relating as conocidos as something unique and in need of further exploration (Ruiz-Belda and Sell-Trujillo, 1993; Fernandez-Dols *et al.*, 1994). Other explanations, such as linking this form of relating with research done on collective societies (Hofstede, 1980), do not seem to uncover its richness. For instance, if relating as conocidos would be dependent on collectivism, then its usage would be limited to favouring the in-group, regardless of the context – either formal or informal (Triandis, 1995). Empirical research conducted by Fernandez-Dols *et al.* (1994) shows that relating as conocidos is more valued within the formal context.

The divergence between the approach of Perverse Norm Theory and this thesis lies in that both are trying to answer different questions from different paradigms. The fact or verity

of the Theory of Perverse Norms touches this research insofar as both are trying to account for collective social phenomena. However, whether relating as conocidos is prominent in contexts where there is a 'perverse normative system' (Ruiz-Belda and Sell-Trujillo, 1993), does not deny its presence in other contexts. It does not explain why this form of relating prevails or acts in other cultural contexts, outside or within formalised contexts (such as business settings, institutions, and so forth). Fernandez-Dols's theory takes for granted the factuality of relating as conocidos, while this thesis attempts to look within this form of relating to uncover the ways and elements of its operation as a process.

On the other hand, the assumption of a perverse normative system touches important issues which need to be clarified at an early stage in the research. Firstly, the Theory of Perverse Norms condemns the form of relating under study to a negative ethical framework, where relating as conocidos is placed at the margins of what is normatively acceptable and legitimate. This thesis, on the other hand, does not ascribe such normative values to relating as conocidos. Rather, it follows in the vein of Foucault (1986b, 1987), who questions the assumption of norms as guides to action and the existence of an ethical standard by which subjects evaluate conduct. He refers to the *disciplined subject*, who constitutes himself in an active fashion by the practices of the self. These practices 'are nevertheless not something that the individual invents by himself. They are patterns that he finds in his culture' (Gauthier, 1987; p. 11). Disciplines are forms of relating with ourselves which assume this mode as a result of a variety of historically rationalised schemes, which shape the way of understanding and enacting our reality as human beings (Rose, 1996). Thus, the subject, rather than a unitarian entity, is seen as undertaking a multiplicity of subjectivities which are expressed through positions taken within different discursive realities (see Foucault, 1973, 1981b, 1986a and 1988). Hence, to assign the rational and disciplined individual a coherent and responsible way of action is to fall into the Enlightenment discourse of the unitary self. Against the Hobbesian postulation of an individual who needs to be subdued through an ethical framework (Clegg, 1989), a different proposal emerges: a post-structural vision of society containing positions that confer sources of power to subjects (see Leach, 1968; Humphreys and Kirtsoglou, forthcoming; Foucault, 1986b). This thesis favours such a position.

Secondly, Fernandez-Dols *et al.* (1994) take relating as conocidos within formalised contexts as an indicator of the malfunctioning of bureaucratic principles, and therefore, of institutions. Thus, we need to take into consideration the fact that bureaucratic principles,

as guarantees of distributive fairness, are spread to most business contexts – private or public. In guiding decision making, they are supposedly ensuring rationality and objectivity (see Weber, 1968). However, assumptions of rationality and fairness can be understood in a different manner.

Foucault (1986b) argues that, although institutions and laws are offered as the guarantors of liberty, they deny the experience of Liberty as a practice. Discipline, through institutions and everyday experience, appears again as a regulatory force in the functioning of society as a whole. Foucault (1986b) locates the Enlightenment as the historical moment where the subject discovered liberties and also invented disciplines. The disciplinary society has been formed in connection with historical processes of an economic, judicial, political and scientific kind. They have provided the grounds for the creation of techniques which ensured the necessity of ordering the multiple aspects of the subject (Foucault, 1975). It is in the formation of an equal judicial system, which guaranteed a system of rights, that the techniques and diffused mechanisms of power appear, creating the unequal disciplines. 'Whilst the juridical systems define juridical subjects according to universal norms, the disciplines characterise, classify and specialise; they distribute along a scale, around a norm, hierarchicise individuals in relation to one another and disqualify and invalidate' (Foucault, 1986b, p. 213).

Going back to the story of Doña Dolores and the Colonel, we see that the context, which links the characters, is provided by virtue of sharing a community from childhood to date (although they are not required to be permanently a physical part of it). As we saw through the story, the community seems to be heavily regularised. This space, apparently crowded by social norms, does not intuitively seem to be the standard formalised context which the perverse norms theory needs. However, we can see the makings of the discipline, mainly because the norms within the community are implicit codes of practice. They are regulatory but do not appear in written form. Moreover, the two characters we know of (and the possible encounters the Colonel had when taking the request further) did not perceive the request as a way of bending the rules, but rather as a chance of doing a special favour. It is the ambiguity of this perception and the subsequent activities undertaken to repay or acknowledge the favour that I find particularly interesting.

However, questions come up, such as whether the differences between an institutional (governmental or bureaucratic) context – with a written and registered set of rules imposed from the top – and a given unit of social context, such as a community – with a

more pervasive but forceful code of practice – reside simply in their normative systems and how people relate within them. One could say they are not really comparable. It is in the latter, the community, where the tensions between formalised and implicit codes of practice merge and negotiate a space of action. We shall see in the next section an elaboration on the mechanisms of power sketched out here, as well as a critical assessment of the conceptual value of networks. The distinctions between the so-called formalised and informal contexts within an organisational or management perspective will be elaborated upon further[9].

b. A Network Approach to Relating as Conocidos

In the story of Doña Dolores and the Colonel, the former approaches the latter with one clear intention, her goal is clear. She required some help in order to assure a safe and close placement for her children. She approached the appropriate person, the one she needed. She made a request, which was initially met. A possible description of Doña Dolores' way of proceeding is that, when faced with the need, she checked her network of relations and accessed someone pertinent to her request. She actively engaged in a pursuit which she knew would require some repayment. At the same time, she enhanced the Colonel's power, and increased his status in her community of friends and contacts. However, if we follow this line of thought things become confusing. Who became empowered through the request? Was it the Colonel through a public acknowledgement of his exercise of power, or was it Doña Dolores through the building of alliances? Moreover, do we understand the action taken by Doña Dolores as an active individual pursuit or as a form of practice with which she was familiar?

The literature on networks, or the act of networking, seems to throw some light on relating as conocidos. Thus, this section aims to assess the existing meanings and uses of the term 'network' within the academic literature and examine the degree to which they inform the discussion on relating as conocidos. First, I shall start addressing the questions posed

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[9] Other lines of research which estimate – or require – a link between a faulty system of normative or governmental structures and misuses of informal relations have been conducted by diverse authors, such as (i) de Soto (1989) and Chickering and Salahdine (1991), who examine the appearance of informal economies which rely primarily on family networks; (ii) Miller (1993) and Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti (1993), who explore conceptions of public citizenship; and (iii) Elster (1989) and Fiske (1991), who resort to a more structural and sociological approach in their studies on social order.

above by resorting to the literature on 'individualist networks', including the conception of networks as a 'modern' way of relating in this day and age. The notion of the 'networking society' has emerged as a substitute to a more traditional State-centred society. I shall give a brief account of this literature to see the understanding of networks which lies behind. Secondly, I shall provide a review of networks as ways of explaining relations. We shall see how networks are tools of research within a sociological tradition which understands their mapping as indicators of patterns of communications. Also, there will be a brief review on how the creation and maintenance of social networks has been favoured as a means of providing support. We shall learn here whether or not relating as conocidos can benefit from the literature on social support and the research done on social networks.

i) Individualist networks

a) The network of the manager

When looking conceptually at the term *networking*, there seems to be a wide set of assumptions which are not accounted for in the literature; in fact, networking has little conceptual value and a vast instrumental load. Traditionally, it has been prevalent in management and decision making literature. It is made reference to and applied in an organisational context: the setting is a business company and networking is what successful managers should aim to do. In my view, this perspective emphasises the utilitarian value of networking, done only with a purpose and an aim. These networks have a clear organising principle, and take the form of a static resource ready to pull out when needed. In this manner, there are people who become valuable by being in positions of power and, as such, become providers by job description on a constant basis. Hence, it makes sense to talk about 'doing politics' and 'having contacts' as an asset: accessing the net is not context-dependent or transactional. It works in one concrete line of action: those who are more powerful are more valuable and are able to provide more help. It goes from the bottom of the hierarchical scale to the top[10]. Hence, when talking about

[10] See Kenis and Schneider (1991), Heald (1983), Granovetter (1974) and Weick (1995) for more information about hierarchical structures and power relations.

networking in the management literature, the focus is mainly on (a) the verb: to network; and (b) the subject: the successful 'networker'.

Let us start with the verb. To network, according to the literature, implies (i) 'having contacts' and (ii) 'making alliances'. Within the work-related context, we see that to have contacts is an asset. We are told that contacts imply the existence of a formalised structure (Granovetter, 1974) where networks play the role of favouring or promoting a second structure, which is accepted – and even encouraged – but not acknowledged by the management corps (Greenberg and Scott, 1996). The social setting is aware of it and promotes it. It follows that networks are especially relevant within business settings because they hold a set of regulatory systems which are subjected to some sort of well established principles (see Coles, 1992; Döhler, 1991 and Pfeffer, 1992). As such, networks sustain and promote the application of some rules as a means of creating and maintaining order among their members. One's behaviour conforms to unwritten codes (Morgan, 1986). Disrupt these norms and the ordered reality of life inevitably breaks down.

Regarding the second activity, i.e. 'making alliances', the literature concludes that this activity is mainly active in circumstances where there is a scarcity of resources (see Döhler, 1991; Marin and Mayntz, 1991). We are told that allies are valuable as a route to success and they can be attained in different ways. Within the organisational setting, one way is through the formalised procedure – promotions and hiring decisions – by providing and allocating resources (Pfeffer, 1992). The alternative route to building up alliances is to do favours for others whose support you either want or need, that is, creating situations of 'interdependence' (Pfeffer, 1992)[11]. As we have seen in the story, both means can be brought together. The Colonel managed to build up alliances by allocating people. However, was the Colonel masterminding a way of achieving success? And could Doña Dolores be seen as an ally or a powerful resource that needed to be kept?

The second issue which needs to be addressed is the figure of the 'networker'. Taking

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[11] This literature states that interdependence constitutes 'the reason why nothing comes out quite the way one wants it to' (Pfeffer, 1992, p. 37). However, this quality is intrinsic to the social subject. Subjectivity is created starting from the inclusion of the Other (Merleau-Ponty and Smith, 1989). Interdependence is a starting point in social life, where power is always present. As Foucault (1986b) argues, in the analysis of society fundamental phenomena could be ultimately placed in reciprocal relations. From here, interdependence is assumed, as it is the expected consequence of everyday expressions of power.

relating as conocidos from the point of reference of the 'networker' – the one that initiates the process with the request – it is relevant to point out a narrative running through this approach: networking becomes implicitly an instrumental process for creating social order. Networking is understood as an act performed by an individual. It becomes a tool kit with the sole Machiavellian aim of serving one's interests. The 'networker' is understood to be active – moving around, making contacts – and the act of networking is evaluated for its effectiveness (Hosking and Morley, 1991). Hence, from this perspective, there is a linear act (to network) which is done by one subject (the networker) to an object (another person). The subject's point of view is assumed in reference to the other as a contact (Dachler and Hosking, 1995). This linguistic tool reflects the underlying taken-for-granted assumption that the other is fundamentally passive, s/he is 'networked upon' but cannot choose.

In short, the general picture presented through the networking literature is that of a structural distribution of power, according to a hierarchy, which ties people with powerful others. Within this system, it becomes necessary – in order to achieve a goal or resolve a problem – to either be in a powerful position or to resort to powerful individuals (Pfeffer, 1992). In this light, having power – or access to it through a net – becomes in itself a valuable resource as it becomes a bargaining chip. Hence, texts on networking present a clear elaboration on how to be a successful manager, which is immersed in discourses on 'how to gain power'.

An alternative vision of power

Networking's elaboration on undistributed power seems to correspond to Foucault's (1981a) *discourses of truth*. For Foucault, truth and right define power, constrain its dissipation and, more importantly, legitimise it. Discourses of truth enforce the mechanisms of power within an ethical framework, which regulates the practice of power by denying the subject positions and enhancing the unitary subject (Foucault, 1980, 1981a and 1986a). Therefore, the networking literature suggests that, although there is a general consent that contacts and allies can be misused, they are nevertheless essential in order to get things done (Pfeffer, 1992). Moreover, the building of a network of support through personal favours is seen as somehow illegitimate (Pfeffer, 1992). Hence, it is the assumption of the veritable non-divided subject that enhances the making of the discipline. If we considered the individual as taking a position which is transient to

her/his persona (see Potter and Wetherell, 1987), if we accounted for the relational making of power (see Baudrillard, 1987; Foucault, 1980), we could find solutions and understand the mechanisms of power within the everyday terrain. It is the position that makes the subject a 'broker' or a 'fixer' amongst various subunits (Jaques, 1976).

Moreover, the corporate reality presented by networking seems to be consistent with Foucault's (1986b, 1980) notion of disciplinary power. For Foucault, the individual is subjected to relational structures in which everything – discourses, institutions, norms and practices – work together in guiding disciplinary power. The everyday technology of power renders visible the anonymous instruments of power by objectifying the subjects to whom it is applied (Foucault, 1986b). Power does not reside in spheres like the economy or in institutions, but is rather dispersed and functions in a multitude of ways in everyday life (see Baudrillard, 1987; Kellner, 1989). Rather than a negative repressive force, power needs to be seen as a system of relations which induces individuals to conform and act in a certain way (Kellner, 1989). There is a whole network of relationships of power which operate between individuals in different sites of domination, such as the family, an educational institution, or an organisation, where relations of power are firmly set (Gauthier, 1987).

Hence, the legitimised act of networking, in both cases – the explicit use of contacts and the creation of alliances – is reduced to ways of using the 'individualistic' network. Both strategies are indicators of networking with the sole purpose of ascending through the 'juridicio-discursive model of power' (see Foucault, 1978). However, this is contested by an understanding of power which is not a possession distributed in a descending form: from the ruler towards the oppressed (see Clegg, 1989; Foucault, 1978). Power is constructed in relations of communication and founded in exchanges within discourse (Bourdieu and Thompson, 1991). Power becomes not only the tool of the oppressor but also a productive mechanism, which needs to be seen as starting at the micro-level, ascending from its use within the everyday relational domain (see Baudrillard, 1987, 1990a; Humphreys and Kirtsoglou, forthcoming).

Moreover, the relative passivity of the 'networked upon' subject, compared to the active 'networker', calls into question the conceptualisation of the subject. The individual acts within networks by accessing, stepping in and out, being active and accomplishing tasks for the benefit of the organisation. This subject needs to be seen as both subjected to institutions of power and subject to discourses, such as those imbedded by the

technologies of the self (Foucault, 1988) or what Miller (1993) calls the 'theories of the person'. These discourses are complex combinations of 'the action of imposed scarcity, with a fundamental power of affirmation' (Foucault, 1981b, p. 73). A discourse encompasses the statements of what can and cannot be said, acted or represented; it determines the making of choices only within its rules (Miller, 1993). Hence, the validity of the view on networking as an activity carried out in order to gain power (personal or institutional) needs to be questioned.

Accounting for relating as conocidos

There are various points at which we can witness networking's shortcomings in accounting for relating as conocidos. In fact, the view of this lifeless, competitive network is sustainable or 'practicable' only in situations when subjects are not able to use the formal authority of their hierarchical positions. Networks are seen as coalitions which survive over time because each element recognises a commonality of interests (see Elster, 1989).

We can picture other places, such as where the two characters of the story come from, that are shaped as highly structured societal groups. Also, there exists research which presents the idea that 'doing politics' – such as making contacts – is even more relevant outside the formalised structure of an organisation, in the 'real' world of communities (See Cohen, 1985; Goodale, 1995; Rose, 1996, and Rosenberg, Ward and Chilton, 1988). Could the Colonel be seen as just a 'contact' or an ally of Doña Dolores? There is an element of informality in the request made, as the former was not, by any means, forced to meet the request made by the latter. However, was it such a free choice? Even though the benefits for the Colonel are not that obvious when meeting the request, it is clear that the action was not just a case of 'pure good will'. For some reason, the Colonel had to be seen to be attempting to fulfil the favour – i.e. meeting the request.

Networking, as such, fails to provide the answers requested from the story. It is primarily seen as an activity explained in terms of a subject who accesses a stable network in order to increase her/his permanent source of power. As it stands, it assumes the gain of only one of the actors, the networker. The act is linguistically expressed as a continuing activity, unfinished (witness the '-ing' ending) and aimed at imposing one's own agenda. Through the story we have seen how relating as conocidos seems to encompass different

connotations, where mechanisms of power are subjected to negotiation. For example, both partners – immersed in their respective subject position – can be seen as gaining from the exchange: the Colonel by meeting the challenge, thus ascertaining his power, and Doña Dolores by having her request met. Also, although the presence of an informal structure is accounted for, networking does not include a sense of accountability when relating with others. In our story, the Colonel as much as Doña Dolores needed to publicly account for relating as conocidos. The Colonel was forced to be seen to be using his connections, and Doña Dolores was forced to repay the favour. They were both responsible in their community for acting in the right manner, for helping each other.

b) The networking society

The understanding behind the concept of networking presented above permeates the conception of a 'new' society, namely the 'networking society'. The presumption is that we are witnessing changes in society, which are only decipherable when seen within a historical perspective. It is argued that, in the 20th century, the relationship between society and the individual changed to what has been defined as a society composed of different networks (see Castells, 1996). These changes stem from an understanding of society and societal processes as no longer controlled by a central unitarian entity (Kenis and Schneider, 1991). The argument is that, due to the increased empowerment of technology, organisations and institutions of our time have become useless as mechanisms of social control and democratic representation (see Giddens, 1998). However, the assumption of a centrally-controlled individual as a starting point needs to be questioned.

The view of the networking society presents working networks as modes of activity which have deeply penetrated realms of human action. In fact, they seem to have superseded their original purpose and appear, together with globalisation, as a threat to the democratic citizen (see Castells, 1996). Although networks are supposed to increase resources and informality by promoting teamwork, they are also claimed to be disintegrating society as we know it through the fragmentation of labour[12]. By contrast, if we view a system of networks as a continuation of locally-rooted forms of relating (such as relating as

[12] It is in these settings where decisions are often made in a remarkably decentralised and informal manner, giving way to what has been called the structure of a second economy (see Castells, 1996; de Soto, 1989; Chickering and Salahdine, 1991 and Giddens, 1998).

conocidos), there is a chance to endorse a view of the subject as positioned in closely-knit relationships, woven together through personal and communal investment. Network systems then could be seen as processes, as dynamic relations, which are context-dependent (work, institutional, etc).

Furthermore, the assumption of the centrally-controlled individual and the conception of a democratic citizenship cannot be taken for granted. They need to be accounted for historically in order to find alternative routes of understanding. The construction of our reality is far too complex and rich, and the making of power has to be understood as radically dispersed (Baudrillard, 1987). It is not feasible anymore to think of a centralised level of social organisation and governance (see Baudrillard, 1990b). The democratic citizen is formed through 'modes of subjection' (Foucault, 1981b), where people are compelled to recognise their moral obligations. The subject has been historically produced to account for her/his self construction. This subject has become the central issue for the State in its need to produce a sense of oneness among an heterogeneous population. The ethics of self construction produce a capacity to draw upon moral codes to manage conduct, and it creates virtuous subjects with an unequivocal compulsion to duty (see Miller, 1993).

The networking society, rather than a new conception of a structural system, should be understood as a system based on forms of communication (Lévi-Strauss, 1965). Lévi-Strauss defined 'society' as a network of different orders which could be arranged according to different organising principles. He suggested that, by showing the kind of relationship which exists between them, we could understand how they interact amongst themselves at both synchronic and diachronic levels (Lévi-Strauss, 1977). Hence, by showing the interconnections and the kind of relationship that exists between different groups we could arrive at a mapping of social reality. Lévi-Strauss explains social unity in terms of communication, where the prime source of interaction amongst the social subject is language (Lévi-Strauss, 1969). He provides a way of understanding unity without centralisation, as it is the subject's engagement in social exchanges that binds the group together (see Harland, 1987). From this perspective, networks (or networking) are structures (or actions) grounded in the subject, who is engaged in relational processes and creates divisions and associations. It is from these divisions and units that primitive

societies were created, with individuals being far more a product of common life than its determinant[13].

A system of relating as conocidos should be understood in this light. In the story of Doña Dolores and the Colonel, we see how asking a favour from someone known is not (only) a way to simplify and guarantee an outcome. Doña Dolores' request is more a case of taking 'the more travelled path', rather than asking whoever is closest to her world of action. The Colonel, on the other hand, seems to be doing what people expect him to do. Relating as conocidos is better understood as lying at the core of the individual as a social being. It is the acknowledgement of an active agent within a social group. Relating as conocidos, as a system, has to be understood within a social setting, where resources are scarce and people are linked by kinship and a shared history. This form of application within community life could have been 'translated' by the organisational and practitioners' language into *networking*. Unfortunately, somewhere in the process the term has been transformed, and the Enlightenment discourse provides the reasoning behind this conversion (see Bewes, 1997). In this vein, this research will explore the social roots of relating as conocidos, thus making it possible to acknowledge it as a thread by which a community is shaped.

ii) Networks as systems of support

Up to this point, we have seen how networks can shed some light on relating as conocidos, when seen as a system. We first learned about the activity of networking, as an action geared towards getting rewards. We moved afterwards to a view of networks as a contemporary form of structuring a new society. We are dealing then with a contested term whose varied meanings have been explored by several disciplines. A Network is a term that incorporates different meanings. The one missing in this account is that of networks as systems of support.

This section will provide a brief overview of the different fields in which the notion of networks as support systems is developed. The interest in network research comes as a result of their increased role in understanding communities and the relationships within

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[13] See Durkheim (1897/1990), Durkheim and Mauss (1963), Mauss (1967) and Lévi-Strauss (1969, 1977).

them. These days, traditional kinship roles are diminished due to the physical displacement of their members, this being one of the reasons why networks have benefited as alternative systems of support (see Kenis and Schneider, 1991). The section will centre on two artificially made divisions, which correspond to different academic trends. First it will examine the literature related to *social networks*. Then, it will build on existing research on *social support*, which has taken the concept of network as a lens through which to look into community processes.

a) Social networks

Social networks have mainly been defined in the literature as tools for uncovering structural chains of relations within diverse societies (Wellman and Berkowitz, 1988). Within sociology this term has provided ample scope for mapping different types of relationships, from personal and intimate to work-related and instrumental (see, for example, Allan, 1979; Atheide, Adler, Adler and Atheide, 1978; Bradford, 1976; Brown, 1981). This functional value has to be acknowledged and, to a certain extent, praised. The study of social networks has provided an important instrument for explaining social organisation, but only at a descriptive level. It also has important and practical repercussions for political, policy and organisational analysis[14]. However, the cost of presenting social networks as instrumental devices has resulted in a detrimental conceptual depth of the term. Networks here continue to be objectified concepts. In looking at their structure and function the view provided remains an external one, rather than a processual understanding.

Still, research on social networks provides a tangible measure of the degree of physical proximity among members of the same or different communities (see Hage and Harary, 1996). As a tool system, it has also been used with the intention of extracting significance, such as in research which theorises on the sheer concept of community from measurements of social networks (see Bott, 1957). Also, social networks have provided a construct to measure informal order by uncovering a way to evaluate the internal 'cohesiveness' of different social settings (see Barnes, 1971; Allan, 1996). Here, a

[14] See Gillies (1998), Kenis and Schneider (1991), Klein and Milardo (1993), Marin and Mayntz (1991), Milardo (1988), Mitchell (1969) and Wellman and Berkowitz (1988).

quantification of the number of exchanges among the subjects is taken to reflect the source of cohesiveness within a community. Social networks permit a shift from geographical constraints, as the community is not forced to be confined to a physical context but to what is perceived to be 'local' (see for example Allan, 1996)[15]. Although the validity of such studies needs to be questioned, the research on networks as tools to uncover webs or patterns of communication has raised important issues.

The web analogy indicates that people are dependent on each other, and not on society in abstract (Santos, 1994). Conceptually it defends the position that most people are related by the fact that they are constantly interacting and exchanging something between each other (Klein and Milardo, 1993). As has already been explained, webs can be functional tools in that, by means of action, they reveal the internal structure of groups (Leichter and Mitchell, 1978). Furthermore, as webs are tangible and accountable they can be subjected to further dissections (Hage and Harary, 1996). We could then talk of the effective web of one subject as the one made up of those close enough to get mobilised when something is needed (Yang, 1994). The extended web would be the one accessed only through those connected to the effective one (Santos, 1994). The general assumption is that the web is a way of examining the structure in which relationships are embedded. The configuration in terms of size, composition, or interconnectedness of members is claimed to be relevant to the way the relationship is carried out, however this information is only of a structural kind. It is relevant to acknowledge that the only manner in which to uncover ways of relating is through looking at its continuous making, i.e. its processual and contextual character.

Hence, although this view on networks lacks the capacity to tease out the internal processes, it does provide maps of relations. More importantly, it accomplishes a decentralisation of the subject. Here the net is defined as the collective action of organised actors (Marin and Mayntz, 1991). In this light, a net is characterised by the predominance of informal, decentralised and horizontal relations (Elster, 1989). Still the net never operates outside power dependent relations (see Marin and Mayntz, 1991). Networks, within this significance, are not confined to institutions or closed entities. They are, by definition, open structures which have as a main characteristic the extent of their

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[15] For more information on this perspective of social networks, see Toynbee (1967), Shotter (1992), Wellman and Berkowitz (1988), Hage and Harary (1996), Bott (1957) and Barnes (1971).

coverage (King and Wickham Jones, 1999) rather than a privileged access (see Heald, 1983).

The study of social networks is relevant to relating as conocidos insofar as the latter system gives preferential treatment to people according to their relational web structure. It seems appropriate to assume that the closer the contact with a person, the more likely it is that one will be willing to request a favour or, in general, access her when needed. However, the opposite does not seem to be incorrect either. As we saw in the story of Doña Dolores and the Colonel, there are other elements which need to be accounted for. For example, Doña Dolores and the Colonel did not keep up regular or actualised contact. They knew of each other and of each other's life, but not necessarily at first-hand. Also, as explained in the story, the manoeuvring of Doña Dolores when she felt she had to repay the Colonel did not only involve her. All her relatives (close and extended) had to play a part in acknowledging the favour and in looking for ways to pay it back. Hence, it would be extremely complicated for a social network to be able to assess the depth of this form of relating (with its numerous ramifications) and the mapping of the characters involved (translated into number of nodes in the web). Also, just uncovering the structure will not provide the richness of the relations in which people engage. Issues such as, for example, why the extended relatives of Doña Dolores were also held accountable for repaying the favour would not be explained by this structural understanding of relations.

b) Social support

Social support is understood to be a particularly central characteristic in a social network. It is assumed that the result of an interconnected and healthy net of relations is positive in numerous ways for the well-being of the social subject (Duck, 1993). The assumption regarding research on social support is that there is a correlation between indicators of health and community cohesiveness (Campbell, Wood and Kelly, 1999). Networks of social support could also provide a broad reading of the processes involved in relating as conocidos. Both could be seen as informal networks of community cohesiveness. Relating as conocidos, as a system of support, can be understood as shaping a way of acting within a safety net when problems arise. Hence in the literature on social support the individual is considered within a system which provides for and shelters him, but makes him accountable (Shotter, 1992). Eventually, the subject is required to nominate a

way of contribution and work towards the gain of the community as a whole (Forsey, 1993). It is understood that, in those contexts where resources are scarce, people need to relate to each other, help each other and work towards the benefit of the group and the community as a whole (Gillies, 1998). To provide and be part of a system of support is to work for integrity and against alienation, for communal stability against individual solitude and chaos (Forsey, 1993).

However, I consider that this perspective on networks of support as a guarantee of 'integrity' and against 'solitude' is ideologically and emotionally charged. It has the loaded weight of longing for a past together with the re-invention of rural ways of life. Relating as conocidos also tackles the other side of the coin: with a network of support comes a network which constrains and enforces conduct. The Colonel might have preferred not to engage in doing favours for Doña Dolores. However, there may have been somehow a sense of duty that made him accountable in the eyes of his community. This sense of duty was strong enough to force an exchange to happen.

Social support is also commensurate with a system of relating as conocidos in that its uses can be seen as a form of surpassing and recreating social reality. In effect, relating as conocidos, as a system, does provide support and facilitate access to various sources, as we have seen through the story of Doña Dolores and the Colonel. Family sociologists and psychologists have examined how social support, available from kith and kin, is related to the internal character of families and their well-being (Grieco, 1987). Other social scientists have studied the development of personal relationships (see Adams and Allan, 1998; Duck, 1993) or have explored collectives of personal relationships and interrelations of kinship (Milardo, 1988).

Given that research in this area is rather extensive, I shall focus on one particular case relevant to the story: employment – we saw how the Colonel found a convenient placement for Doña Dolores's sons. There seems to be a link between the existence of networks of support and employment opportunities, particularly relevant within family relations. Kinship networks represent the most effective channels of providing employees with social control (Grieco, 1987). By recruiting friends and relatives of the existing workforce, the channel provides an efficient screening mechanism which produces new workers with characteristics similar to those of the existing workforce (Grieco, 1987).

Many companies claim that, in order to save time and money, the best way to recruit new staff is by word of mouth[16].

However, after the Enlightenment, with its emphasis on the social ethics of the disciplined subject – which emphasised and legitimised the universal bureaucratic hiring criteria (see Foucault, 1980; Rose, 1999) – the role of the extended family in securing employment is presumed to have declined (Allan, 1979). This is also consistent with the ample sociological research that explains the shrinking of the family to a more isolated nuclear form (Milardo, 1988).

A way of explaining this apparent contradiction is to acknowledge social networks as active but to propose that, currently, the constituent links of partial networks are largely independent of one another and do not communicate (Mitchell, 1969). Therefore, the sphere of employment in modern industrial society becomes isolated from the sphere of the family which has lost most of its traditional functions (Parsons, 1960). Also, kinship seems to play a role in small-scale societies, whilst in more complex social structures it is only likely to provide a basic structure underpinning social relations (Turner, 1971)[17].

In short, empirical evidence shows that companies prefer to use informal channels, and the workforce is permanently accessing their social networks as means of recruitment. On the other hand, the evidence forgets to contemplate the reasoning behind it. People will usually not recommend just anybody – unless they are head-hunters and are explicitly requested to do so. To recommend someone is an act by which actors create links of indebtedness with each other and are indebted themselves to the institutions or any other referential context. At the same time, by doing favours they also increase their prestige within the company and within their own personal circles in helping to cover placements for the organisation. Going back to the story of Doña Dolores and the Colonel, we clearly see how using the network and requesting favours implies a strong liability on both sides. For Doña Dolores, to show gratitude in the form of the right repayment was just as relevant as it was for the Colonel to put his name at stake by recommending the sons of

[16] It does not come as a surprise to hear these days of companies in the City of London which reward those employees who introduce a friend into the company. This does not emerge from documented sources, but is rather the result of informal conversations with City workers from the financial and consultancy sectors.

[17] For a broader view of the issues presented here, Castells (1996) provides a satisfactory elaboration within a wider socio-political frame.

his acquaintance. Moreover, it could be argued that the placement provided by the Colonel for the two sons of Doña Dolores touched two of the most rigid institutions (the army and the church). It is relevant that, through his position, the Colonel was able to provide such a placement, and it shows how, when seen as a system, relating as conocidos links different social worlds. However, we can safely assume that the relation of the two characters, as well as the possible channels accessed by the Colonel when providing the means of fulfilling the favour requested, relied on a horizontal system of contacts.

There is also a valid trend of research which considers the use of social networks as enhancers of life experiences within communities of action. Here networking is a process of making sense of, and accounting for, people's intersubjectivity, where actors create their contexts and are recreated by them. Realities are socially constructed, constraints are conventional and therefore subject to agreement (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). Actors must strive to achieve a working consensus and this is done through social processes such as networking (Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti, 1993).

A Network as a structure of support is no longer viewed as a one-way-street but as a meaning-making process carried out through joint co-ordinated action. In reduced spheres of action, such as small communities, i.e. settings where social support is locally rooted, people are constantly confronted with the perspective of the other (see Barnes, 1971). They face and hear each other and are compelled to construct a shared understanding in and about their relations (see Ramella and Attride-Stirling, 2000). In the realm of the public sphere, social order, rather than being constructed through 'power over', is understood as a social process of relating on the basis of conversation (see Elias, 1994; Shotter, 1992). Networks of support provide a way by giving voice to the multiple perspectives of the participants, making it possible to seek out, recognise and respect differences as different but equal (see Miller, 1993).

Briefly, one of the shortcomings of the theoretical paradigm of social support is that, although the acknowledgement of the interdependence of social actors is relevant, it carries too far its instrumental value towards causality. Moreover, when web structures are used to illustrate different relational realms of the individual the matter becomes confusing. The methods of exchange and their number might be considered as indicators of strength and continuance in a relationship, but these issues have no explanatory value *per se*. Questions such as why they happen, how the relationship is approached and how the support is built amongst community participants are not answered.

3. FRAMING THE RESEARCH WITHIN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

This thesis seeks to look at a relational process and how it is worked out within a concrete setting. Relating as conocidos starts by being transactional and equivocal; these two characteristics are in themselves enough to allow research in this area. The task of dealing with related concepts from different academic disciplines has provided a building block from which research can begin on this form of relating – in a context and as a process.

The core of this research involves an intersubjective space, through which an interaction shapes the construction of a way of relating. Therefore, as the object of study is a form of relating socially, I shall take this form of relating as the unit of research, the starting point. In this section I intend to establish the theoretical paradigm that guides this thesis. A paradigm is understood as the equivalent of a world vision, a conceptual frame to order life. It aims to make a coherent unity out of a variety of theories and academic positioning, thereby abstracting their underlying principles.

There is space for socio-psychological research in relating as conocidos. Social theorists are a product of their time and their research concerns are also a consequence of their surroundings and their life history (see Giddens, 1990). Hence, the way they have influenced the development of the social sciences can be quite removed from what they originally intended (see Farr, 1996). However, this research has been informed by the input of many social theorists. This account will start from the very foundations of the discipline of social psychology to move afterwards to more recent contributions from which the research benefits.

To start with, Heider was one of the first, within the discipline of social psychology, to give relevance to interpersonal relations (Heider, 1958). He was strongly influenced by Wundt, who considered social psychology as the science of analysis of everyday experience in its ultimate elements (Heider, 1983). Heider wanted to account for the psychology of common sense, to explain how we interpret our behaviour and that of others. His relational phenomena aimed to include the 'object' within the environment which expressed it (Heider, 1983). In this manner, the study of relating as conocidos, following the path taken by the theory of interpersonal relations, aims to unearth an object – which happens to be a way of relating – and discern its parts without denying the process and emptying it of its content. Relating as conocidos exists out there. It is a

socially enacted – though not acknowledged – form of action, which has to be understood in reference to the social context in which it finds expression.

The subject in this form of relating needs to be understood as active. S/he re-creates reality and comes across as able, within the tradition of symbolic interactionism, to have the primacy of action (Cohen, 1994). Individuals' conduct is initiated by their perceptions or consciousness of themselves and of their relations with society. Reflexivity then, plays a central part and is accomplished by the subject's capacity to take the position of the other (Mead, 1934a/1962). This is done through the expression of language as the mediator and initiator of intersubjectivity (see Mead, 1934b/1964; Saussure, 1974). Social interaction is taken as the means of self-construction, where the subject is developed and nurtured through its relation to others. It is that interaction which brings about and stimulates reflexivity (Cohen, 1994). It is not about compliance and resistance, but about re-creation and the possibility of social action.

Hence, interaction also allows the possibility of agency. Any spoken, vague, thought presupposes a communication organised between individuals (Páez, Valencia, Morales and Ursua, 1992). Interaction becomes the prelude to a sense of self (Mead, 1934a/1962; Vygotsky, 1981; Wittgenstein, 1987). Intersubjectivity informs subjectivity and meaning, or signification is relative and dependent on context (see Saussure, 1974). Meaning comes about through historical processes, because it is subjected to processual change and embedded in culture (Foucault, 1986b). Hence, social processes are constantly creating, maintaining, and reproducing (i) the way people perceive themselves, (ii) the way they relate to each other, and moreover (iii) the forms and contents by which their reflective self is manifested (Mead, 1934a/1962; Vygotsky, 1981).

Social psychology should be seen as the science aiming to theorise about the practice of living. As a discipline, it can be seen as lying at a crossroad between biography and history (Páez *et al.*, 1992), where the subject and culture meet. Its task is the reconstruction of a fragment of social reality which, because it is social and symbolic, is mediated through language (see Saussure, 1974). In a sense the relevance of the discipline, and therefore of my topic, lies precisely in its non-relevance by placing customary experiences at its centre (see Ichheiser, 1949) and looking at the 'seen but unnoticed aspects of everyday life' (Featherstone, 1992, p. 159). Social processes need to be looked at by seeing how they are related to the cultural structure in which they are situated (DaMatta, 1991). Within this tradition, my task will be that of uncovering the

social process underlying relating as conocidos, which is implicitly based (as any form of relating) in the interpersonal domain and anchored to the intersubjectivity of the social actor.

Thus, this way of relating socially is situated at the interplay of structures and subjects. Social structures, as cultural symbols, are relevant (see Cohen, 1994). They partly produce meaning and are subject to change as a consequence of subjects' expression of their reality. Relating as conocidos assumes a subject, a partner, engaged in her/his reflexivity. By looking at interactive processes, the researcher can extract an emerging pattern. In looking at codes of practices through a contextualised form of relating, the concern of this research is to relate the latter to the system in which it is embedded and thus attempt forms of explanation which will not be necessarily context dependent.

Social interaction happens in everyday life. The subject's capacity to drive towards social action is related to subjectivity and power (Foucault, 1981b). Both are understood as recreations of discourses and narratives that are, at the same time, subjective and subjected (Attride-Stirling, 1998). The multiple expressions of power create different subject positions within each relevant discourse. Multiple subjectivities are tied together and constitute agents through the subjective experience of identity. The historical continuity of the subject positions and the embodied discourses give sense to present subject positions (Moore, 1994).

It is within the observation of social life as it is manifested around us that the subject learns about different forms of relating, appears to conform to, and resist, norms. S/he can engage in disguises and appearances, as ways of constructing outside of the real self and turning into the 'performing self' (Moore, 1994; Baudrillard, 1990b). There are ways of engaging in mechanisms of resistance; Baudrillard (1987) presents us with seduction as a way of 'withdrawing from the visible order'. He introduces reality as subjected to mechanisms of production, which perpetually reproduce discourses of need, which again become the preconditions for increasing power (Baudrillard, 1987). The counterpart of production are the strategies of seduction (Baudrillard, 1990b). Seduction has to do with rituals, with engaging in social games that have their own rules and charms, and take place at the level of appearance (Baudrillard, 1990b; Kellner, 1989). Seduction represents a strategy of appearances which opposes, and has the quality to break down, relations and mechanisms of power (Baudrillard, 1990b).

Actors' interpretations of the material world, and the kinds of activities they perform in a socially structured space, are governed by their particular position within social relations and dominant cultural discourses (Bourdieu, 1990, 1977). The subject engages in relations following a time and a tempo (Bourdieu, 1977). These relations are social practices and, as such, they are regulated and played out through strategies of action, rather than static rules. Moreover, the particularity of discourses is that they are practically and performatively, as well as discursively, maintained (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990). The capacity to engage in different strategies within a symbolically structured space requires practical knowledge of how to proceed within that space, of what should and should not be done (Moore, 1994). Thus, the development of the self and of self-awareness is thus both discursively and practically produced (Moore, 1994).

Summing up, I have presented a social process, a way of relating that is embedded in a cultural system. It is enacted within a context. The first stage has been to acknowledge the presence of social actors. They are performers and players, existing in discourses, within the setting of social action. Moreover, social action is the processual engagement of actors within their context, who are positioned within the structured scripts of a given community. The subject is not only an actor, s/he also chooses the cast and the performance in question. S/he does so by interactions guided by the need for communication. The notion of communication here is wide, as it includes verbal and non-verbal forms (Leach, 1976). All of these elements make patterns of interpretation for those who maintain them; they are sets to be read and decoded as symbolic expressions of reality.

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This chapter has provided an overview of the topic of this thesis, namely *relating as conocidos*. With the aid of a narrated instance of it (the story of Doña Dolores and the Colonel), the chapter has discussed the extent to which some constructs within the social psychological literature inform aspects of relating as conocidos. These referential thoughts and trends of research emerge as valid yet parallel to the form of relating under study; they provide answers to questions different from that posed in this thesis.

Therefore, if the research were concerned with why relating as conocidos is still prevalent in Western society, the problem would have been approached from a more sociological

and structural perspective. Society would be understood as being conformed of a set of norms which act over agency-less individuals who struggle to find ways of getting around an imposed normative system. Here, the Theory of Perverse Norms would have been relevant. Relating as conocidos would have been understood as the necessary component of a badly-evolved, malfunctioning institutional setting, where the structure and organisation of society is weakened and corrupted by this way of relating. However, this thesis does not ascribe to the assumption of the unitary self and thus does not opt for such an ethical standpoint regarding relating as conocidos. Moreover, rather than taking it for granted, this thesis seeks to focus on the elements involved in relating as conocidos *as a process*.

This research could also have been guided by an interest in networking. Here, the networker is seen to achieve goals by networking upon passive subjects, thus increasing his so-called permanent power. The activity of networking demands an isolated subject who chooses to engage in relations with others. The network is seen as a static resource to 'tap on' when needed and only in the pursuit of individual benefit. Relating as conocidos, on the other hand, places the emphasis on a *reciprocal* activity, which needs to be embedded in a social context.

Relating as conocidos could also be approached from the perspective of networks as systems of support, which promotes the idea of subjects in dynamic systems of interdependence, where the individual's action depends on the interlocking behaviour and the social context where others in the network are placed. However, the literature does not acknowledge important consequences related to interactional exchanges, and it neglects the processes involved in relations such as requests or approaches. This action, and the fact that through it, an engagement of *reciprocation* is established, is one of the elements that fails to be addressed by the literature on networks of support.

The chapter provides a common bedrock from which to start thinking about relating as conocidos. It also proposes the research problem as a relevant case for study within the social psychological tradition. The next chapter provides a focused theoretical account of the elements highlighted in this chapter.

II

FRIENDSHIP, RECIPROCATION AND PRACTICE
TOWARDS A THEORETICAL ARTICULATION

The approaches to relating as conocidos reviewed in the previous chapter posed interesting questions, but they failed to provide answers to the issues explicitly pointed out through the story of Doña Dolores and the Colonel. However, the investigation of these approaches made explicit the need for a theoretical handling of relating as conocidos. This chapter aims to deliver it. Again, as before, the story provided (see Chapter I) will guide the exposure of this form of relating. Therefore, we have passed from giving hints on the issues involved, to attempting to deal with them theoretically. A comprehensive understanding of the way in which this form of relating is actually conducted and understood will be the final outcome of the thesis. However, at this stage, we need to take a further and more focused look at those issues which make it particular.

Why do people relate as conocidos? It could be said that, as people scan the environment for effective pathways to handle a problem they face, they would be likely to relate as conocidos as a facilitating resource. It speeds up problem-solving processes at a low cost and ultimately encourages personal interactions. However, relating as conocidos seems to be more than bartering or simply a matter of exchanging favours. It is regulated in a concise manner. In the story we witnessed how modes of exchange need to be taken as part and parcel of wider processes which seem to involve tradition and reproduction of codes of conduct. Relating as conocidos appears to require forms of understanding which are far more intricate than what could be achieved following a pragmatic socio-economic approach grounded in social exchange.

Recapturing what was hinted at in the previous chapter, one point made clear was that relating as conocidos needs to be seen as a process that requires two people in different subject positions: one asking something from another. Let us call the subject position of the person putting forward a request, that of the *appealer*; we can then call the subject position of the person dealing with the request – the one challenged with doing the favour – that of the *provider*. In our story, the Colonel would be in the position of the provider,

and Doña Dolores in the position of the appealer. We saw, after the story, how there were three broad points being made which highlighted the particularity of relating as conocidos.

The first question raised (Q_1) had to do with what enabled the characters in the story to relate as conocidos. The most obvious answer would be either because they were 'friends', or because they 'knew' each other. I mentioned briefly the assumptions underlying the claim of friendship. Within these assumptions we can ask, on the one hand, what does it take to acknowledge a 'relation' with someone? Or, when does the process of 'knowing someone' become 'having a friend'? The first section of this chapter will deal with the research conducted on friendship, in order to extract its principles and understandings. We shall see how the process of exchange in relating as conocidos starts off by calling on friendship.

A second question posed (Q_2) enquired about the criteria used by the appealer in order to choose a certain provider; or, how the former attempted to restore the balance with the provider. This question is a complex one. We are here trying to understand how an everyday transaction takes place and what issues are involved. We know through the story that the appealer chose the provider only after considering the request that needed to be granted. However, the provider answered and, through the answer, the favour done became a transaction. We saw how the appealer failed to reciprocate, and somehow the transaction was never balanced up. The second section of the chapter will tackle issues on reciprocity. We shall look at gift theory and reciprocity in search of possible ways of assessing the process of transaction in relating as conocidos.

Finally, a third question (Q_3) which came up had to do with the reasons the person who occupied the subject position of the provider had when choosing to relate as conocidos – and thus, in occupying that position. This question refers to the grounds which made the *provider* grant the favour, or answer the challenge made by the *appealer*. We are left wondering whether it was because the provider expected to be paid back in an appropriate manner. It is also plausible to consider other issues, such as the separate need – of the people occupying both positions of provider and appealer – to maintain a certain level of prestige within the context of which both were part. It might also just be part of the way things are done within the community. This question will be tackled in the third section of the chapter, which will deal with Bourdieu's (1977) understanding of practice. We shall see whether relating as conocidos can be seen under this perspective and what are the issues at stake.

Hence, a theoretical elaboration on friendship, reciprocity and practice will provide the theoretical building blocks of the process of relating as conocidos. The chapter will present these theoretical contributions with the aim of clarifying issues – rather than providing answers – relating to the three questions raised above. Thus, by dissecting the process of exchange between the Colonel and Doña Dolores, the games of 'seduction' (Baudrillard, 1990b) played by the characters will become apparent. This dissection will help in the uncovering of the ambiguity of the transaction (Baudrillard, 1987). It also will show how both characters within their ascribed subject positions attempt to achieve some form of balance. The assumption is that, in this process of balancing, we shall be able to see the play of cultural codes and the strategic realm where agency gains space. In a way, only these two characters could have acted out this relationship within their context but, moreover, they were both the only qualified masters in doing so. It is only because they were acquainted with their codes of practice, on the one hand, and their common past, on the other, that they were entitled to relate to each other in the way they did.

Thus, the first moment to start acknowledging this form of relating is when Doña Dolores contacts the Colonel. In this plane the friendship is called upon, where the two people occupying the subject positions of the appealer and provider meet and set the scene for the process of the relational exchange to take place. As we are trying to account for a process, it is not possible to separate domains of action. Hence, there is continuity building up, where the next step to be taken in the relational process corresponds to the second question raised: the reciprocation. These moments – the call on friendship and the reciprocation – mark the temporal process of the relation, starting when the contact is made, when one subject reaches another seeking a conocido. In order to build a general frame, normalised practices (Foucault, 1987; Bourdieu, 1990) could become a lens through which to look into relating as conocidos. In this chapter I shall propose a further focus on the accountability of relating as conocidos within a social context. I shall start by presenting a discussion on relationships, but shall finish with a theoretical look at practice. The chapter ends with a tentative framework for understanding relating as conocidos as a practice.

1. THE FAÇADE OF FRIENDSHIP

As shown by the characters in our story, a loose sense of friendship appears to be a precondition for relating as conocidos, a requirement when the process starts. Moreover, after the claim of amity – and once the request is met – gratitude enforces the friendship, as a sense of closeness. To be able to account for relating as conocidos is more than symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986); the general understanding is that those who relate as conocidos are either potential friends or people who used to be friends. The relationship is regulated on those terms and with the understanding that the deal will force a commitment among the actors which could be activated in the future; a pact between friends.

Starting a relationship with a conocido requires having some form of 'removed connection' –i.e. some previous knowledge or association – with the person who will take the subject position of the provider. This relational connection between the two actors seems to be enough to enforce action. The favour is done in the name of something intangible and elusive which cannot be pinpointed as a specific commodity but is enacted maintaining a certain code that is directing a process. It is done in the name of the family or a common friend. The relevance of the common anchor for the people taking the two subject positions proves to be enough to enforce the favour.

However, can 'friends' relate as conocidos? The answer to this question resides, to certain extent, in the ambiguity of the form of relating under study. One could argue that a 'friend' could not relate as conocidos (i.e. by requesting or conceding a favour) as s/he would take up the position of provider or appealer out of care and trust. On the other hand, there is a contradiction, as it could be said that, generically, relating as conocidos implies a friendship, although it might not be the most intimate one to begin with. What is friendship, after all? If you ask a favour of someone and they grant it, are they not 'friends'? They certainly behaved in a friendly manner. In many instances they might have gone well out of their way to help, such as breaching formalised channels of action. Only a true friend will do such things for one's sake, who else?: a conocido.

Any form of relationship is created by two individuals who come to occupy certain subject positions (Foucault, 1973). These positions anchor them within a process loaded with some linguistic, cultural, human and individual baggage, but which nevertheless can proceed, through their interaction, to create a substantial shared understanding of the

world (see Duck, 1994; Foucault, 1988). The cultural understanding of what the relation 'means' will guide them in developing it according to the codes established within their context (Bauman, 1973; Bourdieu, Chamboredon, Passeron and Krais, 1991). In the case of relating as conocidos, they will find out what is expected of one another through engaging in challenges (see Baudrillard, 1987; Bourdieu, 1977). They will make their form of relating 'real' and carry it through. Hence, it is required that both partners share the same cultural understanding of the processes and codes involved; otherwise misunderstandings and inappropriate uses or demands can easily happen (see Duck, 1973, 1991; Baudrillard, 1995).

The form of relation which is most strongly founded in considerations of negotiated processes is that of friendship (Fehr, 1996). Friendship is generally seen as a process started by two partners who meet each other. This process starts with 'being friendly' and goes through to 'becoming friends'. The prevailing perception of friendship is that of a non-hierarchical way of relating outside of dependant power relations (see Foucault, 1987). By relying on a process, surely at first there must be some elements in common with relating as conocidos. Among these elements, there is an unremitting checking and building up of relations of trust, which are in many ways reflected as relationships of power (Foucault, 1988). This mutuality of exchanges is constructed through the continuous play of seduction and the posing of challenges which need to be absorbed and played upon by the subjects through the relational process (Baudrillard, 1987, 1990b).

Friendship, as a phenomenon, has more of a relational component than a categorical one. Friendships are dynamic and subject to cycles but, overall, they have a strong element of trust, requiring a process of servicing, contact and loyalty (see Rawlins, 1992; Porter and Tomaselli, 1989; Fehr, 1996). Through friends we learn how to relate to others in social life. Moreover, life satisfaction derives to some extent from having personal relationships, close and intimate ones (Klein and Milardo, 1993). Friendships have a strong role in providing and forming identities as well as in transforming and reorganising meanings (see Duck, 1994; Adams and Allan, 1998). Hence, in getting to 'know more about someone', our comprehension of ourselves may be modified by our interactions with that person.

The importance of the context within the development of friendships has to be highlighted. Research shows that class location is a core element within people's social and economic environment and, as such, plays a part in fashioning friendship behaviour

(Duck, 1993). Friendships seem to allow expressions of subjectivity by appearing to be separated from people's established social positions (Willmott, 1987). Yet, because friends tend to be essentially of similar backgrounds and share equivalent worldviews and values, in practice they actually tend to provide legitimisation and support for these positions.

Personal relationships are sustained and based on cultural forms. There exists research which considers friendships as a framed contract where rules and scripts are rooted within a socio-economic organisation (Allan, 1979). Every relationship can be specified by the shape of the boundaries, the topography and landscape of the social fields (Duck, 1973, 1993; Adams and Allan, 1998). The form friendship takes is influenced by social 'guidelines'; the boundaries we construct are fashioned socially and economically. Culture and society, as fields where relationships are contextualised, affect individuals by creating the need to deal with dialectical pressures and requirements created by the friends (see Rawlins, 1992; Porter and Tomaselli, 1989; Duck, 1993). The boundaries can be conceived as the parameters of socially accepted behaviour and exchange within the given form of relationship.

As mentioned, relating as conocidos starts to work under the assumption of friendship, or closeness, as a precondition which is mutually maintained and developed throughout the process of exchange of the two people taking the positions of *provider* and *appealer*. In this process the two members are also transformed to some degree by the process of relating. Two actors are involved in the transaction: one requesting or challenging through strategies of seduction – taking up the subject position of the appealer – and one being asked or challenged – taking the subject position of the provider. The *appealer* will be the one putting forward the allegation of friendship. The *provider*, by receiving the request – and accepting the challenge – is implicitly acknowledging the claimed relation. In fact, it is more than an acknowledgement, it becomes real. This is best expressed by Shotter (1992, p. 29) when he says 'in everything I say, I also make a claim to sincerity, justice, truthfulness, beauty and so forth – a claim that will occasion a response'. The critical problem relies on comprehending the meaning system of the other person insofar as it relates to her/his cultural codes. This system will be neatly formed by culture and therefore by social conventions (Elias, 1994). Socially constructed conventions are the product of social organisation, as opposed to timeless objective facts. Hence, whatever the degree of consensus among the members, the fate of the

partners is related to the concerns and motives of this social organisation, or historical context (Klein and Milardo, 1993).

Let us go back once more to the story of Doña Dolores and the Colonel. We learn through the story that the feelings of Doña Dolores towards the Colonel were – to say the least – ambiguous. She had always behaved in a friendly manner towards him, and as the space where they both engaged in relations during childhood was rather limited, we could think of them as friends through need, rather than choice. However, according to Baudrillard's (1990b) games of seduction and challenges, to behave in a friendly manner is certainly a form of friendship. Also, by sharing the same contextual code, the Colonel was able to interpret without any doubts the request posed by Doña Dolores. The extent of this interpretation enforced the doing of a favour, but also it provided a way out once the situation was seen to be unbalanced. The socially constructed conventions enforced a friendship between the characters (by assuming one in the first place and by allowing the potential engagement in relations of trust), but it also provided codes to establish the way forward – and the way out – when relating as conocidos, by establishing the boundaries of socially accepted behaviour between the two characters.

Friendship theories provide ample input into how those who relate as conocidos carry out the process of exchange between each other. However, since friendship studies have generally focused on dyads of friends, they tend to miss the big picture: informal ties like friendships have an impact on issues of social division and political advantage (Duck, 1977, 1993). The collective impact of how the different relationships are worked out and related within a cultural context is often ignored. A reading of these elements can provide understandings of whatever the dominant pattern of their interactional context is. Moreover, the analysis of patterns of social interactions can also reveal information about other structural processes and practices (Bourdieu, 1990; Bourdieu *et al.* 1991). The nature and content of their relationship is likely to be influenced not only by time (as a process) and variability (as the mode of interaction) but more importantly by other ties within their social realms. Acknowledging these factors is necessary in order to reach a proper understanding of relating as conocidos.

2. REGULATING THE EXCHANGE

In this section I shall explain how relating as conocidos is worked out by seeing how the exchange is regulated. However, this task is a complex one, since by trying to dissect social processes we can easily fall into deterministic explanations. The section builds upon theories of reciprocation and gift giving, which are borrowed from the discipline of anthropology. These theories are, however, based on studies of 'primitive' and remote societies, whilst the context and topic of this study is of a contemporary nature. However, these studies become relevant because they immerse the activity of exchange within a system and a societal context. By contrast, other theories which deal with similar concepts of reciprocation, such as social exchange theory, the psychological contract and equity theory, fail to provide explanations anchored and accountable within a context.

When comparing a transaction made when relating as conocidos with a client relation in a service setting, we find that in the latter case there is a formal relation guided by market exchange conventions where the provider (seller) has to perform in order to keep the business going (Fernandez-Dols, forthcoming). In the case of relating as conocidos, there is not a perception of trading action; rather it is seen as a form of camaraderie with no formal obligation but a moral one – i.e. within an ethical framework. This ethical enforcement is so intangible that the action cannot be said to be initiated by an individual's will, but by groups of moral selves that carry out the exchanges (Mauss, 1967). Moreover, it contains a combination of interest and disinterest, of freedom and constraints, and the persons who enter the exchanges do so as incumbents of subject positions and 'do not act' on their own behalf (Parry, 1986; Moore, 1986).

