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ADVANCES IN GENDER RESEARCH VOLUME 32

**ADVANCES IN TRANS
STUDIES: MOVING TOWARD
GENDER EXPANSION AND
TRANS HOPE**

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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SERIES EDITOR PREFACE

We are pleased to include *Advances in Trans Studies* in our series. Its new paradigm moving from gender deviance to gender difference to gender expansion is a true advance in gender research. In an AGR chapter, Austin H. Johnson (2015) wrote,

as social scientists, we should make a greater effort to address transgender people, experiences, and phenomena in their own right with an analysis that is grounded within transgender communities and developed with a transgender perspective in mind. (p. 37)

With this volume, Baker A. Rogers and Tiffany Taylor along with Johnson have brought us a collection of writings that center the transgender experience and world and counter attempts to mortify, stigmatize and other trans folk. Chapters use a social scientific description based on the collection of empirical data to gain a fuller picture of the lives of trans and queer people. Through systematic research they reveal the daily injustices experienced at the hands of well-meaning and not so well-meaning cisgender people in institutional settings ranging from the family to medical complexes while providing suggestions for ways in which cisgender scholars can partner with trans scholars in revolutionizing what it means to be a human being and in making effective and informed policy recommendations possible. We welcome the new voices included in the volume and the approach, which is intersectional throughout and interrogates cis- and trans-normativity in our thinking and our institutions.

Johnson, A. H. (2015). Beyond inclusion: Thinking toward a transfeminist methodology. In V. Demos & M. T. Segal (Eds.), *At the center: Feminism, social science and knowledge* (Vol. 20, pp. 21–41). *Advances in Gender Research*. Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

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INTRODUCTION

Baker A. Rogers, Austin H. Johnson and Tiffany Taylor

SOCIOLOGY OF TRANS STUDIES

In 2017, Kristen Schilt and Danya Lagos published a review, “The Development of Transgender Studies in Sociology,” in the *Annual Review of Sociology*. This volume, number 32 of *Advances in Gender Research*, seeks to pick up where they left off four years ago and continue to move the field of trans studies forward within sociological and social science literature. Through both qualitative and quantitative data, the authors in this volume expand the definitions and knowledges we hold about what it means to be trans and how trans people navigate our world. This volume is also unique in the number of trans and queer voices it highlights, allowing trans and queer people to tell our own stories, both as authors and subjects of this research.

Schilt and Lagos (2017) argued that there were two major paradigms in the sociology of trans studies: gender deviance (1960s–1990s) and gender difference (1990s–2017). In this volume, we demonstrate that the sociology of trans studies has continued to progress over the last four years and today a new paradigm is emerging beyond gender difference to what we call *gender expansion*. Qualitative work on trans studies in sociology and the social sciences more generally has begun to expand our understanding of gender beyond difference to a whole new landscape of what gender can mean and how it can be performed.

Disciplinary gatekeepers in sociology and the social sciences have also begun to lose ground as trans studies can no longer be written off as niche or of no interest to the broader disciplines. Those gatekeepers are quickly losing positions of power and are being replaced with scholars who understand, or a minimum wish to understand, the importance of trans and queer studies. Since 2017, there have been an increasing number of academic journal articles (Johnson, 2019; Johnson, Gibson-Hill, Beach-Ferrara, Rogers, & Bradford, 2020; Johnson & Rogers, 2019; Mathers, Sumerau, & Cragun, 2018; Rogers, 2018, 2019; Rogers & Rogers, 2021; Stone, 2018; Sumerau, Barbee, Mathers, & Eaton, 2018; Sumerau, Grollman, & Cragun, 2018), monographs (Abelson, 2019; Guadalupe-Diaz, 2019; Meadow, 2018, Nicolazzo, 2017; Pfeffer, 2017; Rahilly, 2020; Robinson, 2020; Rogers,

Advances in Trans Studies: Moving Toward Gender Expansion and Trans Hope

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2020a, 2020b; Sumerau & Cragun, 2018; Sumerau & Mathers, 2019; Travers, 2018; Westbrook, 2020), book series (Sumerau's *Breaking Boundaries: New Horizons in Gender & Sexualities* with Lexington Books), edited volumes (Beemyn, 2019; Compton, Meadow, & Schilt, 2018; McNeill & Scott, Forthcoming; Sumerau, Forthcoming), and encyclopedias (Beemyn & Goldberg, Forthcoming) published that concern trans and queer studies, specifically taking up trans and queer studies from sociological and social scientific perspectives.

Many of the chapters in this volume address Schilt and Lagos' calls for future areas of inquiry in the sociology of trans studies. Specifically, this volume highlights "more qualitative research that takes up ... social locations as a central issue," the sociology of incarcerated trans people, the experiences of aging and elderly trans people, and "research that pushes the gender difference paradigm further by destabilizing binary classifications" (Schilt & Lagos, 2017, pp. 437–438). Additionally, this volume expands beyond US-focused scholarship to include an international examination of the sociology of trans studies and highlights the voices of queer and trans people as subjects and scholars.

THIS VOLUME

In this volume, we feature work about and by trans and queer people that takes seriously the intersections of sexualities, race, class, nationality, citizenship, and more, within trans studies. Authors in this volume give space and voice to trans peoples' experiences and interactions with various social institutions, including but not limited to, healthcare and medicalization, the criminal justice system, and the family. The chapters in this volume utilize intersectional approaches, qualitative and quantitative methodologies, and many have clear implications for policy and advocacy for trans people.