Gift theory is the most relevant academic enquiry on these concerns, and the concept that the theory sets out to study is possibly the closest contribution to a system where relating as conocidos takes part. Their main point of overlap is that the basic elements of reciprocity are present in both systems, although the object of exchange is different (i.e. favours instead of gifts). This commonality raises fascinating possibilities that will be acknowledged throughout this section. Hence, although an object of exchange might not be established when relating as conocidos, the fact that the prestation (Mauss, 1967) provides regulations, tempos of friendships and has symbolic meaning (Bourdieu, 1977) is very relevant for the scope of this thesis.

a. The Debate on Reciprocation

Gift theory is based on the principle of reciprocation, inasmuch as gifts are considered transmitters of something else. They are the objects through which relating is regulated, favours are accounted for and acknowledgements are reciprocated. The theory is confusing concerning one central issue: there is no consensual positioning amongst the authors on what is theoretically at stake with the concept of reciprocation[18]. The centrality of the arguments surrounding gift-giving is whether the action is mainly disinterested or based on equal reciprocation. The simplicity of the dichotomy should not be taken lightly. The processes involved in gift-giving offer potential readings, such as freeing subjects from their assumed economic soul and seeing intention as motivated by individualistic self-minded aims. Taking this understanding of gift-giving as a way of balancing exchanges, we have to assume human beings as constrained by issues of power, where relationships are hierarchically dependent and implicit in the way we relate to each other.

So is reciprocity an empirical fallacy, an anthropological assumption or an original theory? According to Malinowski, the range of transaction in the reciprocity of gift-giving goes along a continuum from 'pure gifts' to 'real barter', where 'the savage is as cunning as the civilised businessman' (Malinowski, 1932, p. 177). His legacy seems to identify the exchanges involved as essentially dyadic transactions between self-interested bodies, where obligations to reciprocate are kept, as long as the chain of gifts and counter-gifts benefits both sides equally. This interpretation is also consistent with that of Leach (1976), who claims that the exchange is not based on a speculative venture, but rather on certain returns that are quite specifically recounted. Lévi-Strauss's (1965) model of generalised exchange is based on a more indirect system of reciprocity, which leaves room for a presupposed expansion of trust and credit (c.f. Leach, 1970). Building on the Lévi-Strauss model, Blau and Duncan (1967) acknowledge this by assuming the same pattern of exchange but bringing power into the equation; hence, where the exchange itself is not balanced, the deficit is compensated for by an increment in power to the creditor (see Parry, 1986). As mentioned in the

[18] See Mauss (1967), Parry (1986), Malinowski (1932), Lévi-Strauss (1965) and Sahlins (1972).

previous chapter, these chains of power relations are also present when relating as conocidos, where the one in the position of owing will be eager to restore the equilibrium.

The implicit thread through the theory of the gift seems to be the notion that 'gift-giving' is an act to be reciprocated in an equivalent manner. In the case of an exchange of favours when relating as conocidos, the equivalent idea prevails: while doing/giving, the provider is expecting something back, s/he is even 'investing' in the other, who becomes potential capital. This implies the consequent denial of the principle of the pure gift, and the cynical belief that people always have a personal interest in mind when engaging in an act of giving. Society is created by, and its cohesion results from, an endless sequence of exchanges in which everyone seeks their own advantage, however those exchanges are conceived (Parry, 1986).

However, Mauss (1967) sparked off a different perspective regarding gift-giving. He suggested that the gift, in itself, is empowered by a spirit (the Hau) that contains the essence of the donor. This essence compels the recipient to reciprocate. Although the concept of the spirit of the gift has always been controversial, Mauss's insight into the implications of engaging in gift-giving is a valid one. It implies an acknowledgement that objects create bonds between persons and uncovers subjects relating to each other through gifts. He establishes a continuum about the way humans engage in exchanges, tracing back the modern historical contract as being reminiscent of the primitive gift exchange. This continuum starts with the total prestation, in which the group engages in various non-economic transactions, where object giving is just one of them. A second stage is gift exchange between 'moral' persons who represent groups, and this leads finally to the commodity exchange between independent individuals in modern societies (Mauss, 1967).

The notion of making a distinction between people and things lies at the core of reciprocation and gift-giving. This constructed dichotomy becomes clear when acknowledging that the person participates in the object; the gift creates an enduring bond between people (Parry, 1986). Moreover, there is an implicit contradiction, as we have learned to relate to possessions as markers of utilities, opposed to disinterested giving. As Mauss (1967) says, since the things of this world are seen as antithetical to the person's true self, the separation of persons from things becomes a precondition of market exchange. The ideology of a disinterested gift and, in the same manner, the

ideology of the disinterested favour, emerges as a consequence of a forceful ideology of interested exchange. They are made reference to throughout the same continuum, or rather as the two sides of the same coin. However, Mauss proposes acknowledging the idea of economic self-interest as a societal invention where, given the spiteful reaction towards interested exchange, the mistrust of the disinterested gift (or favour) is only to be expected (Parry, 1986).

Therefore, once again Mauss's understandings on gift-giving and reciprocation can shed some light on the mechanisms of exchange when relating as conocidos. It seems that the 'disinterested' act (of gift-giving or favour doing) has to be made with reference to the self-interested market economy. The implicit reading is that only in more affluent societies can people afford to engage in disinterested acts. As the economy becomes disembedded from society, economic relations become differentiated from other types of social relations (see Van Bavel, 2000). Hence, the transactions appropriate to each form of relation become ever more polarised in terms of their symbolism and ideology (Mauss, 1967).

However, other theoretical contributions point to the opposite direction, where gifts have passed from their original function of cementing established social relations to become a more instrumentalised object. One plausible explanation is the role played by an anonymous individualist society, the outcome of modernisation (Krige and Krige, 1943; Gulliver, 1969). A way of combining both theoretical positions is to see gift-giving as relevant for various reasons. For example, Fortes (1949, p.120) emphasised the political function of gift exchange and reciprocity in maintaining the social equilibrium and also made explicit the 'case of the formal gift exchange as carried out mainly between affines'. Sahlins (1972) also suggested that the distinction between gift exchange and commodity exchange should not be seen as a bipolar opposition, but rather as the extremes of a continuum where the determinant is kinship distance: people tend to exchange gifts among kin and commodities among non-kin. Hence, the net disinterested act of giving, or doing favours, can gain different significance depending on whether we are in a society based on kinship relations, where the possibility of the disinterested act gains weight, or in a class based society, where commodities are exchanged (Gregory, 1980).

b. Reciprocation in Relating as Conocidos

For the purpose of this thesis, the relevance of gift-giving comes as a powerful insight into how an exchange is regulated amongst two people. Particularities need to be addressed, such as: how is the first gift given? What are its implications? How is the equivalence amongst the exchanges worked out? Who establishes the value and how is it done? Reciprocation could be seen as a central part of regulating processes when relating as conocidos. The realm of interaction, made by the two exchanging subjects, ties in nicely with the elements of reciprocation tackled by gift theory. However, the relevance of relating as conocidos is in the transactional exchange, and in how this transaction has its implications in the public and societal world.

Let us take again the story of Doña Dolores and the Colonel. The transaction is carried out with a specific understanding, where the provider engages in a situation which can be publicly sanctioned, as it could be associated, in many instances, with fraudulent activities. This implication can permanently be made explicit by the provider, who could remind the appealer of the unusualness of behaving in such a way, and which is only done 'because it is you' or 'because you are a friend of'. Thus, during the moment of the exchange there are various forms of challenges and affirmations of power. Firstly, the appealer challenges the ability of the provider. The Colonel would need to ascertain his prestige. As it happens, the difficulty of his endeavour when trying to meet the request cannot be evaluated by the appealer. Hence, the provider can create, if needed, an illusion of power. The appealer, Doña Dolores, turns to the provider as an expert in an area where she has neither access nor knowledge. Doña Dolores is forcing a relationship in which the provider is being evaluated in terms of liability and power, where there is no an explicit relation of friendship, but rather a pretension of it.

Here again, understanding the relational exchange of conocidos as a form of reciprocation would suggest the immediate advantage of the donor or provider over the appealer. A hierarchical relation is created, though 'whether this superiority implies political control over the recipient or whether it merely indicates a gain of prestige on the part of the giver are matters in which the individuals systems vary' (Shotter, 1992; p. 10). These cultural variations are mainly responsible for delineating how this form of relating is going to be worked out in the future. Whether relating in such a way turns out to be a prestigious or strategic move, it implies an enforcement, which is marked through power. I have already discussed, in the previous chapter, how power needs to

be seen as a productive force in the construction of relations based on discursive positions (see Bourdieu *et al.*, 1991; Foucault, 1987) negotiated in everyday life (see Baudrillard, 1987, 1990a). Therefore, the initial appealer will have to answer the counter-challenge by showing respect and an unequivocal implicit recognition.

Research examining kinship shows that distinctions of reciprocity are made in terms of the type of kinship relation between the subjects in the exchange. In this manner, reciprocity is regarded as a way of distinguishing kin from non-kin (Gulliver, 1969) or the degree of closeness amongst the partners. This could also act in distinguishing relating as conocidos from other forms of exchange. It could even venture to put forward the assumption that the lesser the degree of closeness, the bigger the need to reciprocate. However, this premise can be easily falsified, as there is no direct relation: at both ends of the reciprocation spectrum, the materiality of the repayment might be null. With those close to the appealer, there is no enforced need to reciprocate. In this regard, it has been claimed that sibling relations are governed by an obligation to reciprocate whilst filial relations do not involve such a straight transaction (Burridge, 1969).

On the other hand, another instance where reciprocation is denied is when there is an extreme gap between the associated power positions occupied by the partners, and this distance can never be breached by the appealer. In this case, relating as conocidos cannot really be taking place, as the main precondition of this form of relating is the perceived or enforced 'closeness' of the subjects involved. Moreover, a display of generosity is rather a claim of supremacy and a statement of power to prove the personal wealth and superiority of the provider over the appealer (see Codere, 1950). Giving, in itself, needs to be read accordingly; it has to be made public, almost as an offering equated to goodness. Mauss acknowledges it by stating it as an example of 'total prestation', where gift exchange involves religious, economic, social, and legal aspects of social life (1967, pp. 36-7).

Once a favour is done, another moment in the process of relating as conocidos starts. The appealer feels s/he is in debt to the provider and has to find a way to pay back, making sure s/he can correspond with an equivalent form of transaction. To be able to reciprocate at an equal level is crucial: in the same way as a conocido is not a friend, not anybody can become a conocido. The appealer needs to have the potential to be useful, otherwise the favour cannot be repaid in future and it becomes kindness,

magnanimity, charity. The non-reciprocated favour (as the gift) demeans the appealer (see Bourdieu, 1977); and the effortless act of charity from the resourceful provider tends to be dismissed. This denial of the obligation to reciprocate could be interpreted as unbalanced where reciprocal interdependence, in a market-exchange society, is replaced by asymmetrical dependence (Parry, 1986). In these circumstances the form of payment can be concretely materialised in the form of a gift and, as long as the present is felt to be equivalent to the favour done, the score is even and the debt is paid off.

In relating as conocidos, the gift can be also seen as a way of freeing the appealer from the eternal chain of reciprocity. However, the only circumstance where the gift can liberate the implicit responsibility of repayment is when its exchange value is perceived as higher than that of the favour done. The unsymmetrical gift will give the appealer the chance to temporarily block or exit the process, but if asked in the future by the provider – who will then become appealer – she will have to 'pay back' and engage in reciprocating – as favour-doing rather than gift-giving – once more. We saw how Doña Dolores acknowledged the favour done with a bottle of whisky, but this was a sign of recognition of the favour, rather than an attempt at repayment. Furthermore, here we encounter again a significant difference between the activity of gift-giving and that of favour-doing. In the former, the gift is public and it speaks of the donor but it also enhances the position of the receiver (see Parry, 1986; Yang, 1994). The gift has to be paraded, it proclaims the goodness of the giver and it also proclaims the benefit of the receiver as 'the chosen one'. On the other hand, favour-doing in relating as conocidos seems to have a far more elusive character. The favour seems to need some form of acknowledgement but not a public recognition, rather a private – kinship belonging to the realm of the private – one. A more important requirement, from the perspective of the 'donor' or 'doer' of favours, is to publicly present the deed as either effortless or deserved.

One of the closest referents to the activity of relating as conocidos – if seen as a system – is the *guanxi network*, a social practice in Chinese society (see Yan, 1996; Yang, 1994). This practice is said to be the result of a cross-action of the 'traditional' system of relations and a 'socialist' political system (Yang, 1994). This system has the benefit of fulfilling very different facets, which otherwise people would find difficult to deal with. It has economic and political functions, and provides social support by constructing horizontal networks of help (Yan, 1996). Therefore, an extended guanxi

network could mobilise a whole village, but this would imply having engaged in a spotless, reliable gift exchange activity.

Gifts can be seen as 'tie-signs' because they give evidence about the nature of the relationship (Goffman, 1971; p. 194). Gifts as markers, as ritualised exchanges, are an important part in the process of negotiation when relating as conocidos. They work as visual regulators of relationships. However, they serve as emergent indicators of the relationships rather than definers of relations *per se*. Relating as conocidos seem to be mainly worked through and subjected to change within a continuing context. Although gifts can be seen as part of the negotiating process in relations, they cannot take the role of defining relations or structuring them.

Hence, although gift-giving plays a major role in the exchange when relating as conocidos, the inter-relational dimension, which is created through the exchange of favours (and the thankful gift), takes primacy over the object exchanged itself. Usually, when relating as conocidos, the gift could be seen as a sign of gratitude but still there is an unwritten contract of reciprocation. This form of agreement has its own set of obligations: It is desirable to repay before asking for a favour again, otherwise the appealer could be seen as abusing the essence of this form of relating. There is also a time constraint: the relationship needs to be activated within a certain time, otherwise it could be perceived as out of date and the possibility of repayment diminishes. Finally there is an element where the distance of the connection plays a part: if there are too many levels involved in the transaction or too many go-betweens in the chain, it is difficult to keep track and to feel the need to recompense for the favour done (see Yang, 1994). In this manner, to access someone who is a friend of a family member, or a family member of a friend, will guarantee a straight payment. In cases where the connection is looser and hence involves more web connections, there will be less chance of reciprocation – unless both members are instrumentally valuable to each other. This is when the transaction is made at a merely utilitarian level, it becomes a network[19].

Thus, relating as conocidos also implies the giving and receiving of gifts. Moreover, subjects do and return favours, through gifts. Gift exchange and favour doing are part of defining the process of relating as conocidos in two instances: (i) when enacted by

[19] See Chapter I for a general critique on network theories.

someone who is not necessarily forced to do so (i.e. a close friend or family member); and (ii) when power relations are seen as balanced, hence magnanimity and charity are out of the question.

Relating as conocidos can be seen as based on the reciprocity principle, inasmuch as people will ask favours from others with the expectation that others will return the favour at some time in the future. This form of relating thus requires some form of binding power amongst the people involved. It seems that the nature of this power is what needs to be looked at, as it is not the result of a personal choice, but one enforced through an ethical framework. It is an obligation, where issues of honour, emotional binding, communal identity, past and kinship are working together in enforcing this form of relating. Furthermore, issues of fairness, reciprocation and indebtedness are also working to manufacture the exchange as it happens. The factuality and presence of relating as conocidos reveals something about its social context. It is presented as a matter of personal choice, yet binds people together by the issues mentioned above: an apparent contradiction that I shall tackle throughout this thesis.

3. ON PRACTICE

Throughout this chapter, we have seen relating as conocidos portrayed initially as a contact made between so-called friends. We saw briefly the implications of this assessment and how the façade of friendship had the potential to enforce its action. Through gift theory and the acknowledgement of the centrality of the principle of reciprocity, we are now a step closer to understanding what are the issues at stake. This section attempts to relate to the third question raised in the instance of this form of relating (see Chapter I). This question had to do with an intangible sense of duty, which enforced the relationship between the Colonel and Doña Dolores. It was related to some communally agreed code of practice to which both were susceptible, and accountable for. The community seemed to allow the performance of agency – which permitted Doña Dolores to request a favour from the Colonel – within a certain space. This contextual space shaped the characteristics of the exchange, inasmuch as this form of relating happened to be regulated in a particular manner – i.e. a challenge made to the Colonel carried the implicit commitment of reciprocal action from Doña Dolores. Bourdieu's theorising helps integrate explanations accounting for social agents and

structures. With his understanding of practice, he implicitly opens up a space for agency, by which individuals are allowed to enact potential changes within their cultural structures. This is boldly stated in his claim that 'the imposition and inculcation of the structures is never so perfect that all explicitness can be dispensed with' (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 19).

Practice will provide a conceptual bedrock on which to build the research. The understanding of relating as conocidos as a practice follows from the implications and dubious character of the gift, presented above. The paradoxes presented through gift-giving and reciprocation are used by Bourdieu (1977) as a frame of discussion for the concept of practice. We shall see how his understanding of this concept provides the research with a tool to bring into view this form of relating. Bourdieu (1977) claims that the difficulty in theorising about everyday life appears when trying to extract regularities. Science tends to look at social objects in order to find patterns. The most lucid fallacy consists in ending up emphasising rules and rule making in order to regularise these patterns. Consequently, those cases which do not fall within the rules extracted are misread or dismissed, even though they could contain important explanations. Scientism and 'the academicism of the social "art of living" have attempted to provide a set of norms in order to explicitly govern practices and by this, have taken away the understanding of the logic of practice in the very moment in which it tries to offer it' (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 19)[20].

Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977) argues that, in order to achieve a full understanding of certain phenomena, we need to account for the local strategies at play. These contextualised strategies, if subjected to deconstruction or regulated as norms, tend to lose their value. He talks about speech and language, gift exchange, and first-cousins' marriage in these terms. I should like to propose tentatively a fourth area in which to look for commonalties: relating as conocidos. Therefore, this section presumes that there are two main connections: (i) the sequential process involved in both – practice and relating as conocidos; and (ii) the communally agreed misrecognition of practice, which is also a characteristic of relating as conocidos.

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[20] See also Bauman (1973), Bourdieu (1990) and Bourdieu *et al.* (1991).

a. The Sequence of a Practice

Practice, as an analytical unit, encompasses activity and a tendency to interpret this activity. It is a concept that allows a meeting point between agency and structure. Bourdieu has made a major contribution to the debate on the relationship between structure and action, which was his guiding problem and marked his departure from a structuralist positioning (see Jenkins, 1992). Thus, practice as a unit allows the incorporation of instances – socially constructed as isolated events – as subjects of analysis.

By following an instance of gift-giving we can start bringing a bit closer Bourdieu's work on practice and my research interests. We have, as the starting point, the giving of a present, as the activity to focus our eyes on. When looking further, we see that (1) giving a present may imply getting, eventually, another present back. However, as I explained when talking about reciprocation, there are many alternative readings to be made. (2) We have seen in gift-giving how the *type* of gift is relevant: if the gift is too valuable, it cannot be paid back, it could be either an insult or charity. (3) Also, *who* gives the gift to whom is also central: exchanges made among kin will mean something very different from exchanges among visitors, or members of different social groups. (4) We can then start looking into the reasons *why* the gift is given: Is it marking a celebration? Recognition for an effort made? A sign of gratitude for a favour done? (5) Finally, the gift is not an end in itself, but rather another module *marking a moment in the chain of the record of the relationship*. Therefore, one could go on by looking at when and how the gift is reciprocated: if it is given too quickly it could be seen as an offence; not giving it at all could also mean a purposely-crafted lack of recognition. In short, with every alternative there are trees of possible explanations, depending on which of the many routes are taken within a record of gift giving activities (or eventually, a record of the relationship between conocidos). This is why rational, normative, or contractual explanations 'could telescope into an instant a transaction which gift exchange disguises by stretching it out in time' (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 171)[21].

Through the analysis of an apparently reciprocal unit of exchange, such as an instance of gift-giving, we can witness how practice becomes a tool to build an understanding of

[21] This is why theories of social exchange fall short in accounting for relating as conocidos.

culture. It provides a way to enhance the instance as part and parcel of something bigger; it helps us read into the very culture in which the practice is enacted (Bourdieu, 1990; Jenkins, 1992). We could follow step by step a parallel elaboration, following the story provided as an instance of relating as conocidos. Briefly, we saw that a favour done was granted only within a set understanding that the person requiring the favour – Doña Dolores – was willing to reciprocate in an appropriate manner. When the equivalence was not achieved, we saw how the provider – the Colonel – put on a pretension of offence, as he refused the possibility of providing other favours. Generally, the appealer feels in debt and attempts to restore the balance. A material repayment is not enough and there is somehow a feeling that until the person responds adequately, there will be an imbalance in the relationship which favours the status of the provider over the appealer.

From here, a cheerful researcher could identify an immediate pattern from which to extract regularities. However, caution is needed as, although practices are culturally recognisable, they are not necessarily repeatable in the way rituals are. The questioned predictability stems from the part agency has in their making. The implication with rituals is that there is no choice but to act/react in a culturally prescribed way. Practices account for a creative action, through which the agents involved act according to a *strategy*. This consists of 'playing on the time, or rather the tempo, of the action (holding back, putting off, maintaining suspense...)' (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 7).

Thus, practice allows its participants to play on the necessary improvisations, to believe that they have a choice of stepping in or out of it. Hence, within the context of the exchange, the agents remain in control of the interval and progressive continuity of the relationship, they mark the tempo within the sequence. The distinction made between practices and rituals needs to be precise and Bourdieu clarifies it further by pointing out that

> only a virtuoso with a perfect command of his art of living can play on all the resources inherent in the ambiguities and uncertainties of behaviour and situation in order to produce the actions appropriate to each case, to have people saying 'there was nothing else to be done' and do it the right way. We are a long way from norms and rules. (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 8)

Consequently, a careful reading permits the uncovering of the implicit contradiction at play within the usage of practice. The actor skilfully needs to master the symbolism of the social interaction or savoir-faire, to the extent that – although s/he is the one acting

out – s/he needs to perform the only appropriate option. Practice does not allow for the presence of explicit rules, and this distinction is central to understand the innuendoes at play. We are talking here about the presupposed knowledge necessary to act in most everyday situations. In order to play the game of social 'life' adequately, we need to master and maintain (reproduce) the application of a 'spontaneous semiology, i.e. a mass of precepts and codified cues' (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 10).

Coming back to the gift-exchange, unfolding a logic of practice helps us see that the only certainty of a gift is the marking of a return action (see Bourdieu, 1990). Every gift is a form of challenge. The giver is sending a more or less veiled message through the gift, which aims to re-establish or ascertain power. It is eventually the choice of the receiver to acknowledge this power or reject it through various means, such as delaying the acknowledgement or 'paying' back in an equivalent manner.

To engage in such a practice, the actors require an unceasing vigilance, to the extent that they must be able to disown participating in the practice when the challenge is not met. The people in the social context of the relationship – i.e. the group, the social class, the community – are the judges, the ones who ascertain whether the exchange, the challenge was successful or not (Bourdieu, 1977). Ultimately, what remains is the exchange as a challenge and, above all, as means of communication: a language that both players are culturally required to master.

> The temporal structure of gift exchange, which is ignored by objectivism, is what makes possible the coexistence of two opposing truths, which defines the truth of the gift. We cannot really say that the meaning the gift has for the donor is recognised when the counter-gift has been made. It means that even if reversibility is the objective truth of gift exchange, it is not the whole truth of its practice, as the practice could not exist if it was consciously perceived fitting the model. (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 9)

The relevance of the sequential process – shared by Bourdieu's practice and relating as conocidos – resides in allowing the object of research to be dissected, and hence subjected to study. The sequence stands for a process, permitting the study of practice – or relating as conocidos – in terms of a 'historical' linkage of events, or diachronic analysis. A comprehension of the analysis of practice as a chronicle of historical and future social life allows for the accountability of a flow of time and space (Jenkins, 1992, p. 68). The liability of sequential processes assumes an expected continuity, at least throughout the time necessary for completing the transaction constituting the relationship. Hence, a major constituent of the notion of practice refers to those interactions among a group of people within a context with continuity, such as a

community. These successive relations cannot be made sense of without acknowledging their past and their prospective future. In spaces where the participants of community life remain to a certain extent constant, interactions – conflictual or not – only make sense in accounting for family history, neighbours and other sources of close or remote contacts.

Understanding the interplay of practice along the co-ordinates of time and space appears to be crucial for Bourdieu. Literally, an interaction '*takes* time – and it occurs in space', inasmuch as although they are 'equally social constructs, movement in space always involves movement in time' (Jenkins, 1992, p. 69). Accounting for time within the exchange is crucial. It provides a guiding tool to look through action in order to achieve a cohesive meaning. Time – inside and outside the relationship – plays an important role, as it allows for continuity rather than isolating the exchanges and looking at partial insights (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990). It could be tentatively proposed that i) time outside the exchange has to do with the historicity of social relations, with the cultural life shared by the participants while ii) time inside the exchange is linked to agency and strategy.

i) The historicity of relations

Accounting for time permits the sequence of exchanges – a practice – to move forwards. Time here reveals process as a character of practices which otherwise would remain static, uncovered. Time, as the cadence of social life, acknowledges a relationship within a continuum of exchanges which can only achieve a total meaning when seen in this manner. Bringing back the characters in the original story, we saw how time endorsed the relation. It permitted the characters to consider the stability of their presence. Time was necessary as a guarantor of a record of relations amongst them, their families and neighbours, as well as within the general context.

Time is referred to as the maker of history, tradition and communal culture. Time gains expression through a common history and through a personal past. By this, a two fold process needs to be acknowledged: a) time as *history*, as the shared record of the community and b) time as *past* within a community, which informs about a person at a certain point. Past in its latter form is tied up with personal history, which designates differences and informs subject positionings within power relations.

History, as the community thread, can be defined in terms of its social memory. It ties a community together by providing a narrative for its members. History is a narrative of social memory which is subjected to different social actors or groups (see Burke, 1989; Halbwachs, 1992; Thompson, 1996). Social memory is selective and malleable (Burke, 1989), in as much as it presents a collective recollection which shapes the memory of others. The way a particular history is constructed relates directly to the search and need for roots of its participants (see Burke, 1989). The historical references shaping a given social memory seem to be aimed at two processes: (i) that of explaining the past and making sense of its presence in current times, and (ii) explaining the structural compositions of social reality (Adler Lomnitz, Lomnitz Adler and Adler, 1993). Both processes, the search for origin and the search for social composition, work together in forming and creating the cultural referents of a social group. The recreation of these cultural referents coincides with processes of legitimising the 'invention of tradition' (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983). The processes of recreating tradition and social memory provide the sense of continuity among a social group. These processes are always in the making, and they closely weave together communal experiences and shared history (see Mercer, 1990; Hall, 1990). Tradition, as the historic account of a social memory becomes a guarantee of continuance and permanence.

Past, as time located in a space, also designates difference insofar as any point of reference has to be understood given a particular time and a particular space (Mead, 1934b/1964). Time, in this context, shapes and produces, together with space, the trans-actional aspect of a relationship. Past and history are made up of characters and actions. Actions always involve spaces and are located in time. Social memory, like tradition, is about organising the past in relation to the present, due to its constant process of reconstruction and actualisation (Giddens, 1994). This reconstruction is social and collective. Moreover, the collective reconstruction defines the relevance of the actors, not only of the actions. Hence the processes of past reconstruction work reflexively on the subjects (see Coser, 1992; Elias, 1994).

ii) Time within the instance of Practice

An accountability for time also comes to be a factor within the exchange. It proposes a rhythm of exchanges which provides the signification within the instance of the

exchange itself. When looking at our guiding story, time within the relationship had to do with the inherent play of the characters, the making of practice. The way they both marked their exchanges revealed aspects of a code of practice. Presumably when Doña Dolores' third son had to enrol in the army, enough time had passed for the Colonel to refuse to do the favour and, thus, to 'outdate' their relationship as conocidos.

Hence, returning to Bourdieu's work, it is possible to hint at a carefully balanced tension. This refers to whether the subject acts out through an orchestration framed by their communally prescribed practices, or whether it is practice that limits the subject's action. The answer lies in between. It seems to be the agents, within their cultural understanding, who decide to time and distribute their actions in order to communicate the pace of their relational exchange. However, it is their practice which provides the means of achieving a distribution of actions endowed with meaning (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990; Jenkins, 1992). This is what has been explained as strategy:

> To substitute strategy for the rule is to reintroduce time with its rhythm, orientations and irreversibility. [The] detemporalising effect is never more pernicious than when exerted on practices defined by the fact that their temporal structure, direction and rhythm are constitutive of their meaning. (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 9)

Briefly, a strategic move is one which requires knowledge. It is about *doing* as much as it is about *knowing* (see Jenkins, 1992). The mastership of the strategist – the subject – resides in anticipation of the response, which can only be obvious when the partners in practice share the same cultural knowledge. A particular move includes, and even anticipates, the partner's understanding within the same cultural play. The manner of reciprocating incorporates the other's point of view.

Practice is then considered to possess a 'logic' which is shared by all the members of the group, or class (see Faubion, 1995; Bourdieu, 1990). Bourdieu (1977, p. 11) proposes that agents make decisions and move their bodies in a 'regularised improvisation', such as jazz. Practices provide a sense of adequacy necessary for the 'intuitive' feel of the game of everyday life (Fowler, 1997). The realm of practice is that of reality as constructed – rather than passively recorded – within a set of principles oriented towards functional activities (Bourdieu, 1990). We have to situate ourselves within 'real activity' as such. That is, 'the practical relation to the world' (Faubion, 1995, p. 33), where words and deeds are always unfolding as a spectacle. Reality is then constructed within the history of the group and the way to return to this is through

the site of the dialectic and the objectified products, through the incorporation of historical practice (see Faubion, 1995).

b. The Collective Misrecognition of Practice

We have seen how a practice can be seen as a sequential process, where time allows the making of strategic moves. There is one central question which remains unanswered. This question has to do with the fact that there are social norms and rules which are meant to enforce behaviour. Hence, if there are domains of official ruling, why is there such a mismatch between what is normatively expected and what people actually do? What is it that results in action 'if it is so clearly *not* the cultural knowledge which is revealed in "official" public discourses?' (Jenkins, 1992, p. 69).

In order to provide an understanding of agents' activities, Bourdieu resorts to the acknowledgement of a *habitus*, from which people construct a 'system of principles which they put into practice' (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 70). The habitus is then a system of 'durable, transposable dispositions' (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 53). It is also the result of the historical making discussed above.

> It produces individual and collective practices – more history – in accordance with the schemes generated by history. It ensures the active presence of past experiences. (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 54)

The habitus is, in a way, a term that encompasses the knowledge of 'how things are'. It is the guarantor of the consistency of practices. It ensures some form of continuity over time, as it is the result of a commonly concerted way of acting. It is then more reliable 'than all formal rules and explicit norms' (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 54). The habitus is the domain of implicit knowledge, where things are learned through a lived experience of sharing and relating within a cultural context. It is therefore difficult to exert its presence through collective enquiry, as it is the realm of the 'taking for granted' and the 'know hows' (see Bourdieu, 1990; Moore, 1994; Jenkins, 1992). It does not have then an explicit cohesive character, but it is a stable system which cannot be subjected to change in a mandatory manner. 'This system of dispositions – a present past that tends to perpetuate itself into the future by reactivation in similarly structured practices [...] – is the principle of the continuity and regularity' (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 54).

Practice is then anchored as an action performed following certain dispositions – belonging to the habitus – which are discursively reproduced within a cultural context (see Bourdieu *et al.*, 1991). Hence, practices rely on a shared knowledge, which accounts for its logic within a cultural unit. This collective knowledge or savoir-faire shows up as a tacit understanding. Giddens (1979) refers to this tacit understanding as practical knowledge, which he distinguishes from other forms of knowledge as that which is not subjected to expressions of text or discourse. A different interpretation is provided by Moore who claims that the notion of tacit 'is clearly meant to imply that the knowledge is practical rather than intellectual; in other words, it is based on things you know how to do or that have been inculcated to you' (Moore, 1994, p. 52). It could be argued that this practical knowledge – precisely because it lacks the possibility of being made explicit – demands a dependency on a discursive rehearsal in order to be recreated and passed on through interactions.

Practices are created and recreated through means of collective transmission. Language becomes more than the medium of transmission. It positions discourses as specific social practices of communication (Fraser, 1992). Here, 'the pragmatic model of language' proposed by Fraser (1992) unites the positions of both Foucault and Bourdieu. Both authors present discourses as contingent, subject to change by historical contextualisation (Foucault, 1986a; Bourdieu and Thompson, 1991). Practices have a discursive reality because they change; and they change primarily because they are subjected to time and individual re-creation (see Bourdieu, 1990; Kristeva and Moi, 1986). Subjects are discursively constructed in historically specific contexts, they are not the outcome of structures but are socially situated agents (see Fraser, 1992; Foucault, 1988). Hence, the transformations are made active due to the agents' understanding and recreation of their reality, through their use in interaction, and by means of communication[22]. However, whatever the qualities of this form of tacit or practical knowledge, it seems clear that this knowledge is, on the one hand, shared by the group and, on the other, does not need to be made explicit. Furthermore, when made explicit or objectivised, it loses its inherent quality (Bourdieu, 1977). Bourdieu explicitly refers to this quality of practical knowledge as being ultimately related to

[22] For a more thorough discussion on the development of the self as both practically and discursively produced, see Moore (1994), Trevarthen (1995), Fraser (1992) and Rose (1999).

what he called the 'art of living'. This art – flowing from the habitus – can be otherwise pictured as a social code, the 'manners' linking actions to rituals or traditions (see Jenkins, 1992). These manners are so much ingrained in our day to day activities that we have forgotten to account for their presence (see Goffman, 1971; Elias, 1994). Bourdieu talks us through the art of living using honour as an example. Here, the sense of honour is

> a disposition, incorporated in the earliest years of life and constantly reinforced through practice, incorporated into bodily schemes, virility signs, looking in the eyes... The point of honour is a permanent disposition embedded in the agents' very bodies [...]. The sense of honour is the cultivated disposition which enables every agent to engender all the practices which the stereotyped ritual would in no way demand. (Bourdieu, 1977, p.15)

Although the nature of this disposition – and ultimately of the habitus – is still not clear, it can be seen as a cultural guide to sociability, which is even reflected in the very shape of our bodies, as Bourdieu points out[23]. The dispositions are first and foremost discursively created, maintained and reproduced; they are inherently social. I have already discussed elsewhere the 'technologies of the self', where the non-unitarian subjects are understood as constituting disciplines through which to understand, judge and conduct themselves (Foucault, 1986a, 1988). Anthropologists, such as Moore (1994) and Jackson (1983), insist on the corporeal quality of communication and, hence, of practice. The former suggests that

> if we focus instead on the strategic execution – as anthropologists so often do – of a series of gestures or practical activities, such as the way in which a particular job gets done, then we must ask ourselves whether such conscious strategization is to be characterised as practical or discursive knowledge. (Moore, 1994, p. 52)

A valuable contribution to the notion of practice is made by Kristeva and Moi (1986), who propose 'signifying practices' as a way of reinforcing the creative character of practices. They consider these practices as norm-oriented but not constraining because they are strongly tied to historically determined relations (see also Foucault, 1987). The agent of the signifying practices is called 'the speaking subject'. This subject is socially and historically situated but capable of innovative practice, as s/he sometimes

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[23] There is ample literature concerning the cultural shaping of bodies. Among the anthropological literature is Mauss and Brewster (1979) and Mauss, Beuchat and Fox (1979). Also, for a discussion on how to understand corporeal expressions within particular relations of the self and others, see Rose (1996), Elias (1983, 1994), Osborne (1996) and Foucault (1986a, 1986b, 1988).

transgresses the established norms in force. Transgressive practices give rise to discursive innovations and these, in turn, may lead to actual change (Fowler, 1997). The innovative force will eventually form part of a renovated signifying practice. At this point, the baggage to take forward is an understanding of Practice as discursively created and, hence, culturally enacted.

We have seen how practices can be understood as forms of stable interactions among a group of members of a cultural entity. The actors involved are aware of its existence and take their chances at incorporating or denying its presence. Practices rely heavily on the 'necessary improvisation of the everyday strategies' (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 171), which requires a common understanding of what is at stake among the relating actors/partners. Hence, when practice is allowed to happen, both actors satisfy their expectations without having to make them explicit and 'making possible the *institutionally organized and guaranteed misrecognition*' (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 171). This collective misrecognition has the purpose of avert,

> by the sincere fiction of a disinterested exchange, the inevitable, and inevitably interested relations imposed by kinship, neighbourhood, or work, into elective relations of reciprocity. [...] The labour required to conceal the function of the exchanges is as important an element as the labour needed to carry out the function (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 171).

Bringing back relating as conocidos, we have seen elsewhere that its ambiguity is largely caused by its misrecognition. This came across clearly in the story presented (see Chapter I), where the two characters seemed to be happy to engage in an exchange of favours calling upon a dubious relation of friendship. I have already mentioned how, when attempting to establish the semantic field of this form of relating, people had some problems defining its characteristics, though they talked familiarly about its exercise (see Fernandez-Dols *et al.*, 1994). The contradiction between the familiarity of relating as conocidos – its practice – and the difficulty of defining it comes to light when understanding the necessity of its collective concealment. When the agents are engaged in the relation, they choose to be unaware of its presence, and at a later stage they have difficulties acknowledging its usage. This lack of awareness when relating as conocidos has resonance with the misrecognised practice proposed by Bourdieu. The functional ambiguity of the activity is encouraged and maintained. It seems that the unspoken room for misunderstanding is, by itself, playing an important role in the

> manipulations of the objective meaning of practice and its product which this combination of ambiguity and clarity allows and encourages. (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 49)

Summing up, practice is an action enacted through dispositions which are collectively shared and conform to what people understand as the 'know hows'. The value of the strategies for the researcher is that they allow the visibility of practice using, for example, the passing of time. Members engaging in the practice are required to master the cultural code, even if they are unaware of its existence. There is an implicit mass of precepts which require just as much attention from the challenger in performing, as from the challenged in acknowledging it. It is just as bad to challenge the wrong person – one who cannot respond to a challenge – as to respond in the wrong way; in both cases the actors' membership can be questioned. The members who share a cultural reality must be able to engage in the manipulative process. Here, manipulation has to be understood as an enactment of practice, rather than connoting an individual's orchestration of a plot. However, the plot – as a strategy – is there. The main difference is that the script of the plot has been communally sketched, rehearsed and agreed upon. Therefore, practices have to be studied in terms of the flow of interactions that maintain them. These interactions, or challenges, reveal a sequence. Such sequences have a history, which is seen as irreversible from the point of view of a member. The sequence and the irreversibility both underpin the strategy in itself.

c. The Practice of Relating as Conocidos

Relating as conocidos could be seen as an exchange of favours: the visible outcome of an instance of this form of relating is a favour done and repaid. However, the exchange falls short with the significance of the favour done. As with gift-giving, the only thing we know of favour-doing is that it is just part and parcel of a bigger system: it is a way of relating, i.e. of interacting with another social member. Relating as conocidos, although based ultimately on a transaction – the favour done and the acknowledgement of it through a symbolic payment – cannot be fully understood as such.

Throughout this section we have seen how the concept of practice touches central foundations of relating as conocidos. We have centred the discussion on those elements which were relevant for the study of such a form of relating. Among the elements, we saw the processual character of practice, which allows the strategic play of the subject – the making of agency. We also saw how practices were enactments of a sort of cultural disposition, the habitus. These dispositions were the product of the historical play and

had, as a main characteristic – for the purpose of this research – a lack of collective recognition.

The notion of the 'tacit' (Moore, 1994) is a relevant element within the understanding of relating as conocidos as a practice. In fact, 'tacit' implies again practical knowledge, or the know-how[24]. This practical knowledge requires a discursive and a performative component (see Jackson, 1983; Bourdieu, 1990). The force of 'cultural discourses is that they are practically and performatively, as well as discursively, maintained' (Moore, 1994, p. 41). Practical knowledge is voiceless but it is also performed; it might be unsaid, but it is not silent. It is created and acknowledged through the engagement (discursive and performative) in strategies.

The double accountability of discourse and performance is then reflected by the expression of linguistic utterances, or text, as well as bodily experiences (Moore, 1994). Both are subject to discourses and dependent of subject positions (see Foucault, 1987). However, they need to be read in conjunction with, as part and parcel of the making and employment of, strategies. The subject's 'interpretation of the material world, and the kind of activities they perform in a socially structured space, are governed by their particular position within social relations and dominant cultural discourses' (Moore, 1994, p. 77). Bourdieu has been criticised for ending up with an 'agency-less' and static theoretical elaboration (see Jenkins, 1992). However, Bourdieu stresses that the role of the actor is crucial for practice, as s/he is required to interpret (Bourdieu, 1995). Bourdieu's practice involves agency inasmuch as it allows for the interplay of strategy and interpretation and, therefore, change (see also Moore, 1994).

In our story, Doña Dolores chose to position herself as the appealer in reference to a provider when a favour was asked; and the Colonel was able to play upon a sense of reciprocity in order to obtain an increased network of relations for his daughters in his village. This is the making of a strategy, which renders visible the potential usefulness of the relationship – as usable and useful – at a given moment. This strategy, discursively anchored, demands the performance of the given subject positions, which may need to demonstrate – when relating as conocidos – amity, trust, care and accountability within the given context.

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[24] This links back to the distinction made in Chapter I between the two types of knowledge: practical knowledge – from which relating as conocidos derives – and generic knowledge.

We could think, for the time being, that relating as conocidos requires two parallel components: (i) a request made to a family member or friend – the emphasis is on the person accessed – and (ii) the need to request a favour from someone – the emphasis is on the favour. The first component presents an exchange made familiar through the referential world of friendship and/or kinship which tends to be based on trust and the good faith of the partners – with which all the actors have first hand experience. The second component presents a performance of the strategies at play: there is a favour to be asked of someone. The play of strategies is highlighted if we consider a situation where a request is posed to a stranger (such as a specialist in the area). Here, the challenge is at risk. It might not be met, there is an unpredictability regarding the outcome. The neutral or impersonal relationship should then be *performed* to appear as a 'lasting relationship of reciprocity' (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 186). This is only possible when the appealer, the one asking for a favour, knows about the provider; i.e. when there is some sort of relationship among the partners concerned before the request is made and there will continue to be after the favour is done, although the relationship *per se* might be changed.

Finally, to summarise, practice is intrinsically defined by its tempo. Temporality is both a constraint and a resource for social interaction and any adequate analysis of practice must therefore treat temporality as a central feature (Jenkins, 1992, p. 69). Practice as a visible social phenomena cannot be understood outside time/space. This space is delimited through some physical boundaries as a unit. In the context of this thesis this space is also geographically bounded, in the format of an island[25]. This space marks and structures the lives of the people around it. It thus has a part in the making of people's customs, as practices, as it delimits the scope of 'where' things should happen (see Hetherington, 1998, 1997; Bourdieu, 1977). These customs are visualised in a space, but space needs time as a co-ordinate. Time and space are both dependent insofar as the community, the social unit, needs a sense of continuity in order to construct the spaces (see Jenkins, 1992; Hetherington, 1997). The passing of time and the usage of space make possible the existence of practices.

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[25] The decision to make an island the context of research and its consequences are elaborated upon later on. This decision carries important theoretical implications of which the researcher needs to be aware and allows for important possibilities as a unit of study. These issues will be unravelled in Chapter IV.

Practice, as we have seen, is not normative (as ruled over by members), nor is it a regularised component which denies change and agency. It relies on the weight and the common understanding of the 'how things are', the 'know hows' and the 'art of living'. It provides a code, a custom, a manner, but it is subjected to performance and improvisation by the agents. Practice is conducted individually but subjected to approval through the eyes of others. The group, the community, plays an important part, they establish what is and is not acceptable though a tacit 'sense of behaving' or 'code of manners'. This code need not be made explicit, as it would then pass from manners to coercion.

This art of performance or communally agreed code of manners is what Bourdieu (1977) terms the 'learned ignorance' of practical knowledge. The relevance of this code of manners and the strategies is that they render visible relating as conocidos. The general misrecognition of the action, where people collectively maintain and approve of the deception (the 'tacit' element of practice) can be pinned down and, thus, shed some light on the form of relating being studied. Relating as conocidos could be seen as assuming a logic of reciprocation through a form of exchange (as in any communication) where the demand (the favour) implies an answer, a challenge. The ways of discursively acknowledging these challenges and the manner of performance (ignorance, degree of eagerness in response, time taken...) are the strategies of the practice. In this play of relating as conocidos, the subjects choose the part and the partner. The pace of the exchange and the way it is performed imply agency and, hence, the possibility of recreation and change.

d. Considerations for an Empirical Exploration

This chapter proposes, on the one hand, the need to theorise about the processual character of relating as conocidos. Practical knowledge, on the other hand, otherwise mentioned as 'the art of living', relies heavily on a contextualised understanding of actions/relations which conform to a set of normalised practices. Practice, as proposed by Bourdieu, becomes a tool with which to understand culture, where agency and structure meet.

For the purpose of this thesis, I have focused on two main characteristics of Bourdieu's (1977) practice: the sequence of practice and its collective concealment. Practice then

allows for the accountability of a sequence, which taps into the process of relating as conocidos. I have already explained how the sequence permits the study of this form of relating as a continuous linking of time 'inside' the relation and time 'outside' the relation. Time as a strategy 'inside' the relation shows the agency of the social subject, whilst time 'outside' the relation displays the historicity of social relations. I also explained how the concept of strategy meant 'doing' as well as 'knowing', where any interaction includes an anticipated response. The performative element of practice in time and space permits the visualisation of this sequence. Also, practices allow for 'improvisation' through the engagement in strategies and the collective and intangible sense of duty and manners. This agreed 'misrecognition' of the strategy or 'tacit' knowledge requires a mastership of the codes of practice within a given context.

After the theoretical elaboration upon practice and the acknowledgement of relating as conocidos as a process, a proposal to frame the study of this way of relating can be made. The following points will guide the empirical exploration of this thesis, as well as focus the theoretical enquiry:

i) Through the 'passing' and recording of time and spatial performance practice accounts for the process and unfinished marking/making of the relationship under study. This sequential character will help in rendering visible for the researcher the object of study, relating as conocidos.

ii) The 'contextualisation' of relating as conocidos will allow the visibility of the 'misrecognition' proposed as a central element of practice. This commonly shared sense of duty will be uncovered through the study of the codes of practice followed in order to relate as conocidos.

iii) Exploring the usage of strategies will permit the unveiling of agents who engage intentionally in playing with the covert character of the relationship. Strategies, on the one hand, speak of the processual nature of relating as conocidos and, on the other hand, ensure a contextualised understanding of the research.

* * *

This chapter has presented a more focused and theoretically-grounded discussion of relating as conocidos. Its purpose has been to provide the basis for an understanding of

the form of relating under study. Hence, it presented a discussion on issues surrounding the making of friendship and reciprocity. Moreover, it addressed the notion of practice and its value for understanding relating as conocidos. The chapter also proposes a theoretical framework to aid the empirical exploration of this form of relating.

III

EXPLORING

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES AND TOOLS

This chapter presents the introduction to the empirical part of the thesis. It elaborates on methodological issues surrounding an exploration of relating as conocidos, taking into account the theoretical issues raised in previous chapters. In order to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the choices made, the chapter is divided into three parts. The first part starts with a general discussion on methodology. It presents the need for a qualitative approach and addresses some issues regarding the validity of this approach. It also presents various arguments to justify a proposal for researching practice, as the theoretical endeavour guiding the analysis of my data and the interpretation of the empirical exploration. The second part of the chapter introduces and elaborates on the methods proposed for the study of relating as conocidos, and the third discusses some issues on reflexivity and the way this research aims to deal with them. Finally, the fourth part presents a brief account of how the data were collected and analysed.

1. GENERAL ISSUES

Methods of research are approaches to attempt an understanding of reality from within. Methodology can be defined as the science of practising research. A strong methodological corpus has to provide research alternatives which are (i) consistent with the theoretical perspective of the study and (ii) accepted within the scientific community (Burgess, 1984). In the next sections, I shall introduce my approach (section *a*), elaborate on issues related to qualitative research (section *b*), and explain how to engage in the endeavour of researching practice (section *c*).

a. Introducing a Qualitative Approach

Research strategies are varied yet seem to be divided according to an almost paradigmatic positioning between quantitative and qualitative methods. Rather than elaborating on an account of these divisions, a more fruitful approach is to consider that for every research question there is an appropriate research design (Burgess, 1984). Hence, methods of research need to be linked to the theoretical endeavour the researcher proposes (Farr, 1993). A qualitative approach focuses on processes of interpretation. This alternative aims to describe techniques which deal with the meaning of certain phenomena. The emphasis here is on occurrence rather than on frequency. Qualitative techniques deal with language and its interpretations in text and action allow for the presence of a socially rooted subject (Cohen, 1994).

Thus, the researcher who chooses qualitative methods should be careful in identifying what she is talking about, and how she is talking about it. The 'what' relates to the phenomena under study and their delineation; the 'how' relates to the theoretical framework within which to explore the 'what'. In this manner, I need to make explicit that ultimately what I aim to study is a relational process, or practice, which is culturally bounded (contextualised) and socially constructed. The way in which I will explore this process (the 'how') is by problematising the 'what' from a perspective of 'culture'. The European tradition of sociology and social psychology is very much centred on a view of society as rooted in webs of social relations and sustained through human interaction (Farr, 1996; Firth, 1951/1963; Lévi-Strauss, 1977). Static ideas of society, such as the nation-state, have been challenged by theories prioritising issues of community and tradition (Nisbet, 1967). However, culture is all too often equated with society, which in turn is equated to the nation-state, where boundaries are physical as they coincide with frontiers (Bauman, 1973).

Social psychology can overcome this state of affairs by replacing these universal categories with more specific ones, those that subjects are willing to use to structure their activities. A better understanding of culture is formed by all those things that the subject needs to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members (Goodenough, 1956). Traditionally, distinctions in social sciences related to the different domains, where sociology provided answers to the person in society – as nation-state –, psychology to individual questions, and anthropology to institutional ones (Jahoda, 1982). Here, individual questions relate to 'the motives, intentions,

reasons people have for doing what they do; [and] institutional questions concern concepts, forms of organisation, patterns of behaviour seen in relation to each other' (Hanson 1975, p. 3-4).

Explanations of the socially constructed character of reality should include these different dimensions. This research is interested in what people say, inasmuch as individual conduct and experience is taken to be social expression and, as such, is modulated and shaped by interactions with the Other (Merleau-Ponty and Smith, 1989). The understanding of this thesis is that of reality as produced and named by the active subject, in co-operation and interaction with others, where facts have a nominal character in providing views of social phenomena. By considering the discursive character of culture, and context, social psychology can provide a way of including the subject in the social equation. This discursive character is enacted by subjects, who are not perceived anymore as interchangeable but, rather, as subjectively identifiable participants in a socially recognisable framework (Cartwright, 1979). The individual becomes an agent who both creates the social structures to which s/he belongs and acts within the constraints set by them. Thus, subjectivity is used constructively, as it cannot be avoided (Cohen, 1994).

b. Validating Qualitative Research

This research is not aiming to know what reality *is* without our participation in it. By contrast, what it searches for is people's practices and meanings in a context of interdependence, given by a social relationship. This relationship is recognisable to the participants by virtue of the interdependence, as well as to others, for example, new participants. The issue of objectivism and subjectivism and its acceptance within social science is a recurrent one (see Bauman, 1973; Campbell and Narroll, 1972; Jahoda, 1982). It needs to be explored on two levels. The first level is that of the subject engaged in apparently meaningful personal and social relations with others – this level pertains to my object of study. The second level of exploration pertains to the role of the researcher. On this latter level, criteria such as (i) validity and reliability of the research and (ii) generalisation of the results, still need to be accounted for. Reliability, as a scientific requisite, is a criterion which is set to ensure a precept for repetition, for the researcher as well as for others, and to increase the predictive power of the results of

the research. Validity is understood to mean whether the empirical exploration renders 'valid' what the theoretical elaboration proposed or, in other words, whether the exploration makes social events visible on an interactive as well as an individual level.

Validity and reliability within the social sciences need to find expression in a particular manner (Kirk and Miller, 1986). This is so, insofar as what is studied may be influenced by the researcher's observations, and the object of study might not be accessible in ways other than those observations the researcher needs to validate. These claims in qualitative research have a different value, but the criteria for judging what is valid qualitative research remains controversial (see Van Dijk, 1997). The obstacle to a straightforward interpretation is the reactivity of what is studied, as the object of study – the participants – and the researcher are both part of the social world (see Kirk and Miller, 1986; Riessman, 1993). A way of accounting for issues of validity and reliability in the research is to propose some degree of 'quality' in terms of data, a quality of the interpretation and a quality of the 'product' of the research, its ability to be generalised (rather than replicated) in other contexts.

Thus, firstly, ways to acquire a certain quality of data are related to issues of access, creation of intimacy and good habits of recording (Van Maanen, 1988). In reference to the research as a whole, there is some agreement in seeing the research experience as a process. The researcher enters the field with nothing more than a general problem in mind (McCall and Simmons, 1969). The process of data gathering involves continual analytic activity. It is through observation and the sharing of the community experience that the researcher begins to make sense of the flow of events (see Conklin, 1968; Kirk and Miller, 1986). At this stage, the researcher starts making tentative hypotheses which are confronted with daily observations, and focuses on making sense of those explanations provided; the lenses of observation become finely tuned.

Secondly, a measure of the quality of the interpretation is the coherence, clarity and cohesiveness of the narrative. It should present a frame or body of interpretation which is valid in itself and capable of accounting for variations across the different individual texts. Van Maanen (1988) proposes that the discussion should be centred on: (i) the relationship between culture and the observed conduct, (ii) the experiences of the researcher as the observer, (iii) the style selected to link the experiencer and the experience (the narrative), and (iv) the role of the reader as an audience engaged in the reconstruction of the tale. Through the process of writing, a culture and its practice are

created and gain reality for the reader (see Wagner, 1981). The relevance relies on understanding how the tales 'are produced, which sort of stories they are, and how we can put them to honest and intelligent use in theorising about social life' (Miller and Glassner, 1997, p. 111). This is precisely the richness of qualitative research; to suggest otherwise merely reduces it to a methodological alternative (Van Maanen, 1988).

Here, it needs to be specified that the starting problem of this research refers to something noticeable, a practice, which needs to be rendered visible, i.e. others need to be able to recognise the same socially constructed relationship and its 'workings'. This implies that the process of research relies on an increasingly precise general explanation, aided by particular instances (which are provided by the accounts that the researcher gives when interpreting the context, and those elaborated upon by the respondents). In order to clarify this point, let us take as an example a study on the socially constructed character of the 'family'. We 'know' what a family is in daily life, but as researchers we want to make it more visible, more recognisable in terms of both its general form and the variety of its specific forms. Thus, presumably, the starting problem would be to identify some examples, then to interview people and then to come up with a series of properties that allows others to understand what a 'family' means. This is precisely what the researcher aims to do: by identifying the properties of relating as conocidos, we can render visible its processual character and practice.

Finally, the third point to provide some quality to the qualitative research is the 'explicitness' of the research endeavour. Making the research process explicit does not mean increasing its 'predictive power' (as with reliability). It should rather allow for a development of this form of research as a corpus (Kirk and Miller, 1986). Although concrete studies might not be replicable they may aid a critical reading or stand as models for further research (Miller and Glasner, 1997; Willis, 1996). Regarding the generalisation of results, this is again a requirement that needs 'translation' within qualitative research. Cultural processes and practices might also gain existence in other cultural contexts which would grant a specific focus in order to discover the subtleties of their 'taken for granted'. However, a research project can propose a route into finding out ways to gain access to practice, and it may also provide a point of reference from which to delve further. Again, a concrete research endeavour may stand as a model, hence the explicitness of the research process is favoured.

Thus, at the stage of data gathering, a way for researchers to provide internal checks of their data and acknowledge these issues is by: (i) accounting for behaviour and processes visualised through observational strategies; (ii) taking their own experiences as part of the situations; and (iii) supplementing their observations and experiences with those of informants (see McCall and Simmons, 1969). Also, when facing the analysis, a number of strategies can be applied, such as: (i) the use of part of the material to test for the validity of the analytical procedure; (ii) having the analysis checked by others (colleagues or informants); and (iii) making sure that conflicts and variations in the respondents' texts are accounted for. These internal checks at the level of data and at the level of interpretation were applied in this particular research. The benefit of these methodological tests is that it legitimises and acknowledges the validity of one's research endeavour, and thus provides a way of understanding social phenomena such that the results can be of help in clarifying similar phenomena elsewhere. However, the ultimate test is to provide a narrative which accounts for people's voices and that, in short, provides a cohesive interpretation which makes sense when retold.

c. Researching Practice

The previous chapter proposed an understanding of relating as conocidos as a social practice. It elaborated on the transactional element of the form of relating under study, on the use of strategies and on its collective 'misrecognition'. These key elements of practice provided a framework with which to approach relating as conocidos. Practices present the actors, socialised in a common culture, as able to identify situations and activities in familiar ways (Bourdieu, 1977). Practices then become enacted and subjected to changes within everyday experience. However, how can the researcher tackle a phenomenon that lives in the realm of practice? How can the richness of a form of relating be expressed and researched upon when the object of analysis is, on the one hand, regulated by a contextual code, and, on the other, exists because it is 'tacit' – i.e. publicly denied?

Given that a central characteristic of practice is its lack of public recognition, the choice of methods need to be essentially unobtrusive (see Bourdieu and Thompson, 1991; Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, Secherst and Grove, 1966/1981). Also, as I explained above when accounting for culture, so-called passive techniques, such as observation

and non-experimental methods, answer recent demands on social psychology as a discipline (see Moscovici, 1984). The present research on relating as conocidos will rely on naturalistic and unobtrusive techniques, such as participant observation and open interviews, as they are particularly adequate for theoretical considerations. Thus, in order to render visible this practice, the researcher is required to collect first-hand observations (by participant observation) and the experience of this practice by the respondents (who are also 'practitioners') through the interviews.

Thus, to the scientist, practices present the challenge of finding out about people's sense-making of reality. This activity should focus on the precise discursive and performative nature of social life (Foucault, 1987; Moore, 1986, 1994). When studying practice there are some issues which are salient. Firstly, the observer needs to account for the disjunction between (i) the practical activity which was enacted following a subject's positioning, situated in space and time – i.e. the phenomenon as an experience – and (ii) the withdrawal from the action in its transformation from practical activity into an object of analysis – i.e. an awareness of how the phenomenon is seen from the outside (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu and Adamson, 1990). This withdrawal, if not accounted for, involves the danger of forgetting that the accounts offered by the reflexive subject are only able to state the discourse of familiarity, which leaves unsaid all that cultural baggage that 'goes without saying' (Bourdieu, 1991). Paradoxically, it is the content of the inverted commas that is at the core of cultural scientific questioning.

This distinction between the objectified practice and the experience of the act involved in such practice has important consequences at the methodological level. Bourdieu, Passeron and Saint Martin (1994) suggest tackling research on practice according to certain criteria. This proposal constitutes a guide for the empirical exploration, and has shaped the structure of the research design.

First, Bourdieu *et al.* (1994) suggest an analysis of the historical construction of spaces from which perceptions and perspectives are derived. This research will account for historical relations by looking rigorously at the social realm and painting detailed descriptions of social practices – i.e. those acted in current time in reference to past times – and the historical construction of the spaces. The elements of spatiality and temporality, as I said in the previous chapter, are specifically relevant when uncovering reciprocal relationships or the accountancy of indebtedness. This also implies the

retrieval of subjective perceptions or experiences. These issues will be tackled through an *ethnographic account*. The unfolding of a field report was collected in the form of participant observation[26].

Bourdieu *et al.*'s (1994) second suggestion is to render visible the invisible relationships. These relationships, by virtue of being processual, can be seen by the underpinning of the codes of practice and the playing on strategies. Regarding the empirical exploration of this thesis, the exposure of the codes of practice and the performance of strategies will be tackled through an analysis of *unstructured interviews*. The codes of practice, as those elements establishing the relevance of conduct in the given context, will be tackled with an analysis on, what I have termed, the 'talk content'[27]. Also, as we saw in the previous chapter, the strategies can provide a lens through which to explore relating as conocidos in its performative and discursive character. They will be explored in an analysis of the 'talk structure'[28]. It is in this realm of interaction that intersubjectivity is constantly re-created and where knowledge is created and transmitted.

A further analysis of the interview data will be carried out in order to underpin the discursive patterns in the respondents' talk. This analysis throws light on the understanding of relating as conocidos as a conflictual practice. It complements this study by providing a look at the reasons why this practice needs to be concealed. Hence, whilst the two previous analyses portray a picture on how relating as conocidos is carried out, this last analysis looks at why this form of relating is still manifested in the current context under study[29].

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[26] See below for an exploration of issues pertaining to participant observation. See Chapter V for the ethnographic narrative dealing with the historical construction of spaces, and Chapter IV for an introduction, through the ethnography, to the field.

[27] See below for an account of the procedure of this analysis, complemented in Appendix III, and see Chapter VI for the narrative of interpretation.

[28] See below for an account of the procedure of this analysis, complemented in Appendix IV, and see Chapter VII for the narrative of interpretation.

[29] See below for an account of the procedure of this analysis, complemented in Appendix V, and see Chapter VIII for the narrative of interpretation.

2. THE CHOICE OF METHODS

This research relies on two complementary methods of research: unstructured interviews and ethnography. These methods were chosen keeping in mind the transactional and practical dimensions of relating as conocidos. The difficulties in raising awareness of the processes as well as the ambiguity of this form of relating prove particularly relevant. Hence, my choice of research methods comes as an answer to the theoretical issues outlined above, concerning the problem under study, and a paradigm positioning. This situates my research within the interdisciplinary tradition of anthropology and social psychology (see Campbell and Narroll, 1972; Jahoda, 1982).

The common thread across these methodological alternatives is an understanding of research strategies as a means of learning about the social world at first-hand, with an emphasis on elucidating the meaning of social situations and how the participants structure their social world (see Burgess, 1984; Miller and Glasner, 1997; Rachel, 1996). The researcher should study situations from the participants' point of view to see how they experience and construct their reality (see Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Bogdan and Biklen, 1982). Thus, this emphasis on non-reactive methodology and the preference for so-called natural data is grounded in the assumption that (i) 'face-to-face interaction is the fullest condition of participating in the mind of another human being and that (ii) you must participate in the mind of another human being by taking the role of the other in order to acquire social knowledge' (Lofland and Lofland, 1984, p. 12). These perspectives on data collection allow a study of social phenomena in real life settings. The data derived are also a guarantor of the researcher's derived direct experience of the particular society under study (Conklin, 1968).

Ethnographic research, in the form of participant observation, is a method by which an investigator is integrated into a natural setting for the purpose of developing scientific understanding on precisely the process of integration (Lofland and Lofland, 1984). Unstructured interviewing, on the other hand, is a guided conversation in which the researcher seeks to discover the respondent's experience of a situation through language. Both methods have in common the interweaving of looking and listening (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973), and the fact that in both cases the researcher needs to develop relationships with the participants. With participant observation the researcher witnesses action and participates in its process across time, but s/he might be missing the interpretation that members give to those events. Explanations of motives,

intentions, and ways of living are to be collected through interviewing (McCall and Simmons, 1969).

a. Ethnography

Ethnography as a method of research sits on a difficult boundary. It is really a method by which the researcher interprets an alien culture. As Van Maanen (1988, p. xi) says, 'ethnography rests on the peculiar practice of representing social reality of others through the analysis of one's own experience in the world of these others'. It is also politically mediated, as the power of a person representing a cultural group is always present; fieldworkers are typically one-up on those they study (see Nader, 1969). The ethnographer necessarily decodes one culture while recording it for another (Barthes, 1972). Yet ethnography remains the best way to question those taken for granted or 'unquestionable' issues in a particular society.

Moreover ethnography, in its written version, is the result of a report on the fieldwork experience. This is a relevant distinction, as writing ethnography is rather deskwork, not fieldwork (Marcus, 1980). Hence, ethnography as a written product has a degree of independence from the fieldwork experience, as the researcher (once fieldworker and now ethnographer) uses a text format as a voice of public expression. It is about how culture is portrayed, whilst the fieldwork – on which it is based – is about how culture is known (Van Maanen, 1988). Consequently, it follows that narrative conventions assumed by the writer will also shape the ethnography, from textual organisation to the choices of figurative allusions (Van Maanen, 1988). It is not a matter of writing style, but more a reflection of a position and an understanding of ethnography as a valid account of a culture.

There are inconveniences and advantages to using ethnography. One of the advantages is that there are fewer limitations to accessing information, as the researcher participates in the informal settings where informants are not affected by demand characteristics (McCall and Simmons, 1969). Also, the relationship provides means of satisfying the researcher and the participant, whereas a one-sided relationship for obtaining information (as in surveys or questionnaires) might prove frustrating and unbalanced (Miller and Glasner, 1997). As a counterpart, there are arguments against this relationship, such as claims that it constitutes a potential source of bias where the

researcher might be misguided (McCall and Simmons, 1969). For the purpose of this research, ethnography allows the researcher to be present through the process of the practice, it provides a way of recording continuity and following up interactions.

Thus, ethnography requires the researcher to be directly involved in the process of data collection. This close contact with the field offers the possibility of redefining the research problem as the researcher goes along (Burgess, 1984). The scientist has the capacity to modify categories, avoiding misleading experiences of situations and providing quality impressions *in situ*. In order to interpret the meaning and experiences of the social actors, participating in the context becomes a requirement. Thus, the emphasis for the construction of an inductive theory through the ethnographic description (Goodenough, 1956) is on two issues: (1) the relationships between the researcher and the researched and (2) the role of the researcher in the field.

The first issue refers to the rapport the observer establishes with the observed (see Burgess, 1984; Toren, 1996). The second issue refers to the role of the researcher and her/his self-involvement in field situations (Lofland and Lofland, 1984; Spradley, 1980). A fieldwork role is supposed to be a 'social interactional device to secure information for scientific purposes' (McCall and Simmons, 1969, p. 31). Regarding both issues, the only way by which the researcher can account for her/his presence as a participant observer is through reflexivity and a careful balance between taking positions and playing positions in certain situations (see Burgess, 1984; Toren, 1996). Thus, it is through this self-accountancy and through the central dialogue between the informant and the observer, that the researcher can provide the methodological checks as well as ensure an adequate interpretation of fieldwork processes (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Willis, 1996; Goodale, 1995). These processes allow the researcher to discern relations between social structure or specific phenomena and ongoing social situations (McCall and Simmons, 1969).

The ethnographic research of this thesis had the purpose of looking at culturally grounded ways of interacting in the social world. This account is presented by a narrative on *participant observation*. Participant observation helps provide the social scientist with a chance to adopt and understand the 'common sense' construct of the researched upon by making her/him live her/his daily life within their social worlds (Schutz, 1954). It provides the observational field of the researcher with a form of access into the discursive social interaction of actors (see Burgess, 1984).

i) On participant observation

As mentioned above, the study of practice requires of the observer to account for the performance of the subjects in space and time. It is relevant for this research as it provides a way of rendering visible reciprocal relationships. Participant observation allows the 'passing' and recording of time and spatial performance[30]. Thus the sequential process of a practice can only be studied by situating the researcher in context, by ensuring her presence in different spaces and across time, in order to gain understanding of people's relationships.

Participant observation requires the researcher to fulfil the demands of the specific social environment. The challenge is not to be invisible, but rather to account reflexively for inescapable visibility (see Conklin, 1968). The researcher is expected to account for differences caused by her/his presence, and acquire abilities through which s/he can learn to relate to others in the same manner as they relate to her/him (see Marcus, 1980; Rachel, 1996). This participatory role requires the social scientists to take part in relevant activities in order to acquire perspectives and experiences similar to those of members of the field (McCall and Simmons, 1969). It is the best method of compiling data on social interactions, as the researcher has access to relational exchanges among members by observation and by the shared experience with the participants (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). To talk, to live and participate in the social life becomes part of the research process itself (Willis, 1996). Only through this process can the researcher arrive at an understanding of how the community is constituted and uncover members' interpretations of life (see Byron, 1986).

In participant observation, the informants constitute an important source of the validity of the recorded material, by virtue of providing the researcher with alternative interpretations as well as providing 'indirect observation' (McCall and Simmons, 1969, p. 4). Informants can also provide an entrance into spaces of limited access. In some cases, they go as far as providing the researcher with a guided tour of the setting (see Whyte, 1955). The researcher is thus expected to spend more time and energy participating than observing, either formally or informally (McCall and Simmons,

[30] See Chapter II.

1969). Sometimes, throughout the research process, there is a known reverse effect: the informant may become too much of an observer and the fieldworker may over-identify with the informant and lose her/his research perspective. Whether the researcher's position is that of an insider or a stranger (or both, as I consider was the case for me), s/he still has to be aware of the relationships in which s/he has engaged (see Burgess, 1984). The fact that the researcher's presence might not stand out is useful, but cannot be taken for granted. Regarding this research, an awareness of these issues ensures that, despite the presence of the researcher, the observational process will not obliterate the relational processes under study.

b. Interviews

The use of unstructured interviews within social psychology is justified by the mere nature of the interview as an interactional relation. Through conversations, either in the collection of verbal text or in the examination of gestures (Benney and Hughes, 1956), the subject is making the researcher an audience of her/his narrative. Interviews are justified as sole providers of discourses on action; it is a conversational production (Denzin, 1970). The way the interviewee attempts to convey meaning in the interaction with a known stranger – the researcher – is a powerful mechanism with which to gain insights into social knowledge (see Farr, 1984). Interviews portray the arts of sociological sociability (Benney and Hughes, 1956), the game in which the researcher gets to test and savour the flavour of the cultural environment.

Unstructured interviewing shares with ethnography similar benefits and limitations. As an unstructured method, it lacks a formalised standardisation. However, it permits getting the most out of field situations, with the aim of obtaining substantial sources of information (McCall and Simmons, 1969). Interviews also make effective use of the relationships the researcher establishes with the respondents in the field. As before, the researcher – by being present – attempts to gather information through fluid and constant feedback between what appears relevant and her/his incipient theoretical grounding (see Denzin, 1970).

When using ethnography the researcher creates the impression that the subject exists outside discourse, in a world where the researcher mediates her/his own experiences (Denzin, 1992, p. 201). Interviews provide a balance by uncovering the making of

discourses. Through language, the researcher has access to the reality of the researched. Oral discourse allows the interviewee to include ways of thinking about social relations and social continuities (Bestard-Camps, 1991). Hence interviews, as social interactions carried out between two people, provide an adequate digging tool for the acquisition of social knowledge and remain at the core of the practice of social psychology.

In the context of this research, unstructured interviews provided the researcher with a wide range of information in terms of content, as well as that related to the form of the talk. As mentioned, the problem of the investigation into relating as conocidos is the necessity of its practice with a certain level of false front. This front comes across in the way people relate and narrate interactions, which provides a useful instrument of interpretation and analysis (see Diversi, 1998; Riessman, 1993; Van Maanen, 1988). Unstructured interviews allow considerations of the social subject as historically situated within culturally created symbolic systems. Instead of burying the voices of the respondents under layers of analysis where the subject becomes a transmitter and a medium, the research seeks to acknowledge their concerns and accounts. The view from nowhere is impossible from an epistemological standpoint founded on a socially constructed reality. Hence, the 'located view from somewhere is the closest an author can get to a text that gives voice to the people' (Diversi, 1998, p. 133).

Unstructured interviews provide a way of overcoming the space in between a known event (such as past or history), and the actual experience of this event for the respondent (Hastrup, 1992a). In fact, specific stories retold by the respondents paint different worlds. These worlds can be seen as self-defining social spaces within which particular realities are generated, regenerated, or transformed through social practices (Hastrup, 1992b). The benefit of the interviews for this research is that they transmit the enactment of actions and skills through everyday occurrences. They can be seen as a form of history – as they relate past events – though they benefit from a contemporary element. The respondents' texts create voices that sound close and real, as these texts were lived before they are told. The way they transmit it, the format of their narratives is an appropriate object of analysis in itself, as they unveil an understanding on the inter-actions with others. Unstructured interviews constitute an active and reflexive form of inquiry to convey the lived experiences of thoughts and feelings (Ellis and Flaherty, 1992). The form of conversation of these interviews, as well as their content, will be subjected to analysis.

3. On Reflexivity

Research on practice can only be achieved when the researcher 'breaks with naivety and monitors his/her social understanding' (Fowler, 1997, p. 6). One of the requirements to ensure the reflexive breakage with the naive position of the researcher is inside knowledge of the cultural context in which the research is placed. This warrant of reflexivity framed the choice of where the fieldwork was conducted. This section presents an account of reflexivity from a theoretical and methodological standpoint.

Two rationales have been made explicit in presenting this research: (i) the recognition of qualitative methods as those sensitive enough to recuperate claims of intrinsic social experience, and (ii) the methodological alternatives available for the nature of the research problem. The need for this research to account for issues regarding reflexivity comes from its reliance on ethnographic material (ultimately a methodological concern), from the nature of practice as a frame for exploring relating as conocidos, as well as from its focus on studying processes. These conditions (naturalistic methodology, the study of processes and inside knowledge) increase the awareness of reflexivity on the part of the researcher, as well as account for the 'experience' of practice. From here, it follows that the best option for underpinning its logic is to be in the position of an insider, as well as remaining, to a certain extent, an outsider. In this way, the researcher is capable of identifying instances where episodes of relating as conocidos take place. This section will present a thorough account of field research concerns which are central for the understanding of this concrete theoretical endeavour[31].

The Field

The notion of field research – as a closed, bounded community – in a world defined by accessibility, where definitions of time and space rely on different co-ordinates, is, to a certain extent, being questioned (see Hetherington, 1998). 'Field' as a concept remains merely an ideal construct (Yang, 1994). Thus, it is not possible to make claims of territorial demarcations for this fieldwork, as (i) it is not methodologically feasible to draw a closed social boundary; and also (ii) this research enquires about the prevalence

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[31] For equivalent experiences, see Van Maanen (1988), Diversi (1998) and Ellis and Flaherty (1992).

of relating as conocidos. Hence, it does not make sense to limit the relationships to a specific enclosed space – especially as the research aims to account for their 'nature', rather than structural composition. As Yang (1994) says, fieldwork by the network method cannot be restricted to a place, or geographically circumscribed to a community.

However, in order to ensure some level of physical enclosure, the choice of an island as a research context provides a geographical boundary. This boundary guarantees a certain level of continuity in the relations – as it is a fairly isolated place– as well as ensuring a 'circularity' in the chain of relations. By this, I mean that if one were to follow up on the relations amongst the islanders, eventually there would be some level of closure, which is something that probably would not happen in other contextual spaces[32].

My position

Typically, the fieldworker arrives in the field without an introduction and knowing few people, if any. Once immersed in the field setting, the researcher learns to move around by trial and error, with numerous episodes of misunderstandings and embarrassment. This emphasis on the researcher as an outsider was more prevalent when ethnographic enquiry focused mainly on isolated communities. However, participant observation has also been applied (especially in disciplines such as sociology and social psychology) 'at home', i.e. in a familiar setting for the researcher. Still, there are numerous references in the fieldwork literature to how the role of the researcher requires some of the instincts of an exile, understood as the professional stranger (see Schuetz, 1944). I shall argue that my position in the field was right in between these two extremes, that is, I was what Burgess (1984) terms the 'known stranger', 'familiar outsider', or the 'known investigator'. It was precisely the chance of acquiring this position that determined the choice for the fieldwork.

Hence, the fieldwork was undertaken in La Gomera, an island which I have visited in the past and where I have some kinship connections. I am, therefore, an outsider but with a continuity of presence in the environment of the islanders. This gave me the chance of being accustomed to the cultural setting, as well as making me familiar in the

[32] More follows on islands as contexts of research in Chapter IV.

eyes of the community as a whole. Ethnographers acknowledge that the difficulty encountered by researchers doing fieldwork in a familiar setting comes in making the setting unfamiliar so as not to overlook situations (Burgess, 1984; Lofland and Lofland, 1984; McCall and Simmons, 1969). However, this need for engaging in a process of detachment from the setting was already part of how I related to the context itself.

Accessibility

Issues of accessibility are very important when approaching and relating in the field. The presence of the researcher undergoes a series of stages of identification: from the newcomer or foreigner, to a then personalised member, and finally to an 'immigrant' (McCall and Simmons, 1969, p. 53). In this sense, although I had to go through the same processes, I already had some initial connections. Hence, relations of trust with some members of the community were already facilitated, thus speeding the process of 'assimilation' (see Burgess 1984; Lofland and Lofland, 1984).

Here, I was able to blend into the context and meet the demands made by participants. Interaction was natural, as rapport was already established with those researched upon (see Burgess, 1984). These circumstances favoured my research in numerous ways. I did not have to request access and was neither forced to enter negotiations nor search for connections. Thus, the use of a participant-as-observer role (Junker, 1960) in the field was fully integrated. By enjoying a position as a 'known outsider' and by making clear my intention of carrying out research, I gained, soon enough, access to public and open spaces as well as to the private realm. Also, as an 'outsider' I was relatively free to enquire about situations which caught my attention (see Lofland and Lofland, 1984).

Location

In using ethnography, when the stranger – the researcher – first arrives in a community s/he aims to be included in a social circle. It is through this social circle that s/he approaches understandings of the community (McCall and Simmons, 1969). The term *social circle* follows Znaniecki's (1934) description of social interaction in small communities. Social circles are the informal groups of households – and individuals – who are linked through bonds such as residential closeness, kinship, and a general record of common participation (Znaniecki, 1934). Geertz (1973) has also referred to

these circles as *webs of significance* which are in continuous recreation by social interaction. It is in the social sphere that everyday matters are performed (Byron, 1986). Research into webs of significance provides access to cultural meaning (Geertz, 1973). Hence, the web of significance where I was located was not of a particularly distinctive character within the island context. Its intricacies and particularities will be revealed throughout the ethnographic account, though it was characteristic and representative of the life in the field.

Reflexivity

In order for the reader to access and assess the research process, the researcher's developing relationship with the research field must be laid open. Ethnography has given forum to the debate on whether being familiar with the setting is an advantage or a disadvantage. By being an outsider, the individual is claimed to be more objective (see Simmel, 1950). However, even if claims of objectivity are valid, prejudices could also appear in the stranger as soon as s/he engaged in relations with the people in the community (see Leach, 1963; Nadel, 1951). Disadvantages produced by studying a familiar setting seem to be applicable to those raised within the community under study. This is not my position. To the question of how far a fieldworker can understand her/his own society, Srinivas (1966, p. 153) answers: 'whatever the disadvantage, it has certainly not been so great as to prevent the emergence of the discipline of sociology. Marx, Weber, Mannheim and several other sociologists have been continuously preoccupied with the study of their own societies'.

Familiarity with the culture is, rather than a source of error, a way of increasing the competence of the researcher when translating observation into data (de Zeeuw, 1992). It ensures that issues regarding reflexivity, as well as political or ethical problems, will be treated accordingly (Stephenson and Greer, 1981). The researcher needs to be able to recognise cultural patterns and interpret meanings attached to events. Problems on the nature of participation will vary in their nature and the researcher – familiar or not with the setting – needs to acknowledge them reflectively. The position this researcher had within the field context was adequate for ethnographic purposes: I was generally granted access to the field and, when convenient for the process of enquiry, I could enquire as a stranger. Also, my position as an outsider facilitated the required 'detachment' to engage in the ethnographic process.

The reflexivity required in the process of data collection and the internal checks accounted for in the interpretational stage, also point towards a particularity of this research venture. A final point to discuss in this section is the quality process of this research. The thread of this thesis is necessarily the result of a processual activity which required a constant checking between empirical and theoretical elaborations. This constant linking between theory and interpretation lead finally to a convergence of both activities. Thus, the thesis reads as a generative process because it is, in itself, a generative endeavour. By providing an account of how people relate as conocidos, I am providing at the same time an experiential and conceptual language which feeds on the theoretical elaborations provided. This is clearly manifested in the empirical part of this thesis where, inevitably, the concepts explored rest upon the tools previously interpreted.

4. FIELDWORK AND DESKWORK

The fieldwork material for this thesis was compiled on an island belonging to the Canarian Archipelago. This island is called La Gomera. The implication of the island for research purposes is covered in the coming chapter. The collection of the fieldwork material and data corresponds to three periods. As I have mentioned elsewhere, the fieldwork as such had a temporal limitation, but my participation in the field – the island – goes back in time.

a. Periods of Collection

I was on La Gomera three times, compiling my fieldwork notes and conducting the interviews. The first occasion was in January 1997, when I stayed on the island for a month. At this stage, my purpose was to investigate and find ways of gaining access to data for my research problem. I went with the sole aim of writing a systematic diary of observation and starting a relationship with my informants. There was also the possibility of setting up a research proposal with WHO (World Health Organisation), which gave me access to the political elite and also changed the relationship I had with the islanders. It helped in providing access to different people as well as establishing new relations. It also gave me certain credibility in the eyes of the community, and gave

me the possibility of putting on the 'research guise' for the islander (see Lofland and Lofland, 1984).

The second time I was in the field I stayed for a longer period: from 15th July until 30th September 1997. At that time I was already more focused on the relational nature of the research, and also on the ways of getting around and gathering data. I kept a thorough recollection of events in a diary of observation. I spent most of my time focusing on getting contacts to carry out my interviews and also establishing the spaces and times for observation[33]. By this time, people were more familiar with my presence on the island.

The last period of fieldwork was during the spring of the next year. I was on La Gomera from 10th April until 30th May 1998. This was a period marked by my high visibility on the island, as my intentions to do a research project were already known. Although this project never came about, the venture proved to be extremely beneficial for the purposes of my research. It gave me access to the third group of interviewees – those working in public institutions or funded by them. During this time, I finished compiling material from the island and came back knowing that the fieldwork was complete.

b. Undertaking Ethnography

As I mentioned when talking about the location of the fieldwork, I relied on a pre-existing social circle when collecting the data. My field of observation (in terms of people and places) was located in and between two communities: that of Hermigua and San Sebastián.

Also, I soon found out that conceptions of research and investigation are stigmatised as rather obscure by the islander. More often than not, I realised that people were not very interested in the actual nature of my research, just the acknowledgement of a research endeavour was enough. However, in every situation I attempted to find accounts appropriate for those to whom they were emitted (see Lofland and Lofland, 1984). As I said, the fact that there were discussions about the development of a research project

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[33] For example, public spaces such as squares or bars were utilised by different sectors of the population at different times of the day. For a specific account of the field see Chapter V.

gave me the possibility of acquiring different sources of information, as well as potential explanations, when approaching the islander.

I also relied on the help of two informants. One is a young professional who lives in San Sebastián the whole year around. He proved to be very valuable for the research, and was interested in the work I was trying to develop. Moreover, apart from filling me in on the gossip or people's stories 'half-told', he also gave me access to many of the interviewees. The second one was a middle-aged woman who had also been living on the island for a long time, though she had spent some time working elsewhere. She had a good capacity for critical assessment, and the fact that she had been away and had come back gave her the benefit of knowing the actors and their stories as well as being able to establish a distance from them.

i) Observing public spaces

Regarding the places of observation, after a careful study of the area I decided to concentrate on the points of 'transit' within each community. These were all located in the highest visible area within the two population centres. In San Sebastián, the centre was a public square, and specifically three open kiosks facing onto the square. In Hermigua, the choice was also the public square (though only at very concrete times) and two very popular bars/restaurants in the area.

As a participant observer, I recorded behaviour, exchanges and conversations amongst people (either by taking notes or tape recording when possible). After a time, the routine of observation was highly specified. I realised that the use of the public spaces was largely determined by the time of the day at which I was doing the observation. In general, the time set aside for observation (and interviewing) was from noon to 10:00 p.m. I broke the units of observation into three time-spans, corresponding to the structure of the day: 'morning' or afternoon (from noon to 15:00), evening (from 17:00 to 19:00) and night (from 19:00 to 22:00). This proved beneficial in structuring the observations and aiding the recollection of the texts when I recounted the situations by myself at a later stage.

There was always a break after the midday meal and also some time in the morning which gave me the chance to work on systematic introspection (see Ronai, 1992). During this time I focused on – and recorded – my thoughts and feelings while engaging

in the setting (see Ronai, 1992), as well as narrating the setting and interactions among the participants. I made a systematic account of the 'sense-making' of relations, while going back and forth in time in order to produce emergent understandings (see Ronai, 1992). This last point was important in order to read the actual exchange in reference to the history of the subjects and the history of their relationship. The focus is on flesh-and-blood subjects and their lives as represented by community members. This form of narration offered fuller representations of the characters. To account for the ramification of their stories and other events was one of the most demanding endeavors in the field, but facilitated the narrative of the ethnography later on. This is so because, as predicted, people did not want to nominally acknowledge the level of instrumentalisation when relating as conocidos. However, they did talk about it. I found that when enquiring, interviewing and observing, people would make reference to these relationships, either in the first person – relations in which they had engaged themselves – or in the third person – when talking about others.

The references from the narrative presented have a system of annotation that indicates the moment of collection. This information might be relevant in locating the instance related and acknowledging the progressive level of involvement in the field across the visits. The annotations are composed of 3 numbers: the first indicates the order of visits (1 is the first visit; 2 the second and 3 the third visit) to the field; the second number corresponds to the day of the visit; and the third corresponds to the moment of observation – for example 1/14/2 would be a reference to an observation made on the first visit, on day 14 (15th January), from 17:00 to 19:00.

c. Conducting the Interviews

I conducted 30 interviews in total, which were carried out following an unstructured format of conversation. I always introduced myself as a researcher who was interested in investigating patterns of relations on the island. The introductory question to start the informal conversations was simply 'tell me about the island and your relations with the people here'. The conversation then carried on following an unstructured pattern. I let them speak freely and followed their arguments and lines of conversation. When further probing was needed, and always following on from their comments, I (re)framed

the line of argument in the interviews to tackle issues related to relations with others as well as problem solving within the island context.

By this, I intended to find out the ways in which they acted when limitations or problems arose on the island. The assumption was that when faced with problems they would access people and engage in relating as conocidos. I soon found out that there were particular areas of concern in the respondents' accounts. These areas were related to gaining access to three different domains: institutional (such as getting subsidies, or access to resources such as water or light), health and education (or employment training), and other areas (such as access to people related to the masonry profession). Given the open-ended character of the interviews, the time taken for each of them varied, though it was never less than one hour and fifteen minutes.

i) Segmentation

For the purpose of my research, I chose to distinguish between three different segments of the population on the island. These groups were (i) the elders, (ii) the young people, and (iii) those I have termed 'outsiders'. The first group was composed of people over 60. However, the term 'elders' conveys their weight in the traditions and codes of the island. Their role is very important within their communities, as they are publicly acknowledged as those in possession of 'local knowledge'. They are aware of it, and see it as their duty to provide the young generations with the continuity needed to live within the island context. Given the ageing process of the population (Legna, 1997) this group makes up a large proportion of the current population of the island[34].

The 'young' group was formed of people aged 25 to 35. They were either professionals or people working in the service sector. All of them had the option of being elsewhere, of leaving the island. The professionals had trained in Tenerife, at the university, and those working in the service sector had also been at some point on some neighbouring islands. The relevance of this group is that they had 'chosen' to come back (even

[34] For the records on procedure, half of the interviews with the old people were arranged via a third person (a nexus), a common conocido, who was the informant. However, on five occasions when the interviews were conducted in isolated areas, the nexus remained during the interview. This person was asked to keep his/her level of intervention to the very minimum, i.e. only answer if s/he was specifically addressed. The rest of the interviews followed a standard one-to-one procedure.

though the choices were determined by issues such as taking care of their elders, or the family business and land). This group, given the distribution of population on the island, seemed interesting as they were not young enough to be ignored, but shared with the younger population (who inevitably just dream of leaving) a certain amount of discontent, but also a certain amount of 'pride', in being an islander.

People who worked in official institutions on the island composed the third group. They had all been living on the island for a minimum of 5 years. As it happened, interviewing public servants on the island had two other attached distinctions. First, they were not from the island. They considered themselves outsiders and had been appointed to their posts through centralised state procedures. Secondly, as a consequence of this, they did not recognise me as an insider. Neither my accent nor my current place of residence conveyed any links with the Canary Islands. Thus, they related to me as if, like them, I was an outsider, or rather a stranger.

The segmentation was also theoretically driven. As was explained, Bourdieu's (1977) understanding of practice presupposes a familiarity with the performance of strategies and codes of the community. My initial hypothesis was that people would engage in this form of performance with those whom they recognised as being familiar with these codes. In order to test this assumption, I conducted two interviews with people who were from the island but did not know me (those with asterisks after their names in the table below). I was proven right, as these people did engage in the conversation in a different manner. They did not bring in referents to other people and, in general, were unsure of my level of knowledge of the island, the social agents, and even the physical geography.

Thus, there is a further distinction between the first two groups of 'insiders' – the group of elders and the young people – and the third group – the outsiders. The first two groups knew me and recognised me as a 'known outsider' (with the exception of these two respondents). In those cases where they did not know me, precautions were taken to ensure a 'nexus': I was introduced to them through informants. Hence, the division accounts also for whether the respondents were familiar with me or not.

The structure of the segments, including the number of interviews per segment as well as the gender and age of the respondents, is as follows:

Insiders		Outsiders
Elders	*Young*	
Nela Pelaez (69, F) Felipe Páez (68, M) Erfidio Hernandez (65, M) Mariquita Rita (63, F) Pili Sandoval (67, F) Don Anastasio (72, M) Maria Fragoso (62, F) Manuela Ayala (64, F) Sita Plasencia (66, F) Onelio Mendez (67, M) Eustaquio Febles (69, M) Baltasar Suarez (69, M) Rucho (61, M)* Ramon Tadeo (66, M)*	Eva Padilla (28, F) Paco the Sailor (31, M) Hernando Almenara (32, M) Pilar Vergara (32, F) Tomas Gonzalez (34, M) Pepe Morales (33, M) Ernesto Perez (33, M) Paloma Osorio (32, F)	Ana (34, F) Father Jeronimo (40, M) Juanita (32, F) Sara (33, F) Bartolome Fragoso (41, M) Encarna (35, F) Julie Douglas (55, F) Pili (30, F)
Total: 14	**Total: 8**	**Total: 8**

The names of the characters have all been changed. Given the nature of the research, the island itself could not be disguised and, given the respondents' accounts, it is also difficult to disguise certain public figures to whom they made reference (such as the mayor or the president of the island). However, I took care to conceal the respondents' identity in order to ensure anonymity. In some instances it proved difficult given the restricted character of the community, however information which could give them away was not provided. Also, in order to have some assurance of the anonymity of the respondents and of those others the respondents mentioned in their texts, a Gomeran read all the analytical chapters. She checked that the private characters were not recognisable and she was able to assert that the interpretational narrative was accurate according to her experience of the context.

Briefly, the general picture painted through the interviews of the different groups is the following: (1) the 'elders' are the guardians of tradition, the ones who talk, with nostalgia, about Gomeran roots and folklore. They are the witnesses of the island's detriment. (2) The 'young' group are dynamic and also the potential dissidents; they want change but are cynical. They are the change enforcers, the new blood, and the voice of the contemporary Gomera. (3) The 'outsiders', as such, are less concerned with the sensitivity and codes of the island either due to lack of awareness or interest. They

are also the only ones capable of raising problems publicly. They are highly critical of the way things are and seem frustrated and dissatisfied[35].

d. Analysis of Interviews

There is a reluctance by many authors to lay bare the procedures associated with the analysis of qualitative data (see Bryan and Burgess, 1983; Burgess, 1984). As Hammersley and Atkinson (1993) point out, the way to increase the power of qualitative forms of research is to account reflexively for the research design, data collection and analysis. In this section, I shall attempt to provide a concise account of the process of analysis of the interviews. The interview material was coded following three different forms of analysis, and therefore, three different treatments of the data.

The data were transcribed verbatim and the text was coded using ATLAS/ti, a qualitative data analysis programme. This section will describe the stages in the analysis of the transcripts of these interviews. The annotations to the text of the quotes provided by the interviews refers to the name of the respondent, followed by the group (O: outsider; E: Elders; Y: young), the number given to the respondent[36], and the line of text from where the quote was extracted – for example: Don Anastasio (E6; 531:536).

i) First two analyses: Interviews with insiders

The first two analyses were conducted on the interviews with the people who had a history of location on the island. Their families were from the island, and they made up (in opposition to the third group) the group of 'insiders'. Their main characteristic, for the purpose of this research, was that they were familiar with other members, the ways of being, and the history and traditions of the community and the island. Therefore, the data for these analyses consisted of 20 interviews pertaining to people who were both (i)

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[35] Also, by the fact that they belong to the institutional domain, it means that they are also linked to the central government, to 'mainland Spain'. This brings out a powerful stream of connotations and stigma: from feelings of superiority (the Spanish above the islander) to a shared understanding on the part of the Gomerans on their lack of capabilities (destinations are decided according to results in central exams, only those who did most badly would have ended up taking a post in La Gomera).

[36] See Appendix II for a list and description of the respondents. The number given to every respondent corresponds to the 'primary text' in the ATLAS/ti programme.

aware of my position as a 'known outsider', and (ii) considered themselves as islanders, i.e. Gomerans.

Insiders		
Elders	*Young*	*Total*
12	8	20

The two analyses of these 20 interviews gave rise in the narrative of the thesis to the interpretations reported in Chapter VI and Chapter VII. Hence, although the material subjected to analysis was the same, the handling of the interviews was quite distinctive. The analysis was not theoretically driven, as there was not a theoretical framework to anchor the analysis of the text prior to the coding schedule. However, if not theoretically driven, the codes developed in the process of the analysis were conceptually loaded. Prior to the analysis I already had a rough conceptual bed on which to anchor the research. Therefore, even if the analysis was not explicitly theoretically guided, it was conceptually informed by practice (see Chapter II).

a) Procedure of analysis

Before starting the coding exercise, the interviews were thoroughly read in order to engage in an informed exploration of the text. The aim of the exercise was to become familiar with the data and be able to have an overview of the general story conveyed by the respondents – i.e. their own description of their context and living environment. After the reading of the individual interviews, and in order to allow a cohesive general picture, a narrative was generated with the aim of providing a general story of the two groups: elders and young people.

From these general stories I found that there were two different issues which sparked interest in the data. One issue had to do with the content of people's talk. The respondents were very articulate in expressing their concerns and ways of life on the island. The second issue was the way they talked. The structure of their narrative was rather 'challenging' and I found interesting their manner of handling a conversation.

From these two issues, two different analyses on the same body of data were carried out. They were named analysis on 'talk content' and analysis on 'talk structure'.

Talk content: The codes of practice

This analysis, as indicated, focused on the content of the respondent's talk. It aimed to record with a set of analytical codes the concerns and the way of life of the islanders. That is, issues related to their daily routines and conflicts, as well as their expectations were of interest in this analysis.

From the general story, which roughly outlined their concerns, a coding frame was developed. This coding frame was built in a bottom-up fashion, i.e. it was anchored on the content of the text. Hence, the interviews were extensively coded on an individual basis. From there, and with the aid of ATLAS/ti, codes and text segments were merged to generate a more manageable and cohesive body of data. On many occasions and, as expected when doing qualitative analysis, the text was coded under more than one code-category.

Once this coding was completed, a second level of interpretation began. A printout of the code-quotation list was created as a database to further delve into the thematic content of the data. This permitted a move from the individual interviews, and the personal stories of the respondents, to concentrate on a process of enquiry detached from its text source. These code-based data were explored in order to search for patterns, which proved to be one of the most demanding parts of the analysis. As expected, this highly intuitive process did not have a linear structure. The mapping of concepts, the need to arrange clusters of meaning, and connecting and disconnecting strings of text proved to be a challenging but thoroughly enjoyable exercise.

The result of this second code-based analysis was a set of themes which accurately reflected people's narrative. I considered it extremely important at this stage to check the internal narratives of the interviews and see whether the themes outlined reflected the voices and concerns of the islanders. Tables of codes, showing their frequency and occurrence, and the resulting themes in the respondents' narratives are provided in Appendix III.

Talk structure: The strategies

The second analysis of the islanders' interviews aimed to look at the structure or composition of the respondents' talk. As mentioned, this group of respondents was acquainted with me, with the exception of some interviews conducted with the aid of the 'nexus'. In this manner, I could pick up the way people used language, in its full signification, when addressing someone with whom they were familiar. It is usually the case that in interviews people challenge and make claims of importance through their talk (see Epstein, 1992). These ways of talking are relevant as they disclose the purpose of informing the listener of the things that should be known and, hence, they allow for the emergence of interpretations. Hence, the analysis was aimed at searching for patterns in people's talk about relating as conocidos.

In the field, to be known by the respondents gave me the possibility of establishing an appropriate environment to facilitate talk on interactions in their lives (where relating as conocidos happens) and their way of going about solving issues in their context (which was the subject of the previous analysis). Although considerations such as the validity of this methodological strategy need to be taken into account, the relevance of establishing some degree of rapport with the respondents was of extreme importance for the nature of this research. People would not talk about relating as conocidos in abstract, they needed to retell an instance or refer to the people involved to account for this form of relating[37]. This was confirmed by the two interviews I conducted with people who were not acquainted with me, and therefore did not engage with me as a conocido. They provided later, after the analysis had been undertaken, some grounds of validity as the set of codes, which came out of the interpretation of the interviews, were not applicable in their talk.

In order to ensure the inclusion of the relevant material, at this stage of the analysis I selected text which was relevant and specific to interactions. I established three main pre-requisites for selection: (i) the presence in the text of verbs related to 'knowledge'[38] ('do you know who X is?' 'I know X, and you too', 'Have your heard of X?'); (ii) text

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[37] This methodological strategy is informed by research I undertook in the past (Fernandez-Dols *et al*, 1994), where we interviewed people asking them about who was a conocido and in which circumstances they would access them. The respondents needed to be prompted by examples and needed to talk about the topic within a context.

pertaining to forms of relations expressed by the interviewee in reference to those around him/her on the island; and finally (iii) narratives of problems that the interviewees encountered and, especially, how they went about solving them.

In this manner, I established a procedure that ensured the consistent inclusion of relevant material to be subjected to further analysis. Also, the text collected throughout this preliminary selection formed a guarantee that those elements pertaining to relating as conocidos within the islanders' context would be included. Therefore, the resulting coding frame of this analysis on the 'talk structure' was exhaustive. By this, I mean that whenever any of the pre-requisites mentioned above was present – related to knowledge, relational or processual issues – the text was further delved into, codified and subjected to further scrutiny.

Before coming up with the set of codes for this analysis, I undertook a similar process of exploration as the one described in the 'talk content' analysis. The thorough reading, initial interpretation and further codification was a requirement in order to search for the patterns in people's talk. The most difficult part of this analysis was to not take into account the content of the text. In order to focus on the construction of the respondents' talk I took some cases where the composition was clear as examples to guide the coding process. A description of the coding frame, as well as tables of codes (showing their frequency and occurrence) are provided in Appendix IV.

ii) Third analysis

The third analysis of the interviews included a bigger corpus of data. Here, all segments were included: the elders, the young people and the outsiders. Thus, this third analysis comprised a set of 30 interviews: 14 old people (here the two control-interviews of the group of elders were also included), 8 young people and 8 outsiders.

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[38] Here, the reader needs to be reminded of the connotations of the verb 'to know' (*conocer*) which have already been explained in Chapter I.

Insiders and outsiders			
Insiders		*Outsiders*	*Total*
Elders	Young		
14	8	8	30

The aim of the analysis was to look into the discourses underpinning the practice of relating as conocidos. This analysis was mainly empirically driven, as I only arrived at it once I had undertaken the two analyses mentioned above. After delving into the data (looking for content and looking for structure) I felt there were still unanswered issues. The respondents' texts made noise, their contradictions, when explaining relations and instances of exchanges, were still not uncovered. Also, although the last analysis (on the structure of talk) had touched upon these issues, they were only elaborated upon at a descriptive level. I lacked a point of reference which could give a cohesive sense-making to the practice. Also, even though the actual shape this analysis took was empirically driven, I had already envisaged this analysis to be the one moving from practice and dealing with discourse. From the first readings of the interviews (as mentioned above) I realised that people talked differently if they were outsiders or islanders, they had different concerns and expressed problems in a distinctive manner.

Hence, this analysis started with the view of providing a discursive frame to understand the respondents, as subjects living in a contemporary society. It provided a way of looking at the unquestionable, the taken for granted, and at the conflicts in people's interpretations of the world.

a) Procedure of analysis

This analysis required more conceptual work than text work. In comparison to the others, it was more challenging but less unsettling, as I felt I had to find a way of expressing something I already knew, implicitly, was there. Moreover, due to the familiarity with the data (provided by the two previous analyses) and undoubtedly the conceptual clarity that the writing of the thesis gave me, the process of the analysis was considerably more focused and informative.

Hence, I established three broad conceptual categories to direct the interpretation:

- The **Subject** as an entity defined in a particular manner.
- The **Other** as a person to whom expectations of actions are attached.
- The **Context** as the place where the subject and the other meet.

Two very different narratives, ways of speaking or stories came out in reference to the three different categories established above. These two narratives were at odds with each other, their construction and underlying assumptions were based on disparate terms. These terms drew a cultural field full of contradictions. By looking at the disposition of these divergent terms it was finally possible to unveil the role of the taken for granted. The report on this analysis (or the story of what I found) is narrated in Chapter VIII and complemented by tables and descriptions of codes in Appendix V.

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The aim of this chapter has been to address methodological issues relevant to the study of relating as conocidos as a social practice. The first part of the chapter explored methodological concerns regarding qualitative research and the study of Bourdieu's (1977) practice. The second part of the chapter engaged in a more focused look at issues of reflexivity and the relevance of the choices of methods for this research. Finally, the third part provided an overview of how the research was conducted. The chapter exposes the process of research through an elaboration of the interplay between theory, method and analysis.

IV

THE CONTEXT

ON ISLANDS: THE GENERAL AND THE PARTICULAR

This chapter aims to present the context in which the fieldwork for this thesis was undertaken. I consider an explicit elaboration of the context to be essential because of its importance for methodological as well as theoretical issues. Thus, the context is relevant (i) for ethnographic concerns – in aiding the understanding of the thesis – and also (ii) as part of a more academic concern, which refers to the need for contextualising research and which situates this thesis as part of a tradition of island research. This chapter aims to fulfil these two requirements.

The first part of the chapter presents the consequences of choosing an island as the context of research. This thesis needs to be located within a running tradition in the social sciences which has made islands the 'ideal' scientific laboratory. I shall then elaborate on the appeal and input of islands in Western academic and lay thought. Islands as geographical entities have certain characteristics which make them particular in relation to a greater context. Hence, since relating as conocidos happens to be studied in an island context, there are particularities that will reflect the way this relationship is conducted within this spatial frame. The second part of the chapter is already part of the ethnographic narrative. Hence, this chapter offers an entrance into the explorative stage of the thesis. The structure for this second part is provided by the first part. Thus, I shall mirror theoretical considerations with an ethnographic report. The chapter goes from the general to the particular.

1. ON ISLANDS: THE GENERAL

In order to make an honest attempt at recounting the knowledge and experiences of an island, it is necessary to be aware of (i) the attraction towards islands as constructs created through history, and (ii) their use as sites for scientific research. This section will acknowledge the role of islands as territories with a specific differentiation and a

unit of identity. I shall first present the symbolic conception of islands within the Western world. Islands can be seen as unique sites of resistance. Their geographical condition positions them as the ideal territories for the visualisation of enclosure, and therefore control. This is followed by an elaboration of islands as units in the next section. These secluded contexts offer guarantees of isolation and have traditionally been used for research purposes.

a. The Meaning of Islands

Islands as geographical territories have had a role in the formation of Western culture. They have been the subject of research and literary endeavours, and are still significant as sites of conquest and experimentation. In many ways, the island has come to signify far more than its geographical reality; it is a 'primary expression of coloniality' (Lane, 1995, p. 4). Islands have become constructs discursively created across time. This discourse is anchored in the expression of islands as isolated and simplified spaces.

The island space is deprived of meaning, does not exist and, as such, gains reality through the appearance of the conqueror. It is a space that awaits the arrival of the coloniser and 'becomes a site for his reproduction, self-replication and self-discovery' (Lane, 1995, p. 12). The literary figure of the shipwrecked sailor portrays this symbolism perfectly: the hero, after the close encounter with death, confronts his re-birth through the lonely appearance of the island. As Green (1990) writes, the Crusoe figure gives up on life at night, and by morning miraculously begins his settlement and new conquest. The island is therefore depicted as empty or unreal, vulnerable to the re-imposition of new regimes that replicate the domination of the old ones (Lane, 1995). Loxley (1990) argues that the purpose of English texts related to islands was to reproduce certain imperialistic ideas. These ideas meant to convey the notion that Europe provided management and control through knowledge and language; the New World was actively constructed through Western ideological codes. The recurrence of this idea in narratives since Victorian times gives away the inherent need for these discourses as celebrations of the impositions of sameness and colonial power.

Although islands are defined as land surrounded by water, there is more variety within this category than first appears. We have islands as formative units in an archipelago. Then there is Australia, which can be defined categorically as a continent, but remains

linked to colonial traditions. Finally we have the insular character of Britain, which amplifies characteristics of identity and self-sufficiency, attributes certainly not present in other island categories. There are also authors who define islands as social entities existing in isolation, though not necessarily isolation of a physical kind (Pitt, 1980).

The ambivalence of islands is clearly suggested in Thomas More's *Utopia*, which defines the island as a space of Otherness. Utopia was the frontier of the imagination, where the no-place (outopia) and the good-place (eutopia) met. This place defined, above all, the aim of modernity, trying to create the perfect society by turning the no-place into the good-place (Hetherington, 1997). It was therefore predictable that Utopia was situated on an island, which unites possibilities of conquest with possibilities of privacy, self-discovery and isolation. Islands, as places of fantasies, are also the topic of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. Fantasy is by definition the epitome of resistance, and the island represents that potential fight for idiosyncrasy against stability. Celebrations of variety are counter-balanced by comparisons with the mainland, which is always the unit of measure. The island has also been used to comment on, or to criticise, local and contemporary society, rather than being depicted as a place with its own distinct identity (Lane, 1995).

Therefore, the experience of island societies in Western culture is clearly marked by artistic creation. We have literary expressions, as old as the Mediterranean odysseys, or Rousseau's communion of man and nature. We even have pictorial forms such as Gaugin's paintings, where the exotic is joined with the erotic, both clashing with Puritanism and the repressive social norms of Western societies at that time. In a way, the images of islands were a forceful contrast within the urban landscape of the Industrial Revolution. Also, this clash is still present to a certain extent. The assumed permissiveness and exoticism of island cultures and the aestheticism of the eighteenth and nineteenth century bourgeoisie are still present. This alternative vision is marked by a simplification of exchanges and labour structures (Sahlins, 1985); it is somehow equated to earlier forms of metropolitan cultures. This form of escapism is still active in the appeal of islands, and has now been transformed into a consumer product to be purchased through the local travel agency (see Cohen, 1983). Here, the escape towards adventure is packed into neat weekly periods, with any element of threat removed by the provision of a made-to-measure catering service and the guarantee of sun, sea and sand.

b. The Island as the Research Unit

The emphasis on islands as units of research has proved valuable in providing answers for social science. During the European age of discovery, islands provided a great deal of new imagery for scientific and social comment (Cohen, 1983). There was the work of Wallace, Darwin and Spencer, who presented islands as enclaves of isolated nature where the uncontaminated evolution of species provided answers to the origins and development of life. The published work of explorers, missionaries and traders also provided the view of the island as an isolated society. This was very appealing to Western consciousness, and the view that islands and their people provided meaningful insights into industrial society prevailed.

The 'nature vs. nurture' debate also tapped into islands, at first searching for answers to linear evolutive arguments, and then finding evidence for the perspective of nurture in the social sciences (see Malinowski, 1932). Islanders became the epitome of the primitive man. Their communities, as undiscovered or untouched societies, were also meant to provide answers to the character of human relations and societies. To some extent, social sciences such as anthropology were the result of this interest in what were labelled primitive societies. Soon enough there were scientific expeditions focused on islanders as those who could shed light on how things had become in modern, Western, industrial societies. Issues such as market principles, exchanges and ways of relating amongst community members were of prime importance at this time.

Islands are limited spaces marked geographically by strong boundaries. The boundaries have the purpose of differentiating spaces, and as such they work in two ways: (i) from the island to the outside world and (ii) from the island community to other spaces on the island itself. Hence, given that islands are distinct spaces, there are two main issues or concepts attached to being part of an island community: dependency on the outside world and divisions marked by multiple boundaries.

i) Dependency: The island in the world

Islands are always related to a mainland. This relationship might not be always welcome or acknowledged, as in the case of Great Britain and Continental Europe.

However, regardless of the size of the territory, a space surrounded by water is meant to be related to a stable mainland. Islands have already been defined as spaces of resistance. They are enclaves attacked by the assumptions of modernity. Thus, an island's relation to the mainland has always been marked by an active struggle for, and a powerful mechanism of, identity differentiation.

However, in the case of the small island, resistance has been tainted by an uncomfortable position of dependency, constituting the co-ordinates of an unsettling paradox. The size of islands is significant, as small ones enhance their image as bastions of a pristine way of life, which seems endangered by the intrusion of the Western world, with its values and institutions.

However, islands can still be seen as laboratories of life. They have to encounter and assimilate fast and unsettling changes. Hence, they provide understanding about how islanders, as active subjects, have assimilated technological development and institutional change, rather than being a mere outcome of them (Byron, 1986). Islands take on meaning by themselves as frames, to which the wider world has access, where people have re-worked ways of integrating modernity within their own reality. Their society is the product of their own agency. Their inhabitants' thoughts and acts are embedded in a continuous cultural process, in which 'any comparison between 'then' and 'now' is relative and completely arbitrary' (Byron, 1986, p. 10).

In island societies, there is a marked division in history. Whether it is recorded or not, the history of these societies can be told in a 'before and after' fashion, with little continuity between the two. Curiously, the 'after' starts where Western colonial history begins and, in many cases, the 'before' is either actively ignored or belongs to the sphere of resistance mentioned above. Today, the presence of the mainland's power is felt in many spheres of their lives. There is an important difference between people living on island territory – especially if they are at a certain distance, such as many ex-colonial enclaves – and people on the mainland itself. This tangible difference is that, although regulations and distribution of central government resources is meant to be equal, island communities often tend not to enjoy the closeness and participatory status of people from the mainland (see Sanchez-Padron, 1983).

Hence, the State and its institutions come across in very concrete public endeavours, most of them in the form of formalised restrictions, at a community level and an individual level. In general, the hand of the State sets up points of contact reaching into

processes of social control, where institutions operate upon universal criteria and do not take into account distinctive island idiosyncrasy (see Byron, 1986; Cohen, 1983). Moreover, islanders under the influence of Western countries live with an unsettling feeling of misplacement. Their links with other historically or geographically close territories is neither acknowledged nor present in any sphere of their lives. They give meaning to their lives with reference to a detached state, yet always are aware that geographical distance carries with it the essence of their difference.

There are forces that define the contemporary situation of island economies. Islands are significant elements in the definition of contemporary world order; this is why they are important assets of colonial power. Either because of their strategic geopolitical location or natural resources, they are in many cases the focus of desire of Western countries. This fact has provoked tensions which are difficult to resolve at an internal level. Island societies often record high rates of emigration and the cost of their administration is disproportionate to the population they serve (see Cohen, 1983). In research on island economies, there seems to be an absence of class analysis revealing the relationship between institutional changes, policy measures and continuity of the dominant power groups (Sanchez-Padron, 1983). As a result, the distribution of power has remained the same, and communities have been subjected to a sharp polarisation of wealth and opportunities. This dual exposure to internal conflict and external pressure on small islands is, in many ways, derived in a circular fashion from the 'very fact of their size, their characteristic economic weakness, and their historical dependence on larger countries for budgetary support and political protection' (Cohen, 1983, p. 9).

It is important to be aware that these tensions of local and modern forces are also present in other forms of community. What makes the island a particularly interesting case is how it provides an example which, given its geographical condition, proves to be more visual and tangible. Pitt (1980) argues that there is a need for a sociology of islands since they are, as a concept, a significant part of folk sociology. Islands are discrete entities in space and time, and their dependency status is linked to geographical limitations. This secludes the islander from other community groups through a clear social boundary which is reflected physically, in its condition as an island, and emotionally, in its colonial status of dependency.

ii) Divisions: The island as the world

As mentioned above, the second characteristic I consider relevant, regarding the concept of islands, is the 'indispensability' of demarcation. This demarcation perfectly defines the boundary between the world inside the island and other worlds. From the island looking out, the outside world might even be visible on the horizon. It might represent a secure way of escape or it might be an aim to aspire to. In any case, being an islander is marked by a clear understanding of the island as unit, as a point of reference in understanding the world. This referential point needs to be made sense of. Thus, we can think of islands as possessing an external boundary which has to be tailored through identity differentiation. Almost by definition, an island comes with a boundary, which brings with it a clear position to be taken in the world.