This volume is divided into three sections. Section 1 covers a wide array of issues relating to health and healthcare for trans people. The authors in this section examine health and aging for older trans people, the continued cisnormativity and transphobia that plagues the healthcare field, questions of body modification and how this relates to fertility, as well as access to mental healthcare. In Chapter 1, "Health and Aging among Middle and Later Age Transgender Populations," Alexandra C. H. Nowakowski, J. E. Sumerau and Lain A. B. Mathers draw on survey data from over 250 transgender people who are over the age of 40 to learn more about health and aging in the trans population. In Chapter 2 in this section, "Maintaining Cisnormative Accountability: Medical Providers' Negotiation of Transgender Healthcare," William C. Stallings, Nik M. Lampe, and Emily S. Mann examine the maintenance of cisnormativity by healthcare providers in the Southeastern United States through nine in-depth, qualitative interviews with providers. In Chapter 3, "'You're Going to Want to Freeze Your Eggs': Conversations Surrounding Fertility between Healthcare Professionals, Parents, and Transgender Adolescents," Lindsay Toman explores how conversations about fertility are being navigated with trans boys. Specifically, Toman uses interviews with 24 parents, 26 healthcare professionals, and 23 trans adolescents

to show the complexity of these conversations. Using 40 in-depth, qualitative interviews, in Chapter 4 (“Enhancing Selves by Gendering Bodies: Comparing Surgical Body Modifications among Transgender and Cisgender People”) Elroi J. Windsor compares surgical body modifications among trans and cis people, particularly focusing on issues of gendered embodiment that affects everyone regardless of gender identity. Finally, in Chapter 5, “Gendering the Fat Body: Rhetoric and Personhood in Transition,” Han Koehle examines public discourses around transness and fatness. Koehle analyzes discourses of embodiment in articles and blogs written by trans authors.

In Section 2, authors explore trans inclusion in institutions and societies around the world. This section covers non-binary gender options on state sanctioned identification, prison experiences, and policy recommendations in the United States and England, and positive changes to support trans students on college campuses. In the first chapter in this section, Chapter 6 (“Trans and Non-binary Identities and a Politics Beyond Recognition: On the Possibility of the X”), C. L. Quinan and Dagmar Oosthoek explore how a person’s legal gender and the adoption of an X marker on identification documents influence mobility and feelings of freedom and self-affirmation. Quinan and Oosthoek interviewed 12 trans, non-binary, or genderqueer people living in Australia or the Netherlands who had obtained an X on their identification or passport, or were considering electing an X. This chapter uses four vignettes to highlight the different experiences of their interviewees. In Chapter 7, “Policy Recommendations for Incarcerated Trans Men in the United States,” Sarah A. Rogers provides policy recommendations for incarcerated trans men based on findings from interviews with 15 previously incarcerated trans men. In Chapter 8, “Doubly Imprisoned: Transgender and Non-binary Prisoners’ Experiences in England and Wales,” Olga Suhomlinova and Saoirse O’Shea also consider trans incarceration. In particular, this chapter explores the experiences of trans and non-binary prisoners in England and Wales using letter correspondence with inmates as their mode of data collection. While Rogers’ chapter considers trans men’s experiences, Suhomlinova and O’Shea corresponded predominately with trans women who were incarcerated. Lastly, in Chapter 9, “Shifting Understanding, Creating Inclusive Collegiate Culture,” Emily Fairchild considers the institution of higher education. Through 24 qualitative interviews with trans and non-binary students, Fairchild discusses how campus cultures can be more supportive of gender nonconforming students.

Section 3 covers trans resources, healing, and resilience. We end on this positive note of how trans people are finding belonging and healing despite obstacles. The authors in this section explore the importance of trans resilience, healing, negotiating hopelessness, and finding support. In Chapter 10, “‘I’m Technically Not Disowned’: Familial Strain, Trans Resilience, and Bargaining for Belonging,” Bailey Troia draws from 23 in-depth, qualitative interviews with trans and non-binary adults living in the Southeastern and Midwestern United States. Troia uses this interview data to demonstrate trans people’s resilience despite obstacles to belonging and family problems. In Chapter 11 (“‘Being Able to Breathe Publicly’: Trans and Gender Nonconforming People Healing through Embodied Activity”), through nine in-depth interviews Kai P. Blake-Leibowitz explores trans and gender

non-binary peoples use of physical activity as a resource and a form of agency to navigate oppression in their everyday lives. Similarly, in Chapter 12, “Managing Hopelessness: The Health-seeking Processes and Negotiations for Queer and/or Trans People,” Sameera V. Akella examines how trans people manage feelings of hopelessness through 20 semi-structured interviews with queer and trans people in the Southeastern United States. In the final chapter of Section 3, Chapter 13 (“Social Support Networks within Transgender Facebook Groups: Facing a ‘Therapeutic Shield’ in France”), Yael Armangau and Julien Figeac employ three various methods of data collection (a national survey, an online ethnography, and a statistical analysis of the textual content of Facebook posts) to show how trans people utilize social media as a source of information sharing and support.

MOVING TOWARD TRANS HOPE

Overall, our goal as editors is greater than merely updating the research in trans studies, but we also desire to support the trans community in the continued fight for recognition and rights. Furthermore, we end the volume with a section on resources, healing, and resilience, because we believe this is, or should be, the future of trans studies in sociology. Trans studies research has shown unequivocally that trans people face increased discrimination, oppression, and violence, nevertheless trans people continue to survive and thrive. Focusing on how trans, and queer people more generally, flourish despite obstacles can provide hope and resources for others. This should be part of our goal as public sociologists and activists who believe that research is about more than crunching the numbers, who believe that research is about social change and social justice.

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SECTION 1

TRANS HEALTH

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