Moreover, given that the island context in itself is perceived as limited or restricted for the islander, resources can be defined as scarce. Here divisions of space take a fundamental role in defining social structure, and are clearly separated through tangible and/or symbolic boundaries (see Hetherington, 1997). Land or water ownership are the prototypical examples of the symbolic value of scarcity and limitations (see Cohen, 1983). Other physical entities, such as public spaces, also become important demarcations: from hierarchical distinctions in villages to bars and social clubs. In the context of an island, these boundaries are imposed but at the same time negotiated through social relations lived and acted through time. The historical past of the families, the location of spaces of resistance and compliance, and the places of ritual and innovation, are limited in access and, at the same time, re-created through community life. People belong to 'either/or' spaces, where boundaries are publicly agreed and ascribed.

In small island communities spaces are assigned, distributed and justified by tradition. The way of expressing and challenging order needs to be disguised by games of seduction (see Baudrillard, 1987). However, individuals in isolation cannot exercise games of disguise from the public community. It involves the subject, and above all his position and his relation to significant others. Thus, in these spaces, the subject engages in different domains of life within a singular social environment. Every social subject is actively making distinctions between her/his own social sphere and that which is outside (Byron, 1986). This social sphere is where most of her/his daily activity is acted. It falls within the boundaries of what is familiar to her/him and thus s/he becomes a

competent social performer within it. In small island communities, the social world matches the physical world. This particularity is what I consider to be central in acknowledging research on islands as unique and characteristic.

The richness of island communities is found in the work of Goffman (1959) with his study of everyday life performance; here he talks of people displaying behaviour for the sake of others. Although he identifies this form of behaviour in different social spaces, such as the work environment (Goffman, 1971), it is in the island community where it was first acknowledged and where the power of performance comes across clearly. It is in this context that a common tradition of interaction can give way to particularities, and it is here where kin and client form part of the same social sphere.

Goffman's (1959) work is part of the research tradition on islands. However, he was one of the few who saw the setting not only as a self-contained fieldwork unit, but also as a social entity in itself. This sensitivity towards the nature of human encounters has proved enlightening as a research trend in itself. Human encounters could be seen as enriched when the social environment is restricted, not in quality but in the amount of social subjects. In an island community, the subject has to relate to clients, kin and service providers within the same environment. When multiple webs of relation enclose the community and everyone is related in some way or another to someone else, displaying behaviour becomes a central issue. The social subject has to engage in activities which strive towards a coherent image that needs to be given to different groups. The positions s/he takes need to be consistent, and conflicts need to find a way of expression. Every subject has a wide and penetrating knowledge of the lives and circumstances of their fellow islanders and this society corresponds, in its membership, to the physical limits of the island.

2. AN ISLAND: LA GOMERA AS THE PARTICULAR[39]

The purpose of this section is to present the context of the research. As explained elsewhere, the context is ultimately linked to the research question. It provides the thesis with a cultural lens. This part of the chapter constitutes the introduction to the fieldwork, and hence an entrance to the stage of interpretation of the thesis. Again, the process of narration will go from the general to the particular. Hence, I shall start by presenting the island in reference to the world, and then continue with a focused look at the island's spaces. The content of this narrative aims to aid the consequent empirical exploration, rather than provide an exhaustive account. The text needs to be understood having in mind the perspective of those living on the island. Thus, those speaking through this text are the ones living in the context where the research took place.

La Gomera is one of the minor islands of the Canarian Archipelago, and administratively belongs to the province of Santa Cruz de Tenerife[40]. The islanders, although hospitable in character, have a strong categorisation of the world. This stereotyping has to do with issues of insular identity. The traditions of the community and the understandings of what it means to be Gomeran are strongly related to the way in which outsiders are perceived and positioned. Thus, there are strong distinctions on how strangers are understood. This is not only related to distance and experience of them; it is also tied into historical contact and traditions.

a. Looking Out

Looking out – literally, given the geographical disposition of the island of La Gomera – is relatively easy. The population has a very specific view of the contours of the island and of the horizons available. On a clear day, the rest of the islands which compose the archipelago are visible, including the 'ghost' island of San Borondón, which has only been seen by the most experienced sailors and has disputably been reported on ancient

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[39] La Gomera has a circular shape with a surface of 378 km², the highest point being 1487 metres above sea level. It is estimated to be 12 million years old, and the last volcanic eruptions were 2 million years ago (Mora, 1993). The volcanic origins of the island are easily discerned in the characteristics of its geography of high cliffs and deep ravines.

[40] The Canary Islands are politically part of Spain, though they are situated around one hundred miles off the coast of Northwest Africa.

maps which date from the Roman times. Two elements are characteristic of the inhabitants: the eagerness to be elsewhere – as the only way to progress is to get out – and the prevailing weight assigned to traditions and myths. They present a sharp contrast which, from the perspective of the islander, makes sense: the outside is the way out of a world loaded with incongruences and, as people say, 'witches' tales'.

A young female veterinary surgeon once explained how difficult it was to access shepherds or the owners of cattle. People were aware of the need for her assistance (to provide certificates, for example) and, once they let her in, they trusted her to cure their animals. However, whenever she visited someone she had to be extremely careful. She had to ask permission and request a 'blessing' from the owner, who would let her in once the animal had been protected by a red ribbon. She had already been blamed twice for 'drying up a cow' due to an unwarranted 'evil eye'. These traditions co-exist with modern means of communications, in a place where television is widespread, as well as other forms of technological progress such as the internet and mobile phones.

La Gomera is a space 'caught in-between' modernity and tradition. This is only expected given its insular condition. Hence, although allegedly 'things never change', there have been some important changes coming from the outside, via tourism in recent times and via migratory movements in the past. These changes – always expressed in dichotomies: south vs. north; coast vs. centre; old vs. young – are historical and spatial. People who lived elsewhere seem to see the island as being '40 years behind the rest of the Spain' – itself a country 'behind the rest of Europe'. If we consider that roads were only built at the beginning of the 60s, with electricity following shortly afterwards, then we can see how this delay has been effected. Many people still remember today when they saw their first lorry, and the excitement and fear this vehicle inspired.

i) The island in the world

La Gomera has had a considerable role in Spanish history[41]. It seems that before the Spanish came, there were already some Portuguese settlements and periodic British and

[41] There is almost no knowledge of the first inhabitants of the island before the Spanish conquest. The genesis of the population is not clear but the most plausible theory is that the name of Gomera could have its origin in *Gumara*, the name of one of the Berber tribes which might have reached the island escaping from Roman slavery.

Dutch invasions. However, no one bothered to 'conquer' until the Spanish came along. Whether this is something to celebrate or not depends on whom you ask on the island today. The island – and the rest of the archipelago – only gained importance once the so-called 'discovery of the New World' took place. The islands, and La Gomera in particular, were obligatory strategic points on the route to the Americas. This, on the other hand, also changed the relations within the island as, even today, the maritime traffic provides the islanders with new contacts with the outside, as well as relevant points for emigration.

Mass emigration has always been part of the history of the island, and of the whole archipelago. There are a number of stories, still recalled today, which give credit to Gomerans all over the world, especially in reference to Latin America. However, despite the islanders' claim to historical importance, these stories are hardly acknowledged from the outside. After all, not long ago, the island was almost unknown until the first tourists arrived. Locals say they were deserters from the Vietnam war. These and other adventurous travellers who sought the anonymity of the island have contributed to the reputation of tourists among the Gomerans even today, who refer to them as being largely of 'the hippie' kind.

The sense of isolation and lack of public acknowledgement seems to be challenged when one learns from the islanders that the port of San Sebastián (the capital) is said to be one of the busiest in terms of 'movement' in the whole world. This fact can be easily explained if we consider that the islanders always have some relative to visit or errand to run in Tenerife, and that, until 1999, the island did not have an airport. Also, there are organised daily tours from Tenerife, which arrive in large buses on the earliest ferryboat of the day and, after going around the island, leave on the last one.

ii) A misplaced site

The Canary Islands are said to be located at the crossroad of three continents: Europe, Africa and Latin America. Given the fact that Columbus stopped in San Sebastián (apparently to visit his lover) before crossing the Atlantic Ocean and arriving at America, La Gomera claims this right more forcefully than the other islands. In fact, the island itself is nicknamed *la isla colombina.* However, this crossroad of cultures is misrepresented. Europe, on the one hand, has become recently the 'big provider'.

Money, prospects and legislation come from this continent which has no spatial reference to the islands at all. However, the principal presence of Europe on the islands, and on La Gomera in particular, is through tourism. In fact, this has become a recent source of concern, with the islanders complaining bitterly about the new tendency to make the island a retirement home for Europe.

Furthermore, the other benchmark, Africa, is practically eroded. The connection between the Canary Islands and the African continent is non-existent. Physical proximity just highlights the separation of these two worlds. From central government to actual institutional arrangements, the doors to and from Africa are firmly closed. The Spanish government has consistently denied any links or proximity. There is no traffic by sea or air connection from the Canarian archipelago to this continent. Also, as a deterrent and as a security measure, the presence of military institutions (army, navy, and even the legendary Legion, a body of professionally trained soldiers) is highly visible on the islands.

The only acknowledgement and affirmation of an African identity was voiced in the late 60s, through MPAIAC, a political group with terrorist ramifications[42]. These claims of 'africanism' are quietly disappearing and today they are only made by an extreme nationalist group. This group constitutes a minor proportion of the population. However, 'africanism' remains an argument to claims of independence and separation, within the continuously challenged Spanish State of Autonomies. These days, for the islanders, the fear of the African neighbour is higher than their urges for independence.

On the other hand, there is a strong and close link with Latin America. This is evident in many ways, such as the Canarian's accent – far closer to the Latin American way of speaking than to that of the Spanish mainland – and the music they enjoy. This closeness goes back in history and, as explained, is due to the islands' location on the sea route. The Latin American is warmly welcomed. People express interest in their ways of life and immediately ascertain the historical proximity with this continent,

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[42] MPAIAC (Movement for the Self-Determination and Independence of the Canarian Archipelago) defended the 'africanism' of the islands. Its leader, Cubillo, lived in Algeria. The support given by Algeria resulted in its exclusion from the treaty between Morocco, Mauritania and Spain over the Spanish Sahara (which was abandoned by the Spanish in 1976). At this time, the MPAIAC was the only vocal movement towards independence, and it went so far as to ask the OAU (Organisation for Africa Unity) to declare the Canary Islands a territory subject to decolonisation.

while establishing an emotional distance from the Spanish mainland. They consider themselves more Latin American (in spirit, they say) than Spanish, which remains just a political affiliation. Given the cultural exchange to which the islands have been subjected through emigration, their loyalty is to their so-called 'brother continent'[43].

iii) Degrees of relevant others

There are places which are of special relevance in the life of the Gomeran. As explained before, the tradition of emigration has marked relations of closeness and distance amongst the Gomerans in reference to the exterior. There are other referential markers in their lives which convey a concrete form of emotional link and are expressed with strong stereotypical views. Hence, the inhabitants of the world beyond exist not as individual characters, but as collectives or social types. They judge and relate to people coming from these places accordingly.

Therefore, we have those who are regarded negatively, such as people from mainland Spain. They are called *godos*, making reference to the ethnic group that occupied the current Spanish territory before the Romans arrived. This ethnic group came from the north and, as such, it conveys the connotation of lacking the cultural depth of either the Romans or the Arabs. People from the mainland generally provoke a historical resentment, as they were the so-called 'conquerors' of the Canary Islands. However, the term *godo* is pejorative, its equivalent neutral term being *peninsular*. They are portrayed as being demanding, bossy and having an attitude of looking down at the islander.

There is also an ambiguous relation regarding the inhabitants of any of the other six islands that compose the archipelago. The Canary Islands are divided into two provinces, and affiliation to a provincial group (which corresponds to the division of central resources provided by the government) is felt as something important. Thus, in general, those who come from the same province (i.e. Santa Cruz de Tenerife, made up

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[43] The destinies of emigration were mainly Cuba (in the 20s) and Venezuela (in the 60s). These days, both countries are in a state of economic crisis. Thus, due to growth in the service and tourist sector in the Canarian Archipelago, migratory Gomerans have centred their hopes on the capitals of the larger Canary Islands, especially Tenerife. La Gomera's population is approximately 13,000 – 40% of its size four decades ago (Legna, 1997).

of the islands of Tenerife, La Gomera, La Palma and El Hierro) are closer to the heart of the Gomeran than those who come from the other province: Las Palmas (composed of the remaining islands of Lanzarote, Fuerteventura and Gran Canaria). The feelings towards this province are voiced especially in terms of strong stereotypes. They are seen as having the attitude of the 'new rich', lacking class and being rather 'kitsch'. This is consistent with the actual rapid development which these islands have experienced. Given their mostly arid climate, they have been subjected to stronger pressures from the tourism market. Land prices have risen enormously and many landowners have accumulated plenty of money due to this sudden tourist interest.

There is also a group that cannot be defined in terms of nationality, but is clearly distinguishable. This is the group of the *guiris,* and it is formed by the generic tourist. Amongst the many tourists who reach the island, the most common visitors are the Germans, followed by the English and then the Belgians, the Swiss and the Italians. There is no particular resentment towards them, but rather a sense of indifference. Although *guiris* tend not to mix with the population, they are catered for and treated with cordiality. However, currently there are sources of concern regarding this group, as there is a tendency for retired, wealthy middle class Germans to come to establish themselves on the island. They come with high spending power and buy land and properties at exorbitant prices, putting Gomerans themselves out of competition.

b. Looking in: The microcosm of La Gomera

La Gomera, although small in dimensions, is characterised by its numerous divisions, spatial and social. This section will present an overview of the relation between the islanders and their relevant markers within the island. A point of reference to start the journey through this section is the awareness that the islander has an unquestionable perception of the island as regressing. It is commonly said that 'the best times are over' and, within this spirit of general gloom, people express sentiments of defeat, survival, uncertainty or disapproval. This attitude is quite remarkable if we consider that the island has had periods of extreme poverty, where people have been forced to migrate elsewhere. However, instead of being mildly content about the general improvement in life conditions, the mood is either critical or nostalgic.

A descriptive map of the island's needs should start at its centre, as this is where, according to the islander, the heart of the island is[44]. The whole central area is covered by a forest, which in 1981 was made into a national park and which is currently regulated by ICONA, a national body[45]. Thus, this park has come to symbolise the eternal point of confrontation between the islanders and national institutions. The argument put forward by the islanders is on two grounds: (i) economic: families used to live in the park area and from its products; and (ii) almost as a claim of 'invasion', as the islanders say that, before its 'national status', the park was controlled and cared for by the people. Today, due to regulations imposed by the central government, nothing can be altered or touched and the park is said to be 'spreading downwards' and taking over their space (houses, land and cultivation). Also, when the central government declared the park a protected area, they promised jobs, which never materialised. People felt cheated, and these circumstances forced the movement of young labour towards the coast. Eventually, as the older population became unemployable, the area was heavily depopulated.

Towards the south of the island, problems are different. Agriculture and land cultivation has long been lost on this part of the island. Rather, the South is rather the fastest growing area in the service and tourist sector[46]. The oldest 'tourist' area is Valle Gran Rey, which has suffered drastic changes due to an uncontrolled growth of tourist infrastructure. This, at the same time, has meant that the island no longer appeals so much to 'alternative back-packers', but rather to those seeking a more traditional form of tourism which demands more from the villagers in terms of service provision. Also the fast deterioration of the landscape is a cause of concern for many islanders. The other main tourist area is called Playa Santiago. This had been, until recently, a poor fishing village. However, the owner of the Tenerife-La Gomera Ferry industry (a Norwegian company) has recently bought more than 30% of the land in this area, and is planning to build a golf course and make it appealing to a very selective sector of the

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[44] See Appendix I for a map of the island.

[45] The forest has also been named a World Heritage site by UNESCO. From this central forest, in the highest part of the island, the ravines become wider as they descend to sea level. It is in these valleys, formed by the enlargement of the ravines, that the centres of population are to be found. Hence, the structure of the island and its communities is in the form of an inverted plate with some villages scattered around the centre but most of them separated naturally by the high mountains enclosing them.

[46] This sector constituted 73% of the Canary Islands' GDP in 1990. The rest was distributed as follows: construction 11.6%, industry 11.3% and agriculture 4.1%. Source: *OECD Economic Survey, 1992-3.*

tourism industry. The population has not welcomed the fact that a sole owner – and a foreign one – can decide the future of their own space and, despite the prospect of employment, they perceive it as greatly unfair.

Lastly, the north of the island is currently the most impoverished part. The demise of agricultural production has greatly affected this area, which was mainly dedicated to banana cultivation. Today, these plantations are being forced to disappear and are heavily subsidised by the European Community, which has opened up the market for the Central American banana. Other forms of cultivation, such as alternative or organic products, are currently being explored. Also, as this area is quite preserved and isolated, rural tourism is taking root. This form of tourism has provided alternative means of income for the islanders, but it still remains restricted to those who have properties to rent.

i) Being Gomeran

The islanders tend to be cordial and of a friendly character. This is mainly the experience of outsiders, especially tourists. However, as soon as the person moves from being a transient character to a more permanent one, relations tend to change dramatically. In fact, although initially open, the Gomerans are highly reserved. They claim to have important reasons to be so. As it is a rather restricted community, people prefer to disguise and not to reveal themselves to others. Discreteness is one of the most valued character traits, and with it comes loyalty. A piece of advice given by them to the newly arrived outsiders who plan to stay is 'not to be seen': the best way to avoid problems is to remain invisible, which means, on a day to day basis, to perform appropriately at work and to avoid any social contact. Of course, needless to say, this is only possible if one already relies on a close knit group or if one already knows how to evade 'visibility'[47]. As a newcomer, it is very difficult to meet these demands. Hence, newcomers usually tend to get together with other 'outsiders' and remain slightly isolated from the life of the islanders.

Locals ascribe character traits to each other according to the spatial origins within the

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[47] See Chapter V.

island. This, in many ways, is not so unusual. They make explicit connections between villages' structural dispositions and people's characters. Therefore, people who live in villages with a linear structure along a main road – such as Hermigua and Vallehermoso – are said to be introspective, not in favour of associating or doing things together. They don't have a sense of community and are socially deprived. On the other hand, people who live in villages with a more rounded structure – such as San Sebastián – are visualised as more active at a community level and, in general, livelier.

As we mentioned above, the Gomeran is superstitious. This might be due to the legends of witchcraft on the island, as La Gomera is an island with a rich tradition of sorcery. The healers (*curanderos*) on the island have high prestige and various areas of expertise: there are those who have the gift for 'bone healing'; those who have 'the touch', passed on through generations, for finding muscular tension and relieving it; those who specialise in stomach problems; and those who can cure you of diverse ills, such as 'evil eye' and 'bad passions'. Most of the times the cures consist of a mixed ritual composed of prayers, ointments and massages. This is followed by advice on how to avoid future damage. However, people agree that, although traditional medicine is valued, it does not compete with or displace 'mainstream' biomedicine.

Thus, the islanders talk about ghosts, spirits and evil eyes, although it is difficult to see whether they truly believe in such phenomena or whether it is simply a question of superstition. They have numerous devices for dealing with these issues. Hence, if someone is praising your child or baby, you should balance this attention by mentally hurling insults at the person. Or, if a child is crying for no apparent reason, s/he should be taken to a specialist *curandero*, who will undo the damage by means of prayers. If people suddenly seem unfriendly and treat you badly, then you should bathe and rub your body with white flowers to get rid of the contamination. If one wants to find out whether bad spirits are in the house, the procedure is to leave out a glass of vinegar and salt overnight. There are numerous stories circulating around the island on how to deal with such things, or on who suffered from them and what was the outcome. Two characteristics of the evil-eye make it more likely to come from the outsider. The evil-eye can be effected even if the person doing it is not aware of it, and those who have clear (blue or green) eyes are more prone to give it than dark eyed people (i.e. most of the Gomeran population). The danger, as usual, comes from the outside.

ii) The way of life

Briefly, as already hinted at above, there are important divisions in the domains in the lives of the islanders. Hence, the South is the opposite of the North insofar as the former has developed around the tourist sector. In the South, the infrastructure is more modern and it currently benefits from the majority of funds put into development. The North, by contrast, is still trying to survive largely on the agricultural sector. However, the agricultural machinery and the means of production in use are still very rudimentary. Ongoing problems such as the lack of water and the slow production feeds back into forcing people into the service and tourist sector in order to make a living.

There is also a large division on the island because of the class system. To talk about different classes is difficult, as there is not substantive economic disparity among the population. As the islander says, apart from those few who are working the land, the money to feed them comes from three sources which represent the main 'businesses' on the island. Most people are employed by either the ferry industry and its related catering services, a construction company owned by a Gomeran, and the insular government (an entity which ironically is perceived as a 'business'). The most resilient feature of this so-called class structure is its lack of mobility. Hence, despite few exceptions, social class is still determined according to those who once possessed land – although today this land is largely unproductive or has been sold – and those who worked on the land. Families belong, across generations, to these two separate groups. The island's capital, San Sebastián, as I shall explain later, is one of the few exceptions as, due to changes in the public sector and its infrastructure, there has been higher mobility among the population.

Due to this highly divided and structured space, the lack of social mobility and a denial of access have resulted in a static vision of general apathy or defeat. Domains of life are not questioned, and understanding that 'things are the way they are' reflects the prevailing attitude of the islander. The lack of dialectical negotiation within their world, and lack of capacity to exert changes, has caused sentiments of powerlessness and passivity in the islanders. This is more visible in the younger population who, unlike their parents, are involved in new ways of behaving and have lost the capacity to execute change or access resources through the informal channels.

Hence, people on the island are and have long been associated through various links: through kinship, marriage, neighbourhood, land interests, etc. They have worked out their relations within a space that, as explained above, has to allow public and private relations. Thus, people have a penetrating knowledge of others. This close society is certainly able extend beyond the geographical limits, as it also includes those who have ventured outside and remain linked through kinship to the island. There is no one living on La Gomera who does not belong to it in some way. Although the position of outsiders is more ambivalent today, those who traditionally come from the outside – such as the priest, the doctor and the teacher – still have a fixed position within their society[48].

In this environment, social life is extremely constrained. People aspire to maintain above all a status of 'honesty and pride'. Not to be a source of gossip is a value people seek to attain. To have privacy is impossible; hence, the next best thing is 'to keep up appearances'. The codes of behaviour among kin and fellow villagers are strongly mapped out and, within this frame, social relations must follow a pattern that few are willing to challenge[49].

iii) The fields of observation on the island

The fields in which the observation for this research was focused were located in and between two populations: Hermigua and San Sebastián. San Sebastián is the capital of the island, where the main port and the centralised institutions are. From San Sebastián there are two roads: one going to the South and one going to the North. Hermigua is the closest village on the North road. There is a lot of mobility between these two centres of population and, in fact, San Sebastián itself is a point of reference for all islanders who need to go to the capital more than once a week.

Hermigua is a village of around 2,000 inhabitants. This community was economically successful some time ago, but its economic situation today is rather different. The people who live in the village either work on the land for the remaining local banana and tomato production centres, or belong to the service sector and commute to San

[48] See Chapter V.
[49] See Chapter VI.

Sebastián. The structure of Hermigua has changed with the building of a fast road to San Sebastián. Today, due to the facility of access, people are able to go to San Sebastián every day. This has proven detrimental for the already sparse social life of Hermigua. Although there is still a post office, a church, a pharmacy, a bank and many bars (locals say too many), supermarkets do not open on a regular basis, and when they do, prices are higher than in San Sebastián.

San Sebastián has a population of around 6,000, most of whom work in the service and public sectors (i.e. the island government or *cabildo*, the regional autonomic administration, and the central government). It is the only region of the island that still enjoys some form of progress today. The only hospital and the only secondary school on the island are located in San Sebastián. The secondary school also has a residence for those students from the other side of the island for whom access is difficult, making it impossible to commute on a daily basis. Hence, in the lives of the islanders, San Sebastián is an obligatory meeting point. Affluent islanders own a house or flat in the capital, to which the family moves at the beginning of the academic year. Other amenities such as brass band concerts or sporadic cinema cycles exist only here, in the capital.

c. Looking Through: The relation with institutions

There are two particular domains in which the institutions and the State (from the mainland) are of relevance in the life of the Gomerans. This section deals with the 'local politics' and the domain of the 'law' as representative of the changing conditions in their lives. These issues are very relevant in gaining understanding about their ways of relating. They will also prove beneficial in providing some background information with reference to the rest of the analysis.

It is assumed that people have fewer choices in an insular environment due to its peripheral character. This is also the case in La Gomera. However, people have continually had to adapt their way of life to the demands of the fast moving world of the outside – embodied, for example, by the tourist who wants better services, or by the EU who provides money, but demands accountability – or face economic extinction. These tensions, in an already deprived environment, have played an important role in the way the islanders today understand relations among themselves and with institutions.

Bureaucratic institutions enter into many spheres of social life. The State, with its three layers (national, regional and insular), presents itself to the islander in many different guises: the payment of income tax, an application for a fencing grant, an old age pension, the size of fishing nets, fishing and hunting licences, etc. The input of this vast institutional body, which controls and provides at the same time, has affected the life of the islander enormously. Islanders see these public bodies as appropriating functions which formerly belonged to the community – there is a strong sense of intrusion from the institutions into their personal and communal life.

In recent years, the domains of government policies have grown enormously. In the case of Spain, this growth has been accompanied by a tendency to distribute central funds at a local level, with the intention of promoting the 'State of the Autonomies' across the country (these processes are equivalent to policies of devolution in Britain). The delivery of local funds has given rise to an increase in the power of the political entities in charge. Hence, although changes have been made at the structural level, in the experience of most of the islanders, things have remained the same or got even worse. Domains which before were independent of the family's political tendencies, are currently subjected again to 'political' decisions. Thus, the re-distribution of central powers has 'remained in the same old hands'.

i) Local politics

Politics is a complex term according to the islander. They claim that 'everything is always down to politics'. However, politics are not organised on a linear ideological domain. There are three main political parties on the island: the Socialist Party; the Popular Party (centre-right wing party) and the Nationalist Party (which is roughly similar in political character to the Popular Party, their difference being in terms of their defence or animosity towards the central state). Ascription to the parties is also consistent with the 'social positioning' of the islander. Moreover, although the Popular Party still counts for the 'old right wing', it is slowly losing position in favour of the Nationalist Party. Thus, the Socialist Party (currently in control of the island's government) is traditionally linked with the land workers whilst the Nationalist Party has wider support among the young population and the traditional 'land owning' sector. Still, the main problem is that political ideology runs in parallel with divisions amongst

families, which dates from the Spanish Civil War. Also, politicians are from the island. They were known before their period of political activity and thus people have had dealings with them or their families in the past. Thus, it is only to be expected that the person in power will represent and acknowledge the concerns of those close to him (i.e. his family, village or region).

ii) The law

Law 'enforcement' is enacted by the only security force on the island, the *Guardia Civil* (Civil Guards). This body has strong associations with the Dictatorship – as it was created by the dictator, Franco – and the central state. The Civil Guards have a rotating system of deployment, therefore the people who come to work on the island are from central Spain, and are totally unaware of the local dynamics. Whenever there is a rotation and the 'new Guardia Civil' comes, the islander knows that, for a while, there will be harsh restriction on speed limits, parking tickets and a general strictness. However, within a few months, the situation will return to normal.

Also, every now and then, other law enforcing institutions will come to do some 'check ups' – as different police bodies have different responsibilities – regarding particular issues, such as making raids on the island's considerable number of unlicensed fishers or uninsured vehicles. However, the minute they board the ferry in Tenerife, somebody is told in La Gomera via telephone. Hence, the news that the police are on their way usually precedes their arrival, whereupon, for example, illicit car traffic will vanish until the policemen have departed by the night boat.

In contrast, matters of civil litigation are very common. Legal cases are carefully reported and are discussed amongst the islanders. There are numerous disputes amongst different sectors of the population, usually regarding rights to water and inheritance disputes between families. The excessive reliance on resorting to the law may be seen as a contrast to what one would expect in a close network of social relations, where the effectiveness of the informal channel should prevail. In La Gomera this is not the case and, as the locals say, 'the smaller the village, the bigger the hell'. The over-reliance on the judicial system is one of the most characteristic features of Gomerans, with laws and legal institutions exerting a significant influence on the affairs of the people. This could be taken as an example of how institutions have changed public relations and conflict

resolution. The law is invoked in too many instances and people rely on it to enforce solutions to many conflicts. It is often called upon in everyday arguments as a source of threat.

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The chapter has framed this thesis as part of a research tradition concerning islands as particular contexts. I have elaborated on explanations for this tendency as well as accounted for the constructed character of islands as spaces of unique composition. Also, the second half of this chapter presents the particular context in which the research was conducted. An introduction to the island through an ethnographic narrative will prove relevant, as the subsequent chapters of analysis will need the contextualisation in order to aid meaning.

V

THE STAGE

CONTEXTUAL MARKERS

This chapter reports on the milieu, the context in which the research was conducted. It presents an ethnographic analysis of the island, the place where people go about their lives relating as conocidos. In this first part of the analysis I shall draw on the need for contextualising research when studying practice. The ethnographic account of participant observation resulted in the uncovering of some analytical tools: the axes (space and time) and the markers. The axes provide the dimensions in which the markers are located. These markers are statements of context, which are socially constructed and agent-driven. The axes and the markers inform the islander's ability to shape action.

Therefore, this chapter presents the arena in which relating as conocidos take place. The two axes are needed to report on what I have termed the social markers on the island. These markers frame the process of relating as conocidos as well as other forms of relating. They involve space and time as social constructs. These contextual markers are related to (1) the construction and use of spaces when relating, and (2) the understanding of relating as subjected to a record of continuity. Hence the first part of this chapter will deal with issues of space and the spatial construction of relations. The second section relates to the need to account for a history of continuity, a past in social relations amongst the islanders, in order to guide interactions.

1. THE CONSTRUCTION OF SPACES

Geographical structure and physical space have an input in social relations. They provide a strong naturalized division of a social group. In the case of the island, geography as a spatial demarcation offers a consistent boundary to interactions, which

forms the population centres and ends at the sea[50]. An island brings with it spatial limitation. This limitation also finds expression in the everyday of the social realm. Space is subjected to negotiation and the ascribing of meaning to different spaces seems to enhance the different positions people take. Loyalty, acceptance (expressed through presence) or rejection (expressed through absence) of a given public space is worked out with care among the islanders. Space gains significance as a marker of positions.

Once a place is attributed to a certain group and gains a particular reputation, it acquires a rigidity which is difficult to change. Hence, locations are marked and disputed in a strong manner. Every public space has a distinct meaning attached to it and, in some cases (such as the main squares in the centre of the villages), there are important subdivisions within that space, which are occupied by different performers at different times during the day. For example, one can be seen to be 'doing the wrong thing', which means being present in the wrong place or at the wrong time [2/36/3][51]. This will be a topic of public comment, as people may criticize one's 'lack of prudence' [2/38/2].

This section will present some representative instances in which it is shown that space affects the way relations are constructed and negotiated among the islanders. The direction of influence, i.e. whether space has an input in social relations or social relations are constructed in different spatial frames, is difficult to ascertain, and it is probably accurate to consider both directions. For this purpose, I shall discuss (a) public space distribution, (b) social relations and divisions of space, and (c) the space of celebrations as an adequate context in which to explore spatial concerns.

a. A Prominent Public Space

As mentioned elsewhere[52], the two main foci of my observations were the communities of Hermigua and San Sebastián. In these two places, I spent considerable time working out the distribution of public spaces across time. Most of them, such as the bars, followed a straightforward but interesting pattern tied to their schedule and clientele [3/19/3]. However, there were some other public settings where the construction of

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[50] See Chapter IV.
[51] The diary notations refer to the date and time of observation (see Chapter III).
[52] See Chapter III.

space was highly mapped out and distributed. I shall describe one of the settings as particularly indicative of the issues needing exploration, the central area of San Sebastián.

The central area of San Sebastián comprises three different open spaces that face the beach and the pier. Two roads separate these three spaces, though they remain visually connected. These three spaces together form the shape of a rectangle, with one of the long sides marking the start of the town and the other one facing the pier. A temporal recollection of the use of these spaces is as follows: During the morning, the space is usually taken over by tourists. They come or go towards the port, walk around and sit in two bars with terraces, where they have juice and ice cream [3/24/1]. People from the town only pass by on their way to the banks – two of them on the eastern, short side of the rectangle – and occasionally they have their midday snack in one of the bars not frequented by the tourists.

From 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. in the afternoon there is a complete change of scenario. This is usually the time when local people are either eating the main meal or having a rest. The town is practically empty but for one particular spot which is strangely crowded. This spot coincides with the west side of the rectangle. This local space is populated by two groups of young people (roughly in their early twenties to early thirties) who literally face each other and divided by one of the roads. To the untrained viewer they look like two gangs composed mainly of men. However, this space is the place and time of the drug dealers in San Sebastian. The choice of place and time does not follow a standard logic, but rather a highly local one. The space chosen is in the most open and visual area of the town. The time for dealing, rather than night time, which would seem the least conspicuous moment of the day, is instead broad daylight. This is the only time when the town is quiet. Siesta time is not only when people are resting, it is a period socially constructed as 'the time when nothing happens' [3/13/2] and, as such, there is no community surveillance.

When the sun sets there is again another change of use in this varied social space. People go for walks in the evening along the pier, usually elderly couples or middle-aged women. Young couples with children meet at around 6:00 p.m. in the middle area, which could be seen as the main square. Whilst the children play, the parents sit and have a drink on the terraces located in the adjoining space, at this point free of tourists. After 10:00 p.m. young people hanging around the terraces and bars, as well as old

women, constitute the last users of the space. Whilst the groups of young people are distributed across most of the terraces, there is one place exclusively frequented by groups of old women. This terrace is located in the interior side of the rectangle that marks the start of the town. The women sit for hours, with occasional replacements, achieving a full view of passers-by. They stay till very late, weather permitting, assessing and talking about life in the community. Those who want to keep good relations have to stop by, salute and, every now and then, ask about their health [1/16/3]. If one fails to do so, the old women will call the person over and request some sort of attention. This area has been nicknamed the 'control post' [2/7/3].

b. Social Relations and Divisions of Space

The way people negotiate their exchanges on the island is very rich for the purpose of this research. As mentioned, social relations are rather tangled. A neighbour can also be a relative, a client or a civil servant with whom a person wants or needs to keep good relations. There is, for example, the generic term 'cousin' which is applied to anyone, from the son or daughter of your parents' siblings to a distant political relative [1/2/2]. Even though, when asked, people can successfully explain what the actual link with their 'cousin' is, for an outsider it is almost impossible to keep track of the degree of closeness of kinship relations [1/17/3].

One way of making distinctions among forms of interactions is provided by the use of space. The place where exchanges take place becomes relevant as it is meant to provide information on the type of relation among the partners and, when applicable, the nature of the request. These issues have great importance for the islanders, as everything is translated as 'having good manners' [2/66/2] or being 'well educated' [2/50/3]. When faults are committed, people will point them out and comment on a person's rudeness. To make requests or approach someone 'properly' shows sensitivity and willingness not to 'put people in difficult circumstances' [3/21/2].

For instance, when a person – an appealer – needs something from another, s/he would never make the request during the provider's working hours. A way of showing awareness, which conveniently portrays an impression of friendship or closeness, is performed by approaching the potential provider and posing the request 'outside the work environment' [3/17/3]. This is so to the extent that even simple matters, which are

straightforward transactions, are also conducted in the same manner [2/60/1]. It can only work in favour of the appealer to approach potential providers outside their work. S/he enters the realm of the *as ifs*: they relate as if they were friends or as if it were a casual request with not much importance. When the request is made as 'part of the job' it becomes a formal matter, a demand posed to 'a person behind the desk' [3/8/2].

In order to be able to pose the requests in an informal setting, the potential appealer needs to know where certain people are likely to be: the place where they would hang out. This makes it very difficult for people who have not lived on the island for a long time, such as those working for central government institutions (e.g. social workers, clerks and civil servants). On the one hand, they are unlikely to know where a particular person is likely to be, or whom to ask in order to find them. On the other hand, they tend to refuse to 'deal with people outside working hours' [3/12/2], as they still assume and defend the existence of a private space. This group, most of whom remain outsiders, have problems getting access to those with whom they need to transact, as well as being accessed themselves by the islander. They complain that people spend a lot of their working time in the bars. However, the islanders usually say that 'bars are the best place to do business' [3/16/2]. Against all logic, those who come to the formally designated places to make requests are treated in a very harsh manner, be it an application form or a plumbing service. The perception is that, in order to get things done, informal rather than formal requests are more appropriate.

Furthermore, intimate relations are also subject to spatial concerns. The code of the community is not to show affection in public places. Couples do not display affectionate behaviour overtly [1/23/3] and, even if there are tensions between people, they should relate to each other as if nothing was bothering them [1/18/3]. To show restraint over emotional issues means to have control and power. This is not to say that people behave in a cold manner, for it is subtler than that. It is a disguise of friendliness and indifference; a mastery over the self.

However, for every convention there is a way out and a chance to play an alternative game. Building on the section above, spatial locations play an important part in disguising or allowing relations, and are structured in a peculiar manner. Hence, there are public places such as *Kiosk Ramón* where 'one can be oneself' [1/3/2]. It is a space where the rules are relaxed. The kiosk is an open space and a place for gathering during the daytime. Its composition is very particular. It is an open-sided bar in full view of

the town and has become an alternative space of action for young people with special characteristics: only those who play within the boundaries of acceptability will go there. However, there is no reason to keep an eye on it, because, as it is an open-air space, everybody is within one's field of vision. As the space does not allow for disguise, it is understood that 'there is no room for gossip' [3/33/1]. Of course, behaviour might be restrained, but this is the case regardless of the space. However, by having an open-front this space allows for talk to flow freely.

c. The Space of Celebrations

There is one standard way of celebrating events in La Gomera, called a *verbena*. The understanding of how a *verbena* works is crucial as an insight into how people relate to each other on the island. It is a micro setting where the use of space in giving meaning to interactions is powerfully displayed. This popular gathering is usually attended by people from all around the island. It is a celebration commemorating the saint, christ or virgin of the village, as well as other festivities such as New Year's Eve. Most of the villages will have more than one occasion for celebration during the year. For example, in Hermigua the patron's day for the Upper Valley is 5th August and for the Lower Valley it is 8th September. *Verbenas* are always held in the open air with a band, which plays Latin American music and Spanish popular rhythms, to which people usually dance in couples. Every *verbena* is known to have a concrete idiosyncrasy for reasons such as the character of its inhabitants or the purpose of the festivity.

The setting of a *verbena* is composed as follows: there is a stage where the band plays, usually placed on one of the sides of the main square of the village. This area becomes the 'dance floor' [1/9/3]. It is a highly decorated and well-lit space, people here will either be dancing or watching those who dance. It is a setting of high visibility, where people will be assessed by gossipers and guardians of good manners. This is the place where middle aged women will stay, partly to gossip and partly because in the past, women could neither dance alone nor with each other [3/21/3]. By being in the dancing area, they become available to men who can approach them and ask them to dance. It is the area where behaviour is on display, where one has to watch what s/he is doing and saying, and with whom.

Kiosks are located around the square, where people can get food and drinks and socialise. Those on good terms with the authorities of the village will get a better placement within the square, though this will not guarantee them better business [2/10/3]. The prices of the goods served are varied and, as soon as the party starts, the word will spread on who is serving the best food and what variety is on offer. Furthermore, within the same kiosk, not all customers get the same treatment. It depends on one's relation to the owner [2/37/3]. There are different types of relations, and this will determine the type of ritual applied by the kiosk attendant: inviting the person for a drink, serving the best whisky he has or giving more liquor than the standard amount.

There is a prevailing principle by which, if there is somebody from one's own village setting up a kiosk, one will prefer to go there. It will help the business of a fellow villager, but also the person will expect preferential treatment. One cannot claim the 'right' of preference, as this is considered bad taste and will definitely have a negative outcome. The kiosk attendant is the one in the position of power. He will decide to what extent one is part of the gang or just an average customer by the price charged and the speed of service. Also, depending on the degree of closeness, the attendant will play various central roles during the night, such as passing on messages and warning whom to watch out for [3/17/3]. Kiosk attendants always ascertain clients' loyalties in a very strong manner; they are very conscious that their position gives them a sort of spatial jurisdiction. Moreover, as it is only a transient position whilst the party goes on, they make the most of it. They are providers for a night.

Everything around the *verbena* is arranged in a very explicit manner, and the kiosk setting follows the same pattern. For example, there are drinks which are seen as being better than others: whisky is the best one, it shows maturity and knowledge, followed by dark rum. However, it is seen as very bad to get drunk. The nights are long and, in order to keep up, people need to take care of the speed of their drinking. People will encourage drinking and invite one another. Despite the pressure to accept, it is better to decline if one cannot handle drink well [2/10/3].

Again, as mentioned above, there is a subtle understanding of the intangible existence of a field where behaviour needs to be displayed – as opposed to expressed. Nothing is free from interpretation by the viewer, and everybody is an expert in assessing performance. The subject continuously acts and observes the interaction among other

members; nothing escapes multiple viewers. People immediately make judgements. The assessments always involve relevant others – known ones, conocidos – and the purpose is not to make a moral statement. Losing composure is a way of 'letting go' [2/37/3], of revealing private feelings; it shows the person inside the social shell. By losing control one is seen as unable to hide from others, it shows 'with which foot one limps' (i.e. what one's weak points are) [3/17/3]. There is also a positive dimension to being the subject of surveillance, namely a strong sense of feeling protected. Family and friends watch out for each other. Precisely due to this alertness on the side of the viewer, there is always a firm awareness of playing within a secure field. The whole *verbena* needs to be seen as a stage on which people play their parts. It seems as if it had all been rehearsed before: as the actors move across the stage, they need to be aware of the position of others.

People have to play within the field of vision but locals are experts at avoiding surveillance, as they know when they are – or are not – the focus of attention. The most pure exemplification of gaze avoidance is the ritual of smoking marihuana among young people. The process starts with a small signal or clue given within the group. There will usually be an allocated space, known to all group members, near the square. Little by little, small groups (no more than three) will start the pilgrimage to the meeting point. The viewer will understand this transit as people going to the toilet[53]. Hence, the absence cannot be prolonged more than necessary. The process, although not long in time, is usually intense in quality. The group uses this interlude to assess the people on the stage – at the *verbena*. It is a moment of jokes and leisure which plays an important part in preparing the group for the performance of the second act – going back to the square. Once the smoking has finished, the ritual starts again in an inverted sequence. The group reverses the process and starts going back again in small groups to avoid suspicion.

[53]There are no public toilets at the *verbenas*, so people urinate in dark locations close to the party and will usually go in groups of two or more.

2. THE ROLE OF PAST AND COMMUNAL HISTORY

Past and history are usually linked in the academic literature with the making of identity, especially with regard to the maintenance of tradition in small communities. This section will deal tangentially with these issues in order to offer a different focus. I shall propose in this section that the role of the past, the history of the island, is also related to (a) the continuity and (b) the perpetuity of social relations. Continuity has to do with the relevance of having a record of relations, not only among partners, but mainly amongst the families across the island. Perpetuity, on the other hand, has to do with a tendency towards repetition. People seem to pass down – and receive – positions across generations. A family name seems to carry with it a way of behaving and a powerful denial of individuality.

a. Relations of Continuity

Time provides a sense of continuity towards marking social relations. It proves to be relevant in the life of the islanders. Continuity as a marker ensures trust and, more importantly, conveys the need to rely on some form of historicity within ongoing relations on the island. This partly shows the extent of isolation among the inhabitants, and its salience in this context is probably linked to their geographical condition[54]. For any relation to happen, there is a need to call up a record of maintenance, which gives information on how to relate with the other and what kind of relation can be enacted. This record is not limited to personalised exchanges. The exchanges seem to take the family as a unit along a length of time. Single interactional exchanges need to be understood as part and parcel of ongoing relations which happened in the past.

Hence, inasmuch as exchanges need to be framed within the running historical context of the community, they play an important part in making – or arguably maintaining – relationships between conocidos. Current links and interactions among people are there because there were links before among their extended families (i.e. the parents, grandparents and kindred) across a time span. This explains why one of the most

[54] See Chapter IV.

popular questions on the island is '*who* are you from?' [1/1/2]. This sentence is so indicative that it is supposed to identify the Gomeran from the rest of the Canarians. Whenever there is an encounter among two unknown people one of the partners would be expected to enquire about the other using this same sentence, which has been converted into an inside code [2/4/3]. The sentence expresses with clarity how kinship – understood as family origin – works as a situational marker, hence the 'from'.

The significance of surnames goes along the two axes of space and time. They do not only give information on social standing, but also on physical location and, most importantly, on character traits. In the same way that professions are expected to pass down through generations, the way of behaving is also locally prescribed. Family names have some value attached to them. For example, in Hermigua, the Corderos, from the Lower Valley, make a living by working the land and have a reputation for being outgoing [3/7/1]; the Diazes from the Upper Valley are right wing and land owners [2/17/2]; the Paezes from Las Hoyetas are good drinkers, the Olmoses are eccentric [1/18/3], and so on. Of course, changes occur: families emigrate and may return with fortunes, and land is no longer a guarantee of current economic success although it still has high symbolic value [2/25/3]. But still these patterns pervade and work in forming explanations about people's behaviour. Fellow inhabitants would not forget 'where one comes from' [3/7/1], an expression which again ties in issues related to kindred, such as the family name, with spatiality.

The fact that continuity informs on how to conduct relations with others also comes out in long-standing enmities which people hold across families for generations. There are families with a tradition of not getting along, such as the Lopezes and the Armases. This is publicly acknowledged to the extent that, if two of them looked as if they were friends, people would pass judgement, such as 'when have a Lopez and an Armas ever been seen walking side by side?' [2/37/3]. It seems to be almost a matter of respect towards their families and ancestors. Everybody knows that before the Civil War a Lopez (a land owner like all Lopezes) killed an Armas (a land worker) on one side of the church. The victim's brother swore that no Armas would ever walk near that spot again. This is still the case today: every respectable Armas has to reach the entrance of the church by walking across the opposite side. Also, when one or more of each family are present in a gathering, there are comments directed to one another such as 'what can

you expect from a Lopez?' [3/7/1]. These comments have the purpose of displaying irony and mistrust.

Spatiality also plays a crucial role, as resentment also seems to be geographically consistent. In Hermigua, the Lower Valley and the Upper Valley have a life long history of conflict which has traditionally been repeated and anchored in every realm, from institutional funding to the religious domain. Whenever a new spark is started, people bring up remote issues from the past to argue with their valley neighbours. For example, a long-standing conflict, which has not been entirely solved to this date, is in which of the two churches – both placed on each side of the valley – should the monstrance[55] be located [2/75/3].

Continuity seems to be one of the most characteristic requirements in any sort of relation, but it seems particularly important for relating as conocidos. It provides some assurance of trust (or mistrust). It works as a presentation card. The record of maintenance informs on how to relate with others as well as what kind of relation can be enacted.

b. Perpetuity: Taking positions

This second section deals again with the need to take into account localised history in an understanding of social relations. The legacy of positions could be interpreted as providing some sort of ordering. In this manner, we see a strong tendency to keep nicknames across generations. This tradition is so much embedded that, in some cases, the initial meaning of those family nicknames is forgotten, such as 'the soup', 'the bun' or 'the water-pipe' [2/40/3]. Sometimes they refer to a profession once practised by the family patriarch, such as the shoemaker [2/45/3], the pharmacist [2/51/1], or the baker [2/33/3]. Other professions, such as the doctor, the teacher or the priest, are more institutional than kin related, as they tend to be taken up by people from mainland Spain [3/7/1].

By hearing a name, a person familiar with the community can disclose plenty of relevant information about a character. Also, the first-born male of a family is given the

[55] In a Catholic church, the monstrance is a vessel in which the Host is exposed for veneration.

same name as the father, as well as the surname and the nickname. There are people who are total replicas of their parents. Usually, as long as the father is alive, the youngest person will use the name with the added suffix of 'ito', which refers to being 'little' (his father being 'the big one') [2/54/2][56]. One of the participants in the study was called Raulito. He is the son of Raul, the florist, who as it happens was never a florist, but rather a shop owner. People would address him as 'little florist', especially when running his father's errands or when dealing with people he was not close to [2/45/3]. He was also given this name by closer friends when they tried to point out that he was acting as his father would, following his code of practice, as if he were a child afraid of parental punishment.

By the same token, should one need to access someone, just knowing the nickname will be enough to locate her/him within the community. Nicknames act as concrete instances of markers. For example, one of the respondents is called Paco the Sailor. He is not a sailor, and neither was his father. He is not even the oldest male in his family, but he is the only one remaining in his village. These days he owns a bar, but people still refer to him as 'the sailor' [2/72/3]. When giving directions they will include his household as a reference: 'pass the sailor's bend and turn left' [2/65/2]. Ironically, at that same bend there is a statue of a local saint, which is ignored by the locals even though it would provide a more effective reference.

The passing down of 'positions' is something that people assume without question. People take the positions left by their parents, which were also the positions taken by their grandparents and ancestors. These positions are not available to anyone. People are given a position within the community history that will determine the way their acts are interpreted. In the same way that there is always a village pharmacist, there is always a village drunk [2/37/1]. But the legacy of these positions is qualitatively very different. The clash comes when someone denies her/his position and publicly rejects the popular labelling. As mentioned above, families 'own' character traits [1/3/1], as well as physical ones. This has permeated into what people expect from each other, and how they explain their behaviour. It is a way of perpetuating the stories, but it denies changes and the power of being an individual entity, 'without the aid or weight of one's past' [3/30/1].

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[56] This also applies to female characters but to a lesser extent.

An example of this is the way people dealt with Ramirito Diaz, the son of Don Ramiro Diaz from the Upper Valley[57]. He was a left-wing political activist – whilst his father and family were right wing, as well as being wealthy landowners. He joined the socialist party and was committed to having a political career. He established himself as an ideologically aware member of the party on the neighbouring island of Tenerife, but at some point in his life he wanted to return to La Gomera. This was the end of his political life. He was never trusted within the island, even within his party, as 'one cannot be a prophet in his own land' [3/30/1]. He lacked credibility because of his family, and people denied him 'the right to be truly socialist' [2/25/1]. They justify it by saying that he could never understand about their issues, as 'he had never had to face any hardship' [2/54/3]. After years of trying, and numerous conflicts with the islanders, he made his way back to Tenerife.

3. THE STAGE: DISCUSSION

This chapter provided an introduction to the stage where the form of relating under study is performed. It sets up a discussion on the field axes of space and time. These axes define the markers through which people relate, and therefore inform the islanders how to relate as conocidos. Other forms of relating will also be negotiated within the same referential axes, and they will enhance the value of a different set of markers. I have, however, focused on those markers which provide a wider understanding of how relating as conocidos is enacted.

AXES	MARKERS
Space	Spatial construction of relations
Time	Continuity
	Perpetuity

[57] *Don* is a respectful term used to address a male person of a certain age or position. Although this position is usually related to high social status, it is also given to people of great knowledge. In everyday conversation, it is also an indication of degree of closeness.

The benefit of the axes is not only to fix some parameters through the markers where the relation of conocidos is constructed. These axes and their markers also give significance to a given context. These tools articulate the specific value of contextuality, which becomes central to the expression of social action, rather than a 'methodological' concern. Space and time can be broken down into specific field units, such as the spatial construction of interactions or the markers of continuity and perpetuity, that could be used in other settings and relational contexts.

Hence, the axes of time and space allow for a relational tradition to become observable. They work together in formulating a frame, an arena in which interactions are constructed. The markers provide the structural background of the community. Their relevance is conveyed in the way they provide information on the sort of relations to be performed by the islander. Also, as will be explained in subsequent chapters, these markers work in mapping a world of performance. The islanders use the markers to confuse, to provide a different and acceptable depiction of their actions.

Space delimits social relations inasmuch as it is limited in an island context[58]. People need to order their interactions and they do so geographically. Space acts as a resource to inform the islander on the type of interaction to be expected. This information clarifies the position taken by the partners about to interact. For example (as we saw in section 1.b) a request should be posed in an informal setting. This will convey a sense of closeness or friendship between the appealer and the provider as well as a chance for the provider to deny the request if it requires too much of a commitment. By contrast, a demand should be set in a formal context, as it implies a right, outside the realm of negotiated action[59]. The use of space for the performance of relations provides an image of consensual agreement among the social actors. People know where to go and what to do in any given space. At the same time any spatial arrangement ascribes different positions and varied power relations, as we saw in the *verbena* with the kiosk attendant, or in the main square of San Sebastián with the drug dealers. To master the markers of spatiality means being able to behave adequately and to conduct successful relations.

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[58] See Chapter IV.
[59] These issues will be dealt with in Chapter VIII.

Time contributes with two markers: continuity and perpetuity. They work, together with the spatial referents, in guiding relations on the island. They give information on who should be approached and, also, on what to expect from the exchange. This is particularly relevant for relating as conocidos, which relies heavily on a record of continuity among the partners. Continuity, as a marker in social exchanges, plays an important role in accounting for issues of reciprocity. It affords people the luxury of neglecting a straight reciprocal accountability of a single interactional exchange. This does not mean that reciprocity is not an issue, but rather that in the long run exchanges and favours will be balanced out. Continuity ensures trust, it gives information on whom to trust and whether they are reliable. It also permits an entrance into the domain of the 'as ifs' (or façades), which need to be understood as public expressions aimed at conveying alternative readings. The domain of the 'as ifs' requires a highly refined local expertise as it refers to actions, through talk or performance, with more than one meaning: a person can afford to portray generosity or ask for and receive favours without making explicit ways of repayment. People are able to relate as conocidos because they have the assurance of a historicity of social relations which (i) ensures trust and (ii) conveys awareness that, in future, transactions will keep on happening and favours will eventually be reciprocated. The accountability of relations across a length of time permits the presentation of single exchanges as acts of pure good will. These issues will be further explored in subsequent chapters.

Perpetuity works as a marker of order and stability within the social field. It portrays an uncomfortable sense of repetition and lack of mobility. Perpetuity as a marker mixes the spatial and the temporal dimension; it provides situational order by accounting for kindred. Hence, a certain surname has spatial as well as temporal connections insofar as people know about each other's lives across generations. This knowledge is very refined. It accounts for family histories, social standing, professional trades and character traits, as well as current or past affairs in their communities, who they like or dislike. The past and traditions work towards assuring and maintaining power structures, and are usually linked with the perpetuation of class systems. However, what comes across through the ethnography is that this handing down of social positions also goes in different directions. The positions might be negative, or the subjects might reject them, trying to take their own course in life.

* * *

Space and time inform people about the changeable nature of their positions and those of others. Both axes provide information on how to conduct relations. Spatiality works as a frame in which to place or enact relations, whilst temporality gives information on the person (and her/his possible engagement in relations). The former provides information on current affairs, and sends signals of a structural kind on how to relate in general and as conocidos in particular. Time accounts for the historicity of relations, and makes the players in the social field accountable. The extent to which they are negotiated, and the use of markers in everyday relations within the community, will become clearer with the presentation of the codes of practice (Chapter VI) and the strategies at play (Chapter VII).

VI

THE SCRIPT

THE CODES OF PRACTICE

This chapter presents a focused look at the codes of practice among the islanders. As previously mentioned, the spatial and temporal axes are needed to frame the boundaries of the relational spectrum on the island. The chapter presents the local script, the domains of the tacit subtleties and the taken for granted when dealing with others. It highlights how life on the island seems to be strongly determined by the way interactions with others are carried out. By exploring and accounting for the codes of practice, as well as reaching conclusions on the role they play in the local community, the chapter deals with those issues which underpin the practice of relating socially in general, and relating as conocidos in particular.

The codes of practice of any given social context offer guidance on how to carry out relations. The codes direct, make sense of, and lie behind social practices. They are, therefore, very loaded with what is acceptable; the rights and wrongs of the community. Hence, the way people are expected to behave exposes a specific guide to manners: the must and must not of public expression. This public display provides crucial information about the intricacies of cultural contexts and, ultimately, about the form of relating under study. However, in the context of the island, 'public' is everywhere that is not the household (in terms of its space and members). Anonymity is not possible, hence behaviour becomes a display, an action put on for others, which is charged with meaning and open to interpretation.

In analytical terms, this chapter is the result of the first coding of a group of interviews. It is a preliminary introduction to the interview analysis[60]. The chapter is divided into three different parts, and it ends with some concluding remarks. The first section describes the way people manage, and are controlled by, a communal surveillance; it introduces the presence of *the gaze*. This section discusses the double stance of the

[60] For an exploration of methodological issues see Chapter III, and for the analytical process, such as the coding procedure, see Appendix III.

respondents. They seem to complain, but reproduce; they criticise but enact the power of the gaze.

The second section relates more closely to a traditional understanding of the codes of practice, it presents the realm of *conventions*. Here, the respondents discuss the taken for granted of their community, in reference to interactions and exchanges. They present these issues as manners, as ways of doing which are commendable and desirable in their everyday lives. However, through these conventions they assume (a) a need for others, which demonstrates the extent of *dependency* on fellow islanders. They also elaborate on (b) the *principles* guiding exchanges through sayings and local adages which are meant to convey guides to behaviour.

The third analytical section of the chapter presents the relevance of manners through an analysis of how the islanders portray the conduct of *those not known*. By using those who are not familiar with the island, the issues presented above come to light. The taken for granted is made evident through the behaviour of the outsider, who trespasses upon boundaries and commits numerous infractions. The chapter finishes with a conceptual summary on the issues discussed.

1. The Gaze of Surveillance

As was pointed out, the way interactions are performed and expressed are, for this study, important sources for empirical exploration. The expression and performance of conduct are closely related but, in the context of the island, they convey important information on the understanding of relations. Every relational exchange has to be played out under the communal surveillance, the gaze. As such, (public) interactions require a high level of mastership of conversation and action.

Public life on the island not only covers the vast domain of the everyday routines of the islanders, but it also plays a very important role in the domain of the private. There is a straight relation between the way one interacts with other people and one's happiness, success and emotional stability. This is emphasised by the respondents, who present different arguments but agree on one thing: current affairs in their communities play an important role in their quality of life.

> Before, the neighbours looked for one another in order to give people a hand. Today one, tomorrow another one, the day after someone else, and so on. There were no secrets because the village was a family.
>
> Baltasar Suarez (E12; 173: 175)[61]

The respondent's nostalgic view presents how things have changed for the worse. People used to do things for each other, to behave towards each other like kindred. In this context, help was not questioned, but it was not free either. The respondent introduces a contradiction of utter importance in the context of this research, which will be elaborated upon later in the chapter. To provide help to a neighbour was not an act of good will. Neither was it an act of unquestioned duty, as it would be in the case of kinship. In fact, help was given because it would be returned. It was an act of reciprocation which demanded that people provide in order to receive. As family, everyone knew everything about each other and, as they helped each other, the picture becomes clear: there were strong links of trust among the islanders. The respondent makes a further point which aims to convey the closeness of kinship and the generosity of public acts: there were no secrets. However, another respondent provides a different view. We are left unsure about whether today, as before, people keep secrets or might avoid talking precisely *because* they know each other:

> If I want, I can say to Felipe Gonzalez 'go to hell' and nothing happens! In the times of Franco that was not the case [...] Before, one could not talk, and even now one cannot... they start judging you. So this is good for your research, you can tell it [points to the tape]: 'here in La Gomera, the one that tells the truth gets crucified like Jesus Christ'. So you either stay at home and don't talk, or you have to fight with everyone, because the minute you think differently, they will stab you in the back.
>
> Maria Fragoso (E7; 190: 195)

Here, the respondent focuses on a complaint. It starts with a political claim to be converted into a local one. This shows the extent to which the political domain is made into part and parcel of the everyday domain in community life, where political figures are contextualised within their field of action, regardless of them being national or international personalities. Before, the reasons for the secrets or the silence were more related to the political situation. In the context of the dictatorship, repression was

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[61] All the quotations have as a reference the name given to the respondent. This is followed by group (O: outsider; E: Elders; Y: Young), the number given to the respondent – see Appendix II – which corresponds to the 'primary text' on the ATLAS/ti programme, and the line of text from where the quotation was extracted.

enforced upon people. One could not express an open challenge to a political figure, whilst, these days, someone like the ex-president of the country – Felipe Gonzalez – can be publicly questioned. However, despite political changes in the country, there is one thing that has remained the same: people in La Gomera cannot talk freely. One can make the ultimate sacrifice in the name of truth but, by talking, one's position in the community is endangered. To stay indoors, to stay at home is equated with being silent by avoiding relations. To be different, to assert one's position would be punished with social death: isolation.

The two texts presented reflect a certain level of contradiction, but there is an important issue which unites them: talk, conversation. Initially, both respondents seem to be posing contradictory statements. However, secrets as a relevant component still pervade. Conversation, as an exemplary act of public expression, is open to manipulation. It is a powerful tool that needs to be mastered through shared codes that only become relevant when directed to those within the community. People compete with each other and send warning signs and threats without losing composure or the smile on their faces. Double meanings and plays on words are always present in open conversation. Words are far from casual but are played up with an incredible expertise in order to convey a parallel and alternative meaning to what is really being said:

> N[exus][62]: And why don't you complain and say that no one has come up here to check how things are?
> DA: No, if they [local institutions] find out, they will get upset with us and it will be worse. That's how things are, one does not know how to act. If you talk, it's because you talked and if one remains silent, because you never said a thing... But here in La Gomera it's better not to go around making enemies, you always get plenty of those without doing anything bad anyway.
>
> Don Anastasio (E6; 219: 225)

The danger of speaking conveys a climate of fear. The purpose of secrets and silence is not to offend, not to open the door to speculation. The respondents seem to be caught in the dilemma of either speaking out, putting their claim forward, or showing and implying compliance through silence. To avoid having enemies is futile. However, the silence is not real, as they are talking, but they know to whom they should direct their

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[62] The nexuses were informants who introduced the researcher to the respondents. On most occasions, given the isolated locations of the respondents lived, the nexuses had to remain present during the interview. However, this proved beneficial, as they ensured a flow of information, reduced the artificiality of the setting and acted as situational conocidos between the researcher and the respondent.

talk. Their presentation of compliance remains just a show, a performance put on in order to avoid problems. Although they try to convey helplessness, they remain resourceful and, by talking about their situation, they are, at the same time, active in enforcing surveillance, only this time it is directed against their politicians. The text portrays an image of the respondents as victims of bigger powers: their politicians. However, the fact that they are disclosing this information to a specific audience – the researcher with the aid of a tape recorder – acts as a powerful disclaimer of the extent of their fears.

Communication has a very important role. It is the transmitter and enforcer of surveillance. Through conversation people transform meanings and convey subtleties. The relevance of talk in everyday life is conveyed by its use in performance. The audience, by engaging with the subject, implicitly ensures an agreement in their interpretations. The audience goes from being listener to leading actor in their performance: the researcher, by complying with the fears expressed by the previous respondent, is agreeing with what he says as well as ensuring trust. Dialogue and conversation are the carriers of the gaze. Against the vision of the islanders as subjected to an eroding surveillance, which paralyses action, there is another vision emerging: that of the inhabitants disguising, confusing the gaze – the invisible viewer – as well as promoting it by spreading it. The secrets here play an important role, as they offer the only possible scope for a performance of privacy.

Again, an alternative and more positive reading of the benefits of knowing each other and keeping up some form of surveillance comes across in the following text, where living with each other, as a community, has been eroded:

> and talking and communicating with each other you knew of everything. Today things are not known. Before, it would be said: 'Yesterday I was in San Sebastián and I met Roberto on the street, with Jose Diaz. And Roberto's sister got married' 'Really? And whom did she marry?' 'She got married to one of Seima [place] whose name is Juan Mendoza' 'Don't you know him?' 'No, I know his uncle, Fernando Mendoza'... and then you would extract the whole genealogical tree. You would always end up knowing everyone. I have asked boys what the name of their great grandfather was, and they don't know it, they don't remember it. They don't know it because no one has told them. [...] So tell me if we are impoverishing ourselves or becoming richer... I think that we have everything today, but we left the principal thing on the way to achieving this. The most valuable thing is the living with each other, the dialogue.
>
> Baltasar Suarez (E12; 193:205)

The respondent establishes the need for keeping the community record up to date through talking to others. To know everything about everyone becomes a value which is equated to tradition and, as such, is in danger of disappearing. Seclusion is the result of progress, the price to pay for improving quality of life. One becomes 'richer' through talk, through communication, as knowing everyone is presented as an asset. In fact, one needs to talk and engage in interactions in order to find out about oneself. It is only when a person engages in communication with others that s/he can be told about her/his ancestors. The past, as explained by the temporal markers[63], defines who you are. Hence, talking is also the way to find out about life and one's identity. The person is defined through her/his ancestors, rather than profession or personal achievements. It is valuable to know about others and, through others, to find out about one's past; it becomes the route to know about oneself.

However, the power of conversation, the keeping of communal records and the necessity of knowing everything about everyone also have dark connotations. Within the whole community there is a very manifest feeling of being watched. People are permanently on guard about these issues, to the extent that it almost becomes a tangible sensation, a perpetual paranoia. Here is where the enactment of performances becomes relevant. In order to confuse the gaze, people need to engage in complicated behaviours to conceal from the viewer. Behaviour is rarely spontaneous in public spaces; there is always the sensation of an act, a show put on in honour of the untouchable – and sometimes invisible – but ever-present audience. In keeping a record, they are also keeping an eye on others. They are enacting and enforcing the collective gaze:

> You have to get used to living with 30 people, whom you are going to bump into every day. And you have to keep up an image, you have to behave in a certain manner, keep your composure because otherwise you are a drug addict, lazy, or a clown... it's just as simple as that. Because no one will judge your physical aspect, but just judge on what you are seen to be doing. Because if you are sitting with those mates of yours [...] as they are smoking joints, [that] makes you a druggie too. They don't value the fact that they have been your friends since you were little. If you are sat behind the Kiosk [Ramon] with them, you are like them. And it's as simple as that. That's the way things are: tell me who you are with, and I'll tell you who you are.
>
> Ernesto Perez (Y7; 115:127)

[63] See Chapter V.

Anything that could have the slightest potential to become a source of gossip has to be disguised. People's concerns are not to do with inherent qualities, not even with external ones. Loyalty and friendship are irrelevant. To be good is not enough, the relevant part is to perform it (goodness): to look *as if* you are good. In the text, people are turned into social obstacles which appear unexpectedly, one bumps into them. They will judge you, not in terms of your 'physical' appearance, but on the appearance of those who are with you. The others (as people) speak about you. But the other (as the one you relate with) speaks *of* you: 'tell me who you are *with* and I'll tell you who you are' is a saying which is masterfully used here to convey the weight of *being seen* to do – rather than being (as inherent trait), or doing (as factual truth). Also, the respondent presents the situation as a statement. These uncontested statements are introducing us to the islander's world of conventions, which will be explored in the next section. They are not subject to discussion or rejection, they are simply and categorically enounced: it is as simple as that, and that's the way things are.

> And if you don't like to wear a tie and you have to work in a bank then it is 'look, what he looks like, in a bank and looking like that'. And that's that. And yes, of course, you can break with everything, but you can't afford not to care about it, when you have your life here, and your job, and your parents, and your family... because people go later to your father and they tell him everything. So he comes back to you and goes 'shave yourself', 'what are you doing looking like that', 'don't go with those guys, because people will start talking'... so it's not only your problem but also that of those around you... they are forcing you into their ways: people, the environment, the family, your job.
>
> Ernesto Perez (Y7; 128:138)

The respondent introduces us abruptly into what it means to be immersed in a context where people know each other (conocidos). Here, however, the performative level is emphasised to the extent that references to 'looks' and 'acting' are numerous: keep up an image, maintain your composure, what you are seen to be doing. The purpose of the image is not to look good, or to look one's best, or to improve oneself. The image is just to keep people off one's back, to avoid being talked about or standing out.

The communal surveillance surrounds him and those close to him – i.e. his family. Even if he rebels and even if he states his indifference, his acts involve his family. It affects the rest of his kindred, as they are held responsible; the family's reputation is at risk. They, most of all, should be spared the communal shame and gossip. The responsibility for one's actions is not only limited to the individual, as one's behaviour reflects on one's family. Parents have little choice but to make their children models of

good conduct, perfect actors within the community. A life of double standards is perpetuated and passed on, because people spread judgements. The islander knows this lesson only too well, and soon becomes a master of disguise and camouflage. People are experts in leading a life of pretensions which are enforced, but which do not seem to be internalised. It remains a matter of performance. The communal surveillance, the untouchable audience in the form of the anonymous *people* gets to them, forcing them, in many different ways, to conform.

> N[exus]: What's that saying? The smaller the village the bigger the hell.
> DA: That's the pure truth. They will criticise you for everything: because you are well dressed, because you had a bath...
> N: Yes, if you look fine, because you look fine, and if you don't because you don't.
>
> Don Anastasio (E6; 314:316)

The circularity and the continuous presence of the surveillance are conveyed in this quote. Whatever the case and whatever one does, someone will see you and someone will talk, because there is always someone watching. Moreover, the observed action will be followed by a comment, which will be made in a casual manner but which is full of significance[64].

a. The Gaze: Summing up

Through the quotes provided we can distinguish two different domains of action when dealing with the gaze. In fact, the skill involved in being a gaze enforcer is as masterfully conveyed as the skill involved in gaze avoidance. These two components are related and feed on each other. On the one side we have the visual component. Through watching and observation people emit judgements. The surveillance, then, uses talk as the means of transmission. Conversation and words are the dangerous components, the spreaders of rumours.

However, the domain of the visual is counter-attacked with a sense of performance. There is a permanent switch, which forces the subject to change positions, from being the audience that assesses, to being the player who performs. It is a difficult exercise, as

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[64] See the strategies in Chapter VII.

there is a constant feeling of keeping up one's guard. It implies a constant awareness in order to display accepted behaviours: always taking the appropriate position. For example, it requires being friendly (socialising) with everybody but not being friends with some, as people make assessments of the company one keeps and to whom one talks. It seems difficult to engage in this permanent need to disguise, as there are multiple ways of being at fault. In order to get by within this social context, the person requires awareness on what needs to be hidden. As nothing is free from the viewer, s/he has to be misled. This skill is taken up with care, it is the putting on of an act. Against the spreading of rumours, the only alternative is to become invisible, as social isolation seems not possible. Hence, *not being seen to do* is the ultimate valuable premise. What is subjected to the eye has to be neutral, plain. The undercurrent, the expressions of individuality need to be hidden, only to come out in safer contexts. Whilst talk enacts the gaze, the visual domain enforces a performance from the subject.

The domain of the public is appropriated – or belongs – to the unnamed viewer, the anonymous *people*. Thus, visibility is what converts the private into the public. Broadly, in other contexts, where the relevance of communal control and surveillance has a lesser quality, divisions of private versus public behaviour are more related to the type of activity or to the number of people engaged in it. However, in the enclosed community under study the parameters for understanding behaviour are strongly tied to its visual quality. This is why their conventions, and the way the Gomerans explain the behaviour of others, provide a good lens through which to understand relations.

2. CONVENTIONS

Conventions on the island have a strong role in guiding interactions. It is, at first glance, just the domain of 'manners'. However, the particularity of these manners becomes a powerful analytical tool to understand interactions and ways of getting access to resources. Hence, the conventions can be seen as the agreed codes of behaviour of the community, insofar as everyone knows whether or not they are breaching them. These conventions have permeated every form of public expression, regardless of whether people are aware of it or not, and they bring into focus the taken for granted. As was pointed out before, the conventions tend to be presented as conclusive statements, they are not subjected to negotiation and neither are they

questioned or problematised. They appear as outside the field of action of respondents and represent what lies behind 'the way things are'. Everyone is familiar with these codes and knows the extent to which they must ascribe to them.

The conventions form a cohesive narrative, which is clearly reproduced and applied to every person in a given context. The narrative on how to exert appropriate conduct – the processual hows – has the value of rendering visible the codes which underlie relating as conocidos. This section will discuss the extent to which the reliance on others is not problematised but assumed – even if this assumption is only publicly portrayed as such. I shall talk about (a) *dependency* as part of people's lives in a context where respondents are linked in numerous ways. Next, I shall discuss (b) the *principles*, revealing the conventional weight of the everyday expression of public relations. These are public expectations about how to carry out a relation; what is expected from others seems to rest upon the three main assumptions of (i) balance, (ii) generosity and (iii) reliability. This is strongly conveyed by the utilisation of sayings and proverbs, in short, 'conventional' talk. The frequency of people's need to engage in interactions conveys the importance of relational performances, such as that of conocidos.

a. Dependency

People talk about the need or duty to establish good relations with others. Carrying out transactions and engaging in deals within the island seem to be the only ways to get things done. The need for others draws attention to a limited space, framed by boundaries, as we saw through the markers. People need to be linked in numerous ways. This dependency could be seen initially as the result of a general situation of scarcity of resources or isolation. The dependency reverts into a strong sense of community, where customs – as habits – rely on the necessity of counting on others. It has played a crucial role in getting them through life, and these days has became part of the unquestionable way things happen, a way of sharing life with each other.

> N: They still have [a phone] in the small bars in some areas. Over there you have Victoria Aguilar, who still has a public phone in her house.

> B: Here, in Igualero, we had Natalia. She used to go to the roof terrace and whistle[65]...because maybe there was a call from Tenerife or Venezuela. And the person would say 'tell my family to be at the phone around four cause I want to talk to them'. And then she would go to the roof of the house and would whistle to whoever and say 'come because at four Vicente will call and wants to talk to you'.
>
> Baltasar Suarez (E12; 142:146)

People request access to each other, either out of necessity or as the result of historically- produced patterns of conduct. It remains circumstantial whether one is in a position to give or receive favours. Having a telephone put Natalia in a privileged position. By owning a phone, which immediately became public, and knowing the whistle 'language' she could position herself, in this particular domain, as a provider. However, her skill was not especially relevant in any other context. It is understood that scarce resources, like Natalia's phone, are there to be shared, as that is the only way to get by.

> When I was only 14 I had a 'war godson'... because I really enjoyed writing. And I wrote letters for all the girls who had boyfriends and husbands in the war, because many of them didn't know how to write. And I made it sound nice... more than one person has to thank me for their engagements!... I also wrote letters for many neighbours, to Loli Merche, and to Venezuela too.
>
> Pili Sandoval (E5; 71:73)

The respondent is perfectly aware of the privileged position she is in. She wrote because she was good at it. She takes pride in telling us that sometimes she used writer's licence to improve the text. In fact, she claims that she played a part in the courtship of many of her friends who are married today. People 'owe' her and she is still, after all these years, claiming prestige. To be a provider seems to be restricted to particular contexts. However, those in this position keep a record, an account of those for whom they did favours. In this case, the need for her writing was highly valued during the time of the war and the emigration. However, in the everyday life of her community this fulfilled one of the many necessities.

The dependency and the need to deal with each other seem to act as an important element in understanding the presence of relating as conocidos. It is not difficult to imagine how there can be a domain in which the position of every person becomes

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[65] The whistle is a form of communication particular to La Gomera, which dates to pre-Hispanic times. It seems plausible that shepherds and land labourers could have created this form of language to overcome the limitations of the terrain, which make it difficult to come within speaking distance.

relevant for others. To be a provider is then context-dependent and not a given status in which power is hierarchically distributed and static. Also, to do things for others becomes an incontestable necessity, where the provider's domains of action gives information on the type of help at hand. This need to engage in relations with others is further elaborated upon in the next section, with the analysis of the conventional principles.

b. Principles

Principles direct the process of relating with others, they entail an order. In reference to relating as conocidos, principles deal with issues related to reciprocity and trust. The analysis uncovered three different but related topics when talking about the relational principles in the community: (i) the need to keep a *balance* of the exchange of favours and requests, (ii) the value of displaying *generosity*, and (iii) the way to assign and distribute *reliance* in the community. These three topics of balance, generosity and reliance convey, as made clear in the section above on dependency, the importance of engaging in relations with others.

Transactions form part of the everyday life of the islander. Their routine character and relevance comes across powerfully in this section. When explaining and talking about their lives, respondents make use of sayings or popular adages which are common on the island. Their use of proverbs to explain how to engage in relations with others shows their value as statements, as principles guiding behaviour. The sentences underlined in the following quotes are those sayings, local adages or proverbs. In short, they are popular and repeated forms of discourse, which the respondents employ skilfully in conveying the implications of engaging in favours with others.

i) Balance

When making requests, a central part of relating as conocidos, there seems to be an underlying principle which imposes a certain order. The principle of balance shows that, in order to be able to ask, a person has to give first or, at least, be accountable for the favours done. This principle, which imposes a communal balance on the relations of the community, shows again the extent to which transactions are constantly needed.

Doing and requesting favours are tasks in which everyone is engaged, but they are shown to be regulated.

> But yes, of course, in places like this that's done very often... things like 'I'll do it for you today and tomorrow you'll do it for me'. Because, after all, this is so tiny that at some place we are going to trip over the same stone. And if at some point I can help you, then maybe, at some other point I will need your help.
>
> Ernesto Perez (Y7; 197:200)

Dependency comes across as a form of reliance free of connotations of neediness or indigence. It is perfectly acceptable to expect favours and help from others, and although regulation in terms of reciprocity is not explicitly mentioned, the underlying tone is that, when doing favours and providing help, a person is engaging in some form of investment. To provide help is expected just because help might be needed. The rights to provision of, and request for, help are arranged in a balanced sequence of reciprocal actions. However, this sequence is constructed in a generalised manner, rather than by accounting for singular exchanges involving individual providers. People engage in doing favours for others because they might require their favours at some point. This is not a straight transaction. There are conditions to be met in order to play the game and not everyone is entitled to ask, or to receive.

ii) Generosity

The principle of generosity plays an important role when engaging in exchanges. Again, it ensures a way of returning exchanges and keeping a balance, as the more a person engages in the provision of help, the more s/he can expect some help in return. Generosity speaks of abundance and it is certainly better to be in a position to give than to ask for help. There is a certain component of display: generosity speaks in favour of the donor. The principle of generosity, and the need to balance, are singled out with the aid of the proverbs. The respondents talk about them as if they were commandments:

> N: It wasn't like it is these days. And the more you give, the more you receive. I remember that in la Carbonera... lots of people came and everyone left happy.
> NF: Yes. To be a miser brings more misery, remember? When we sent people to pick the pears? We ended up giving more away to the people than what we kept. Sometimes you even thought that it wasn't worth it. But more or less everyone ate, had a good time, and next year, they were there again. You cannot seek help if you don't give... that's how things are!
>
> Nela Pelaez (E1; 542:547)

The quote conveys the way things are and were. In a space where a person is forced to require the help of other people, s/he cannot but provide, share and give. As mentioned, the generalised process of giving and receiving means an assurance of help when needed. It is a guarantee of success. At first glance, the quote uncovers a fairly basic commercial transaction: the pears are ripe and the owner sends people to pick them; they are rewarded with a share of the collected goods. It could be seen as a straightforward exchange in a barter economy. However, we are told of another component: generosity. To give away becomes a guarantee of success, and to be tight will destroy you, will make you miserable. However, she does not distribute the goods as gifts; people come to help – or work – and take some with them. Everyone has a good time, which is a positive end in itself. Moreover, the positive ending assures the owner of future success. In years to come, the pears will be picked; people will still come for three reasons: for the benefit of the payment, for the enjoyment and to provide help. Neither the owner nor the people seem to benefit in purely economic terms, but they do profit from it, in more ways than a straight payment would provide.

These principles, then, provide information on how to transact with others, how to engage in relating as conocidos. The prevailing understandings, as mentioned, are that generosity and balance are guiding principles which give information on the order, on when and how a person could relate as conocidos. They inform us of the conditions required to relate as conocidos and how to do so successfully. However, there are other principles which inform us about who to trust. Hence, the guidance not only uncovers the language of the 'how', but it also warns people about whom to trust.

iii) Reliance

The principle of reliance informs the islander on the extent to which people can count on others when problems arise. Most of these principles have to do with the understanding that relating as conocidos involves a tight net of relations where not just anybody is trustworthy. Before, respondents talked about generalised reciprocity, almost as a statement of value in the community. However, what seemed to be general and unquestioned before, when looked at closer is full of contradictions. In a small community, and as we saw when talking about the markers, there are trustworthy and untrustworthy people. Friends and enemies share the same space, and a person needs

to know by which principles to act in order to discern the former from the latter. Hence, reliance has to do with personalised exchange, with whom to choose to engage and why. It informs the inhabitants of the extent to which they can rely on particular others when problems arise:

> Apparently she is the one who is said to provoke problems [...] although really, to tell you the truth... because I don't know her but [...] If I am to be sincere I think he is more problematic than she is. I know her mother, and Viola Maria is a very well educated person, and a very good person... and well, I don't know her daughter but...
>
> Maria Fragoso (E8; 113: 117)

Rumours already have it that the couple mentioned in the text is about to cause problems to Maria Fragoso. He is from mainland Spain, an outsider. She is the daughter of a fellow inhabitant of the village. The gossip going around is that she is the difficult one to deal with. However, within the set of codes with which Maria Fragoso works, and as the marker of perpetuity portrayed, this does not make sense. She has the backing of her mother, a well educated – and hence a very good – person. The mother, Viola Maria, masters the principles of interaction in the community. Therefore, this mastership must have filtered down to the daughter. The rule of transitivity applies: The daughter of a person whom Maria Fragoso trusts, must be trustworthy too.

Trust, even for endeavours which are based on a purely commercial transaction, is highly valued. The guiding principle again comes from knowing, from being familiar with someone, and sharing the same referential markers. Knowledge of the markers and familiarity will ensure a sense of reliance. This is the case, because when a person needs to solve any kind of problem...

> At the end of the day you get to contact the one you trust more.
>
> Paco the Sailor (Y2; 16:16)

Trust guarantees a certain degree of success when engaging in any dealing. However, trust is a value which must not be taken for granted. How do people decide whom to trust? Trust does not only mean to be known within the community. The markers showed how being familiar with others is not always a guarantee of success. Caution is needed when dealing with others as...

> You never know... maybe to be from here helps you out. Or maybe the opposite. Maybe it causes you more problems. Maybe people will say 'Look Miss know-it-all [*enteradilla*]. Who does she think she is... I've seen that happen before.

Eva Padilla (Y1; 212:213)

To be known may bring with it some problems. In fact, it might make a person's position more questionable. After all, in such a restricted space, everyone is familiar with someone's personal past and lineage. They are familiar with the markers and what they imply, perpetuity in this case might be providing information that generates conflict. To attempt a change in the position ascribed by others and hence actualise a version of Eva Padilla as young professional seems to be difficult. A change of position requires a transitional process that not everyone may survive[66]. There is a feeling of helplessness, although it also has a positive side, as...

> Really the same way they can help you they can bring you down... but well... here you cannot see yourself alone [lonely].
>
> Ernesto Perez (Y7; 140:141)

The process of transition needs to rely on trust and on the temporal marker of perpetuity. For a person to be reliable when relating as conocidos the markers and trust need to work in the same direction. The fickle audience, the unpredictable force of gaze enforcers, have people's fate in their hands: they can either help them or bring them down. As we saw through the convention of dependency, to be known to others makes you dependent on them. It is up to the rest of the community to assess the quality of one's performance, to provide help or to deny it. For better or for worse, you are neither alone nor lonely. However, the helpless subject is soon to be converted into a capable one as we see the closure of the circle:

> My girl, here if you are in someone's mouth, they skin you alive! They tear off your skin! And you feel you want to do the same afterwards, because the same way you are treated you want to treat others... more than anything they want to answer to other people's stuff...
>
> Don Anastasio (E6; 321:323)

As has been mentioned, talk is the gaze spreader. To be 'in someone's mouth' means to be questioned, to be the source of gossip. This must be avoided, as we have seen that being named in this manner can only imply negative connotations. The description given by the respondent is quite illustrative, as the person being gossiped about seems to be subjected to some form of torture: the skin is torn off. People are subjected to

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[66] See Chapter V.

scrutiny by other people, the relevant others. Reciprocity also has a negative side which proposes that, when someone hurts somebody, s/he should be repaid with the same treatment. It is a way of balancing, of evening the score.

Furthermore, only those who are familiar with a person's spatial and temporal markers (of continuity and reciprocity) are in a position to assess her/his conduct, and it is here that we see the danger of being known by the members of the community. Public behaviour is subjected to commonly agreed conventions in the community and assessed by communal surveillance. The following of the principles will inform others about their ability to engage in relations with others and their standing as 'proper' members of the community. There is one way to opt out, which is to proclaim independence. By claims of individual assertion, such as lack of dependency on the rest of the islanders, the person can portray some degree of freedom. However, it remains an expectation, a desire:

> Nothing. That's what we have to ask. No more. One cannot ask for help from anyone. There is no better help than that given from God. One needs nothing more. [...] that's right, and there is no bad thing that won't come to a good end.
>
> Don Anastasio (E6; 600:603)

The claim of independence is in itself negated by needing from God, the ultimate provider. The person cuts links by not requiring help, s/he is claiming to be free from engaging in chains of reciprocity, as s/he needs nothing from no one. This also permits claims towards statements of prestige. Resorting to God helps Don Anastasio claim honour, as God only helps to those who deserve it. The negation of the need for others and reliance on greater divine powers emerges as the result of a disdain for other people's conduct. The gossiping and the 'tearing off' of the skin only end when people distance themselves and deny the need to access others.

c. Conventions: Summing up

Through the conventions the respondents reveal their ways of understanding what the customary pattern for concrete forms of interaction is. Interactions can be ends in themselves, but it is relevant to do things for others and keep a record of maintaining good relations amongst the islanders. Also, these interactions are usually linked to an appeal made or to be made – in a subtle or explicit manner – to the relevant other. The

dependency and need for others show how being a provider or an appealer is a contextual matter, as everyone is expected to get involved in chains of reciprocity. There is, however, a certain measure of accountability in the way relations are enacted. This accountability shows social order and is highlighted by the establishment of community principles. The principles convey the expectations people have of others: the generalised reciprocity (by which people are expected to behave generously) and the tendency to achieve a balance of exchanges (not to owe or be owed).

The way the principles were expressed by respondents shows the necessity of guidance in everyday relations. The sayings reflect a long lasting account of patterns of interactions, which is relevant when considering the way relating as conocidos is enacted. These principles, expressed as proverbs, guide the exchange. They need to be kept in mind if one is to avoid offence and increase the chances of success in future endeavours. These sayings and local adages inform us about the relevance of these issues in everyday talk. They convey a narrative on how a relation with others, particularly when requests are posed, should be understood.

The principles also unveil the criteria for trusting someone. Here, the markers provided the relevant background information, but we saw that perpetuity and trust had to provide consistent information. There was also a rule of transitivity, where continuity among the partners engaging in relations was an important part. The respondents also talked about a period of transition where the person was subjected to some form of test before being trusted. We shall explore the types of tests and strategies in the next chapter.

The principles demonstrated that not anyone can ask or request favours from others. Also, when the price to pay for the exchanges is too high – it might imply an increase in surveillance and social 'torture' through gossips – there is a way out: independence, not needing anything from anyone, not engaging in relations of reciprocation. It can be concluded that the conventions – tackling issues of dependency, the principles of balance, generosity and reliance – portray a story of regularity which entails order in exchanges. The conventions talk about issues of reciprocity and rely strongly on the establishment of trust as a foundation upon which relating as conocidos builds. A further view, which highlights the importance of the community's codes of practice, is presented by respondents when discussing the behaviour of foreigners. The next section presents a test of the codes of practice, this time enforced by respondents upon the outsider.

3. THE RELEVANCE OF MANNERS: TALKING ABOUT OUTSIDERS

This section has the value of acting as an internal mechanism of validity. Up to now the task of interpreting has been carried out from the position of the researcher towards the respondents. This section on the relevance of manners adds another layer: it provides an analysis of the Gomerans' assessment of the behaviour of outsiders. Here, the respondents discussed those who, by virtue of not being from the island, were not familiar with their code of practice. The newcomers, strangers or outsiders have different ways of exerting behaviour. Their ways of acting and their many mistakes are unforgivably highlighted by the locals. The Gomerans are, with a slightly humorous tone, keen spectators of their mishaps.

The codes of practice provide hints on how a relation, which requires a request, is conducted by the islanders. The importance of these issues comes to light by the islanders' explicit mention of the conduct of those who are not from the island. The outsiders are people whose voice is not heard, they do not count. Their acts are not so much submitted to the surveillance of the community, but they are nonetheless observed. The observers are not so interested in assessing – as when known ones are under surveillance – but they are spectators. If things are not working and if principles are breached, one can rest assured that the outsiders will somehow be involved. Hence, the few social conflicts which may appear, are linked to them:

> Look, here there might be hunger, but there aren't any people living without a house. It might be due to pride, so people don't think that they... you know, here things work under the thought of 'what would people say?' [...] But people begging on the street, just like that... never! Maybe some bum who comes here now and again, but they are not from here. Also, people don't give them money: 'if you want to eat get a sandwich, it'll be my treat, but money no'.
>
> Ernesto Perez (Y7; 342:344)

There are no homeless people and people do not beg on the streets. This does not imply that they are necessarily resourceful, as they might refrain from doing so due to pride. It is unacceptable to beg. Only those who are from the outside might beg, but there is no shame in their acts as they are unknown to the islanders. The quote starts with a claim pointing towards a rich social fabric in the community, which provides for its people. However, it is soon converted into just another code of manners. The performative element is again drawn on. Kinship might provide networks of support, but here what the respondent chooses to highlight is that, even if there are needs, what matters is *not to*

be seen to beg. The enforcement of the gaze and the certainty that people will *say* things, and make judgements, act as strong deterrents. People might decide to give even to those who display neediness, the outsiders, but never in terms of money. They might provide food to ease their hunger, through an invitation. Charity has to come from indigence and people have to deserve it. An invitation, on the other hand, is a sign of *generosity* and friendliness from a host towards a guest on the island. To befriend the stranger is more acceptable, the invitation transforms the outsider into an acquaintance.

Outsiders are surprised at seeing that there are no measures against theft, and there seems to be no fear of public crime:

> And it attracts people's attention to see a bicycle just left on the side of the road, or a motorbike with the keys in [...] and here it happens because there are only a few of us. We know each other and so it is pointless to steal a bike because they will get you next day... it's obvious. They put a police control in the port and the same way you came you have to go... it's just that. No one escapes from here!
>
> Pepe Morales (Y6; 11-17)

Again, following on from what was mentioned above, the lack of crime on the island might be interpreted as a sign of a healthy community. However, through talks with the islanders, the picture gets distorted. It seems that the sense of confinement and the ever-present surveillance are what stop crime on the island. In cases of grave infractions, just as much as in everyday acts, the same logic applies. Lack of crime is just the result of the impossibility of taking something, because people will know from whom it was taken and because escape is not possible. The sense of the island as an enclosed space where everything is known is perfectly exemplified by an instance provided by one participant. Here, the rift of knowledge – on codes, the gaze and the conventions – between those who came from the outside and those who live on the island is made very clear. The taken for granted and the domain of tacit behaviour is conveyed with a tone of parody by the respondent. The outsiders play at clear disadvantage against the vast knowledge of codes and surveillance mastered and played upon by the islanders:

> So this kid was not from here, but from mainland Spain. And he stole for a long time from all the pharmacies of the island. The fool! And of course, everyone knew him, and people would see him about to go into a pharmacy and say 'come on kid, forget it, don't do it. You won't last long'. And others went to the [chief of the civil guards[67]] and told him what he looked like, where he lived and what he

[67] Local police force, see Chapter IV.

> had for dinner... and still [they] could not get him. They had to set up a huge ambush. Here! An ambush! When a fly moves everyone looks. If the fly is the whole [civil guards] force of the island... imagine. So the civil guards were outside half hidden with their guns and stuff and everybody was hanging around them. People were talking, commenting and screaming to the kid inside 'don't come out. Make [the chief of the civil guards] come and get you!' It was fantastic.
>
> Pepe Morales (Y6; 22-37)

The only local players in the text are the audience, the Gomerans who try to sort things out in the best way possible by pointing out to the thief his destiny and by informing of his whereabouts. The rest of the participants are outsiders. The sense of rebellion is directed towards them, they can be laughed at and ridiculed because they are not from the island. The consequences of lacking inside knowledge, the 'know how', comes across strongly.

a. Talking About Outsiders: Summing up

The outsiders are transient beings, and the islanders treat them as such. On the one hand, they do things wrong but are not held responsible. On the other, they are neither helped out nor subjected to preferences or trust. They stand out and their position as outsiders is talked about, highlighting, by the same token, the way their relations are conducted.

The outsiders then are people who cannot be expected to do things right. Whether they follow a well-founded logic (such as a police ambush) or not, any individual action taken will not be rewarded but ridiculed. It is a form of snubbing which is not grounded in social positioning, but in their lack of permanence. They cannot be positioned in the temporal axes (as they lack a history of relations on the island) and also lack information on the spatial markers. Familiarity with the codes of practice is so much assumed that the locals seem to be offended by the outsider's lack of correctness; they need to subscribe to their community creed. If standards of decency are set, they are there to guide the behaviour of everyone. A person who does not consider others when exerting behaviour should be punished, or mocked. The behaviour of 'those not known' highlights their constraints, it seems only fair to condemn them.

4. THE SCRIPT: DISCUSSION

This chapter has explored the role and significance of the codes of practice on the island of La Gomera, with a specific focus on the way relating as conocidos is carried out. The analysis of the interviews provided a look at those codes which are of relevance to respondents. The domain of manners and how to conduct relations by requesting help from others was explored. The analysis uncovered some tools of interpretation which are valuable for the research. Once the local expertise of the subjects is assumed, we can see how the markers of temporal and spatial dimensions are utilised when relating as conocidos.

<table>
<tr><th>CODES OF PRACTICE</th><th colspan="2">TOOLS</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Enforced by the Gaze</td><td colspan="2">Visibility (surveillance)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Talk (spreader)</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Guided by the Conventions</td><td colspan="2">Dependency</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Principles</td><td>Balance</td></tr>
<tr><td>Generosity</td></tr>
<tr><td>Reliance</td></tr>
</table>

Hence, the codes of practice presented the script of action in which relating as conocidos can be placed. I have talked about the communal gaze, and how the surveillance uses talk for its transmission, and vision to assess behaviour. The eye of the community, which enforces a sense of performance, gains preference over the concrete significance of encounters: *to be seen to do* is more important than doing, as open and direct expression is not encouraged – especially the critical kind. The pervasive gaze directs the focus from any interactional encounter to the unnamed and invisible viewer. Therefore, the content and purpose of specific exchanges has a secondary role; the open display of intentions is made difficult by a mutual control which rewards adherence to local conventions. The respondents introduce surveillance as working in two directions: promoting gossip and caring for others, both of which intervene in providing a sense of community. The gaze provides the structural eye that promotes social control; the content of this structure, gossip, draws on a strong set of social conventions in order to arrange the parameters of relational behaviour.

Public expression is acceptable when it takes the form of gossip. This, at the same time, asserts a sense of rightness on the side of the speaker – the gossiper. In so doing, the person manages to inform the audience of her/his lack of blame, as well as conveying some sense of individuality. Hence, when the codes of practice are openly rejected, the audience needs to look for a reason behind it[68]. For the speaker to assess the safety of disclosure, s/he needs to consider the audience and the context in which claims are posed. The focus of gossip – the person – is dependent on the knowledge of the social players, which constructs her/him as a source of interest to others. The content of the gossip is determined by the conventions and principles of the local field.

The conventions present a story of dependency, which relies on issues of reciprocation. The respondents elaborate on issues such as being a provider, reciprocity, prestige and trust, as these conventions will give information on accountability and on relating as conocidos will take place. The conventions also present us with the Gomerans' need to rely on assurance and security. The price to pay is conformity and, in certain ways, compliance. However, the reliance on the performative quality of action introduces a level of superficiality, which together with the façade – the 'as ifs' – hints at the existence of a life within life. This level of performance was also touched upon in the previous chapter, which gave the first hints about the realm of the 'as ifs': as if we were friends, as if we were generous. In short, the realm of the 'as ifs' presented in public expression aimed to convey simultaneous readings. A public reading would be one of compliance with the social codes of accepted behaviour. A second reading could be, for example, one of pursuing an individual's own interest as opposed to communal good-will[69].

In the world of conventions help is given, and favours are done, but only to those who conform. The requesting and doing of favours becomes, paradoxically, an instrument of social control, as dependency and reciprocity show approval and lack of criticism at the same time. The dependency on others and the principles of balance, generosity and reliance highlight the contextuality of relating as conocidos by assigning different subject positions in multiple places. They guide the way people make transactions. By

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[68] These issues are related to the strategic moves involved in relating as conocidos and will be explored in Chapter VII.
[69] The domain of the 'as ifs' will be further explored in Chapter VII.

conveying manners, the conventions talk about an acceptable way of behaviour and hide the necessity and instrumental value of relating as conocidos.

* * *

The strictness and discursive character (portrayed by the use of sayings) of the code of practice reveal the importance of the inclusion of the generalised other in the subject's life. The richness of its subtleties and nuances uncovers the pervasiveness of a social record over an individual one. A reflection of the importance given to local codes is the degree of expectation placed on others. The extent to which people consider their behaviour in reference to others – for example the compulsion to check one's own behaviour and that of others in order to avoid offence – reflects the binding character of relations, the dependency of the social group and the compelling power of social control. This exercise of interpretation highlights the façade of the 'as ifs', which conveys the use of conversation and performance in acts of public expression. This is made tangible by the way the gaze is constructed (with its visual and conversational component), which is enforced on others and avoided by disguise of action. The disguise is achieved through the provision of alternative readings for the benefit of the anonymous viewer. The conventions also portray a similar picture; they convey a tale of dependency, where the principles of generosity, generalised reciprocation and trust are guides on how to relate in general and as conocidos in particular.

VII

THE PERFORMANCE
STRATEGIES OF ACTION

This chapter tackles the last remaining issue pertaining to practice[70]. So far, Chapter V discussed the arena, the setting where interactions are constructed, and Chapter VI presented the codes of practices guiding relations, such as that of conocidos. This chapter aims to unravel the performative process that respondents use when engaging with the other. The performance contains a level of rehearsal that is guided by a script (the codes of practice) and is informed by the contextual markers. Also, a performance entails a capacity for action, a personal statement which is played with a purpose. In this chapter the social subject is converted into a knowledgeable player. S/he performs strategic actions.

The concept of a strategy, as explained before[71], lies in-between the social and the private. Local knowledge is necessary for its enactment, but it also relies on personal performance. This analysis extracts the strategies used by the respondents when relating as conocidos. The research has already expressed an interest in process. Thus, rather than proposing the uncovering of static constructs, the chapter identifies discursive strategies. The strategies are used by the respondents to direct this form of relating into constant motion. These strategies introduce us to (i) the sequential – i.e. processual – character of the relating as conocidos, and (ii) the realm of the 'tacitness' in this form of relating (with the aid of the markers and the codes of practice). If the codes of practice provided the script, the 'know hows', the strategies convey the 'know*ing* how'. They represent the actual enactment and performance of practice.

The strategies talk about the mediated and negotiated character of the relationship. When relevant, the use of markers and the relevance of the codes will be highlighted throughout the chapter. In a way, this is unavoidable, as strategic action requires of a set of codes in order to be performed. At the same time, the strategies highlight the need to

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[70] The chapter is the result of the 'talk structure' analysis of the insiders' interviews, see Chapter III.
[71] See Chapter II.

follow some form of regulation and to rely on the realm of the untold – the tacit but indisputable manner of inter/action. The respondents' strategic manoeuvres tell us of the need for maintaining a level of ambiguity when making requests. The strategies at play when relating as conocidos are framed in an arena, where the partners negotiate different positions. It is their negotiation through words and deeds that results in the extraction of tacit regularities. The strategies are related by a common thread, they come to tackle the commonalties pertaining to relating as conocidos.

This analysis uncovered a distinctive set of codes, grouped into two sets of strategies[72], which pin down the flow of the relationship. The interpretation of these sets of codes point to two different stages – as platforms of discussion rather than levels of explanation – in the process of relating as conocidos. Hence, the first stage presents the *strategies of localisation*. The aim of these various strategies is to agree on some form of localisation and positioning of the subjects about to relate. The localisation is achieved with the aid of some markers – such as people – that provide relevant information on who the other is. The second stage relates to the *strategies of requests*. These strategies are specifically related to the request for favours and transactions. Here, the codes of practice emerged as acted out by the use respondents give them. This second set of strategies are, as we shall see, more geared to the concealment of the relationship and aim to enforce or justify the *right* to request and the *duty* to grant favours.

1. STRATEGIES OF LOCALISATION

The strategies of localisation provide the requisites for starting to relate as conocidos. This first set of strategies frame the relational domain. The strategies determine the common basis from which the relation, as a transactional process, can start. The performance, then, renders visible a sequence which has to do with the initial attempt to set the scene between the partners. The aim of these strategies is the creation of a discursive space where the relationship can take place. The arena presented before through the markers, is being constructed here as a stage from which to start rehearsing performances. At this moment, the respondents use the strategies in order to establish

[72] See Appendix IV for further information on the analysis.

the degree of closeness. These strategies open up the possibility of engaging in the process of relating as conocidos. They are classified into three different groups: (a) the strategy of *anchoring*, (b) the strategies of challenge, which comprise *positioning* and the *claim to fame* and finally (c) the strategy of *access to the unknown*. Through them, the respondents are establishing themselves as potential partners for relating as conocidos.

a. Anchoring: Locating others within a social space

The strategy of anchoring aims to achieve a certain localisation between the partners in the relationship within an equal or equivalent social space[73]. It implies a test of knowledge where the respondents attempt to ensure a certain level of closeness, indicated by the sharing of common markers. These markers are spatial or temporal[74] and mainly anchored on people. The pattern followed by the respondents when attempting to find common anchors has a structural cohesion. The aim of the strategy is to show a performance of closeness through the people anchored by the markers.

i) The test of knowledge

The strategy of anchoring highlights the necessity of knowing the other – the generalised other who is anchored as a marker – to check whether the partners talking share the same understandings.

> DA: And I am going to speak truly, I committed a huge error there, the first error was to leave these people here. That is true. But before... do you know Aventin Gomez, from La Villa [San Sebastián]?
> I[Interviewer]: The solicitor?
> DA: And his nephew? The one married in Hermigua... the brother of Marcos.
> I: Ah! Yes. He is called.... Jesus Manuel.
> DA: That's the one.
>
> Don Anastasio (E6; 531:536)

The respondent here makes some important concessions: firstly, he ensures a moment of disclosure by saying he will tell the truth. However, the revelation depends on one

[73] See Appendix IV for the table of occurrences.
[74] See Chapter V.

pertinent condition. There is an overt teasing with a promise of exposure, which is dependent on a test: the test of knowledge. Only once the test is passed will the revelation occur. The marker, the object of enquiry, anchored on 'Aventin Gomez', plays a minor role. It is not really relevant to know this character's nephew for the purpose of the narrative – the revelation. The enquiry is relevant as part of a process, as a test of the person to whom the question is directed. A positive answer to the question – to know the nephew of Aventin Gomez – is relevant as far as it conveys to the speaker how to proceed with the disclosure: whether the subject s/he is engaging with is an adequate recipient of trust. Only through a positive answer can we move on in the conversation, only then will the disclosure occur.

The strategy arises from the need to find and agree upon some shared awareness, which, if not present, can result in confusion and misunderstandings. The markers fulfil some sort of procedural requirement. Through the strategy of anchoring, these markers, anchored on people, are there to ensure a knowledge base and a shared understanding of the general implications. When the test is not passed, the potential recipient of trust is called to attention. S/he is exposed by her/his ignorance:

> P: Well, there was one guy but, as it happens, he doesn't want to get involved anymore. Coalicion Canaria [the nationalist political party] doesn't have anything to say so far... Do you know him?
> I: Was it Melian?
> P: No, my god!
> I: He is the only one I know!
> P: No! The third on the list was much better than Melian. It was the surveyor Jaime. If Jaime had run instead of Melian, he would have won... because here people cannot stand Melian!
>
> Paco the Sailor (Y2: 417:422)

Sometimes this process of negotiation, of locating the person anchored as a marker in reference to the listener (and potential partner when relating as conocidos), can be quite arduous. It can take various steps and different routes in order to agree upon a successful marker. We see in the following text how the respondent struggles to establish a marker. She tries, in five different ways, to anchor the person talked about, using the temporal and spatial axes as an aid. Again, the marker, i.e. the subject anchored and talked about, is not relevant. There is very little chance that the listener will have ever seen him. However, through the strategy of anchoring the person is telling us much more:

> A boy that is precisely in the land of [1] Montse, the one of Omoncho, from [San Sebastián], the [2] sister of Quique, the one from the Ferry, who is also a captain. So, [3] the sister of Montse is married to a guy from La Palma [another island] and he has a big piece of land in La Dama. So, [4] this boy works there in La Dama in the land of this girl. And he could not spare a week. A boy with a good body, [5] from Chipude, and with good manners and everything.
>
> Pili Sandoval (E5;418:422)

The context is the rehearsal of a Gomeran folk dance that the respondent was preparing. The person talked about is not even given a name, he is not relevant. The only thing we know is that he is a land worker. We are, however, given plenty of information about other contextual variables. The reasons for the display are partly that he is *just* a land worker. The person talking will not make an effort to locate him, but she struggles to anchor and locate the owner of the land. In this process, she is telling us something about herself, not about the unnamed boy. She is providing us with the tools to read what her social space is; the place where she belongs and should be located. She is furthermore assuming that the listener will need to acknowledge it in the same terms. The test comes when doubling the stakes: she knows the right people – for whom the boy works – and the partner in conversation should also be familiar with them. She also uses relevant markers, which for the knowledgeable listener are charged with signification. The anchoring detour starts with [1] a spatial marker: the capital, San Sebastián; and a marker of continuity: the daughter of Omoncho. Then we go through [2] the captain – hierarchical grade – of the Ferry which links the island to Tenerife. We are, then, taken back to [3] a kinship relation, a marker of continuity, who has some links with the outside, as she is married to somebody from another island, [4] owns land in La Dama, a spatial marker (as it is one of the areas with the largest estates). We are finally returned to the person needing to be anchored: the boy [5] who, despite coming from Chipude, a spatial marker (the most deprived area in the whole Canarian archipelago), has good manners.

This detailed deconstruction of the text above provides a good grounding to unveil the processes at play in the strategy of anchoring. It clearly represents a continuous testing and negotiation through a wide set of statements which are presented as assumptions, as unquestionable truths.

The strategy of anchoring conveys the process of ascertaining where the partners should belong through talk. It is discursively developed by the respondents, who skilfully transform the exchange of words into a full act of social communication. In the three

texts presented above, the 'test of knowledge' enacted through the strategy of anchoring checks on three different domains. In the first example, Don Anastasio needed to check the spatial markers; he wanted to know whether the partner in the conversation was familiar with his geographical area of social relations and knowledge: La Villa (San Sebastián) and Hermigua. In the second example, Paco the Sailor put forward a test of a political nature: in his case it was relevant to establish whether the listener shared his political views. In the third case, Pili Sandoval made sure her social positioning was uncontested by following a complex route of different markers which portrayed a picture of her social relations. Although the person used as a marker and the knowledge claimed as relevant served different purposes, the use of the strategy was equivalent. The marker used – the person anchored – enforced an initial link of trust, and the strategy at play – the anchoring – was essentially the same.

ii) Structural features

Structurally, the strategy of anchoring follows an interestingly predictable pattern. Throughout the course of a broken narrative, the respondent, in search of assurance of trust, resorts to taking side paths. The paths seem to be clarifications aiding the understanding, but we have seen how their purpose seems to be more contentious. The clear side-track structure of this narrative resource comes across powerfully in the interviews. Sometimes, the anchoring is assumed by stating the markers and omitting explanations regarding the person anchored. Public figures must be known to the listener, even though these figures might belong to different generations altogether:

> NF: So then, whenever they were not able, the doctor would come.
> I: But did he have time?
> NF: Uy!, and if there was no time, you just had to put up with it, because there was no other way. Many people died giving birth...even this one... Juaquinita, the wife of the *delegado* [the central government delegate]. She died giving birth. The doctor came, Don Sebastián, and also Don Jose Armas was there. And they came, and still she died giving birth. It was hard but that's the way things were.
>
> Nela Pelaez (E1; 242:247)

Again, regardless of who this person (Juaquinita) was, she was the wife of an important public figure. It is *his* position which is made relevant. The high profile of this character is used, through anchoring, as a support to the story, a guarantee of its truthfulness. Here, the structure of the 'side path' in the process of anchoring is clear.

After the audience takes the point, the narrative detour finishes and the respondent returns to the main story: the way things were.

The referential elements used in the anchoring are rather limited. Their order alternates from text to text, but a certain pattern appears. This pattern provides further validation of the role and value of the markers in the context of this study. The formulas used can be:

[1] name; [2] kinship/continuity; [3] profession; [4] spatial location:

> ... and I left running away to the house where I was staying, that was in La Dehesa, below the Fortress. And I said 'Ay! my god *Edilio Alonso*' – the *father of Leopoldo*, the *doctor* that is in the *North of Spain* – and I said to him 'look what happened to me, I went to ask for some water in that house up there, and [...]'
>
> Erfidio Hernandez (E3; 274:277)

Or [1] name; [2] perpetuity; [3] profession/perpetuity; [4] spatial location. second attempt: kinship/continuity:

> ... and *down there*, *Don Ventura*, *the stutterer*, he really had a pharmacy. He really was a *pharmacist*. And he was *there, below* where Don Manuel Mendez and those people live. *In the Lower Valley square.*
> I: The one of Don Paco?
> NF: No, he came afterwards to live in La Villa, but he had first his pharmacy there... Don Ventura, *the brother* of Don Sebastián.
>
> Nela Pelaez (E1; 305:310)

Or [1] name; [2] spatial location; [3] kinship/continuity:

> EP: Well... you know *Fela*, don't you?
> I: Who?
> EP: The lady who lives *here, in the same building as Conchi.*
> I: The *aunt of Amelia*?
> EP: Yes, the one whose *husband was a Pineda.*
>
> Eva Padilla (Y1; 76:80)

Hence, recapturing the tools explored before (Chapter V), these elements clearly correspond to the spatial and temporal axes. There are three referential markers: spatial location, continuity, and profession – plus nickname when applicable. Profession and nickname are temporal markers of perpetuity. This pattern, with small variations, appears in every quotation on the strategy of anchoring. It is relevant to notice that these markers work as anchors of localisation and permanence. Spatial location (or division), kinship (or continuity) and profession (or perpetuity) are still meant to establish who the person is. When the respondents try to ascertain *who* they are talking

about, rather than personal attributes, the information that appears to be relevant is of a different character. Spatial and historical stability across generations is assumed.

Moreover, continuity as a record of kinship provides information of a social quality: the status and character of the family within the social field. It also gives information on the political and ideological positioning, as these trends are repeated across generations (perpetuity). Profession (and nickname if applicable) is also translated into a form of localisation, as there is only one doctor, or pharmacist, who would take the given position at one point in time. Finally, spatial location provides the same kind of information, as one person's location within the town is also tied down with social meaning; it provides information on the nature of their work and their status within the village. These markers can easily be traced back, and the strategy of anchoring, in itself, needs to be seen as some sort of public oral record. This strategy reveals an ordering process, always made in reference to the partners involved. Its purpose is a negotiated assurance that the other, the partner in the discussion, belongs and therefore understands. S/he is familiar, and has the same set of values and codes. Anchoring, then, becomes a process of actualisation of history, which utilises, rather than a record of the past, the necessary markers that will guarantee an engagement in future interactions.

b. Challenges: Locating within the ranks of privilege

Challenges are composed of different strategies used to convey, to the partner in the conversation, information on the 'location' of the speaker. The term 'location' here conveys different meanings. By resorting to challenges, the person portrays a situation of privilege, but not only regarding social status. A statement of privilege can, for instance, convey significations of freedom, honour, or benefit. Privilege is, after all, a way of increasing the value of the speaker in the eyes of the recipient. When relating as conocidos, a successful challenge may eventually provide a boost to the value of the speaker. The challenges are composed of two different strategies: (i) positioning and (ii) claim to fame.

i) Positioning

The next text introduces us to the strategy of positioning. After the process of looking for the anchor – the assurance of belonging to the same referential domain – there is a need to situate the partner within some form of ranking, which will allow the challenger to emerge in a good light. The strategy of positioning is an active but subtle process, which requires high local expertise, and a good grasp of one's status in reference to relevant others.

> BP: We all grew up working the lands of Don Moisés Plasencia. You might remember... looking back, you might have heard in the *cabildo*[75], in San Sebastián, of Don Moisés Plasencia...
> I: Yes... the father of Raul and Samuel, right?... I remember Samuel, I think my uncle... the first car that my uncle bought, he bought it from him...
> BP: Of course... yes. Your uncle got on well with *those* people [his emphasis].
> Baltasar Suarez (E12; 441:445)

Here, we see the result of a successful anchoring which is turned into a challenge. When the respondent first mentions Don Moisés Plasencia, we do not know whether praise or criticism is to follow. At the end of the text, with just a line, the respondent manages to convey a certain derogatory tone. The mention of '*those* people', and the initial assertive remark, lets us know that to be connected to any of them is not something to be proud of. Even more, to be related by kindred to someone who had a commercial transaction with '*those* people' is already a cause of concern. We are given a clear picture: in this context, to be able to claim some degree of connection with the people used as markers is not welcomed. The partner in the communicative exchange is slightly tainted by this link. Baltasar Suarez grew up working their land; the powerful people related to the local government and the capital are just not people of his kind.

The strategy of positioning emerges as a skilful linguistic resource. The discursive and voluble character of this strategy – which gains significance within a process – becomes evident when taking into account the mobility of locations taken by one person. These locations acquire meaning when seen according to whom the person is relating to.

> MF: And you know what? As I don't have any political ideology I can be seen in pictures with Carrillo, with Aznar, with whomever... and Nena, just to annoy me [*tirarme de la lengua*] said 'you are just a turncoat' and I said 'indeed I am. These

[75] The *cabildo* is the insular government.

days one has to be a turncoat, you have to change sides because you have to live with all of them... not like before'.

Maria Fragoso (E7; 255:258)

Carrillo and Aznar (the current President of Spain) are two public figures from opposite sides of the Spanish political spectrum. The respondent attended a dinner given for Carrillo, ex-leader of the Communist Party, during a visit he made to the island. In the text above, the speaker makes a claim of impartiality. To be categorised as a 'communist' – a red – has important connotations after the Spanish Civil War, and even more in the local context of the island. Furthermore, as mentioned above, the public record is clear: ideological positioning runs across generations within the same family. This is why the respondent needs to justify a picture in which she – whose family has some social standing on the island and has traditionally been associated with the right-wing party – appears together with Carrillo in a public gathering. People know about it and challenge her publicly, forcing from her a disclaimer of freedom, of political neutrality. This claim is challenged by a friend, who positions her in the eyes of others as changing sides. She counter-challenges, by acknowledging the accusation and transforming it using another important referent: democracy. These days people have to be open minded and keep good relations with everyone, which is not how things were before. She positions herself as the liberal amongst her reactionary friends, who are stuck in the rigid past of the dictatorship.

Through the strategy of positioning we can see how people localise others. It is an active process, by which the respondents challenge others and put people 'in their place'. Furthermore, by putting someone in their place, they locate themselves elsewhere. This location is varied, changeable and always in reference to whom they are relating. The locations are historically relevant and always try to convey situations of privilege. In these two texts, the privilege was mainly established by claims of freedom and independence, which are equated to declarations of honour within the highly structured social realm of the island. This strategy again highlights the discursive nature of relating as conocidos. Here, people adopt positions and justify actions using different and rich repertoires which, rather than stating claims of truth, unveil the constructed character of social relations. The varied positions taken by the respondents become a strategy to locate the other, a potential partner in relating as conocidos.

ii) Claim to fame

> Dad was the Mayor and he was also the Godfather of the Virgin. And the English woman – who had been here for a long time and was also within the Church – Doña Florencia... she was the one promoting all this. My dad, as the Mayor, gave a speech up there, and we were with him. And he got together all the men from El Cedro and said that everyone had to do their bit and give a hand. He granted permission to gather the wood and build up the small church. And then, the two of them became the Godparents of the Virgin. And on the commemorative inscription, only Doña Florencia is acknowledged even though they should have put the name of Don Sandoval too, who was the person who authorised it.
>
> Pili Sandoval (E5; 128:133)

This text reflects the strategy of claiming fame. We are told about the inaccuracy of recorded history. The respondent claims the injustice committed by not acknowledging the role of her father. She is – through the figure of her father – claiming prestige in two different and crucial domains: the laic and the religious. They are both perfectly combined in the figure of the mayor, who is also a godparent of the Virgin. His status – and hence hers – is just as big as that of the foreigner, an English woman. The outsider, Doña Florencia, could have had the authority and value of the promoter, but her father was the enabling force: he gave a speech and granted permission. The respondent takes credit and actualises history, or rather the relevant past, to enhance her situation today.

Claiming fame is always the result of an active effort. By taking an event that happened either in the remote or close past, the person re-interprets and 'translates' it in the most favourable light in order to make claims of prestige and success. The event brought into the conversation – the claim – does not necessarily have to be enacted by the speaker, it simply has to involve someone close enough, such as a family member, in order to convey a situation of betterness, according to which the person should be positioned in reference to the other.

> FP: The ones from the *Falange*! The *Falange* was always from [the Upper Valley]. I had a brother in law, the husband of my sister... he was one! He even maintained a correspondence with Don Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera!
> I: Really!
> FP: From the *peninsula*, because they were very political... they were contemporary and that...
> N[nexus]: They fought side by side [*hicieron la guerra juntos*].
> FP: And that's how he got to know him. And that's why the *Falange* was strong here...
>
> Felipe Páez (E2; 359:364)

The strategy of claiming fame needs the acknowledgement of the partners in the conversation. The text highlights the need to share a common knowledge of the past.

The *Falange* was a right wing organisation, which was created by Primo de Rivera. He was a general who took power during one of the Spanish republics that preceded the civil war. The figure of Primo de Rivera is very important in Spanish history. Indeed, any person associated with him will have enjoyed strong public recognition, especially in a small community and during the war. We are not told what the position of Felipe Páez's relative was within the military hierarchy, or his degree of closeness to Primo de Rivera, with whom he fought on the same side. However, whatever the extent of the relationship, to be able to show just one letter would have been enough to claim a 'correspondence' with such a high-ranking military man. In the context of the community, this letter would have been enough to claim positions of power and public recognition. Moreover, in the text we are forced to acknowledge that to be related to the person who had a correspondence with Primo de Rivera – once removed from an already fuzzy connection – is still relevant.

The reconstruction of the past and its personal appropriation are clear signs of the strategic value it has for respondents. The active appropriation of events is also described in other instances, where respondents engage in setting the record straight. They force the person into acknowledging – more or less clumsily – where they stand in reference to the community.

> BS: On the national radio there is a programme that starts saying 'good morning' in all the Spanish languages: Catalan, Basque, the Asturian *Bable* and also the Gomeran whistle... I did that one, the whistle of 'good morning'.
> I: Really! Great! May I have it live here?
> BS: Yes... you will hear it like this [does it].
>
> Baltasar Suarez (E12; 28:132)

Hence, the challenges of claim to fame are strategies aimed at increasing the value of one of the partners of the exchange – the speaker. Again, this partner is also a potential provider in relating as conocidos. S/he is actively requesting importance in the eyes of the relevant others. Privilege here is a more straightforward claim, it talks about the role of history and traditional sources of power in assessing values in the community record.

c. Access to the Unknown: A display of trust allocation

This last strategy of 'access to the unknown' implies a claim to inside knowledge made by the respondents. Here, the person lets us know s/he has access to information that might be relevant in a specific required context.

> That's why I go mad when Anabel starts saying 'because my dad this, and my dad that'. And I'm dying to tell her something I know, but I've kept quiet. And I said to her 'look Anabel, you know what?... because maybe things that you don't know, I do. And things that I don't know about my father, you do. You don't have a clue about what your father was, so just keep quiet' and I'm really dying to let it out, because if it was the other way around she would have already rubbed it in.
>
> Maria Fragoso (E7; 299:303)

In the text above, we see the respondent narrating the challenge made to a third person. In fact, we are told about Anabel, who apparently is constantly using strategies of 'claims to fame' through the figure of her father. Maria Fragoso protests. Not only does she protest but she also counter-challenges Anabel with a claim of access to information unknown to her. Furthermore, she makes the challenge elegantly. In the text she manages to (i) question the claim of fame of the third person, (ii) portray an image of self-restraint and discreteness – a highly valued trait in a small community – and (iii) convey the idea that she is not like the rest – despite the undoubted claim that if the situation were the opposite she would have been subjected to public embarrassment. More importantly, without actually revealing anything, she manages a hint to the audience regarding the questionable moral stands of Anabel's father. This is done assuming that a knowledgeable audience will know how to interpret it. As we saw with the gaze and how surveillance is enforced through talk (by gossip), remaining silent is a value which is equated to a capacity for restraint. In fact, regardless of whether she chooses to elaborate on the claim of access to information and reveal the unknown or not, the listener can already form a more or less accurate picture of what she is talking about. By convincing us of her ability to be restrained, her moral stance rises while, at the same time, locating others – or Anabel in this case – at the opposite side of the spectrum.

The strategy of giving access to unknown information, to 'inside knowledge', is again used by people in order to portray a situation of privilege. However, here privilege has less to do with preference of location – hierarchically placing the speaker above others as we saw with the challenges – and is more related to honour and trust. Hence, on the

one hand, the speaker, by uncovering a secret, 'performs' trust. This trust locates the person, the listener, in the close circle of those who are trusted by the speaker. The listener, the recipient of trust, has little chance to discover to what extent the information is valid, or public. On the other hand, the recipient is also forced to acknowledge her/his 'ignorance' and recognise the disclosure of the secret as a privilege. Information, as we have seen elsewhere, is one of the currencies most easily converted into a scarce resource. Just a hint of a secret, or access to internal knowledge, will put the strategist – the speaker – in a powerful position in reference to others.

> EP: But really, it's a waste because the entrance exams for civil servants have not come out yet. And Sonia could opt for them because she went as a teacher, but I can't... and well... do not tell any one but you know how she passed the exam, right?
> I: No, I don't. How?
> EP: The mother went to Santa Cruz and she talked to a woman friend that she knew was going to be on the panel. But don't tell her anything because Sonia doesn't know either. Her mother did it behind her back.
>
> Eva Padilla (Y1; 179:183)

In this text, we are again enlightened, but the need to be discrete is emphasised. The person revealing the secret is not spreading it carelessly. She might be uncovering information, but she is only telling us because it is relevant in the context of the conversation. She, furthermore, shows us how those who have succeeded in getting good positions have done so by dubious routes. She even raises the stakes by ensuring a way in which the person informed will never be able to check the validity of her claim, as this is even unknown to Sonia, the person who benefited from – and whose mother committed – the unwarranted infraction. The respondents, in giving access to unknown information, are also taking a risk by displaying a public performance of trust. The acknowledgement of this disclosure will enforce a situation of privilege on the part of the speaker to the person chosen as a recipient of trust. It closes the gap between the two partners, as those who share something distinct and not common to others. This strategy of localisation situates the partners closer within the inside circle of the privileged ones. The respondents display the information by conveying, through the telling of 'secrets', that the partner is worthy of trust.

d. Strategies of Localisation: Summing up

We have seen how the strategies of localisation set the requisites for relating as conocidos. These strategies highlight the performative and practical qualities of the social world on the island. They uncover ways of finding out *who* the partner is by enforcing the disclosure of relevant information (such as political positioning, kindred and, in general, the relational spectrum of the person to whom the talk is directed). As we saw with the temporal and spatial markers, by locating someone, we can know about her/his history and family. The opposite is also true: by knowing the person's surname, other information such as spatial location, profession and character traits are also available. This information, even if it just pertains to the past, is a guarantee which speaks of her/his present life. In this world, history and ancestors, as we saw with the markers and the gaze, tell of someone's present, where personal achievements do not play a major part in establishing who s/he is.

Firstly, the strategy of *anchoring* aims to provide information that indicates where a person comes from. Through this strategy, we see how partners in talk bring each other closer. It is a strategy of building bridges. As such, the strategy manifests a tool of acceptance, a way of expressing the commonalties that link players into the same game, with assumptions of equality. It conveys how everyone knows (of) each other and how, through a process of negotiation and searching, every person is related to some relevant other. The use of markers aims to open access to relating as conocidos. It is, literally, the first entrance into this world of relations.

Secondly, we saw how the *challenges* take the function of regulators. These strategies position people, by placing them in or pulling them out of someone's world of reference. They talk about order and separation. However, this ordering is created from a self-referential point. Challenges are strategies enacted to tease out and play with others. They are tools to position the other within a scale of difference which favours the speaker, but also of equivalence (as both partners are measured within this same referential scale). Through the challenges, and after access is granted, respondents regulate and position people using any relevant marker of rank through which they can claim privilege.

Thirdly, we see through the strategy of *access to the unknown* that information is masterfully converted into a source of privilege, a scarce resource. The speaker plays within the ambiguous margins of disclosure (as a sign of trust) and discreteness (as a moral value), highlighting, in this manner, the relevance of information and the fact that this is given exclusively to the partner. Again, after the initial entrance and location, the granting of access to unknown information aims to establish trust. It shows a disclosure through the uncovering of secrets and an enactment (sometimes too performative) of trust. The information, even if it is not disclosed, has a value: it presents the respondent in a better light and it also displays an assurance of trust.

Hence, taking the strategy of *anchoring* as a resource, a potential partner for relating as conocidos tests and informs the other on the knowledge base. The purpose is to reduce uncertainty by forcing the unknown person into the realm of the known ones. It assumes the need to share the same level of the taken for granted (i.e. a familiarity with the codes of practice). It requires a mastership of the local discernment (or an assumed one) of people and spaces (i.e. a knowledge of the markers). Through the *challenges*, we see an apparent opposite process, by which the person anchored – brought closer – is questioned and forced to be located somehow in a different and less privileged position than that of the challenger. Finally, through the strategy of *access to the unknown*, there is acceptance, but within a frame that positions the person by trusting her/him, while also tying her/him in through the revealing of secrets. All the strategies come from a need to position the 'object' of concern – the other – in reference to the respondent's world.

The relevance of the strategies of localisation is their importance in finding out about somebody's world of relations and assessing whether they are suitable for interactional exchanges. Their use shows a process that requires high contextual expertise in the employment of markers and codes on the side of the partners. It also highlights the need to engage at a performative level: in asserting/performing trust (with the anchoring and the claims to knowledge) and in the engagement in ruses by both partners relating as conocidos. The casts and performers in this relationship know their script, which is highly dependent on two main assumptions: trust and prestige.

2. THE STRATEGIES OF REQUESTS

This part of the analysis is closely related to what was labelled in the theoretical chapters as the transactional domain of relating as conocidos. This section extracts regularities pertaining to a different moment in the process, which was started with the engagement in the strategies of localisation. Linearity is not a question here. However, the person agreed upon – localised – as a conocido during the first stage is now to become a partner in a relationship. The value of the transaction, as a moment which enhances the visibility of relating as conocidos, has already been explored[76]. It is revisited here because the 'deals', as such, seem to confer a particularity on relating as conocidos. The aim of relating as conocidos, is after all, to negotiate favours – as 'goods' or commodities. As it is the most visible part of the process, it seems to be here that the performance of the play starts. However, it is also at this point that the relational exchange can be misunderstood. When uncovering how to engage in relating as conocidos, the indications on granting/requesting favours is only part of the story. This stage is made possible because the partners, at an earlier stage in the process, have engaged in some agreement on localisation through the strategies mentioned above. The respondents narrate it because there was an outcome, a granting or denial of a favour. The transaction is just a part of a bigger picture when relating to others – the conocidos.

These strategies are indicative of some organising principles, which, as before, make use of local markers and codes. They are relevant inasmuch as they allow for first hand explorations and explanations made by people when describing relating as conocidos. The strategies presented in this section are divided into three: (a) the requesting of favours, (b) the accountability of requests and (c) the concealment of relating as conocidos.

[76] Explored at a theoretical level in Chapter II and at an empirical level with the codes of practice, such as principle of balance, in Chapter VI.

a. Requesting a Favour

Favour-requesting is the moment when relating as conocidos can be visually acknowledged, and hence assessed. At this stage, subjects talk about how to move and gain access through relating with relevant others in a prescribed way. Respondents reveal what they see as a predictable pattern. There are ways of strategically enforcing or increasing the chance of obtaining favours. In the following text we are told, as a matter of fact, how to proceed:

> Look, [to get a job] what you have to do is to let yourself be seen and get to know the Mayor. You go through the [bar] *Casa Creativa*, as he passes by and hangs out there very often. You then invite him to a couple of beers, which he enjoys a lot... and then a couple of smiles at the right moment and you're done.
>
> Paco the Sailor (Y2; 436:438)

The text reveals the elements involved in gaining access to a job through an explicit process of seduction. Also, implications are made regarding the character of the mayor, his position is strongly questioned. However, if a person wants to gain employment, the steps to take are fairly simple: (1) s/he needs to be seen around, as this would presumably make him/her familiar with the rest of the community; and (2) s/he needs to be known by the mayor, who seems to be the person with acknowledged power within the community. Moreover, in order to achieve the second step, (3) s/he should become temporarily a provider, by ensuring a flow of alcohol, which the mayor enjoys, as a means of establishing trust. The smiles will ensure this trust by establishing a façade of friendship, and inviting the mayor to beers – i.e. providing – will ensure that he eventually feels indebted. A chance to be invited by him will arise, more smiles will follow. Yet the smiles, far from being spontaneous signs of joy, are to be delivered in a concise and studious manner. A smile can indicate a challenge, an insult, a sign of agreement, or enjoyment. After a well delivered set of smiles (of joy and agreement) everything is settled. Finally, a potential friendship – and a job – will develop.

The extent and weight of the performative element of the act is highlighted. Requesting the favour and its implications are discussed by the respondents in such a manner that it seems to be the result of a rehearsed action. The patterns and formula on how to make a request is the topic of discussion. In the following text, we see again the importance of the smile – as a performance – though this time it is the mayor smiling and it is read in a negative manner.

> [In a public meeting] I sat right in the first row, at [the Mayor's] feet, and because he saw us there he went afterwards to the house of Amparo and said 'Hi Anastasio, how are you?' and I said 'Ay, Mr. Prieto, Mr. Prieto' and he then started smiling! If he really was a Mayor who cared for his people, and he always has said that he cares for us so dearly... then he should have come up here and said 'Look, I cannot do much, but I'll give you a hand'... at least he could have put in a word with that other one, [the president of the insular government].
>
> Don Anastasio (E6; 213:217)

This text reveals the expected behaviour of a public figure, the mayor – who happens to care dearly for the respondents – and his relation with the inhabitants. Here we are told what is expected of him: nothing more than giving a hand, or putting in a word. Don Anastasio and his wife are going through difficult financial times. The mayor is expected to show his concern, to pay his respects, which is mainly a question of manners. However, he also is expected to show good will and to offer a helping hand. This hand is the hand of access to resources; what started as good manners is suddenly transformed into something else. If he cannot do much, the least he can do is raise their case in front of the president of the insular government. In the text, the ambiguity of the request is conveyed nicely. It is difficult to get a clear picture of the reasons for the expected help. The partner – and audience – is given the impression that it is either (i) because part of his duties as a mayor are to care for the fellow villagers within his district, or (ii) because he has claimed in the past to be a friend of the respondents, hence it is a matter of honour and he should stand by it now. The respondent poses the request without words, merely with a declamation that aims to show their insolvency: 'Ay, Mr. Prieto'. However, the ambiguity stops here, there is no doubt about the course of action to be taken. The request for a favour is half posed but fully expected.

We see how, through the two texts presented, respondents talk about the strategy of requesting a favour. There seems to be a prescribed approach, which will eventually give a person the right to put a request forward. The success of the endeavour resides in converting a request into a deserving demand. If a person needs something from someone else, rather than asking, there seems to be an alternative format: claim or create something in common with the one taking the position of provider. In the first case, we were told how to befriend the mayor, in order to obtain a job. In the second case, Don Anastasio told of how the mayor should have helped, by making claims on his friendship and, even more, on his job description. In finding the way to put a request in such a manner, those taking the position of the appealer are side-stepping the

issue of reciprocation. Their request becomes a demand, because this is the way things are if you are either the mayor or a friend – or both.

b. The Accountability of Requests

Keeping an accountability for relations works as a strategy, as it provides the grounds to make future demands on others. Through this strategy, respondents present a review of past relations with conocidos by discursively assessing their value and justifying the actions taken. The respondents provide an interpretational account, which introduces a chance for the researcher to delve further into the subjects' understanding. At this stage in their process of relating they assess the exchange. The strategy, as a performance, introduces the transaction or favour done, but from an evaluative position. The relevance of this assessment is that, from here, the partners relating as conocidos can look back and state whether things went wrong and why.

Hence, at this point, from the position of the appealer, the relationship has already been negotiated, even if the outcome is not clear yet. The subjects either feel (i) endowed with honour, hence they will talk positively about the partner in the relation, and attempt concealment in terms of friendship or kindred; or (ii) rejected and they will also attempt concealment by distancing themselves from the initial provider. The respondents have already requested a favour and received a response. In sum, they feel able to assess the relationship as a whole.

Therefore, the strategy is again positioning subjects or actions but, this time, the purpose of locating the person is to either reject or proclaim her/his position of closeness in reference to the respondent's life. The positioning implies an evaluative component. In order to provide a precise account of the elements involved I have chosen to use, as an explanatory resource, a very rich narrative through which we can tease out the mechanisms at play.

> ...of Samuel, the one who was in the [insular government]. The father was called Don Moisés. And it was with the father with whom we were working as

> *medianeros*[77] [...] And with all of them we lived and lived together [*conviviamos*]. But we, nine sons, were brought up working the lands for these people. Living on half of the production, you understand? And you know what makes me rebel today? Well, not rebel, just what makes me feel that there is a moment where I don't even believe or trust anyone... that today they don't remember. These people that today live, those who were raised with me, who ate one bread of the two I produced...because, at least, we should meet each other today and we should be affectionate towards each other, we should look at each other with some sort of attraction... and it's just not there.
>
> Baltasar Suarez (E12; 446:455)

We are told here about the kind of relationship the respondent has with those he was raised with and for whom he worked. The extract refers to a story of mistreatment. The respondent is not speaking about a relation between owner and worker, but between equal partners. The characters may have different positions, but they are linked through the land that fed the two families. He is not only a person who has worked on the land of Don Moisés. In fact, it was his effort – and that of his family – which provided the food to raise Don Moisés's family. They should be thankful, or at least they should acknowledge the effort Don Baltasar and his brothers made. The refusal (or disregard) upsets the respondent to the extent that his system of values is altered, he does not know whom to trust. There is no affection and no recognition of his labour on their part. This is unfair, as all he demands is that they look at each other differently, that they acknowledge each other's presence in some way. But they have forgotten, they do not feel indebted or related to him in any way.

Along the temporal axis, with the markers of continuity and perpetuity, the conventions of balance and reliance have been breached. In the context from which Baltasar Suarez comes, memory is something essential. Dependency and the principle of balance have already conveyed how there are numerous ways in which relationships, rather than being based on negotiations and transactions, are almost guarantees of successive exchanges. Relationships strive for and rely on, at the same time, a tendency to achieve a balance of reciprocation. The codes of practice demonstrated how favours, doing things for others, are the currency. This currency is crucially dependent on social memory, which appears as the guarantor of order within the island:

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[77] The *medianeros* are people who live on someone else's land. They cultivate the land and give half of the production to the landowner whilst keeping the rest for themselves. This system of cultivation is very popular in La Gomera.

> [Samuel's] dad, Don Moisés Plasencia, was different. I don't know if you know that I have been a taxi driver here... I have already retired, but I have been a taxi driver more than 20 years. [...] So when the road opened I went to the Town Hall of Vallehermoso to apply for the position [...] and there were some others who also had applied, I know some of them offered money if they got it. So I went to San Sebastián to see Don Moisés and said 'Look, *cristiano*[78], there is this thing happening' – and at that time, Agustín was married to a niece of [Don Moisés], and he was working as a secretary at the Town Hall. So he said 'Look, I have to go to Vallehermoso, so why don't you give me a lift' [...] and you know what he said when he got to the Town Hall? He said 'Agustín, what's happening with this?' 'Yes, this very week it's going to be decided who takes the three positions created for taxi drivers'. So then Don Moisés said 'Look, I've only come to tell you one thing, remember and be aware that Baltasar is from the family'. I'm telling you all of this to show you that the man knew how to understand these things... but the son, Samuel! He has abused my trust in many ways.
>
> Baltasar Suarez (E12; 456: 470)

Here, in the text provided, the subject clearly states the record. The son is not like his father was. We are told how things should be, as Don Moisés 'understood these things'. Again, it is brought to our attention that the relationship between the two partners (Don Moisés and Don Baltasar) is established on equal grounds. However, their social positions were not equal. We are told how Don Moisés was the well connected one. Don Baltasar was the one taking the position of the appealer and Don Moisés that of the provider. However, the appealer does not present the situation as if he should be grateful or indebted. He is entitled to the favour. He raised Don Moisés's family. The latter, being aware of this, was able to behave properly, and treated him *like* kindred. The respondent portrays the request of the favour and its fulfilment as if it was 'owed' to him. The request then becomes a claim, a right, from which we are left with the impression that, although Don Baltasar is taking the position of the appealer, it seems *as if* Don Moisés is attempting some form of repayment.

It is relevant to notice that at no point does the respondent provide grounds to claim a relationship of power or nepotism, where friends or family are favoured. In fact, he explicitly mentions how some people were trying to bribe those in positions of power through payments. This is not accepted, it is an abuse and certainly a case of corruption. Relating as conocidos, on the other hand, is the way life is conducted, and to behave in such a manner is only a matter of correctness. It is part of the way things

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[78] *Cristiano* literally means Christian. It is a general term used to address someone, though it involves a religious connotation which positions the other person (presumably a Christian like oneself) as a good-willed subject, prone to generosity. The religious reference works in laic terms by transforming a provider-appealer situation into a request among equals.

are: people will give each other a hand, specially when they are (almost) family. After all, he never made an explicit request but explains to us how he told Don Moisés that 'there is *this thing* happening'. Don Moisés checked with the person in charge within the relevant domain. He, again, just asked 'what's happening with *this*?', only to make clear – by reminding someone called Agustín – that Don Baltasar was one of them, one of the family.

This latter point again raises a very important issue – mentioned in Chapter II. We know that Don Baltasar was a land worker for Don Moisés. However, he is given the title of being 'like family'. Through the text, we see how the request for the favour was justified by calling on a non-existent kinship relation. At this stage the subject recaptures the deed and provides a judgement on the way things are. It is the moment of the concealment of the relationship. We are not meant to interpret that they were related in any manner. However, they are family because, as family, they were raised together. The favour is done on the grounds that, as family, Don Baltasar deserves it. The powerful link of kindred is extended to provide justification for relating as conocidos.

c. The Concealment of Favours

Through the exploration of the strategies of request, the importance of maintaining a level of concealment when relating as conocidos gains evidence. It is marked by a general pretence that the instance of relating as conocidos did not happen as such. The favour was done, but - providing they are involved - respondents will powerfully deny any preference or illegitimacy in the exchange, even though they might recognise and acknowledge unwarranted preference in the case of others. The favour was done only because there is some major powerful code – such as the conventions – according to which the relation should be thus enacted. People are just doing their best to help others, they are being generous, and there is no feeling of rule bending as such. The favour is talked about *as if* it was a matter of 'giving a hand' to someone in need.

The texts pertaining to the concealment of favours when relating as conocidos convey ways of discursively performing conventions. They examine ways in which requests should be posed and understood by the people involved. The next two sections tell a story, building on each other, which have two distinctive and related elements: (1) the *denial of requests*, by which respondents present reciprocal exchanges as if they never

happened or they play down the extent of the favour done, and (2) the *transformation of requests into demands*, by which locals struggle to find arguments to convey that the favour was not a favour as such, but rather something that was owed to them on the grounds of general reciprocation[79] or as a right.

People's concealment when relating as conocidos has already come across in the texts provided. This section follows up on those instances in order to find some sort of pattern of signification. This pattern is presented in the following text and discusses the grounds on which the locals justify and put across requests to others. This set of texts talks about the provider and the appealer, but from *within* the relationship. The subject starts the justifications from a self-referential point. The movement through the world of relations starts from the subject and moves out to provide a way of understanding the personal cosmology of his/her social relations.

i) The denial of requests

This section examines the way in which favours are concealed by those opting to relate as conocidos. The sense of concealment has to do with the codes of practice explored in the previous chapter, as respondents resort to the gaze or to the conventions in order to camouflage requests to others. The following text explores the position of the appealer who, after being challenged, gives in and reveals her provider. An important disclaimer follows on the nature of the favour done, which is converted into a procedural matter:

> E: Because someone told me that in the South Airport of Tenerife there could be some possibilities to get a contract and that's why I have to get the driving licence.
> I: To get a job like Carmen?
> E: Yes. Well... Carmen was the one telling me that they were looking for people.
> I: To be an airhostess?
> E: Yes. She said that you don't need much, not even a good level of English. So, then... Because she knows [*conoce*] the people there and that... she said to give her my CV and she will pass it on to the person in charge, just that.
>
> Eva Padilla (Y1; 136:145)

The respondent presents a claim of knowledge and, after the challenge, is compelled to acknowledge the source. In this concrete instance, relating as conocidos has put the

[79] This has already been conveyed, but not elaborated upon, in the quote of Baltasar Suarez (E12; 456: 470) presented above.

respondent (Eva Padilla) in the position of the appealer, who accesses Carmen, the potential provider, to gain inside access to a job. The text renders visible how an appealer portrays relating as conocidos. Initially the respondent does not want to disclose that she has access to a provider: Carmen, who is going to give her internal access. The appealer makes a further point by explaining that the provider will only pass on her CV, as if that action by itself was meaningless. However, the implications of an action such as 'passing on' a CV are clear: her name will be linked to someone already working within the company. The principle of reliance (and the rule of transitivity, explored in the previous chapter) will inform a third person – the one who receives the CV – of her trustworthiness. Therefore, the appealer will benefit from whatever the reputation of the provider is.

The provider, on the other hand, is not promising results but just playing on good will, on giving a hand, following the principle of generosity. This might be part of a strategy of claiming fame or it might be that she will have to decide the extent of responsibility taken when introducing someone into her work domain. Chances seem to be high, as to be able to speak English would appear to be a strong requirement in order to be an air hostess. If the appealer cannot speak this language, and she has still been encouraged to apply, we have to assume that the provider's position within the company, and her liability towards Eva, are quite high.

Again, through the text it becomes evident that relating as conocidos, unlike a gift, is best kept within the domains of 'normality', even though some acknowledgement and repayment is needed[80]. The denial of requests or favours needs to be understood as a form of protection on behalf of the provider. Requests have to be disguised as casual encounters which will not demand much from providers. Appeals are made on the basis of good will and favours are granted within a façade of regularity. Although not a secret, it is just something that people will not feel comfortable about disclosing. The respondents then tend to re-construct transactions and give them concrete elaborate meanings of routine and habit[81].

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[80] See Chapter II.
[81] This point will be further elaborated upon in Chapter VIII.

ii) Transformation of requests into demands

The transformation of requests into demands seems an important resource when relating as conocidos. This transformation relies on the conventions mentioned in the previous chapter: dependency and the principles of balance and reliance. People need to engage in favour-doing in order to sort out problems raised in the geographically limited space of the island, and these multiple favours have created numerous links of generalised reciprocity. Therefore, the islanders convey an easiness in asking favours and making demands on others. Also, as we saw through the spatial marker, there is a place to demand and a place to request. The following text introduces an institution (the town hall) as the space that positions a main local player. The town hall contextualises a provider, located in the figure of the mayor:

> I don't have any complaints about him. Look, when they were going to paint the house, Domingo from the town hall, who is just a worker, said that the lower terrace should not be painted. So I went [to the town hall] and I told him 'Domingo, come here. What mess up are you making with the kids that are painting my house?' and he said 'No, because you have to consult me about these things' and I said 'consult you? And what for? You are just a worker! I have nothing to ask you'. So then, I turned to the girl who works there and I said 'where is the Mayor?' and I said 'even if he is busy I'm going up to his office to wait for him'... Lies! I went up, I knocked on his door and said 'Look, I'm here because this has happened...'. So then, he did not even call Domingo. He wrote to the painters by hand and told them to keep on painting. So really... I mean the poor man has not given me anything, but I don't have anything to say about him.
>
> Maria Fragoso (E7; 99-109)

The text above provides support for various strategies proposed above. The first part of the quote narrates a process in which the respondent struggles through different strategies of localisation. Maria Fragoso and Domingo put forward challenges and counter-challenges. Through an instance of positioning, the respondent rejects dealing with Domingo and places herself on the level of the mayor, as the relevant other who should deal with her request. The second part of the text introduces the strategies of request. Here, Maria Fragoso makes one concession, she declares the mayor 'a poor man' whilst denying the favour done.

The respondent presents, within the text, the ambiguity of relating as conocidos. She had a problem and went straight to the mayor's level – his office – to make a complaint. She informs us of the nature of the request: rather than asking for his intervention, and hence a favour, she puts forward a demand. The mayor – exemplary provider – dealt with it immediately and in the best possible way. However, he has not done anything

for her because her request was a rightful demand, which she posed to him as a complaint. This is why she is not praising the 'poor man'; she is just not saying anything about him. However, the gaze has already informed us that to 'not say anything' is positive, as words are weapons. She does not make any judgements about the mayor, but positions him in the same spatial domain of relations as herself, which is not that of the 'worker' Domingo or the mayor's secretary. He was available for her and gave her access even though he was busy. She chose to engage with the only one who mattered and demanded (not asked) because an emergency had come up: '*this* has happened' (see quote on the accountability of requests). To Domingo, the fact that Maria Fragoso went straight to the mayor could be seen as unfair: it challenged his authority. However, for Maria Fragoso, it was the way things should be; she had the right to have her whole house painted, and the mayor, as the figure of authority within the community, had to uphold that right.

d. Strategies of Request: Summing up

The strategies of request inform us on the performative character of the transactional domain. The strategies render visible how people negotiate with others and engage in relations, as they show the respondents making (or narrating) transactions and posing requests. These requests are made with an intricate level of performance. The respondents struggle in staging confusion when relating as conocidos. The aim of these strategies – of asking favours, accounting for requests and concealing favours – is (i) to conceal the relationship under a façade of closeness and (ii) to claim distinctions between favours and demands. For the appealer these distinctions are relevant when keeping account of general reciprocity with others. They are also crucial in making public acknowledgements of gratitude, or in stating duties and rights with regard to fulfilling demands.

The performance involved in these strategies becomes evident when respondents unveil the way to proceed when there are no grounds to make a claim: they work towards (1) transforming providers into friends, (2) enforcing accountability or (3) concealing the favour as a demand. The accountability and general reciprocation, as was explained through the conventions, permit the strategic play when conducting relations. Even when there is no initial claim that could justify the posing of requests, there is a way around it: converting the relationship into friendship (such as when we were told the '1-

2-3' of how to befriend the mayor). In finding a way to put requests in such a manner, those taking the position of the appealer are side-stepping the issue of reciprocation. Moreover, when requests become demands, to which people are rightfully entitled, the respondents suddenly switch to an assurance of 'the way things are'. However, this 'way' is qualitatively different from the one uncovered by the codes of practice. The level of concealment and the necessity of denying favours by presenting them as demands will prove relevant for the analysis presented in Chapter VIII.

It is tempting to assume that the actions of requesting, reciprocating and accounting for favours are what make relating as conocidos relevant. However, the sequence and process of this way of relating start with the strategies of localisation. Through them, the respondents establish the pre-requisite for the second strategic performance. The latter, the strategies of requests, inform us on how respondents make sense of their interactions. They talk about requests and reciprocation but they also talk about trust and concealment. Single transactions are framed within family and social history, and this alone exemplifies the need to present this way of relating as a process which relies on the accountability of past relationships. By understanding these strategies as stages within a process, I mean to highlight their sequential character. Through the strategies of request, the respondents convey how relating as conocidos is a process which requires a start but envisages no end. In fact, by the continuous shifting of positions, there is a guarantee that the more one helps, the higher the expectation of it being reciprocated (as the principles showed). Hence, the cycle will continue and a record will be kept for future transactions. However, the term 'transaction' connotes an explicit exchange of reciprocation, which needs to be enacted within some sort of temporal limitation. Relating as conocidos is rather initiated under the assumption that eventually transactions create trust. Trust here is a timeless currency, which will account for future relationships and will not be forgotten.

The codes of practice (with the gaze and the conventions) and the markers ensure a space where these strategies can be performed. People need to rely on the continuity of the players and on some social ordering to keep, at an implicit level, an account of favours and to assume generalised reciprocation. Trust is dependent on this, as it is the result of a process in which many exchanges have taken place. It is only in the context of the island, as an enclosed space, where the principles of balance, generosity and reliance can eventually lead to trust.

3. Discussion on the Strategies and an Assessment of Practice

Throughout the analysis of the strategies, we have seen the varied and rich scenarios in which people engage when relating as conocidos. The sequential character of the relationship is highlighted by this strategic quality, which can be understood as denoting stages inasmuch as they convey an interactional process.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Strategies</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Localisation</td><td colspan="2">Anchoring</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Challenges</td><td>Positioning</td></tr>
<tr><td>Claim to fame</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Claim of knowledge</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Request</td><td colspan="2">Asking a favour</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Accountability of requests</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Concealment of favours</td><td>Denial of requests</td></tr>
<tr><td>Transformation of requests into demands</td></tr>
</table>

The first part presented the strategies of localisation. The value of the strategies of localisation lies in conveying how respondents use spatial and temporal markers to position subjects and hence enact relationships. *Anchoring* aims to locate the partner within an equivalent social space, it ensures a common ground among the speakers by 'rooting' or anchoring a marker in order to relate. By finding common markers, the partners find common referents through which they test knowledge of factual belonging. The strategy of anchoring achieves two things: (i) it locates the subject in the same world of reference as the speaker and (ii) it ensures trust.

Challenges, however, serve to place the partner in a self-referential hierarchy. Two different strategies of localisation are explored: positioning and claim to fame. Both strategies convey a mobile play by which the subject positions her/himself in reference to the listener, according to some made-up relevant scale. Challenges convey the

enactment of prestige. They are presented as light forms of teasing, but they reveal some unwritten order: they speak about the power of conventions. Claims to fame and positioning are both related to the significance of 'location'. They connote a need to put people in their places. These strategies attach positions to subjects, providing the speaker with a discursive space where s/he locates her/himself in a position of privilege.

Finally, the strategy of *access to the unknown* also aims to locate the other, but the localisation is geared towards acceptance. By giving access, respondents declare the partner trustworthy. Hence, this strategy also presumes trust (like the strategy of anchoring) and enforces a location (like the challenges). Respondents presume that the disclosure – the 'revelation' – implies trust. Through this strategy respondents position themselves as valuable due to their access to knowledge. Once the secret is uncovered, the 'entrusted' subject is brought closer. Trust is announced and performed through the 'gift' of disclosure and hence the person gains a location in the 'inner' circle.

These strategies convey the need to establish the common ground, to position the other in the interaction by agreeing on some credentials. The credentials give assurance to the speaker that the person s/he is relating with is familiar with the markers, supports the conventions and complies with her/his position of privilege. The strategies of localisation set out the 'requirements' for entering the relationship; they start the sequence of relating as conocidos. At this stage the strategies provide guarantees of trust: if the partners share knowledge about the common markers, if they can be recipients of trust and secrets, they are 'safe' to engage with. The relationship can be started from a much-advanced common ground. All together, the strategies need to be seen as enabling a discursive space of trust and privilege[82].

Therefore, the strategic performance enhances the active involvement of the subjects in allocating positions that create this trust and prestige. They position themselves within the life of the community, where the actors and the spaces need to be part of a shared knowledge. The outcome of this negotiation will be relevant, as it will precede a consensual space for the asking of favours – the barter and haggling. In terms of engaging further by putting forward a request, potential consequences are, for example,

[82] These issues will be further elaborated upon in Chapter VIII.

an increase in the value of the speaker (privilege) and a sense of closeness provided by trust.

The second set of strategies, the strategies of requests, convey how people engage in asking for favours or making requests. Through the respondent's evaluations, these strategies paint a picture of dependency consistent with that of the conventions, where people are dependent on others and engage in general reciprocation. However, a different story is carefully woven in, that of concealing the activity of relating as conocidos. The respondents create a narrative of generosity, whilst revealing the strategic character of their exchanges.

The first strategy of requests shows the way the respondents present the 'asking of favours', which shows the way to introduce a request or make a claim. It plays with the 'tacit' knowledge of relating as conocidos inasmuch as respondents choose either to enforce the relationship – by starting a façade of friendship – or to make a claim based on duty or rights. The asking of favours performs closeness through the usage of the principles of generosity and reliance. It also conveys the fact that, although people act out as contextual providers, they keep a record. There is an account, a social memory which remains unspoken but which states for whom the favours are done.

The second strategy, the accountability of requests, portrays the making of transactions with the benefit of the respondent's discursive interpretation. Problems are resolved through relying on others. However, a breach of trust can occur if the reliance on the other was unwarranted. There are elements of evaluation from which the respondents elaborate and re-define relations and characters in terms of friendship. Trust here is assumed by following the codes of practice and being familiar with the markers. The players are required to be, to a certain extent, contextually stable for accountability to be spread over time. Hence, continuity and conventions need to be followed.

The last strategy, the concealment of favours through the denial of requests or the transformation of requests into demands, provides a very rich picture, but one which is still unsolved. This strategy elaborates on how, either by claiming closeness (either through friendship or kinship) or by claiming rights, there is no explicit sense of debt and owing. The strategic performance is there to ensure acknowledgement, accountability and reciprocation. However, the nature of these rights, which give grounds for making demands, as well as the reliance on discourses of prestige, remains controversial. People seem to struggle in ascribing subject positions to potential

providers according to different sets of 'rights'. The rights are either related to local codes (hence informed by the making of practice) or claimed as some form of 'democratic right'.

Through the respondents' texts, we saw that relating as conocidos has some forms of regulation. They might be fuzzy and unclear, but we saw how the lack of clarity might be part and parcel of the bigger picture. It allows the possibility of choosing a certain route when engaging in or assessing a relationship. However, what is relevant is that people are clear about them. A strategic performance requires active participation from the agent, who chooses to transform, disguise or deny relationships. Accountability and dependency provide a frame in which respondents are aware that actual relationships are to play a part in future exchanges, and are strongly linked to their future success in different endeavours.

Thus, respondents present a communal awareness that relating as conocidos does not need to be made explicit. Up to now, this concealment was understood as part and parcel of the practice of this relationship. A familiarity with the markers provided information on the continuity of relations across time and in space. These contextual markers were prompted by the existence of a script, the codes of practice. These codes had the ability to endorse conduct by the surveillance, which acted as a source of community control. The communal gaze made sure that the conventions of dependency, the principles of balance, generosity and reliance were followed, by assessing the performance of the strategies. Thus, the codes of practice and the markers gave information on how and where interactions should be carried out, as well as with whom a potential appealer should engage. It is at this moment that the partners engage in continuous ruses and negotiations to ensure trust and perform prestige through the strategies of localisation. Also, the strategies of request conveyed the active role of the agent who was able to create this trust and perform closeness when asking favours and accounting requests from others.

However, when looking at the denials of requests and transformation of requests into demands, the concealment of relating as conocidos touches upon different issues. When placing demands, the respondents are not performing closeness, but enforcing a certain type of accountability upon a provider (who must, rather than should, grant the favour as part of her/his job description). Also, when denying instances of relating as conocidos, the respondents are not only describing the episode in terms of friendship or

kinship, but also blatantly claiming that a request was never placed or a favour was not done. The respondents switch from requesting favours to demanding them, from performing trust to complaints of breaching the conventions, from upholding honour to defending 'rights'.

The nature of these continuous shifts between accounting discursively for local practices and claiming rights opens up a further space of exploration. It shows that relating as conocidos, requires tacit knowledge by performing closeness and trust, in order to engage in its practice. However, it also shows this form of relating requires concealment because it is conflictual; somehow, in certain contexts, relating as conocidos is not accepted. The last analytical chapter will explore these issues by trying to spell out the conflicts people encounter when talking about way of relating. The strategies, with the markers and the codes of practice, provided information on how to engage in relating as conocidos. The last analysis will give information on *why* this relationship requires a level of concealment and gives preference to demands over requests. It is around the concealment and the transformation of requests into demands where discursive conflicts gain light.

* * *

This chapter introduced the relevant strategies performed when relating as conocidos. The analysis highlighted the prevalence of this form of relating in the everyday domain. It sought to acknowledge the performative character of this relationship. This performance was aided by the codes of practice (which provided the script) and the markers (which framed the relationship). The chapter rendered visible the *process* of relating as conocidos, through the sequence of the strategies employed. The need to engage in strategies assumes a form of 'tacit' knowledge. It acknowledges *how* things are and *what* makes them happen, and explores the way people live and enact relations in the domain of the island. The chapter concludes the empirical exploration of practice. It also provides the leads to explore further 'discourses of relating' in current societies. These issues will be dealt with in Chapter VIII.

VIII

RELATING WITHIN DISCOURSE

THE ISLANDER AND THE CITIZEN

The first three chapters of this empirical research showed the making of a practice. As such, relating as conocidos was made visible by unravelling the process by which people engaged in this practice. The description of this practice revealed (i) a setting marked by spatial and temporal markers, (ii) a script needed to guide the process, the code of practice, and (iii) a performative component, the strategies, aimed at keeping relating as conocidos in motion. The practice revealed how this form of relation needs to be carried out. It showed that relating as conocidos needs to be performed with a level of 'false front'. The reasons for this concealment were provided by a set of codes, which conveyed issues pertaining to general reciprocation (such as dependency and the principles of balance, generosity and reliance) and were enforced by the community surveillance. These codes guided the performance of strategies by informing the subject about to relate on how to engage in the practice, whilst the markers provided information on whom to choose as a partner in relating. Thus, the strategies showed how the concealment of relating as conocidos is enacted by performing trust and claiming prestige. However, even though the strategies aimed at performing 'closeness' and attempted to enforce accountability (hence the appealer could exhibit the relation as one of friendship or kindred), there were certain instances where relating as conocidos could not be displayed. The necessity, for the respondents, of disclaiming the activity of relating as conocidos opened up questions, which were guided by the concealment of the practice when transforming requests into demands.

Hence, the practice identified some tools of interpretation that had the value of creating an empirical language from which relating as conocidos could be explored. It is empirical because it is grounded in the respondents' experience, and it is a language as it is text bounded. This second analytical layer provides the grounds for understanding the conflicts the respondents have when engaging in this relation in a contemporary context, such as the island of La Gomera. It provides empirical arguments to reveal sets

of signification, which work towards generating conflicts when people disclose engaging in relations of this kind.

Thus, the chapter provides a further exploration to resolve issues which were either posed at a descriptive level in the previous empirical chapters or touched upon when introducing theoretical arguments. Hence, if the previous empirical unit (i.e., Chapters V, VI and VII) aimed to close and exhaust the relational domain of conocidos, this chapter aims to go beyond by opening up its discourses. Relating as conocidos, unlike gift-giving, requires a denial, a tendency to keep these activities within the domains of accepted behaviour. These issues have been referred to throughout the thesis as the façade of the relationship[83], the domain of the 'as ifs'. Hence, whilst the strategies talked about the tacit knowledge of practice, they did not elaborate on why the subjects engaging in this relation transform requests to certain providers into demands. This analysis, which pertains to relating in discourse, will explore these issues. The chapter informs the research by focusing on the problems people express when they account for and display the practice of relating as conocidos.

The exploration of this relationship, what allows it to be subjected to academic study, stems from the way people struggle in providing justifications for and against it in everyday life. This struggle, i.e. determining whether the relationship should be condemned or approved of, has been present throughout. The chapter attempts to look at the foundations upon which the conflicting stands on the practice are built. This exploration complements the previous analysis in so far as it aims to make sense of the practice. Whilst before the aim was to uncover ways of *doing*, the present analysis aims to explore discursive tensions, i.e. why relating as conocidos generates conflict. It grounds practice in discourse.

The chapter presents two discourses in which people engage when making sense of relationships, such as the one under study. These two discourses are named the *islander's discourse* and the *citizen's discourse*. The discourses elaborate on arguments aimed at warranting or contesting interactional exchanges on the island. As expected,

[83] See Chapter II.

these two discourses are not neatly matched across the groups[84], as the islanders participate – to a certain extent – in both of them. The islanders emphasise the islander's discourse above the other, but they still share elements in their narratives which pertain to these two discourses, whilst the outsiders only resort to the citizen's discourse.

The chapter begins by outlining these two discourses. As mentioned, the object of the discourses reflects ways of understanding relationships; by introducing the discourses (first the islander's and secondly the citizen's), the chapter lays down a common base from which to start exploring the 'in-betweens'. The second part of the chapter will focus on the conflicts, tensions and contradictions within the discourses. This second exploration illustrates the tendency of people to jump from one set of significations to another, and gives information on the meaning of this juggling in the respondents' narratives. When relevant, the chapter favours the respondents' text, as it expresses their craftily created paradoxes when completing cohesive interpretations.

1. Discourses of Life in La Gomera

The analysis aims to uncover conflicting discourses presented by the respondents when talking about relations with others. Respondents' talk on relations refers to stories of exchanges, instances of requests and narratives of favours; in sum, texts in which they re/tell us about interactions with a generalised other. A look at these texts informs us on the expectations they have of others. These expectations are informed by the way they see reality and introduce us to the way they position themselves in reference to those relevant others.

The nature of the island as a historical site of isolation subjected to colonial power highlights the differences between the two discourses. Hence, different narratives pertaining to relating need to be framed through a past that makes sense of them. These narratives give people different positions and are historically located. They provide understandings about power relations and how these relations mark a neat hierarchical

[84] This analysis pertains to a body of data which comprised 30 interviews on three different groups: the elders of the island, the young islanders and the outsiders. See Chapter III for the process of interpretation and Appendix V for further information.

order of society in the eyes of the respondents. When describing the way people relate as conocidos, there are important things to bring forward from the last analyses: the relationship was enabled by the way people – the islanders – understood life in general and social interactions in particular. Dependency, trust, and the way the islanders struggle to locate each other through the strategies showed how relevant it was to rely on others. However, there were also conflicts, as this practice needed to rely on the realm of the tacit, the socially expected but unspoken action. This reliance on the unspoken gains meaning in a wider discursive context, where relating with others becomes relating as conocidos and, as such, its practice becomes assessed and challenged.

a. The General Story

There is a running narrative throughout the respondents' texts, a thread that unites and provides some sense of cohesion among the islanders – i.e. those who are originally from the island – and the outsiders. This general story presents the respondents subjected to – and fighting against – mistreatment and misunderstanding in varied instances. Thus, the theme of this general story is most of the time one of frustration and complaint; in sum, a negative one. This does not lead us to conclude that people are unhappy, but informs us that they found it relevant to express these sorts of narrative when talking about their lives on the island.

In this general story there are also antagonists, namely local politicians and their institutions. Local institutions[85] are the focus of conflict; they are the main agents problematised by the respondents, regardless of the group (elders and young islanders as well as outsiders). The politicians comprise a unit with characteristics shared by the locals and the outsiders, as they are Gomerans working for public institutions. Hence, when locals refer to institutions, to a certain extent they include the outsiders, as they are the ones working in central government institutions or in initiatives financed by governmental bodies at an autonomous (i.e. Canarian), central (i.e. Spanish) or European level. For the islanders, institutions tend to be seen as entities which give

[85] Terms such as public institutions, democracy and rights are all empirically grounded. The task of the researcher was to unearth the interpretations and discourses around these issues, but they are explicitly mentioned throughout the respondent's texts.

access to resources. Thus the mayor, the president, the doctor, and the civil servant are, in the islander's discourse, positioned as providers.

Therefore, when the locals refer to 'they', they mean local politicians and their institutions, such as the town hall and the cabildo, whose main players are publicly elected. However, they also extrapolate sometimes to centralised bodies and their workers – the outsiders – or to politicians in general. By the same token, when the outsiders[86] refer to the local institutions they are directly passing judgement on Gomerans. For the outsiders, 'they' refers mainly to the islanders. However, they also focus their critical stances on the same group as the locals, i.e. politicians and their institutions – the town hall and the cabildo.

Hence, the general picture portrayed by the respondents is clear. There are not two opposing sides – that of the locals and that of the outsiders. However, there is one focus of concern, the local politicians and their institutions, which is talked about and problematised by all respondents, regardless of age (young or elders) or their positioning on the island (locals or outsiders). However, the complaints raised are different and the respondents talk differently about them. They employ different sets of meaning-making and, in short, the expectations they have of the local institutions are very distinctive. They are exploring life through different discursive resources. It is not, however, the political and institutional players which are the subject of discussion, but rather the conflicts between two different ways of expressing, thinking and understanding the other.

b. The Islander's Discourse

The islander's discourse is not based on the insular condition of Gomerans. The name given to this discourse is rather indicative of the local tone, characterised only partially by a sense of isolation. This section builds on the first analysis, where the Gomerans' temporal and spatial markers, their codes of practice and their strategies with regard to relating as conocidos were unveiled.

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[86] The outsiders are mostly from mainland Spain, as they tend to be civil servants working for central government institutions.

As mentioned, a discourse is temporally located, it finds expression in a historical time, where people's understanding of the past informs their present-day experience of reality. As shown in the text below, a locally structured system of power finds expression in the manner people look back at their history. The elements they choose to highlight and the references they employ when interpreting their lives are all relevant. The historical roots of the islander's discourse are clearly portrayed here:

> Because the circumstances have forced the Gomeran, starting with... with the historical beginnings of the island. This island used to be of half a dozen important people, so most of the population were servants of that nobility, which were very few. I think that bug is carried inside and is kept alive today... it's something that is transmitted, because I don't know... it's something that is now in the genes.
>
> Baltasar Suarez (E12; 424:438)

Historical references serve to explain how islanders talk about their position on the island as a system. In the text, the argument is strongly backed up by the physiological determination of a gene. A way of living is so much ingrained in people's lives that it forms part of the genetic make-up of the Gomeran. The bug of an autocratic system, with a sole owner, is still transmitted in discourse today. It is used as a resource to back up the lack of progress on the island and the islanders' submission to a few powerful players. Local politicians have replaced nobility nowadays.

The historical location of the islander's discourse also sheds light on its topic: relating. The discourse is conceived as a set of statements about something. The islander's discourse has an aim, and its objective, as conveyed in the following text, is conducting relations. The practice of relations, and specifically relating as conocidos, plays an important part in the life of the islanders (as the codes of practice conveyed). This part also has been subjected to historical change. Relations in the past had a more central role to play, and the numerous protocols on how (and with whom) to practice relations show the extent of their elaboration[87]. The islander's discourse is anchored in everyday life and the need for others. It portrays a complex picture of the generalised other which is grounded on the part this other has played, and still plays, in daily life.

> Well look, exactly when the whistle arrived in La Gomera maybe nobody can say, but when it began to disappear, yes. [It was] when communication arrived, the

[87] As shown in Chapters V, VI and VII.

> roads, the telephones at every corner. So the whistle began to disappear because we, the people, began to live more independently. I don't need to whistle anymore, I don't need people to know what I'm going to tell you, so instead of using the whistle I use the telephone. In earlier times no, because in earlier times people lived and lived together [*convivia*] among each other. [...] After the roads arrived, the first aim was to buy a car. After I got a car, well, I go and live independently, I start providing for myself. The conveniences have been such that today we live alone, we've got everything and yet we are poorer than ever – we haven't got anything.
>
> Baltasar Suarez (E12; 165:178)

The text above provides a powerful image of the way things were negotiated and the implications of the social change that came about with progress. People were important to each other, they were part and parcel of each other's life. A change in priorities occurred, and the place of the other in one's life was reduced and ultimately abandoned. Conducting relations is now a choice, whilst before it was the way of life. People relate to each other differently because they understand their interactions differently. The respondent clearly pictures what was the position of the other in relation to the subject and in the context of the island: as they lived together, the public language of the whistle was adequate because there were no secrets. With communication facilities, the individual as a socially constructed entity appears in sharp contrast to the communally rooted islander. In today's world the individual takes the place of the islander because exchanges are not compulsory anymore. The text reflects the transition from a system where relating with others was essential, to another where the individual found her/himself free of social ties but alone.

The islander's discourse presents the community as a highly structured social context. This context is articulated by personalised players – with names, continuity and a history of relations – who participate in intricate social processes. It is not a homogeneous group, but rather an entity composed of people linked to specific others. They have gone through life working around problems by accessing others and requesting resources or favours. Their codes of practice – the principles, the conventions – guide the manner in which to engage in relations with those relevant others.

> DA: I said 'can you [lawyers] defend this?'... they thought we were friends, and I regretted it.... the brother of this guy comes up and says that he wouldn't charge me, and I regretted having to take my friend [Don Valentin] off the case and put him on instead.
> N: Lawyers don't need anything from anyone.

> DA: And so then they defended the opposite side... and that was that... had I gotten Don Valentin and his nephew, in 15 days I'd have got the problem sorted. But of course they were upset... and they were friends... that was one of the big mistakes I made... I should have said 'Don Valentin, take up the case'... it's clear that nowadays there is no word... if there are no papers, there is nothing.
>
> Don Anastasio (E6; 538:551)

The respondent uses the islander's discourse to make sense of legal matters. He presents a very clear narrative: his lawyer friends were ready to defend and protect him, as friends do. He betrayed them because another lawyer – the brother of someone, also with relational links to the respondent – offered to take up his case for free. He chose the latter over his friendship[88]. His friends took offence and defended the opposite party. To follow the community code of practice would have guaranteed his success. He made a mistake, and this betrayal of trust, rather than the legal nature of his claim, is what caused him to lose in court. He also finishes with a complaint that highlights the difference in discourses: to have honour against having legal papers. The islander's discourse adequately expresses an unbalanced and unfair situation, where one's word has no value against one's (lack of) legal documents.

Taking up the general story that presented the local authorities as the antagonists, the islander's discourse locates the local politicians as part of the community. They have family names and past records, according to which a fellow islander can hold them accountable. As the subject is rooted contextually, politicians are also accountable for general reciprocation. In the islander's discourse, the political structure mirrors the island's distribution of power: it is hierarchical, but also approachable. Power is unequally distributed, but rotates when elections come. Political players are accessible through different routes and at different levels. As politicians and their assistants are local, people sustain claims of long-standing relations with them. Although politicians are linked to power (as they have an institutional position), they also have a community record, which provides them with a contextual positioning. Trust is then allocated to people, with a surname and a position, and is informed through the markers and enacted in spatial dimensions.

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[88] In the quote, the so-called friendship is equivalent to acquaintance-ship, as the respondent used the formal pronoun *ustedes*, which conveyed that they were not that familiar with each other.

> I don't think it's the party that rules but the person. I remember that a while back I had to go to get a document, and Rafael Facundo was there, an old man of the *Falange*[89]. I came and went and thought 'this thing is closed'. And finally I went and he said 'but what is the matter?'. 'Well, the matter is that I've been coming and going all morning!... if you had to leave then you should have put a sign up saying it would be closed until such and such a time'. And he said 'I do as I please'. So that really ticked me off and I said 'look, you might have done as you pleased in times of the *Falange*, but that is over now'. So then Eustaquio came down, as it was his job but he had his brother-in-law there doing it, and he says 'what's up?... well, go tell the minister'. I said 'no, *you* go tell him... if the minister does not pay you to be at your job, then leave it'. And so I said to Rafael Facundo 'don't worry, I will find out in San Sebastián to whom I have to make a complaint about what you've just said to me'. Later I told this to my sister-in-law and she said 'Just go to the judge and tell him'. So one day I went and Saturnino, Fernanda's uncle, was there, and then I said hello to Rafael and he said 'Manuelita, I see you've made your peace with Rafael'. And I said 'no, I wasn't upset with Rafael, I only told the truth [...] a civil servant has to be where he has to be.
>
> Manuela Ayala (E8; 63:91)

The respondent here uses the islander's discourse in order to challenge fellow islanders. It is only right that if someone leaves her/his post, they should write a note informing when they will be back. The lack of a formal and institutional working procedure is clear: (a) the government's office was not open during working hours, (b) Eustaquio made Rafael (his brother in law) cover his post, and (c) when the complaint was made in the institutional context, the respondent was referred to the minister. Manuela Ayala wants to pursue her complaint further and, after consultation, she approached the island judge in order to set the matter straight. The manner in which the different institutional players (the town hall of San Sebastián, the judge) are utilised by the respondent conveys a particular picture of the local power structure. There is a complaint to be made and the judge, as the impartial enforcer of the law, is called upon. In the text the respondent uses the islander's discourse by resorting to a hierarchical system of power that gives information on who is 'more important' and, hence, who is accountable to whom (the judge is above the mayor's assistant). However, she also makes claims of a self-governing nature: a person with a job has to perform that job; a responsible civil servant has to provide a service. Also, when a third person attempts to convert the dispute into a relational matter (have you made your peace with Rafael?), she makes a statement of duty (pertaining to the citizen's discourse, explained below) and tells him the truth. She positions him in the present, where he is finally accountable for what he does, as opposed to his powerful times in the *Falange* during the dictatorship.

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[89] The *Falange* was a right-wing political party during Franco's dictatorship.

c. The Citizen's Discourse

The citizen's discourse, like the islander's, is historically located. However, this discourse has a place in contemporary society. Here, the island is seen as a small part of a bigger world. In this discourse, La Gomera is taken as a point of reference, with its own identity which is informed by its belonging to an archipelago. The islanders are then enabled citizens with rights who are not heard by the central institutions of mainland Spain and beyond. In the text, a respondent from Tenerife tells a story of an identity struggle in finding a place in the world and being respected as such.

> So we are sometimes like Africa instead of Europe, just as if we were down there... despite the aid and still... instead of protecting our products... We used to have cochineal and when artificial colouring was invented they knocked it down. We used to have vineyards, they took them away. We used to have tomatoes and they gave them to Morocco so the moors would be quiet. Now we have bananas and they want to give them to Latin America... so what are we? We are a colony, we are outsiders, [but] we are from the European Union! That has also brought about some nationalistic feelings, feelings of 'we are also here'. I don't mind being Spanish. They say we are Spanish, but if the Spanish from Europe trick us and bother us, and if in Europe they don't defend us, if they don't care about our local commercial interests, well then the Canaries and La Gomera need some form of compensation.
>
> Father Jeronimo (O2; 112:122)

The narrative provided is a tale of isolation where the Gomeran, as the Canarian, is being ignored by the central government, where political interests take precedence over national and European loyalties. It talks about a collective of people, the Canarians, who find themselves misplaced. The respondent puts forth claims where he, as part of a group, struggles to gain acceptance. He locates himself as a European, who should therefore be protected and receive beneficial treatment. Taking as a reference the historical location of the islander's discourse (presented above), this text presents the other side of the argument: opposed to the islander we find an individual with rights, the European.

Also, just as the islander's discourse spoke of the current power relations through a link to a past of nobility, the citizen's discourse also resorts to the past. This past, however, is tainted by a deprecatory tone, where the island is presented as lagging behind on the road to general betterment. A tale of development is carefully woven in, where the island is affected by colonial parallels. The problems today also have a historical root, but one created by the islanders' institutions. The uncivilised islander needs to be converted into the citizen. However, despite the call to action and the appearance of the

citizen, it remains a structural top-down problem in which the subject of concern, the islander, disappears as a social entity.

> It's an island that lacks many things, certainly 20 or 30 years behind the other islands, where, through the institutions, we've taught people to live a culture of subsidies. And so with that they buy votes, they buy silence, they buy freedom, and this causes the citizen not to wake up, not to move ahead. So, when people get accustomed to receiving handouts, then it's very difficult to go back... so [we want] to create some community development [...] where they themselves are owners, producers, who benefit but without depending on anybody.
>
> Father Jeronimo (O2; 47:56)

Institutions, by having resources, became providers. However, from being providers they moved to being corrupted entities which 'bought' people. People (the islanders) were wrongly taught by state officials. The power of this statement stems from the understanding that institutions are constitutionally enablers, which in this case became abusive by robbing people of their freedom. They converted citizens into beggars. The respondent attempts to re-educate people and undo the damage by promoting the citizen's discourse: creating ownership and independence as the basis for the emergence of the individual agent. In this system, personal betterment is possible. Singular individuals *do* things and are accountable for them.

The coexistence of the two discourses creates numerous conflicts and misunderstandings. The citizen's discourse cannot account for a structured community system in which people carry with them a history of relations. The citizen's discourse locates the subject within a major system of rights given through the grace of a national constitution. It is grounded in a world where the subject is named as belonging to a reified social stratum (the unemployed, labourers, housewives). This discourse cannot, in addition, include interactions amongst personalised players. The citizen as a standard subject has rights and duties, her/his constraints are registered under equally applicable laws and regulations.

> Another service which is linked to economic and labour issues is the 'jobs exchange', which is an equivalent of the institutional version, the INEM... contacting, demanding, and offering employment. That turns out to be complicated because people are not accustomed to things working that way, and when they get a job offer, they look to find out with whom it is and whether or not they can work with that person. And then they come and 'no, I don't do that sort of thing... not with this person... no, they told me that he is so and so, and not with this other guy because of this other thing'... and it turns out quite complicated to fulfil so many demands.
>
> Sara (O4; 74:80)

The respondent tries to make sense of demands put forward by the islander in a seemingly unwarranted way. By accessing the citizen's discourse, she fails to see what, in the islander's discourse – and given the practice of relating as conocidos – is taken for granted. However, the taken for granted is quickly contested when placed within different universe of meaning: requests pertaining to relations become a problem when they meet the standardised world of institutions presented by the citizen's discourse. Given the care put into engaging and accounting for relations with others by the islanders, a system which directly matches job profiles with job seekers is not going to be easily accepted. For the outsiders, these issues are seen as creating unreasonable demands whilst for the islanders they are of prime importance.

The citizen's discourse allows for discursive resources pertaining to change and betterment. However, the betterment is linear, its format is already mapped-out and, at the end, stands a uniform picture of progress. These achievements are always the product of a collective – rather than personalised players linked through kindred who access favours. The citizen's discourse assigns people with rights and enables them to claim demands. These demands gain weight only through collective action. The construction of a majority, as a group of individuals who creates visual pressure through the defence of collective interests, is of central importance.

> Another thing is rural tourism, here it's back to the same thing: people don't have the spirit to get together, there is no spirit of co-operation, for example. So everything belongs to people with power, people in politics, the politicians in this case... or someone who comes from outside and has money and says 'well, I'm going to buy so many houses and renovate them and exploit them', right? Because people from the island don't have... that's what I say... there's no interest, no concerns... I can't put my finger on it.
>
> Pili (O8; 193:198)

The community is equated with the collective. The islander's discourse presented us with a picture of a structured context where different groups engage in a particular manner with personalised players and where dependency on others is a requirement (that will never allow collective public confrontation). The citizen's discourse again provides a picture where identity is lacking, where people do not fight together and do not co-operate with each other. Achievements, as a group, are reached through unity. Things could be different, but the islanders do not join forces; they do not strive for things nor take action. The citizen's discourse locates islanders as passive subjects, who are static and only participate when institutions and/or politicians force them to do so.

Within the citizen's discourse, the islanders lack a dream of betterment; the islanders are not ambitious and cannot do things by themselves either as a social group or as individual units.

2. CONFLICTS IN RELATING: SUBJECT, OTHER AND CONTEXT

The conflicts between the islander's discourse and the citizen's discourse will be presented by dividing the narrative into three major and related elements. The first element to discuss is the nature of the social *subject*. The two discourses introduce us to the way people understand what it means to be a person in society. Whether they see themselves as enablers or resource-less will prove to be crucial to the way they relate to and understand their social context. The second element has to do with the nature of the generalised *other*. This section builds upon the description of the practice of relating as conocidos. It presents the discursive conflicts narrated by respondents when engaging in such relations, and portrays the different positions ascribed to potential partners of interaction. The last element to discuss, which builds on the previous two, is the way respondents understand their *context*. It conveys how the two discourses present a different significance of society in general.

a. The Subject

This section elaborates on the distinctive discursive resources used by respondents when describing the social subject. The attributes and characteristics of this subject will vary according to the different discourses.

THE SUBJECT	ISLANDER'S DISCOURSE	CITIZEN'S DISCOURSE
Autonomy	Dependent	Independent
Definition (who the subject is)	Family bound	The achiever
Action	Through strategies	Through rights
Identity location	The islander	The citizen

The respondents here talk about how they see the social agent. We have, on one hand, the social subject as a person linked to others through historical relations and defined by markers such as family positioning. The islander's discourse is set in the island context as a point of reference, where people, following the codes of practice, are able to gain things by the enactment of strategies. The citizen's discourse understands the social subject as an individual, a citizen with a set of rights that allows her/him to achieve and improve independently of others.

i) Islander's discourse

The subjects in the islander's discourse need to be understood in reference to others, to the extent that their own individuality seems at question. A person represents a family. Personal achievements are undermined by the power of perpetuity and continuity, and social relations are informed (and restricted) by a code of practice. The markers (Chapter V) showed how the islander is always talked about in reference to others: their ancestors, their parents' professions and kindred. The convention of dependency informs people on how to work out relations, using the principles of generalised reciprocity, balancing relations and relying on community trust. The codes of practice (Chapter VI) presented the power of the gaze, always watching and enforcing accountability, though not necessarily in a visible manner.

However, this local subject is not powerless. By contrast, the subject here is a resourceful agent who engages in different strategies to gain access to resources and ask favours from others. This subject knows about the local life, s/he is aware of the constraints and plays around them. Her/his behaviour is framed within the domain of the local. S/he knows about others and is aware that s/he is known by them too.

> But sure, when we get into professional and political interests... because I, who haven't got a job at this moment, am not going to risk it... because maybe the day after tomorrow I have to go knock on [the president of the *cabildo*]'s door to get a contract, so I'm not going to slag him off.
>
> Paloma Osorio (Y8; 219:222)

In the islander's discourse, people are dependent on others. Relying on requests and potential relations with powerful others is taken for granted. Here, Paloma is aware of

the potential damage involved in discussing and assessing the provider's performance. Politics is a difficult game to play. Professional life is linked to political interests since, depending on where your political preferences lie, you will – or will not – be rewarded by those with political power. Politics here is linked to a public display: Paloma is confiding in private, but in public she would not display her opinions. Her awareness of the social context would force her to disguise her political stands as an individual. This disguise conveys a need for consistency between actions and talk: Paloma might need the president of the *cabildo* to get her a job, so she should not enforce the gaze by talking badly about him. This is not a tale of self-interest, but of local understanding. The end of an individual, with political and professional interests, comes when her/his relational capacity with providers can be damaged. Her/his well-being depends on keeping up good relations with relevant others, which in this context is also a matter of public and political concern.

ii) Citizen's discourse

The citizen's discourse is accessed by those who define themselves, at a given point, within a 'democratic' system. As such, and given the characteristics of the respondents, it is a discourse that is over-represented among the outsiders, as most of these respondents are not only alien to the islander's discourse, but also very familiar with the language of the institutions. They have an accurate representation of the structural institutional players on the island and beyond, with which they identify as they either work for them or are funded by them.

The citizen is referred to as a subject within the State. The State and its institutions provide as long as the procedural structure of the system is followed: a citizen puts a demand to a civil servant, the demand is processed and, when appropriate, fulfilled. Hence, interactions happen among subjects who are positioned and labelled within this institutionalised system (rather than among personalised players). This system defines requests as formal procedures put forward by civic subjects (rather than appealers and providers). These subjects have locations given by this discourse: the unemployed, the pensioner, the bank clerk, etc. The citizen, as a democratic subject, is an autonomous being endowed with a personal record of achievements. S/he is an individual player who shows knowledge, has achieved a good understanding of how the community works and complains about the shortcomings of this environment. S/he is an achiever

and, as such, is frustrated by the malfunctioning of local institutions. This democratic subject, the citizen, is embodied with certain rights and duties which are often breached by local politicians:

> So people, sure, if it comes to either getting six month's work offered by the institutions or being told 'wake up, boy, they're taking away your freedom, your way of thinking, they're taking away your...' So they say 'look, my family eats, so no matter what you say I'll take that salary and let me be quiet'.
>
> Father Jeronimo (O2; 145:149)

This text presents two apparently opposed subjects: one that should rebel and claim his freedom and the one who chooses to comply. However, both subjects are rooted in the same discourse. Whilst Father Jeronimo presents a subject stripped of a precious constitutional right (freedom), the islander instead opts for a basic need: to feed her/his family. In both cases the subject is aware of the situation, yet the islander ensures his livelihood by performing an act of compliance. 'They' here refers to local politicians, who provide subsidised employment for six months, the minimum required for people to then ask for unemployment benefit[90]. Politicians are thus enforcing silence in exchange for a six-month contract and are subduing the islander by an almost feudal system. The islander's choice is to comply, to remain quiet, and not to revolt against those with power.

The subjects in the citizen's discourse are dislocated: the way to resolve their frustration is either to leave the island or to rebel against the system. Their discontent shows in their awareness of a set of rights and demands. The citizen is able to express claims within the constitutional talk and is endowed with duties. Whilst s/he is protected by the law, s/he is also aware that the law is enforced by those who have power. Ironically, in order to ensure a narrative of independence in the citizen's discourse, the subject needs to play within the boundaries of legality.

> I still have problems because things are getting worse. Not long ago an inspector came to ask me for the bar licence, because the licence is given in the town hall and I don't have an opening licence [...] And there are 40 others like me. And those are favours, even though you are entitled to them by law, but they like you to go three or four times up there to the town hall, to beg and ask them. And as I haven't gone in two years, I have spoilt it. [...] I have not bothered much, really.

[90] This system is claimed to be slowly corroding the work force on the island and it is a general complaint made by many of the respondents.

> But if an inspector comes and asks for my papers, as has already happened [...] and he said 'what shall I do? Shall I denounce you?'. And I said 'do what you want, I'm not going to close down'.
>
> Paco the Sailor (Y2; 32:40)

Paco the Sailor has chosen the hard path by not complying (he refused to be silent) and not begging for favours, which are his rights. By exposing his rejection of interacting with local institutions, he is playing dangerously close to the boundaries of law. Following the islander's discourse, he is also failing to follow the community regulations by not pursuing requests (even though they are demands) in a personalised manner. He accesses the citizen's discourse and introduces himself as a citizen, not an islander, who is a victim of his local institutions. The town hall is blackmailing him, transforming his rights into favours[91]. The citizen, as a subject, is aware of her/his place in a world bigger than the island.

b. The Other

This section presents the way people talk within different discourses about the generalised other. It aims to describe how the two different discourses identified above introduce relations and interactions. As this research pertains specifically to this topic, it is particularly relevant to unearth the discursive resources accessed when talking about engaging in relations with others. When people use talk to convey meanings about relations, they are drawing a picture of what is expected of interactions. It locates the generalised other within a discursive space with particular characteristics.

[91] See previous chapter.

THE OTHER	ISLANDER'S DISCOURSE	CITIZEN'S DISCOURSE
Character of relations	General reciprocation	Formalised demands
Community	As a structured group	As a collective
Behaviour	Local manners	Citizen's responsibilities
Rights and duties	Locally determined	Established collectively
Definition	Personalised other	Objectified other

The section describes the position ascribed to this generalised other, with whom the subject is set to interact in a social context. Thus, the islander's discourse presents relations informed by the conventions of generalised reciprocation. These conventions, together with the markers (which structure the community), guide relations insofar as they establish a system of accountability. The local manners, enforced by the surveillance, with the codes of practice, provide information on how to carry out relations and, more importantly, establish to whom it would be appropriate to relate or request [92]. The citizen's discourse positions subjects within a system of formalised relations where these subjects are objectified as individuals, endowed with constitutional rights and regulations.

i) Islander's discourse

In the same way as a subject stands for her/his family, an action towards another person needs to be consistent with what that person represents. This is why, as we saw with the gaze, those who engage in relations with a subject provide information about her/him. Thus, a concrete relation will be enacted taking into account a person's position along the axes of time and space and informed by the markers. In this context, the strategic struggle of locating others and positioning them in reference to the islander, as well as the play rehearsed when putting forward requests, are only to be expected.

[92] See Chapters V and VI.

Relations in the islander's discourse are based on general reciprocation, as informed by the codes of practice. In a community, people are linked to each other, as opposed to an impersonal urban environment where subjects can choose to ignore others. It is the 'village thing' which holds people accountable in numerous ways. Thus, in the following text we see that if a person needs to give presents, they do so out of goodwill. The respondent accounts for a communal responsibility, which is to portray a good picture of the island and its people, a general duty as an islander towards foreigners.

> And if I have to give [the mangoes] as a gift to somebody, well, I'll do it. When Pedro [and his students from abroad] came, I took some so the kids would eat mangoes, so they would know what they were! You know in a small town it's just like that... more of an attachment thing. Maybe in a city you don't care, and if they don't eat mangoes, well they just don't eat. [...] They had never seen mangoes, they had never tasted them, they didn't know what they were... plus it makes you look good, the typical fruit of the island, that sort of thing. I'd also hang out with them... I was like a tour guide, culinary guide, and everything.
>
> Ernesto Perez (Y7; 261:268)

The community, as mentioned above, is a structured and complex group in which people have different and specific links to each other. Hence, people help each other, but the help is provided selectively. Favouring someone is part and parcel of providing help. It is expected that people have preferences, although duty – or job description – might say otherwise. There might be a need for a façade of impartiality, but beyond it there is space for preference and predilection:

> Then we've got ideology, which is in everyone... that's human. So when the time comes to give his blessing [the priest] gives it to everybody, but I think he has his preference among those he is looking at... those he likes more... but that's the same as always. The priest didn't precisely visit the poorest houses, did he?, where there was nothing to eat. He liked to look into people's pots! [But anyhow] before, it was the priest who would say 'OK everyone, let's have a meeting on such a day', so he would gather them there [...] 'let's draft a statement and send it to the local authority'. And he would make the statement asking perhaps for a water outlet or for roads to be fixed, and something would get done.
>
> Baltasar Suarez (E12; 539:549)

The priest's blessing is given to every parishioner, despite 'ideology' dictating his inclinations and tainting his blessing with personal preferences. With a touch of cynicism, the respondent makes an important link between his understanding of 'ideology' and relations with those who are more resourceful. The priest gives his sympathies to those who feed him. Those in the community who are better off will then get a better blessing. However, in the past, the priest used to be a facilitator, responsible

for creating community awareness. He got people organised and formalised demands to the town hall. Within the islander's discourse, the frame of conduct is provided by the code of practice, which allows for personal preferences and relations. To give an unbiased blessing and act partially towards others is not at conflict. It is also relevant to note that, at the time the respondent mentions, a priest would have been one of the few outsiders who came to live on the island. He was one of the few in those days who understood the need for promoting collective action (see below).

ii) Citizen's discourse

As mentioned earlier, the generalised other occupies different positions, which are structurally given and formally ascribed in the citizen's discourse. Here, the community is a collective in need of organisation, as collective action is the only way to implement (structural) change. The educated subject of the citizen's discourse is supposed to act according to what is expected of her/his position in the social stratum: for example, single mothers have certain rights and benefits. The system defines the needs of the person. Here personal relations disappear in favour of a system that presents a population as an entity and dictates the character of their interactions. The understanding of the group as a collective population homogenises demands, which can be enacted only by means of collective action:

> Another major problem among the population is that they are not aware of their own problems. So this makes them passive... also they've been made used to being this way... it makes them resigned, which is what bothers me most. In any other place... I come from a place in Tenerife where when the town hall did not pay any attention, people would revolt and say 'you don't help us, well we'll get it ourselves'. And both old and young would take to the streets. So, sure, getting accustomed here to the passivity, to everything working slowly, the patience of little by little... you get tired, you get bored until you reach a moment when [you conclude] 'look, everybody gets what they deserve'.
>
> Father Jeronimo (O2; 240:247)

The citizen's discourse demands a subject enabled through action, and the opposite of action is resignation. Passivity and inactivity have been enforced on the islander through a top-down abuse of the local structures. In a system where the players seem to conform and lack the ability to empower themselves through the collective claim of rights, the subject, as a citizen, is eventually defeated. The fight is over when a conclusion is reached: every political figure is a reflection of her/his environment.

As we mentioned above, the two discourses are usually presented side by side. The respondents resort to them and form a coherent unit, from which they pull out different repertoires and make sense of various issues. In the following text we see how collectively agreed rights and duties (pertaining to the citizen's discourse) get converted into locally determined ones (pertaining to the islander's discourse):

> Under socialism Hermigua has been better than ever. Which is not to say that we don't lack many more things... I mean with regard to the town hall and things like that. Nowadays the law is the same for everyone, even if they are friends or family. Because when this thing with Hernando happened... because I went to the social worker she said 'no, Hernando cannot receive [his pension] because he lives with Alonso'. I said 'you are wrong, he does not live with Alonso, it is Alonso who lives with him, because the house where we all live is not Alonso's, but ours'. So I said this to [the mayor] and he said 'but why is she taking decisions?... all she has to do is do the paperwork and if in Santa Cruz they accept it, who is she to say anything?' So he called her and told her off.
>
> Maria Fragoso (E7; 138:145)

Maria Fragoso here mixes both discourses comprehensively in order to make sense of her own dilemmas. Under the citizen's discourse, Hernando (her elderly brother) should not have a pension, as her husband is fully employed. However, she takes the social worker's statement literally and claims that her husband is living in what was originally her parents' house (now hers and her brother's). Although this claim does not hold, as it is Alonso's income which needs to be taken into account, she is listened to by the mayor. This couple (Alonso and Maria Fragoso) had married only recently. In this situation, the mayor, as a local player, knew the particular issues related to them, as personalised subjects, as he is part of the same community. Although in a strict sense, Hernando's rights to a pension are questionable, the islander's discourse allowed the space to put forward this particular demand.

However, the text claims that the law smoothes out differences: whilst before there was room for favours, these days things are worked out under the equality of the law, regardless of to whom this law is applied. Despite this equality, the respondent makes claims of uniqueness. She contradicts herself by stating democratic principles of equality and socialism (under which family and friends do not get a preferential treatment) and then accessing the mayor to demand – or request – her personal claim. Her statement becomes clearer when we consider that she is neither friend nor family of the mayor. Her praise of equality is that, even though she *is not* friend or family of the mayor, she can access him and ask for favours. It is not the law that is equal but the

subjects facing it; they have equal access to its personal interpretation. Also, the text unveils the respondent's structural representation of power on the island: the mayor is more powerful than the social worker. He is the one entrusted with her claim and it is only expected that he tells off the social worker, despite their both working for different institutional bodies (the town hall and the ministry of social affairs).

c. The Context

As was hinted at in the last mixed quote, the domain of the local institutions exemplifies discursive conflicts pertaining to conducting relations. The citizen's discourse presents the subject within a normalised democratic system. However, this system is constructed in a particular manner in the islander's discourse. This latter discourse does not provide room for formalised democratic talk to permeate into the daily lives of the islanders. The coexistence of the two discourses allows for the expression of conflict. When things do not work, when people make demands that are not met or when local scandals occur – which are rendered visible by the gaze – people problematise social order. The local institutions, permanently trapped by the two conflicting discourses, are the object of people's complaints. These complaints and demands are peppered with local knowledge, with a shared and highly contextual system of sense making.

CONTEXT	ISLANDER'S DISCOURSE	CITIZEN'S DISCOURSE
System	Mechanic democracy	Organic democracy
Island	Contextual frame on island as a unit	Contextual frame elsewhere
Trust	Local trust achieved through codes and markers	Institutional trust achieved through the state
Maxim	Fairness	Equality
Failure of system	Breach of local trust and maxim of fairness	Breach of institutional trust and maxim of equality

The differences between the two discourses are amplified as we move from the discursive resources used to explain the subject towards the way the respondents talk about social order. The conflicts present us with contextual sense making, which varies

according to the discourse in which the respondents are immersed. The texts provided in this section expose two related and parallel realities, which remain separate despite their coexistence with each other. Both discourses accomplish a rounded view of the arena where relating as conocidos gets problematised. The way people guide interactions, the way they see the generalised other and themselves is connected to the way they express their way of relating in their social milieu. This will determine the way in which relating as conocidos finds expression.

i) Islander's discourse

As mentioned, the world within the islander's discourse is structured by a system that provides power to certain privileged others. This power rotates, as it is the people, after all, who elect their political leaders. Therefore, in this organic system, the constitutional right to vote is transformed into the right to punish or reward, a mechanism which holds politicians accountable. Through the vote the islanders express whether their politicians have done their job, which is essentially to *provide*, regardless of the nature of the request:

> I'm happy because the truth is, I've been very ill, and they [the national health service] pay for my trips to go over there [Tenerife] and they pay for my treatment, which is really expensive. That's how things are, you've got to mention the good things and the bad things. But with regard to other things... look, I've got a house in Tamargada. The entrance is very bad [...] and every time it rains mud comes down. So I was there and I asked the mayor if he'd help me out a bit. And he very happily said 'what is it that you need?' and I said 'look, as long as the wall and the entrance are fixed, I'll be happy'... 'yes, that can be fixed'. And look, ...they still haven't done anything. 'I think it would end up being around a million and a half [pesetas]', and I said 'well, as long as that is fixed I'll be happy'... and he even said 'do you need a bathroom?' and I said 'no, the truth is I can live with the one I have', because we have it outside the house and well, it's got no electricity but it's a bathroom to wash yourself and that... well, [it has been] over five years and nothing.
>
> Don Anastasio (E6; 235:246)

The text shows how the respondent applies his code of practice to explain his situation. He wants to be grateful and acknowledges the good – the payment for the medical treatment – and the bad – the mayor has breached his trust by offering help which never materialised. They are both assessed on equal terms, almost as if the mayor had a hand in the provision of medical treatment, as after all both 'services' come from institutions. The respondent was fair and showed generosity by declining the mayor's offer to build

a bathroom. However, reading between the lines it becomes evident that, whilst he made claims which hold the mayor accountable, the latter never gave any binding answer. It is only his happiness, which is interpreted as willingness to help, that forces the respondent to transform what was initially a quest for (a bit of) help into a demand that has remained unfulfilled for more than five years.

Political figures, as providers, are subject to requests for favours. As explained, the islander's discourse places accountability in the hands of political players. As they belong to the institutional domain, they wield power (understood as a resource) and because they are rooted contextually they owe favours to others. The islander's discourse provides grounds for demanding local accountability of politicians in a manner (informed by the codes of practice and markers), which is qualitatively different from political accountability in the citizen's discourse. The respondents are able to request payment for favours and call up accountability and reciprocation by locating the politicians as personalised subjects, with a record of relationships on the island. The text presents a further view on people's understanding of the social order within the islander's discourse:

> DA: Look, when we had this lawsuit here, it took four years. We told the mayor, we told the mayor's brother – who even told me one day 'well, and who told you to get those people in your house' and I said 'anyone can make a mistake, I'm telling you in case you can give me a hand, otherwise there's no problem'.
> I: Did you have a contract or...?
> DA: Nothing, nothing, we just let them be here. We told the mayor and 'yes, yes, yes, that is yours and nobody can take it away from you'... well. We told [the president of the *cabildo*] 'yes, yes, that is yours and nobody can take it away from you'. We spoke to the government delegate and he said 'yes, yes, that is yours and nobody can take it away from you'. And the judge!... she might have studied but I did not see it... four years battling away!
>
> Don Anastasio[93] (E6; 491:504)

Their home belongs to them, because that is the way it has always been. There are no papers or formal registration of the property, and the respondents rented it out without a contract. The tenants refused to leave and the respondents accessed every person with power on the island: the mayor, his brother, the president of the island and the central government delegate. Despite the assurance of the powerful providers, they had to fight a legal battle (which they eventually won after four years) to regain access to their own

[93] See Appendix II for a description of the interviewees.

property. The law did not protect them, and the reasons for their failure are not legally bound but of a relational character: the judge's inability (a personalised trait) and the breach of protection and trust on the part of politicians.

The islander's discourse holds a maxim, a value that has to be accomplished: *fairness*. Fairness holds people accountable for past and future deeds, in sum, for their social relations. It is measured in reference to the markers and the codes of practice, as they provide the grounds on which to assess someone's worthiness (through perpetuity and the principle of balance, for example). Fairness comprises a sense of merit, it establishes who does or does not deserve to be granted favours. The islander's discourse positions power – political or non-political – as grounded in a running perspective, where the subjects' social memory accounts for people/players across time and space.

> ...to the extent that you need to have *manga*[94] to see the doctor. And that's a little bit too much... When the orthopaedic surgeon comes, and he comes once per month, then you get there [the clinic] and 'No, sorry. Try again next month. All the appointments are taken' and you go '*Cristiano*! for god's sake, I have an awful pain in my foot and cannot wait for a month in this state!'... And if you know the guy who gives out the numbers it's like 'OK, let us see if there is anything we can do'. Now, if he hates your guts, you are waiting for a year to get an appointment to see the doctor: 'No. Sorry. Everything is full, go to Santa Cruz[95] if you want'. On the other hand, if you know him he says 'Well, you won't come first, but you might go last, let us see what we can do'. If not, you talk to the nuns, because they are the ones giving out orders [...] and they say 'Look, everything is taken'. And yes, maybe everything is full but 'let us see if we can all make a little effort. This person here has nothing serious, so instead of half an hour, I'm sure the doctor will take 10 minutes only' so there is already 20 minutes for them to play with, and give it to you.
>
> Ernesto Perez (Y7; 268:277)

The respondent starts by stating that things are unfair, as one should not have to use contacts to see a doctor. However, soon enough he discovers a way around it, and towards the end of the text we are assured that, anyhow, the system works; it is fair. The islander's discourse presents a denial, which initially closes the door of access to resources (a strategy of positioning), followed by a solution. Although the basic principle of free access to health services could be called into question, there are various

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[94] To have *manga* means to have 'pull', to know people in the right places in order to gain access.
[95] As Santa Cruz is the capital of the larger island of Tenerife, things are believed to work better there.

options to take. The system does not seem to be egalitarian, but it is fair as, with goodwill, everyone gets her/his way. It is relevant to notice that the respondents establish two relational positions which are opposed: to be hated against to be known[96]. To gain access to an overcrowded health system is not rule bending, as the person will not be served first or better, but will just succeed in carrying out a fair claim. The last resource are the nuns, who even though they lack a formal position within the health service, are located as constant providers by their informal role and their vocational urge to help others.

ii) Citizen's discourse

The citizen's discourse assumes a democratic system with normalised characteristics. Trust here resides in the proper working of the system, which should provide and distribute resources equally among its citizens. The maxim that needs to be achieved, the greatest value to maintain, is *equality* rather than fairness. The citizen's discourse assesses requests for favours between individual subjects and institutions as a case of blatant corruption.

> The *caciquismo*[97] that existed here on the island until the 70s still exists today, only with the state's money. When convenient to them, they'll bring some people down [*hundir*] and not others. What happens is that there are some things that can't be said, that can't be spoken about. For example, I know that the last elections cost 20 thousand pesetas per vote, what happens is that you can't say that, you've got to keep your mouth shut and you can't go around saying anything. They can charge you, they can create any story against you.
>
> Father Jeronimo (O2; 140:149)

The state has gone from being the guarantor of democracy to being the facilitator of a system of *caciquismo*. The irony is that in this outdated system the citizen knows her/his rights and the money to support the corrupt system comes from the State itself. The respondent portrays a very negative picture, where the inhabitants exchange protection for votes. Favours are no longer a source of potential bargaining power which can be negotiated by reciprocal relations with personalised others, as was the case in the islander's discourse. The citizen's discourse denounces the buying of votes. The

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[96]To be known, as explained in Chapter I, is literally to be a conocido.
[97] *Caciquismo*: a system of dominance by local landowners similar to a feudal system.

respondent denounces an informal system, whereby politicians are internally enforcing accountability on the islanders by rewarding those that vote for them and by punishing those that do not by bringing them down. The respondent identifies a form of punishment, which consists in activating the gaze by creating stories against those who choose to talk. Thus, politicians keep a record, they would become (at election time) appealers, who would be willing to guarantee a repayment of the favour (the vote) by granting requests when they are in the position of providers.

However, what in the islander's discourse is seen as a linear distribution of power and a system of reciprocal relations is, in the citizen's discourse, a system that promotes fear. Whilst the islander's discourse presents people making demands according to a local sense of trust, the citizen's discourse presents people as creating distrust. The community surveillance, which enforces conduct (and is informed by the codes of practice), is transformed in the citizen's discourse into a constrictive system in which people keep quiet because they are threatened by their politicians. Hence the subject should choose not to play the game of the powerful. Fundamental 'rights' are being abused under this political system which is anchored in local, informal and corrupt relations between the local institutions and the islanders, but is presented under the façade of a democratic one.

> And then the other thing that they do is to go by family. Certain families, which have three or four voters... what they do is to take one. From the families that are not affiliated to the party, from there they take everybody. So it's a way to make people keep their mouths shut. I mean, here on the island the industry that we have is tourism and politics.
>
> Paco the Sailor (Y2; 77:81)

The quote refers again to the system by which the island government [the *cabildo*] provides employment contracts of six months duration, as mentioned earlier. The respondent criticises the corruption of his politicians within a citizen's discourse, but shows awareness of the islander's discourse by showing how local trust perpetuates the system. Politicians rely on a system which accounts for the subject's political positioning but ultimately rests upon generalised reciprocity: a job for a vote. Again, the next text conveys the importance of avoiding the gaze through silence. However, the climate of fear is now transformed into a cynical system of self-interest (or balanced reciprocation). The reward for remaining silent is to be chosen and offered a job. Still,

rights are transformed into favours, the currency of the island. Favours are later translated into votes, and in this way, the circularity of the system is perpetuated.

> Here they know more or less who votes for them and who doesn't [...] But politicians here have that. Everyone who is against them, or who wants to have his own business or association without them, they always put themselves against you, because it goes out of their hands. They have to have you tied down with your own job... it's sad, but that's the way it is.
>
> Paco the Sailor (Y2; 42:52)

The final element of the citizen's discourse is conveyed in the text above. Here, relations between people on the island and the politicians are presented in their worst light: a purely corrupt, power-ridden system in the hands of a political elite. The extent of their power and their capacity to damage the subjects is clearly presented. The citizen's discourse condemns a breach of the principles of institutional trust: by denying independence and by creating dependency on the institutions, local politicians reinforce their positions of privilege. The social context is no longer based on exchanges between providers and appealers, the citizen's discourse presents the making of a corrupt system which constrains and forces dependency on people. People's capacity to work and their space on the island are challenged by the denial of the autonomy of the subject (see above). The making of the citizen as an individual is being blocked by the local institutions, which deprive them of their ability to achieve and gain freedom as citizens. Politicians keep people tied down through work, as independence would enhance the subject's ability to act. An empowered subject would become an individual, independent and with no need for other people's favours[98]. This would deprive politicians of the individual's (rather than the islander's) vote.

3. Discussion and Summary

The chapter has presented two existing discourses pertaining to understanding relations. These two discourses on relating within the island unearthed the conflicts people had when expressing a particular form of relation, that of conocidos.

Briefly, the islander's discourse and the citizen's discourse present different accounts of

[98] See the Baltasar Suarez's second quote in Section 1.b. (E12; 165: 178).

the features ascribed to the social subject, the generalised other and the social context of which both are a part. The citizen's discourse presents the social actors – who, in the realm of the island, happened to be the islanders – as motionless and dependent on state bodies. In this discourse, the lay public poses difficult demands and the local politicians are corrupt. The citizen's discourse demands action and an increase in social awareness. However, this awareness can only be expressed within the available discursive resources. It is the talk of the political struggle, of collective action. This discourse enhances a sense of the subject as enabled, through a formalised democratic system, to demand her/his rights and be publicly accountable for her/his duties as a citizen. This discourse, when dealing with politicians, demands them to be accountable to the State, which ultimately represents the Spanish people.

Hence, in the citizen's discourse, political accountability is subject to public scrutiny. Such a statement, which could be expressed in any contemporary western democracy, introduces different sets of signification within both discourses. In the islander's discourse the politician is talked about as a figure of power. This power rotates, which means that the personalised subject becomes a resourceful member for a time. The politician, as an islander, is accountable for favours and requests from the rest of the islanders. This accountability does not apply to her/him as an individual player, because the subject represents the family and is framed according to temporal and spatial markers. The islanders will then struggle to find means of calling up relations with the politician, through strategies of positioning and requests. The politician, on the other hand – who needs the votes to regain access to power – will take on her/his position as provider. S/he will engage in these relations and look after her/his people, because s/he is expected to do so, and because engaging in relating as conocidos will hold more people accountable. 'Accountability' here means a balance of favours, and 'public scrutiny' is enacted through the gaze and expressed through people's votes. Election time is then the moment at which the islanders pass judgement on their politicians. The latter, on the other hand, are aware that to maintain political power, they have to engage in an extended system of accountability and balance of favours. Although a reading of these actions could lead towards a narrative of corruption (within the citizen's discourse), it is crucial to remember that the islanders demand their politicians to be fair, rather than egalitarian.

Therefore, whilst the citizen's discourse expresses a story of depression, subjugation and under-development, where subjects are static, relations are stagnant and people are fearful of talking, the picture that emerges from the islander's discourse is rather different. Relationships are based on multiple links that unite people and follow the principle of general reciprocation. They are carried out through stories of trust and generosity, and people carefully negotiate them in those terms. Instead of the tale of stagnation, the islander's discourse presents a tale of local distribution of power which is skilfully managed through strategic initiatives.

The two discourses are at odds with each other and generate numerous sources of misunderstanding. Moreover, the citizen's discourse seems to be gaining precedence over that of the islander[99]. The two discourses do not enjoy equal levels of acceptance among people living on the island. They have their own plot and area of expression, and this area matches the different groups of people living on the island. This becomes evident from the use of the citizen's discourse, which finds expression to a greater or lesser extent in all the three groups explored (the elders and young islanders as well as the outsiders). The opposite is however not applicable: the islander's discourse is used mainly by the elders and to a lesser (but still significant) extent by young people. Young people seem to switch comfortably between both discourses. Their preference for one over the other is rather contextual, they participate in both discourses and provide different understandings regarding the circumstances at hand. For example, an instance of a request which positions them as appealers, will resort to the islander's discourse in order to convey a story of trust and generosity if the request was – or is to be – granted. However, if the request was not granted the action is explained within the citizen's discourse, which provides grounds to talk about unmet demands and institutional abuse[100].

The analysis renders visible how public institutions and their dealings are problematised because of their position in a changing society. When requests between providers and appealers are worked out outside the domain of the local institutions, relating as conocidos remains a resource. It is a way of positioning the other and re-creating order

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[99] See Appendix V for a table illustrating the prevalence of both discourses across different groups of respondents.

[100] See texts of Eva Padilla in previous chapter: for the citizen's discourse in Section 1.c. (Y1; 179:183) and for the islander's discourse in Section 2.c.i. (Y1; 136:145).

amongst the islanders, even if this order aims to *perform* trust and privilege – through the strategies. Relating as conocidos might then be restraining, but it has important benefits, such as the guarantee of trust and the reliance on a tradition in relating, which is worked out within the parameters of 'the way things are' (the practice). Relating as conocidos, in this context, is not contested by the respondents. However, local institutional bodies position personalised players as powerful agents in the everyday life of the islander. The discourses then reflect conflicts in the institutional domain, because it is here that clashes appear harder and sharper. Relating as conocidos is problematised when it touches the pillars of the two existing discourses, which talk about the equal world versus the fair world.

Thus, the fact that the practice of relating as conocidos is problematised when pertaining to local institutions, and that the citizen's discourse is accessed by the islanders, point towards a tendency to formalised relations, a democratisation of the public arena. The subjects are seeking ways of defining themselves as individual citizens, rather than islanders. The way they struggle with the use of strategies to make distinctions between favours and demands – and to enforce requests within local institutions – reflects their need to escape the eternal chain of reciprocity. The subject requires ways of transforming the islander (as a dependant subject, defined by markers of perpetuity and continuity) into an individual (endowed by the citizen's discourse with a capacity to achieve) and, hence, performing autonomy as a social agent.

Relating as conocidos then is challenged because equality has gained importance over fairness. In the island context it is not relevant anymore to account for a past in order to mark ways of relating. New players come onto the island and islanders leave. The subject seems to be undergoing processes that position her/himself as uprooted, as mobile and in need of change (reflected by the young respondents in their urge to leave the island or by the sense of misplacement of the outsiders). The relevance of these changes becomes particularly notorious on the island. Whilst the subject of the citizen's discourse is empowered by rights and is owner of achievements, the subject within the islander's discourse is rooted in a historical past, which dates back across generations and in which the islander takes her/his place. This place, moreover, comes with its own spectrum of relations and set of accountabilities. The citizen's discourse allows an expression of agency through individual empowerment. The definition ascribed to the subject in the citizen's discourse (autonomous and endowed with rights and duties)

takes prevalence over the definition of the subject within the islander's discourse (dependent, made reference to through family and constrained by local codes of practice).

Relating as conocidos touches two forms of social ordering reflected via the discourses: one anchored in a system of kindred (the islander's discourse) and one anchored in a formalised democratic system (the citizen's discourse). This practice creates problems because the island, as a social context, is moving from a tradition of distribution of hierarchical power (anchored on a few landowners) towards a more dynamic system of society which features different institutional players (the European community, the central government, the insular government). This chapter has explored the ambiguity of the practice of relating as conocidos by setting it within (but not against) the tensions resulting from the two discourses: the citizen's discourse which condemns it and the islander's discourse which thrives on it.

The two discourses might seem to be at conflict with each other, but they reflect a dialectical movement in the nature of the practice of relating as conocidos. It is precisely because of its ambiguous character that relating as conocidos remains salient, in practice, but unexplored when voided of process. Relating as conocidos necessitates a continual rehearsal through language in order to be maintained by the different discursive justifications. The practice finds expression within a space of transition, where social change is taking place, as the citizen's discourse is progressively accessed by the islanders. However, an awareness of the two existing discourses provides an overview of the breach of discernment: the space in-between the 'corrupt system' and the 'local system of providers', the equal and the fair. It is in this space where relating as conocidos takes its discursive toll as it is accounted for through different interpretations. Thus, the resilience of this relationship represents the capability of the subjects who engage in it to create discursive resources across the two discourses. The practice shows the conflicts among the discourses and a carefully interwoven dialectical balance which informs us, in the context of the island, on the development and maintenance of a space of transition. The discursive tensions pertaining to the practice of relating as conocidos permit its practice as a transitional activity. The subjects engaging in this practice can build upon the two discourses which are situated as cohesive and alternative sets of interpretation, balanced in a dialectical process, rather than opposed in static conflict.

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This chapter has presented the discourses pertaining to relating within the domain of the island of La Gomera. The analysis introduced explanations of why the practice of relating as conocidos becomes problematic and has difficulties in being openly enacted. The domain of the 'as ifs' and the need to justify the relation as part and parcel of something else (under the façade of friendship, kindred or as a demand) hinted at a conflict in the way people provide (discoursed) justifications when relating as conocidos. The chapter introduces two discourses, the citizen's discourse and the islander's discourse. Both discourses seem to be based on different understandings of the subject, the generalised other, and the context where both meet. They inform the research on the tensions and balances in maintaining the practice of relating as conocidos.

IX

CONCLUDING
RELATING AS CONOCIDOS: A PRACTICE WITHIN DISCOURSE

This thesis has presented the social practice of relating as conocidos. This practice finds expression in current societies within two different discourses: the islander's discourse, pertaining loosely to tradition, and the citizen's discourse, anchored in contemporary conceptions of modernity.

Relating as conocidos is only visible through singular instances of it, as the agents practising it cannot account for it outside its experience. However, within a small context, these instances are either visible, known or talked about under the ever-present surveillance of the community. Relating as conocidos works within a space of convention provided through contextual markers and a code of practice. In this space, people know how to position themselves in reference to others. This way of relating is transactional, as it arises when needed rather than being a permanent resource to access. It necessitates (i) a sense of historicity, which is locally set by the spatial and temporal markers; (ii) prudence and reciprocity, which is scripted by codes of practice, and (iii) a concealment of the action, which is performed through the strategies.

Relating as conocidos relies heavily on disguise, on the collective 'misrecognition' of the practice. The need for this disguise is mainly due to its reliance on performance. The codes of practice of the space where relating as conocidos is enacted inform the subject of the necessity of calling up the relation within an informal system conveying closeness (be it friendship or kindred). The performance of a façade, when relating as conocidos, aims to bring closer or locate the subjects within an equivalent relational space. The subjects engaging in relations of this kind negotiate locations and position each other, through strategies, in a discursive space which talks about trust and privilege.

However, there is a further component of disguise. This component is related to the public understanding of the relationship. The performance mentioned above has to do with the enactment of the relationship (insofar as it facilitates it), yet it is also the case

that relating as conocidos cannot be publicly acknowledged. The public denial of this relationship rests upon the conflicting discourses within which it is made reference to. These two discourses, which are called islander's discourse and citizen's discourse, have different understandings of the subject, the generalised other, and of the context where the two meet.

1. On Practice

The understanding of relating as conocidos as a practice has provided this research with a theoretical and empirical language. Practice encompasses an activity and a disposition to interpret that activity. The study of practice requires setting this activity within a context that allows its expression. Thus, accounting for temporal and spatial markers provides the grounds for studying this activity in the making by focusing on the sequence of actions. The sequence conveys a process when relating. The concept of practice grants continuance to interactions, which otherwise would be understood as fragmentary or episodic exchanges. Moreover, by presuming that the people engaging in the process share the same script of interpretation, the sequence of action is endowed with meaning. Given a communally agreed script (i.e. the codes of practice), the agents are able to perform in a 'regularised improvisation' by engaging in strategies.

In sum, relating as conocidos is a practice insofar as it builds upon a common understanding of 'the art of living', which informs people on (a) their position and that of others through the markers, which stand for a past that holds the subjects historically accountable; (b) how to conduct transactions which are based on some communally agreed codes of practice and involve the maintenance of generalised reciprocation; and (c) how to perform strategies in order to allow for the enactment of agency within a given context.

The components of practice, stated theoretically in Chapter II, found empirical expression in the first three chapters of the analysis. The ethnographic recollection (Chapter V) and the analysis of the insiders' interviews (Chapters VI and VII) grounded the process of interpretation. These chapters produced a matrix of elements or research tools that provided an understanding of how people relate in general, and as conocidos in particular, on the island. Hence, the markers (the spatial construction of relations, continuity and perpetuity) provided the stage, the contextual setting where relating as

conocidos is enacted (Chapter V). The codes of practice (composed of the gaze, the conventions of dependency and the principles) provided the script of action (Chapter VI). Finally, the strategies of localisation and requests conveyed the performance of the practice (Chapter VII). This last element was specifically relevant as, whilst the first two analytical chapters provided a constrained view of the subjects on the island, through the strategies, we witnessed their capacity to act and to transform. The strategies reflected the islander empowered with agency.

a. The Construction of Markers and the Making of History

It has been argued that time (expressed through a common history) provides, together with space, the markers to create a communal past, which locates personalised subjects. Time is communally shared and created in the context of a small community. Also, spaces are linked to specific practices, and the presence of a certain group of subjects endows them with meaning. A space, as a social entity, is constructed and made use of by different subjects in distinct ways (such as the kiosk, the square or the community party, the *verbena*). In these spaces people behave according to a set of codes which are socially established by their association with practice. It is within these axes that relating as conocidos is enacted by historically located actors, who are making history and recreating a personal past at the same time.

The axes of space and time make up the tempo of practice. They give information on how social relations are spatially constructed as well as dependent on temporal variables. These axes, which provided the markers of spatiality, continuity and perpetuity, serve as instruments to qualify the generalised other. The markers, despite their need to be affixed in a given context, can be extrapolated to different relational domains. These demarcations work in positioning a given subject (potential conocido) within one family and one location. They provide a record of the subject, a sense of self which is formed through the communal past; this past defines who they are within the community. In the context of our study, the markers permit a person to be held accountable for a family, for example.

This public tale about a given subject, which uses ancestors and spatial location as referents, can be perceived as rather restrictive. It is this tangible sense of restriction that makes it necessary to engage in public performances (as shown by the strategies).

Hence the past (in time and space), which forms part of the public domain, is relevant inasmuch as it has a strong input into the formation of selfhood. It provides justifications for, and explanations of, people's action, by feeding down first-hand knowledge on what people expect of others. In a context where this information provides a record, which dictates relations among its members, the markers work in a reflexive manner (as conveyed below in the codes of practice). They make reference to who the person is in the eyes of the community and, to a certain extent, this reference is reverted and defines the person too, inasmuch as it frames the subject's capacity for action.

The subject engaged in the practice of relating as conocidos within the island context is then understood as a referent of kindred. This 'conocido' needs to be highly contextual, as s/he has no have value outside the community. The community, though not physically bound, requires a root, a connection to the markers, in order to be maintained. As the subjects on the island emigrate and move around, and as people from the outside become permanent members of the island community, relating as conocidos is challenged. The setting within which it is enacted becomes transformed and, with it, the subject becomes uprooted.

b. The Codes of Practice and the Way Things Are

Given what was stated above, community history is expected to account for a way of legitimating a subject's social positioning in the eyes of the generalised other. The common past shared by the community makes a person known ('conocido') to the other; it frames the subjects and locates them in almost static ranks where there is little possibility of change. However, this past as collective history has a value in ensuring a sense of security and predictability in social relations. By knowing a subject's location in the given past which provides meaning to the present, there is a constant reassurance of the permanence of things, as the community knows them to be. This assurance is also re-enforced by the community surveillance. Here, the awareness of a given destiny is more than a figure of speech or a literary resource. Thus, the island community enforces restrictions by locating people in different social positions. There is a striking absence of social mobility as an action is always interpreted in reference to a past in which the subject took no part but of which s/he is parcel. Relations are worked out

within the markers and these markers create, communally, a sense of acting, of performing within a given script of propriety and 'good manners' (see Elias, 1995; Schuetz, 1944).

The power of the community surveillance comes through when acknowledging that, within the island's spaces, there are also markers which provide information on the outcasts and the outsiders. These subjects become permanently located within a space of differences which is made irreconcilable by the existence of a past conflict, or a mismatch between people's expectations and the subject's actions. These conflicts again speak of rigorous codes of behaviour and boundaries of pertinence (see Elias, 1994; Pitt-Rivers, 1966). They are assessed by, and subjected to, the communal gaze, which has the purpose of enforcing tradition as 'the way things are' in everyday life.

This way of life, like tradition, is constantly in the making. The reconstructed character of tradition is manifested when considering that the past binds accountability to a given subject. This subject can balance back the record (or eventually reject it) and, in this manner, change the course of the process. The existence of this up-to-date accountability shows how relating as conocidos requires some form of social memory, a record which marks events and holds people accountable. The conventions of dependency and the principles of balance, generosity and reliance highlight the relevance of conducting relations by assuming personalised reciprocation. Thus, these codes of practice permit the performance of denial when dealing with concrete instances of accountability, as general reciprocation is assumed and the accountancy of favours aims to be balanced.

The codes of practice prescribe the 'way things are' and, as such, provide insights into the domain of implicit knowledge. This domain is where things are learned through a life experience of sharing and relating in a cultural context, i.e. the habitus. This tacit knowledge or *savoir-faire* creates an awareness of the necessity of maintaining this generalised reciprocation. It permits performing *as if* singular instances of reciprocity were not important. The conventions showed how this shared practical knowledge needs to rely on a discursive rehearsal which conveys its practical (the how to do) and intellectual (the *savoir-faire*) knowledge, rather than on a set of rules which would render it visible.

Hence, the community surveillance assesses and inflicts the codes of practice. The codes speak of how inter/actions should be carried out, but they are not static. They are

products of the subjects becoming actors within their context. The codes, despite their presentation as conventions, reflect changes inasmuch as subjects possess history but undergo transformations. They are constructed as guidelines of behaviour, but this behaviour depends first and foremost on the negotiated character of relationships. Relating as conocidos, in this sense, relies on the participatory position of the generalised other in the subject's life. This practice, as shown through the discourses, is also subject to the continuous play of history and power. Thus, the codes of practice are the values that give information on the way the subject positions the generalised other. This position is informed by the markers and, thus, takes into consideration the location of a given subject within the constructed narrative of a communal past.

The codes of practice highlight the interdependence of social actors. The necessity for a publicly accountable subject, and the unquestionable presence of the generalised other, introduces a domain in which the social realm plays a major part. These codes provide the script that allows the subject to become (with the aid of the markers) and to do (with the strategies). The act of relating provides the generalised other with a meaning through the interaction.

c. The Strategies: Agency and performance

The strategies in which people engage when performing practice reveal a sequential process which is partly informed by time, as past (through the markers conveyed above), and by an accountability for time within the relation. The strategies are guided by the ways of doing, which rely on practical knowledge informed by the codes. They permit the subject to enact agency and incorporate the other's point of view. A strategic move necessitates and anticipates the move of the other, because it aims, through action, to enforce a response. It is a process carried out in constant negotiation with the other.

The strategies for concealing and implementing the practice of relating as conocidos illustrate the playing of agency. The strategies show how people use talk, discursively and performatively, to relate as conocidos. They present a way of enacting conversation to say or communicate practical (tacit) knowledge. The strategies, as discursive resources, are only available when the subjects relating belong to the same referential space, they perform communication within the sphere of the known ones. Through their

continuous engagement in strategies, the potential partners are confirming or rejecting the conditions under which a person can engage in relating as conocidos.

The strategies that emerged in the empirical exploration are of two kinds: strategies of localisation and strategies of requests. Within the strategies of localisation, the strategies of anchoring and the access to the unknown achieve a way of locating the partners and ensuring trust. Anchoring also reveals an ordering process with the utilisation of referential markers. The challenges, on the other hand, reflect ways of ranking and enhance the mobility of subject locations; through them, the subjects establish prestige. The strategies of localisation convey how to proceed within a sequence of exchange. These discursive resources are performed in order to ensure that the partners are adequate recipients of trust. In addition to the presumption of trust, the strategies negotiate positions within a discursive space that performs prestige. Whilst relating as conocidos the partners are increasing their value. Prestige, as trust, constructs a contextual evaluation of privilege. Privilege conveys the active re-construction of history by enhancing the markers, which, on the one hand, locate the subjects as trustworthy (by *anchoring* and *accessing the unknown*), and, on the other hand, endow a potential appealer with prestige (through the *challenges*).

Whilst the strategies of localisation addressed the conditions stipulated in order to relate as conocidos, the strategies of requests presented the performance of concealment when engaging in this relationship. The strategies of request – the asking for favours, the accountability of requests and the concealment of favours – are related to accountability and reciprocation. These strategies are performed following the conventions (the codes of practice) and, as such, allow reciprocity to be disguised. These strategies showed *how* to request things from others. However, there are two different ways of ensuring a successful request. On the one hand the strategies of request, like the strategies of localisation, are built upon a performance of closeness, or trust. They ensure ways of claiming access to others by the request of favours and/or rights. They speak about the agency of social actors and their dependency on the generalised other (as they are guided by the codes of practice). In this manner, the agents use the strategies of localisation and of request in order to send veiled messages. These messages of practical knowledge aim to re-create and establish contextual power relations through the performance of trust and the allocation of prestige.

On the other hand, the concealment of favours – with the denial of requests and the transformation of requests into demands – introduces a different sort of disguise. These strategies show a need to hide the relationship (rather than transform it into friendship or kindred), and they have to do with the understanding of the practice of relating as conocidos in two different and conflicting discourses. The constant need to locate, to rank people and to transform favours into demands hints at concerns which are not only related to side-stepping reciprocation or ensuring an appropriate response. The subjects find it difficult to justify relating as conocidos in certain domains. Creating demands, instead of requesting favours, is challenging the providers within a different system of accountability. The discourses on relating provide explanations as to why this is the case.

2. DISCOURSES ON RELATING

So far, the chapter has explained the making of a practice by following the process of relating as conocidos. This relational practice relied on a set of socially shared assumptions (the codes) pertaining to reciprocity, which guided specific forms of actions (the strategies). These actions were enacted within a discursive space, which located subjects (as close but indebted) through the performance of trust and privilege. The relational practice accounted for the weight of history and agency. The strategies showed how, in order to relate as a conocido, the subject needed to conceal the relation under a façade of closeness. These strategies also uncovered conflicts in making sense of this practice.

When talking about discourses pertaining to relating as conocidos, we need to step out of the relational process and its practice in order to frame this practice in a wider context. Relations amongst conocidos do not take place in a vacuum. They happen in a cultural context which, in my study, is placed in the island community of La Gomera. This context needs to be understood as the space where the discourses take action, where the practice is acted out and made sense of; it is the go-between area where the relational and the social domain meet. This terrain of social reality, made real by people's accounts, is framed by a historic interface which locates their discourses in social life.

The exploration of the interviews with the islanders (elders and young) and the outsiders uncovered two discourses. These discourses underpin the way people understand relations, such as the one under study. Discourses are complete sets of meanings, they provide understandings of experience. This last analysis unveiled the islander's discourse and the citizen's discourse. At the core of both discourses, lie a different understanding of the subject and, through the subject, also a particular way of understanding the generalised other and the social context.

The islander's discourse builds on the practice of relating as conocidos. It is in this discourse that the subjects, potentially located as conocidos, exist, insofar as people know each other, they are acquainted with each other and have a record of continuity of each other's lives. In this discourse, the subject is defined in reference to others, by a given location in space and through a given past in time. The citizen's discourse, on the other hand, relies on a different meaning of the subject and hence of social relations. In this discourse the subject is insular, not by context but by its quality as an individual. This subject is understood as unique, unattached and free.

By taking a focused look at how the two discourses found expression in the respondents' talk and the conflicts they articulated when accessing them, we can extract understandings of issues on individuality and citizenship. I aim to theorise about how the conflicts pertaining to relating as conocidos are defined by these discursive tensions, and how the subjects, specifically the islanders, maintain this practice despite (or because of) these conflicts.

a. Relating as Conocidos Within the Islander's Discourse

Relating as conocidos is an activity by which people re-invent and locate the other by giving her/him a position within a discourse of inter-action (see Foucault, 1981). The participants in this form of relating act within a public arena. They belong to a discursive space which is constructed in reference to who the subject *becomes* in a given interaction. This relationship explicitly ascribes meaning to the subject in reference to the other. The discursive pattern it takes, as informed through the strategies, follows a need to locate this other within a space of closeness. Through negotiated action, by talk, the partners in practice provide each other with grounds to engage in a process that goes from the outside – the unfamiliar – to locating the generalised other inside, making them

'known ones'. Relating as conocidos within the islander's discourse requires a location of the subjects within an 'internal' world, and in positions that articulate significances of trust and reliance.

In this discourse, to relate with others as conocidos implies being connected, having friends around. By means of establishing positions, relating as conocidos implies a hierarchy within which power is made present. As such, the practice is set within discursively created power relations, where this power is distributed through people located in subject positions of providers. Thus, in this discourse, providers need to be taken care of, as the subject is intrinsically dependent on them. There are also certain codes which need to be followed. These codes are maintained and reproduced by the community in which the relationship finds expression. In this context, the subject and the other are held accountable by a pervasive surveillance. This community surveillance makes the partners relating experts in gaze avoidance and experts in the performance of the strategies. The undertaking of the codes is then ensured by the surveillance, which acts upon the subjects by making them perpetuate and abide with these codes.

The islander's discourse introduces relating as conocidos within past and tradition. The subjects engaging acquire their meaning through a shared contextual history. They are defined through their social position in their community, which is informed by the markers. The practice calls upon a discursively negotiated meaning of the subjects in a given interaction. This discourse informs the practice about issues of tradition (such as the local past) in the formation of selfhood. This is the case due to the understanding that the position a subject takes within a given interaction is dependent on the discursive position ascribed to the other, the partner in the relation.

Thus, the islander's discourse presents relating as conocidos as trans-actional and transitional. It is trans-actional because it happens across different episodic instances, which are bound with meaning through the continuity of relations. It is transitional because it happens through the subject positions occupied by the partners within the process of exchange. Therefore its episodic and processual character connotes the two parallel understandings of the relation as (i) an exchange performed by the implications of trust and closeness; (ii) an exchange with a certain dimension of intentionality. The practice relies on a discursive performance that is negotiated between those that take part in an episodic exchange. Problems arise, a situation is created, and it is in this

context that relating as conocidos is discursively constructed. Relating as conocidos is, within the islander's discourse, an asset. Within this discourse, engaging in the practice can be an instrument of claiming fame, getting things done, solving problems and, overall, a way of accessing resources.

b. Relating as Conocidos Within the Citizen's Discourse

Relating as conocidos passes from being an asset (in the islander's discourse) to becoming a liability in the citizen's discourse. Given the context of this thesis, the citizen's discourse finds expression by the presence of local and central institutions on the island. In this context, the institutions come to represent the hand of the State. Hence, these local entities work, in the frame of the thesis, by enhancing the conflicts in the discourses. They are valuable because of the way they are located as mediators between the formalised world, in the citizen's discourse, and the community world, in the islander's discourse.

The meaning of institutions rests upon the concept of citizenship. However, their presence in everyday life is quite recent in the context of the island[101]. The existence of – and insistence on – the practice of relating as conocidos reflects how this meaning is still in the making. Moreover, the concept of citizenship is at odds with how this practice is perceived. Hence, these issues, or rather, the way they find expression in this social context, lay at the core of the conflicts when accounting for relating as conocidos.

The citizens, as the subjects of this discourse, are the liable entities stating what is adequate and appropriate. They are subjects endowed with a set of rights and responsibilities. These subjects are defined by their lack of strings, which rests upon a formalised democratic system that grants them independence and freedom. Hence, the citizens are perceived as independent entities, individuals whose actions are regulated by the figure of a state. These citizens have duties which they enact following democratic regulations in an already prescribed way. However, the duties and responsibilities of the citizens only attain a public domain. The state laws and regulations dictate the conduct of these subjects by making them accountable in public.

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[101] See Chapter IV.

Thus, by following the prescribed regulations, the citizens can perform public relations in an 'unattached' way. They have a commitment to the State, where deviations from the prescribed conduct are punished by its law. Within this public domain, they are required to engage in interactions in an uncommitted and unattached way.

In addition to this public formal life, the citizen is endowed with a private informal domain. S/he is granted privacy, as a right, a space in which to enact intimacy. In private, s/he chooses whether or not to engage in relations with others on her/his own terms. This subject has the option of marking the boundaries and deciding upon the level of involvement s/he is ready (by choice) to commit to others. This sense of volition grants the civic subject the capacity to achieve, to improve and to succeed by her/himself. The capability to express a narrative of success is closely linked to the enactment of agency which, in this discourse, demands of the civic subject a drive to perform her/his independence. Moreover, in the domain of the island, this citizen is represented by the outsider who is, most of the time, a transient subject with no wish to create, or chance of developing, roots.

Therefore, the subjects of this discourse assert how relations should be carried out in public, by providing a different understanding of the generalised other. They have a role in qualifying relating as conocidos insofar as they convey different ways of relating (in public and in private). Relationships here need to be defined in either/or terms by which the civic subject establishes a boundary between her/himself and others. In public, relationships follow the formalised procedure set down by the State, who holds the citizen accountable; in private, the citizen is able to choose the extent of commitment to, and the level of involvement in, her/his relationships.

The citizen's discourse introduces us to a 'democratisation' of the public arena. This discourse provides its subjects with the means of defining the way relationships are understood, constructed and negotiated. In this manner, the democratisation of the public arena supplies the essential discursive resources for the democratisation of personal relationships. The formalisation of society provides the means of defining relationships as 'pure' (Giddens, 1992), which can be easily terminated at will, as the partners define them with clear boundaries and contractual obligations, in public as well as in private. The democratisation of the public domain is based on equality (which is said to guarantee an equivalent access to resources regardless of birth or preference). Its formalised procedures are informed by Enlightenment ideas and guide relations only

within this discourse. In this discourse, the practice of relating as conocidos must not exist.

The legitimacy of the arguments pertaining to the citizen's discourse requires the definition of relating as conocidos as corrupt (despite the islanders' codes of generosity and reciprocation). The conflicting understanding of this practice in the island context reflects the making of a new way of life which requires formalisation and demands accountability of a different sort from that of the islander's discourse (i.e. to the State rather than to the community). The islanders' conflicts in rendering visible this practice within the citizen's discourse show how this formalisation of the social realm is still at odds with people's understandings. The ambivalence and struggles are present in their discourse. Relating as conocidos shows how interactions rest largely on social contacts rather than on fixed entities who regularise public interactions. This practice is anchored in a different set of codes, but is undergoing transformation. The way individuals enact the practice within and outside the institutional domain conveys altogether different understandings of the social subject.

c. Convergence of Discourses and Conflicts in Relating as Conocidos

The practice of relating as conocidos within the islander's discourse presented subjects defined through their interactions with others. In this discursive practice, the different episodic instances were endowed with meaning by the continuity and historicity of social relationships in the field in which this practice was performed.

The subject of the islander's discourse performed life in public, whilst the citizen's life was regulated in public, but possessed a private domain. In the life of the islander, despite the central state's regulations that prescribe power, there are different regulations which make people publicly accountable for their actions (informed by the codes of practice and enforced by the community surveillance). Hence, there is a juridical system, but there are also active agents, gaze enforcers. It is because everyone in this context has the means of acting as a judge of others and of her/himself that the codes of practice within the islander's discourse have a hold on people. In this discourse, accountability to others renders valid the 'the way things are'.

The citizen, with the formalisation of the public sphere, does not need to be held accountable, insofar as the duties and responsibilities remain in the public, outside the

private, domain. There is a set of regulations which need to be followed by the citizen; if this procedural arrangement is carried out, the citizen is free from being accountable for relationships in the public domain (but s/he is accountable to the State). The citizen is understood in a world in which her/his actions could be to a certain extent impersonal, insofar as, through claims of privacy, s/he is not subjected to the constraints of the gaze.

Hence privacy, as a space which the civic subject possesses, does not have the same significance in the islander's discourse. The concept of the private space is only valid within the citizen's discourse. In the islander's discourse, the discreet subject, the self, is dependent on others. These others i) have a part in defining the subject (the other as the ancestor), ii) enforce performances (the other as the enactor of surveillance) and iii) negotiates who the subject is in a given relational exchange (the other as the partner when relating as conocidos).

The islander's continuity is in contrast to the citizen's episodic existence. The former's accountability to personalised others is opposed to the citizen's need for uncommitted relationships and her/his accountability to the State. In contrast to the islander's sense of duty to others provided by codes on generalised reciprocation, the citizen discharges her/his duties by following regulations, but gaining independence. The rooted (and constrained) subject of the islander's discourse is diametrically opposed to the uprooted citizen, misplaced and in search of identity. This civic subject struggles to find meaning and coherence from a self-referential point. Thus, in its constant re-creation as up-rooted, the subject has no baggage to carry forwards. S/he is forced to see life with her/himself at its centre. The struggle to find an identity to resolve her/his misplacement points towards a search for continuance and coherence in life.

The citizen's world needs to be orderly, predictable and determined (just as the islander's is but with the use of different discursive resources). However, this predictability has voided the subject of meaning. The lack of continuity of the citizen situates her/him in search of consistency. The independence of this subject, the lack of roots, provides her/him with the ability to be subjected to constant re-creation. However, this constant re-creation has made the life of the subject episodic and impermanent (Bauman, 1996). In this world, the only way to gain consistency is by creating a narrative of individual betterment, which ironically isolates the subject by cutting her/his links to the other. This is evidenced in our Western context by the weight (and number) of available therapies and experiences of self-discovery and self-

development. Thus, the islander, to engage in the citizen's discourse, needs to become the transient and unattached citizen, uncommitted and independent.

Despite the discussion of these dichotomies, the extensive hold of the citizen's discourse reflects a change in the making of the island society. This change does open up unsettling situations. Whilst relating as conocidos in everyday interactions is not a cause of conflict, it does create problems when the dealings involve local institutions. In this discursive space of transition, relating as conocidos is open to abuse (from the perspective of the citizen's discourse). In the islander's discourse, where power is placed in the hands of local providers, these subjects seem to use this practice in order to create debts and enforce accountability on the islanders (who have to pay them back with votes). It is not clear whether these providers are inflicting accountability or enacting within the islander's discourse through links of trust impressed by people on them.

The islander's discourse and the citizen's discourse show how the generalised other, the partner engaging in interactions, is undergoing transformations. The place this other has in the life (and hence discourse) of the islander is far greater than the sphere of action ascribed by the citizen's discourse. The practice of relating as conocidos conveys these issues clearly. In the islander's discourse the generalised other becomes a source of reference in the practice of the relation, to the extent that s/he speaks *of* the subject[102]. Also, the other, as the intangible gaze enforcer, determines the way the islander's life is carried out, or at least, performed. Tales of dependency, generosity and reliance guide the life of the islanders and are expressed by the practice of relating as conocidos.

By contrast, the citizen's discourse presents a civic subject who is loaded with responsibilities, duties and rights. However, this subject engages in relational practices in a distinctive manner. The relational practices are normalised insofar as the civic agent is defined as a disciplined subject (Foucault, 1977). In this discourse, the State, as an anonymous institution, guides conduct and creates the modern subject: it subjects the individual to the technologies of the self. However, the subject of late modernity is endowed with an excess of self-governance, which leads her/him towards isolation, and in search of identity (Rose, 1999). The life of the civic subject is not related to

[102] As conveyed by the saying used by Ernesto Perez in Chapter VI: 'tell me who you are with and I'll tell you who you are' (Y7; 115:127).

personalised others, surnames do not stick to the subject anymore. This otherwise liberating experience has come to engage the subject in a constant search for consistency, roots and lasting meaning. This perennial subject, in constant reconstitution, finds her/himself lost in an identity-less world through which s/he passes but takes nothing and leaves no mark (see Bauman, 1996). The institutions provided the subject with the guarantee of individual success by ensuring equality, against the exchange of preference and reciprocation characteristic of the islander's discursive domain. However, these same bodies come to represent, through the citizen's discourse, the enforcers of normalisation.

Hence, the practice of relating as conocidos is enacted in the sphere of the public, in everyday life, which conveys different meanings in the two discourses. Within the islander's discourse the subject struggles to make the other a 'known one' by finding a link to bring her/him from being unknown to become related by kindred or friendship. By transforming the unknown into a 'known one' the practice can be enacted, as the partners can then perform trust and assume reciprocation. In the world of the islander's discourse, relationships are carried out with the presumption of trust. Relating as conocidos (when enacted with institutional providers) is then tied up with reducing uncertainty, as an expected consequence of the transient situation of the island. The islanders, when faced with an unfamiliar or alien system, tend to resort to others, the known ones. Even though there are formalised ways of accessing resources and solving problems, the subject chooses to adopt the code of practice validated by the traditional understanding of their context. The subject resorts to the islander's discourse by accessing those who are accountable to her/him, and thus bypasses the delusive modern society proposed by the citizen's discourse, of which s/he still does not feel part. The practice of relating as conocidos shows the islanders as social agents where interactions (and, hence, trust, generosity and reciprocation) are favoured over efficiency and equality.

3. FURTHER DISCUSSION

The ambivalence towards the acknowledgement of the practice of relating as conocidos is relevant in explaining social changes taking place on the island of La Gomera and, to certain extent, in wider contexts (such as Spain). These conflicts are linked to a

transition, a historical shift – such as the move from the strong centralised dictatorship towards democracy – from one worldview and set of habits to another. The trend and pace of these changes might be unclear, but what comes across by the co-existence of the two discourses is that there is not a consensual ending.

The two discourses underpin two different forms of social order*ing*, which propose different understandings of the direction of progress. They present different discursive stories to achieve betterment in the island context. The citizen's discourse is based on ideas of modernity where freedom of action and social (institutional) control are at the core. This understanding of society is anchored on the figure of the State as the main provider (see Hetherington, 1997). Moreover, this discourse is being challenged nowadays by its subjects, as the competent civic subject in her/his search for meaning has undergone continuous transformation. These transformations have consequently uprooted the subject and enforced a continuous generation of meaning making/seeking processes. The islander's discourse endorses a different idea of social ordering which is grounded in the experience of social relationships. This discourse is based on (performed) trust and anchored on the island community as a space of reference.

The practice of relating as conocidos shows a carefully maintained balance between the discourses. The islanders already maintain a system in which people are held accountable for their requests, where reciprocation is understood as a way of caring for others. Tradition in the island context informs the islanders of the need to keep up chains of reciprocation. However, new forms of understanding are permeating the context of the island via the outsiders and the younger generations of Gomerans (who studied or worked outside the island). These new understandings are attached to a formalised system which provides regulations. The islanders can now relate as conocidos by adjusting this practice in order to perform demands and denounce abuses, making it also a kind of internal regulation by calling upon another form of accountability (to the State rather than to personalised others in the community).

The maintenance of this practice within both discourses reflects a transformation, but provides a way forward which needs a careful balance between them. Whilst the islander's discourse ensures continuity in the life of the islanders, and a way of allowing action by calling upon generalised reciprocation and holding people accountable, the citizen's discourse ensures a way of disclaiming abuses. This becomes evident in the difficult position occupied by political players in the local context. They are

accountable to others through this practice, and the islanders require them to be fair, to engage in generalised reciprocation. However, they are also accountable to the State, which upholds the value of equality and requires them to be uncommitted in their relationships with others. This State also provides discursive resources to the islanders who, in this context, see themselves as endowed with a set of rights. These rights permit the islanders to put forward demands, rather than ask for favours. Thus, their politicians have to fulfil two different sorts of accountability, in a formal way to the State and in an informal way to their community.

Relating as conocidos touches contemporary issues such as modernity, with its search for the misplaced subject, and the maintenance of traditional customs and identities. This practice shows a way of regulating and transforming interactions in the context of the island. Against assumptions of a unified modernity, relating as conocidos shows tradition as a process tied to everyday experiences and a shared local history. Moreover, the permanence, granted by tradition, guarantees a meaningful present. It highlights the way in which the assumptions of modernity are subject to interpretation in varied contexts. The way social groups have made sense of a democratisation of their public arena, and the way they have endorsed meaning in democratically embedded institutions, show the recreated and agency-led character of social reality. The resilience of this practice shows the extent to which the social subject is able to make sense of history in order to accommodate changes in the present. Relating as conocidos shows how, within continuance, there is variance without emptying the past of its sphere of influence.

The essence of relating as conocidos (and its academic interest) as a conflictual social practice, then, can be filtered by the tensions provoked by these two discourses. In the island context the tensions are openly displayed with the transition from traditional forms of society to the introduction of alternative, and ever-changing, social structures. In the world of the modern, relating as conocidos can no longer be displayed, as favouring people goes against the essence of assumptions of equality. However, the presence of the relationship shows how the transition represents dialectical tensions which allow transformation and the enactment of agency. In this context, the disguise of the relationship gains importance, as the refinement of this formalised modern world makes the islanders feel that they are guilty of something, perhaps because the assumptions and constraints of this social order are still alien to them. This leads to a

generalised sense of wrongdoing by which relating as conocidos passes from being understood as an activity that provides cohesion, to a practice which needs to be 'misrecognised', performed uncovered. In this context, the subject of the islander's discourse still resorts to the local practice of relating as conocidos. However, this subject is thus understood as being sly, s/he challenges by tricking the formal system of rigour. These challenges, despite being prosecuted by law, are still socially encouraged and rewarded.

These issues can provide further understanding of the theoretical concepts elaborated upon in this thesis (specifically those mentioned in the first chapter). Loosely, whilst an option for carrying out this research would have been to locate this practice within an ethical frame informed by conceptions of modernity (and hence the citizen's discourse), the choice was to look within. By rendering visible this practice, it was possible to gain insight into its expression within a different discourse, located in the community. This research shows how ethical terms, such as equality, are contextual and non-unified. Fairness, in the islander's discourse, was a value to maintain which needed as a referent the continuity of relationships. The two discourses explored provided a contextual understanding of these issues, by providing two different points of reference, two ways of understanding relationships. Concepts such as 'illegality', 'nepotism' and 'corruption' gain a relative value by being located within a specific discourse, that of the citizen. An awareness of their discursive reality could eventually facilitate the implementation of changes by opening up spaces of resolution, which allow for movement and transformation.

The manner in which the practice of relating as conocidos finds expression, the choice of disguise (pertaining to the strategies endowing trust and closeness, or pertaining to its conflictual stance within the islander's and the citizen's discourse) varies, but it permeates everyday society. This relationship elicits sets of ambiguous meanings within different historically located discourses, which vary from the vision of the relationship as an accepted practice in caring for others or as an unacceptable form of corruption. The different meanings provided by these discourses have resultant social stances towards its practice, and wider repercussions on the way the agent makes sense of the world.

4. POSTSCRIPT

The journey of this thesis finishes by revisiting the story. Through it, and as explained at the beginning, we can finally pinpoint the issues explored with some specificity. The story provides the link between the theory and the fieldwork and demonstrates that what was difficult to account for before has now become knowledge with some level of independence and of practical usefulness.

a. A Story Retold

Doña Dolores Padilla and Colonel Roberto Padron grew up in Hermigua, a small community on the island of La Gomera. Despite both living elsewhere they still shared some contextual markers, such as both being from a family of landowners. At some point in space and time their families' paths must have met. Maybe their fathers or grandfathers did business together, or maybe they were related, remotely, by kin. Thus, there were some grounds for using the markers of continuity and perpetuity.

Doña Dolores had three children. The two eldest, a year apart in age, were about to do their military service and she wanted to make sure they had an easy enough placement close to home. In order to solve her problem, she decided to request a favour from Colonel Roberto Padron. She positioned herself as an appealer within the islander's discourse. By resorting to strategies of localisation she located the Colonel as a provider. Among those strategies of localisation, she is likely to have used the strategy of anchoring, and thus she located the Colonel within the same spatial and temporal markers. Her request could have been understood by the Colonel as a challenge, performed by a strategy of positioning. This put the Colonel in the position of being accountable within their community context. In showing a willingness to help and in granting the favour, the Colonel maintained a position of privilege within the community.

Given the nature of her request (which was not to avoid military service altogether), Doña Dolores would have been able to deny the favour or to speak about it within the islander's discourse as an act of good will by following the principles of generosity and reliance. After all, as the convention of dependency conveys, to do favours is just part of life, everyone is dependent on others at some point in time. Also, to be generous is not only desirable, it is prescribed by the community surveillance, just because of what others may say about you otherwise. In addition, maybe one of Doña Dolores's relatives might have

helped one of Colonel's in the past, and this was his chance of repaying, or at least, of performing generosity.

Doña Dolores was also aware that, by requesting the favour, she would be accountable to the Colonel by general reciprocation. As a way of showing her gratitude, she offered a bottle of whisky – though obviously only as a token. More importantly, she made herself available to the Colonel and his daughters. However, the markers of continuity and perpetuity also forced accountability on the rest of her relatives, the direct and extended family. The youngest members of her family, who were supposed to help the Colonel's daughters integrate within their group of friends in the village, failed to do so. Despite Doña Dolores's sense of accountability, and despite her relatives' duty to reciprocate and behave appropriately following the communally prescribed code of practice, helping the daughters proved to be a bit difficult. They did not engage further with the young people in their father's community.

Even though the façade of friendship between the Colonel and Doña Dolores remained, when the latter contacted the former in order to find a placement for her youngest son, the request was not met. The Colonel, accessing what may be called the citizen's discourse, conveyed the problems he would face by favouring someone. Times have changed, he would have said, and with this statement he converted the possibility of granting a favour into a demand, which within the citizen's discourse, was impossible to fulfil.

b. A Projection of Practice

This thesis is about relating as conocidos. This form of relating refers to the practice of granting favours and implies the consequent necessity of being held accountable. The research showed that the phenomena involved are sufficiently coherent to be subjected to systematic study, as well as sufficiently recoverable despite relying on concealment. Moreover, relating as conocidos has proved to be resilient despite contextual changes, which undermined the codes of practice upon which the relationship relies. In fact, this form of relating maintains its practice by incorporating the changes and challenges of people following a different practice, in particular that informed by the citizen's discourse. Thus, nowadays, islanders are able to choose either to relate as conocidos or to opt out of that by way of the citizen's discourse and by relying on the formal

structure it supplies. This, in a way, improves the practice of relating as conocidos, as it provides some sort of boundary that (i) informs potential appealers about the kind of requests which may, or may not, be granted, and (ii) gives the providers a way of denying requests.

This practice has been shown to have some visible properties: (i) it necessitates a continuity in social relationships which provide information on the markers, (ii) it induces conduct through a set of codes, such as generosity and a presumption of trust, and (iii) it is regulated by a communally prescribed surveillance. Thus, relating as conocidos within the islander's discourse relies on a regulative component that is communally agreed upon, and holds people accountable in the eyes of others. When things go wrong, when matters cannot be settled and when abuses are committed, providers are able to access the citizen's discourse and denounce 'inappropriate' behaviour through a normalised, and judicial, system.

Given that relating as conocidos has proven to be a practice that can be rendered visible, there are reasons to assume a possibility of generalisation. It seems reasonable to say that the knowledge implied by the practice can be transferred to other contexts, as long as these show some permanence (thus some form of markers can be applicable), surveillance and conventions (which would enforce and inform conduct), and hence allow the practice of a set of, maybe different, strategies.

In other words, it does seem possible to identify the presence of this practice in contexts other than an island. Further research into the practice of relating as conocidos within formalised and normalised institutional contexts is needed. Even though this practice is contested, through the citizen's discourse, in such contexts, by understanding its process and by acknowledging the constructed character of norms (informed by notions of disciplinary power) such research can still provide further avenues of exploration. For example, in urban settings, the access to personal contacts provides efficient channels to solve problems (such as finding the appropriate person to fill a given post in an organisation). Further research could focus on whether, in less hierarchical social systems, where people are more mobile, the partners in the exchange would still need to follow a set of codes and enforce some sense of accountability. In societies without physical boundaries of closure (such as an island), there would be some symbolic ones, so people can perform trust, assume general reciprocation and thus displace the

accountability for singular exchanges from the partners into some form of code endorsed in a social manner (for example 'back-scratching').

This research can also provide further understanding of other, possibly more general, processes at play in a community. The markers have had an input in giving information on how to interpret people's actions at a community level. Moreover, the codes of practice, and especially the existence of surveillance, accountability and reciprocation are instruments which need to be accounted for when studying webs of support or implementing projects on community development. The performance of trust and the micro-mechanisms of power give a plot to relating as conocidos. These two elements, and the outcome of their balance, define how the practice of interactions will be experienced. In contexts where the balance is tilted towards power relations, there would be a predominance of experiences of social rigidity. However, this rigidity is not permanent but rather in constant negotiation. In these negotiations, trust in, and dependency on, others would be important elements in, for example, relations of patronage. Hence, although, to some extent, any form of patronage will find equivalent echoes in this practice, the value of this study is that of conceding that this one is parallel and different, by acknowledging the significance of processes when carrying out interactions.

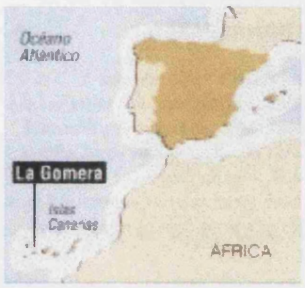
The study of the practice of relating as conocidos provides awareness of the issues at play as processes and practices which we all use. As long as there is a certain group of people who have in common a certain spatial domain which has been constant across time (for example, a private school or a neighbourhood), a continuance of relationships can be assumed and valued. With it, a performance of trust, an assurance of generalised reciprocation and, possibly, the creation of some form of group surveillance would endow this practice with its need for concealment. People would not need to make explicit an exchange of favours but would behave as if there were grounds to make requests under the assumption that, when the need arose, they would be able to reciprocate in an adequate manner.

Relating as conocidos, as a practice, finds expression in current societies insofar as people need to engage in interactions with others. Assumptions of trust and general reciprocation are values which we all strive to achieve and fulfil. The practice of relating as conocidos, despite its need for concealment, portrays an understanding of relationships that subjects are willing to encourage. Hence, this mode of practice can be

seen as manifesting and reinforcing various social bonds which, due to its ambiguity, can be displayed as kinship, friendship, solidarity, co-operation and antagonism, amongst others. Relating as conocidos is then a valuable tool in taking the pulse of any given social situation. Despite the abuses this practice may represent, at least when interpreted within a citizen's discourse, relating as conocidos may knit people together. It also allows researchers to clarify and, in a sense, magnify the hidden features of the social soul.

APPENDIX I

ZOOMING IN
MAPS OF LA GOMERA



APPENDIX II

THE CHARACTERS
DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVIEWEES

All the names of the people interviewed have been changed. The removal of the names, occupations, and surnames had to be done very carefully. In such a restricted space as the one formed by the social characters of the island, recognition in some cases is difficult to avoid. However, the description of the respondents is necessary as some of the issues the respondents raised are directly related to their personal history or focus of interest. This description will aid in contextualising the research. Their lives are, to a great extent, representative of the lives of many other islanders (for example, many elders have emigrated, many families live across the two communities of San Sebastián and Hermigua and many young people are have studied elsewhere). Altogether, their descriptions personalise the research and ground it in the life of people.

1. GROUP OF ELDERS

1. **Nela Pelaez** [with her neighbour as a nexus]: An old woman of around 69 years of age. Doña Nela was brought up and married in Hermigua, and her daughter married and moved to San Sebastián. Since then, she has lived with her daughter during the winter. In the summer, as the weather in San Sebastián gets too hot, the whole family moves to Hermigua. This pattern is repeated in many families.

2. **Felipe Páez** [with neighbour as a nexus]: 68 year-old man. He is from Hermigua, and emigrated with his brother and many other members of the community to Venezuela, where he lived for a significant number of years. He returned to La Gomera, but some members of his family stayed there. He enjoys hanging around the main square with his friends and is known for being good at declaiming *romances*. He has a good memory, and, upon request, delivers these *romances* to the joy of the people.

3. **Erfidio Hernandez:** 65 year-old man. He defines himself as a true Gomeran. He has spent all his life on the island, where he worked as a teacher. He defines himself as a hunter and, as such, he knows the island inside out. He is also a good *silbador* (whistler).
4. **Mariquita Rita**: 63 year-old woman. She is a shop owner and one of the few of her generation who still remains, on a constant basis, on the island. Her shop is one of the meeting points in the community. In the evenings there is always a group of women sitting around with her, knitting and exchanging tips and patterns for jumpers. On some occasions when doing the fieldwork I hung around there and listened to their conversation.

5. **Pili Sandoval**: 67 year-old woman with a good knowledge of Gomeran folk dance. She lives half of the year in the capital of Tenerife (Santa Cruz) and in the summer she moves to Hermigua. She is very involved in the life of the island and is held in high regard among the islanders.

6. **Don Anastasio** [with his acquaintance as a nexus]: 72 year-old man who has a small bar where he provides drink and some food (cheese, bread and whatever his wife cooked for the day) to whoever passes by. He was widowed when he was around 60 and decided to go to Venezuela to 'look for a wife'. Whilst he was away he left the bar and his house to a couple from the Spanish mainland who, without a contract, just made some monthly payments. He came back with his new wife (a lady in her early sixties, also from La Gomera, who had emigrated to Venezuela when she was younger) to find that the tenants refused to move out. He had to prosecute them and the process took around four years until finally they were able to regain their house and business.

7. **Maria Fragoso** [with her sister's sister-in-law as a nexus]: 62 year-old woman who is located in Hermigua but goes almost every evening to San Sebastián for a walk and to run her errands. She is very outspoken and articulate. She has a reputation for causing trouble within the community as she holds animosities for a long time and confronts people very often.

8. **Manuela Ayala**: 64 year-old woman who owns a small bar on the periphery of Hermigua. She always welcomes everybody, even after the kitchen has closed. She knows many people and appears to be a very loyal friend, from the affection people showed when walking into the restaurant.

9. **Sita Plasencia**: 66 year-old woman who lives all year round in Hermigua. She never married but is used to having a big family to take care of. She has spent all her life taking care of her parents in their old age, older uncles and aunts and nieces and nephews in the family.

10. **Onelio Mendez**: 67 year-old man who lives in Hermigua. He is now retired but when he was working he used to live during the winter in San Sebastián, where he has many friends. He is a good story teller and has a reputation for knowing a lot of 'old tales' about the islanders, specially tales of the evil-eye and witchcraft.

11. **Eustaquio Febles:** 69 year-old man who lives in San Sebastián and has close relatives in Hermigua. He knows a lot about the history of the Gomerans, and has a good collection of books and old documents related to important events on the islands (La Gomera and the rest of the Canaries).

12. **Baltasar Suarez** [with acquaintance as nexus]: A 69 year-old man who is originally from Chipude. He has spent most of his life in Hermigua and in the southern part of the Island. He is one of the few remaining whistling experts and has done a lot of work on the island to keep the tradition alive. During most of his lifetime he was a *medianero,* and proved one of the most articulate respondents and a very sensitive man.

13. **Rucho** ['Control group' and discourse analysis]: 61 year-old man who lives in San Sebastián. He has been the president of a neighbourhood association for a long time. It is important to notice that a neighbourhood is a recent concept on the island, in fact it is only applicable to San Sebastián, as the rest of the island has not grown and keeps the structure of a village.

14. **Ramon Tadeo** ['Control group' and discourse analysis]: 66 year-old man who owns a bar in San Sebastián. He is also a healer, specialising in muscle strains. His gift

(his words) has passed down through his father's family and is now an old family tradition. He is now training his grand-daughter, who also has it. He is also the president of a club in San Sebastián.

2. YOUNG GROUP

The people in this group all know the island intimately and have chosen either to live there or to keep close links with it. Generally, they live there, their families and friends are there, or they come to visit regularly.

1. **Eva Padilla:** A 28 year-old woman. She is from San Sebastián but moved to Tenerife when she started her university degree. She studied child psychology and at the time of the interview she was unemployed and quite reluctant to find a job on La Gomera, where she feels obliged to be, as her parents are there.

2. **Paco the Sailor:** A 31 year-old male who has lived most of his life on the island. He is called 'the sailor' after the bar he runs, which was his father's. He left the island to enter a specialist brigade training unit in the Spanish Army. He quit after some time but, as this unit has a reputation of being tough, Paco is still looked upon with some respect.

3. **Hernando Almenara:** A 32 year-old male. He is from San Sebastián, although he moved to Tenerife to pursue his studies. He studied law and he practices in La Gomera. He is an ambitious young man. Very outspoken and receptive, he sees his future in politics (although never acknowledges it), but considers it problematic if he wants to remain professionally independent on the island.

4. **Pilar Vergara:** A 32 year-old female doctor originally from Hermigua. She works in a hospital in Tenerife and still tries to go back as often as possible to La Gomera, as her parents are still living there. She has to balance the demands of work and family, and on many occasions she is a reference point for any Gomeran who is taken to hospital.

5. **Tomas Gonzalez:** A 34 year-old male paediatrician who is from Hermigua but lives in San Sebastián. He studied in mainland Spain and, unlike most young people, was always certain he wanted to live on the island.

6. **Pepe Morales**: 33 year-old who lives in San Sebastián and work as a national park guide. He has a lot of contact with tourists and knows a lot about the island. He enjoys living in La Gomera but acknowledges its shortcomings.

7. **Ernesto Perez:** 33 year-old male bank clerk who lives in San Sebastián and studied in Tenerife. He recently moved back to the island and found it difficult to fit back into a small community.

8. **Paloma Osorio:** 32 year-old female lawyer who lives with her family in Hermigua during the summer and in San Sebastián in winter. She studied in Tenerife and, at the time of the interview, was trying to get a job on the island.

3. THE OUTSIDERS

These are people who mainly work in the institutional domain. They have been referred to as the outsiders, or non-conocidos. They are people who have never integrated into the island and have come with the purpose of exerting change. They have a fixed idea of how Gomerans are: their weaknesses and good points. They talk about the islander from an outside perspective, in a third person. They are subjected to criticism on the part of the islanders and generally lack strong relationships with them.

1. **Ana:** A 34 year-old woman. She is single and originally from the neighbouring island of Tenerife. She moved to La Gomera in 1993, where she works as a social worker in the Ministry Office of Social Services. Her duties are mainly to attend to abuses and problems where small children are involved. She is also in charge of processing issues related to pension funds and other central government administration services.

2. **Father Jeronimo:** A 40 year-old man. He is a Catholic priest and was born in the south of Tenerife. He is outspoken and very dynamic. During the time he had been working in La Gomera (5 years) he had already formed a team of young professionals. He helped obtain EU funds in order to work on issues of development on the island. He has strong links within Caritas (a NGO) and is also involved with the old people's residence on the island.

3. **Juanita:** A 32 year-old woman. She is single and originally from the island, although she has spent most of her life in Tenerife. She is a biologist and works as part of a team in charge of the National Park of the island. This institution is centrally regulated and one of the most confronted and resented by the islanders. Her job is precisely to regulate the relation and use of the park with the inhabitants (at an institutional and physical level).

4. **Sara:** A 33 year-old woman. She has recently married and (like her partner) is from mainland Spain. She works as a psychologist in a woman's association. She has a harsh northern Spanish accent and was very outspoken in reference to the discrimination she has had to put up with on the island.

5. **Bartolome Fragoso:** A 41 year-old male who – although not originally from La Gomera – has lived there for about 13 years. He does not consider himself an islander. He claims that although his life is easy on the island, he has to pay with the level of inefficacy of the islanders. He has worked as an agricultural specialist, assisting landowners on what to produce and how. He was initially paid by the Spanish central government, but now receives his salary from the Canarian autonomous government.

6. **Encarna:** A 35 year-old female. She is from the Spanish mainland and has lived on the island around 6 years. She had fallen in love with a Gomeran and wanted to stay on the island permanently. At the time, she was involved in a project on development. She claims to have the necessary knowledge of the islanders and their ways of being.

7. **Julie Douglas:** A 55 year-old woman. She is German and moved to La Gomera about 20 years ago. She has problems speaking the language and initially moved to

the island to 'spread the word of the Lord'. She is an Evangelist and in her interview she talked about the hardships of living on an island and about the difficult duties she had when she first came. She explained how she overcame the suspicions of the islanders and reflected about their ways of understanding life.

8. **Pili**: A 30 year-old woman (approximately). She is the general administrator and director of an association. She is from Tenerife and studied in mainland Spain, and only came back to the Canaries in order to found this association. She had a very critical view on the islanders.

APPENDIX III

TALK CONTENT
FIRST ANALYSIS OF INSIDERS' INTERVIEWS

1. TABLES OF CODES

The following tables present the codes which were included in the first analysis of the insiders' interviews. They show the number of times a code appears in a particular interview (frequency) and the presence of the code across different respondents (occurrence). The frequency, in itself, is not necessarily indicative of the relevance of the code across respondents. In this regard, the occurrence of codes is more significant.

a. Group of Elders

CODES	RESPONDENTS												TOTALS
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Accountancy of past	1	5	3	0	4	0	6	0	1	4	1	1	26
Being and being able	4	3	2	3	5	0	15	2	3	5	1	3	46
Being foxy	5	0	0	0	0	6	2	2	0	1	0	3	19
Chants	7	7	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	20
Continuity of cycle	1	0	2	4	6	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	18
Divisions	6	2	0	0	1	0	3	0	1	1	1	2	17
Formal vs. informal	0	0	0	1	1	16	8	6	0	1	1	11	45
Geographical domain	2	2	4	1	4	3	4	0	1	1	2	2	26
Goodness	5	0	0	2	8	5	0	3	0	0	1	3	27
Help from locals	0	0	1	1	0	6	11	0	0	1	0	9	29
Looking down	2	0	7	1	2	3	0	1	0	3	1	1	21
Needs	1	0	1	1	1	11	5	0	0	0	0	1	21
Order and structures	0	1	5	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	7	17
Outside: escape	2	1	3	0	5	4	0	2	0	1	0	1	19
Outside: invade	6	1	2	0	0	4	1	1	1	1	3	5	25
Past making present	1	0	1	0	1	1	7	1	0	0	1	2	15
People know	9	0	4	2	7	15	8	3	3	1	0	6	58
Political domain	4	2	0	0	0	1	6	0	1	1	0	0	15
Popular belief	8	0	3	2	4	0	0	1	1	2	5	1	27
Resemblance	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	3	4	11
Scarcity	0	0	1	0	0	3	2	0	0	3	0	0	9
Secrets	2	0	0	2	1	11	4	1	1	1	0	3	26
Social life	1	0	1	3	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	10
Social memory	6	4	2	0	8	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	24
Tourists don't count	1	0	3	0	1	9	2	0	0	0	1	6	23
Tradition vs. change	5	0	4	2	2	3	2	0	0	9	0	8	35
Ways of living	3	0	6	1	6	9	2	3	2	2	0	5	39
Words are dangerous	2	0	0	0	0	4	3	1	0	0	0	1	11

b. Young Group

CODES	RESPONDENTS								TOTALS
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Accountancy of past	2	1	9	0	0	2	0	10	24
Being and being able	0	2	5	2	0	0	1	7	17
Being foxy	4	8	0	0	0	4	4	7	27
Clash of codes	3	0	0	5	1	2	3	6	20
Continuity of cycle	2	0	0	2	3	0	4	2	13
Divisions	3	6	1	1	2	3	0	1	17
Formal vs. informal	0	13	0	0	0	1	5	12	31
Geographical domain	6	2	8	0	1	4	4	0	25
Goodness	1	0	0	4	0	0	5	0	10
Help from locals	1	13	1	0	0	1	2	6	24
Insularity	7	3	9	1	0	4	3	3	30
Looking down	0	4	3	1	1	1	1	1	12
Needs	1	14	6	0	0	1	1	4	27
Order and structures	0	15	3	0	0	0	1	12	31
Outside: escape	5	1	4	0	0	0	4	0	14
Outside: invade	1	5	0	0	0	9	2	2	19
Past making present	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	3	10
People know	3	6	2	8	0	3	6	5	33
Political domain	0	10	1	0	0	0	0	4	15
Popular belief	0	1	5	0	1	3	0	0	10
Resemblance (lack of)	8	0	1	1	0	0	2	2	14
Scarcity	4	1	5	0	1	2	3	0	16
Secrets	6	4	6	1	1	0	4	1	23
Tourists don't count	0	2	4	1	0	3	1	4	15
Tradition vs. change	0	3	9	0	1	2	7	7	29
Ways of living	1	3	0	8	0	1	9	3	25
Words are dangerous	0	2	3	0	1	0	0	2	8

2. DESCRIPTION OF THEMES

A second set of analytical categories emerged from the initial, code-based analysis. It is composed of the following *themes*, which collapse different codes according to their thematic content[103]:

THEME	DESCRIPTION
Balance (accounting for deeds): Includes codes: 'accountancy of past', 'ways of living', 'social memory', 'being and being able' and 'order and structures'.	This theme introduces how, when doing things for others, people keep a record that includes exchanges going back generations.
Dependency (need for others): Includes codes: 'scarcity', 'needs' and 'help from local people'.	The theme comes across as the necessity of accessing others to get things done. The codes convey the numerous needs people have in their everyday lives (of a physical or social kind, such as having a cinema or holding an interesting conversation).
Fear of being seen (visibility): Includes codes: 'people know', 'looking down' and 'being foxy'.	The theme presents experiences and sensations of being watched. Respondents talked about the need to keep a guard and not to speak carelessly. It conveys a sense of suspicion.
Generosity (goodwill and kindness): Includes codes: 'goodness', 'popular beliefs', 'divisions', 'chants' and 'clash of codes'.	The theme presents how being generous pays back. The respondents use sayings, and long standing divisions to specify the conditions under which a person should do things for others (the deeds to the fellow man).
Gossip (spread and subject to): Includes codes: 'words are dangerous', 'secrets' and 'being foxy' (also in 'fear of being seen' theme).	The theme introduces the importance of learning to interpret and to spread gossip. Respondents reflect concerns about people's talk, which is never innocent.
Reliance (trust on others): Includes codes: 'past making present', 'continuity of cycle', 'resemblance', 'geographical domain', 'formal vs. informal', 'social life' and 'tradition vs. change'.	The theme presents how, through actualising the past into the present (sometimes not successfully), people can still rely on each other and generate links of trust.

[103] Codes such as *outside: escape, outside: invade, political domain* and *tourist don't count,* were kept as units in themselves. These codes were relevant as they conveyed (through opposition) similar understandings to the themes presented above (see Chapter VI, Section 3).

APPENDIX IV

TALK STRUCTURE
SECOND ANALYSIS OF INSIDERS' INTERVIEWS

1. DESCRIPTION OF CODES

CODE	DESCRIPTION
Anchoring	Linguistic resource used to locate a person in reference to the listener. It can take many steps and different attempts through which the respondents are constructing their world of relationships for the benefit of the partner in conversation.
Rejection	Linguistic resource which conveys a certain rejection and denial of 'knowing someone'. The person talked about is usually someone who let the respondent down. It involved statements such as 'I wish I'd never met X' or 'one should not mix with people like X'.
Being a provider	Talk regarding the respondents and their positions as providers in their community. They talk about a life of social engagements and the fact that they have done many things for other people. They also occasionally make reference to what other people have done for them.
'I know...'	The respondent tells, or declares having, relevant information. It is significant because it conveys how information, or knowledge about everyday issues, is here a scarce resource. There is a prevailing feeling that there are many secrets, and only with the gaining of trust in the relationship will (only) some of them be disclosed.
Glorious past	The respondent talks about his/her role when things were different. They were great in fact, either for the island, community or her/his family and her/him with it. It involves talking about the past (remote or close) to convey how important s/he was.
Denial of favour	The respondents talk here about being independent and not needing favours from others. When people do things for them, it was their duty – even if a favour was done, but there is not a feeling of preference, or rule bending. In most cases the favour is talked about as if it was 'giving a hand' to someone needy.
Favours	Text pertaining to moments when respondents talked about doing favours for others (and they were never repaid) or others for them (and how little effort that was, or what a nice person he is, or states that they are like close friends/family).
Acquaintances	The respondents talk about knowing someone and how this person helped her/him out. They retell a story, but with an outcome (favour asked, acknowledged, accomplished or not). The code conveys elements of evaluation of a relationship as they elaborate on the extent of their friendship/acquaintanceship.
Keeping up good relations	Talk about the importance of doing things for other people and remaining on good terms. It is presented as a matter of manners, a sign of being socially graceful. To have contacts and be well connected shows being relevant for

	the respondents. The code talks about brushing with people of value, with power.
Asking for help	Talk about needing other people to sort out problems. The code highlights the sense of insularity and people's constructions of the role other people have in their lives. To provide support for others seems a necessity, rather than a choice.
Putting people in their place	Sharp statements meant to put people in their place. The code reflects how people need to locate others in a 'lower' scale of reference. The respondents creatively put people down by understating the achievements of others, or just passing strong judgements (be it on the nexus, researcher, or the person talked about in the interview).
Being careful	Talk about showing concern when talking to others. It reflects a sense of threat, sometimes close to paranoia. The respondents (in a lower tone of voice) talk about how people have to take care of who they are seen with, and what they are saying.
Rules	To engage in relations with others requires some form of rules and principles. The respondents spell them out in a concise manner. Stability, trust and contacts seem to be the three domains across which the principles are stated.

2. TABLES OF CODES

a. Group of Elders

CODES	RESPONDENT												TOTALS
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Anchoring	32	8	13	7	35	6	5	4	4	4	9	5	132
Rejection	0	0	0	0	1	8	1	1	0	0	0	2	13
Being a provider	0	0	0	0	8	2	1	0	0	2	1	2	16
'I know...'	0	0	2	2	1	2	2	3	2	5	1	2	22
Glorious past	0	4	5	1	9	0	0	2	0	3	1	1	26
Denial of favour	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	3	7
Favour	4	0	1	0	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	3	15
Acquaintances	2	2	2	0	8	9	3	0	0	0	0	8	34
Keeping up relations	2	0	1	0	4	5	2	0	0	1	0	3	18
Asking for help	0	0	3	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	8
Putting in place	4	1	11	7	9	6	16	4	1	2	3	5	69
Being careful	2	1	1	0	2	4	6	0	0	0	1	1	18
Rules	3	0	0	0	1	6	1	1	0	0	0	1	13

b. Young Group

CODES	RESPONDENT								TOTALS
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Anchoring	5	15	1	6	1	3	2	3	36
Rejection	1	6	0	0	0	0	1	6	14
Being a provider	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	5
'I know...'	2	10	3	0	0	0	1	1	17
Glorious past	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	3
Denial of favour	4	3	1	0	0	0	6	1	15
Favour	1	3	0	1	0	2	9	1	17
Acquaintances	3	6	0	1	1	0	7	0	18
Keeping up relations	1	7	1	0	1	1	5	7	23
Asking for help	0	6	1	1	0	1	1	6	16
Putting in place	2	13	6	1	4	1	1	10	38
Being careful	0	13	1	1	0	0	2	7	24
Rules	1	5	0	1	1	0	4	3	15

APPENDIX V

THIRD ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

1. DESCRIPTION OF CODES

CODE		DESCRIPTION
	The Subject	
Autonomy	Dependent	The subject as part and parcel of the life of others. The subject is here linked to others and dependent on them.
	Independent	The subject as an autonomous and independent being. It is an individual with a name and a personal record.
Definition of the subject	Family bound	The subject as defined through others. A person is only knowable in reference to her/his family. Personal achievements are undervalued. It does not matter what the individual achieves, but what the family (in an extended manner) accomplishes.
	The achiever	The subject is an individual, a singular player with freedom to manoeuvre. The subject owns capacity of action.
Action	Strategies	The subject is endowed with a capacity to do. S/he shows ability to enact and perform change through the strategies.
	Rights	The subject can enact and achieve through a set of rights which inform of her/his capacity for action.
Identity location	The islander	The subject is understood in reference to an accessible past. Her/his life is known to others. The codes of practice and markers give information about her/his persona.
	The citizen	The subject is made real and created as a figure in a constitution. It has a set of rights and duties.
	The Other	
Character of relations	General reciprocation	The other is engaged in multiple links of general reciprocation. These links provide some sense of social cohesion.
	Institutionalised demands	The other has a position in an already structured system. S/he puts demands on institutions.
Community	Structured group	The generalised other forms part of a structured community in which people relate with specific personalised others.
	Collective	The generalised other forms part of a collective. Through association and unity people put forward single requests.
Behaviour	Manners	Frame of conduct provided by the code of practice.
	Responsibility	Boundaries of behaviour provided by collective responsibilities. By living in society the subject is bounded by law or by conceptions of citizenship.

Rights and duties	Locally determined	The community rights and duties are dictated through the codes of practice, which are enforced through the gaze and informed through the conventions.
	Established collectively	The citizen is endowed with a capacity for action which is bounded by law, by the State, or by conceptions of citizenship.
Definition	Personalised other	A person owns a name and a referential past which informs people of who they are.
	Objectified other	The person receives a position which is objectified and subjected to statistics. It talks the language of social structuring (the farmer, the unemployed, the housewife, the alcoholic, etc.). Personal history does not count.
		The Context
The system	Mechanic democracy	Society is seen as structured by a system where there are big providers with whom people have to keep up good relations.
	Organic democracy	Society as a system based on assumptions of equality. Democracy is a system which provides unity and order.
The island	The contextual frame is the island as a unit.	The island community is the point of reference and local issues are extrapolated to provide explanations of other contexts.
	The contextual frame is elsewhere.	The island is seen as part and parcel of bigger entities. The Gomeran is Canarian, Spanish and European (despite being geographically closer to Africa).
Trust	Local	Achieved through the markers (such as continuity and perpetuity) and the codes of practice (such as balance and reliance) which guarantee the continuance of relations.
	Institutional	Achieved through the State that protects the citizen from abuses of political power and provides him with possibilities of equal access to resources.
Maxim	Fairness	Achieved through multiple engagements of general reciprocation. Success in engaging adequately will provide a positive assessment, and therefore the person will be endowed by a sense of worth.
	Equality	Achieved by giving access to resources to every person.
Failures of system	Breach of local trust and maxim of fairness	Lack of honour, not following the codes of practice and not paying favours back (breaking the chain of general reciprocation).
	Breach of institutional trust and maxim of equality	Occurs when the subject favours people and acts by giving unequal provision of resources.

2. Occurrence of Codes Across Groups

	Codes	Elder														Young								Outsiders							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
ISLANDER'S DISCOURSE	***Subject:***																														
	Autonomy: dependant	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓									
	Definition: family bound		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓				✓			✓	✓								
	Action: strategies					✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓								
	Identity: location: islander	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓			✓	✓								
	Other:																														
	Relational character: reciprocation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								
	Community: structured	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								
	Behaviour: manners	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								
	Right and duties: local	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓								
	Definition: personalised	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓										
	Context:																														
	System: autocracy	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	✓					✓								
	Island: unit	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								
	Trust: local				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓								
	Maxim: fairness						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓								
	Failure of system: local	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓																	
CITIZEN'S DISCOURSE	***Subject:***																														
	Autonomy: independent													✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓
	Definition: achiever															✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
	Action: rights													✓			✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Identity: location: citizen																✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Other:																														
	Relational character: demands							✓								✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
	Community: collective																							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Behaviour: responsibility							✓						✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Right and duties: collective	✓	✓													✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Definition: objectified			✓			✓						✓			✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Context:																														
	System: democracy			✓	✓			✓					✓				✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
	Island: elsewhere			✓			✓	✓			✓			✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Trust: institutional	✓	✓				✓	✓		✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
	Maxim: equality															✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Failure of system: institutional															✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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