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ACADEMIA

Academia is a term for the environment or community where individuals and groups pursue research, scholarship, teaching, and learning. Academia typically refers to activities that occur within colleges and universities and is both a physical location and a sociocultural production—that is, processes that generate norms, practices, and values. While there is much variability within academic organizations within the United States and beyond, across these varied organizational contexts, there are common components, such as being home to fields of study; a hierarchy among students, faculty, and staff; and the multiple missions of academic organizations.

Academia is an important location for knowledge production about trans lives and experiences, although it is not the only source of such knowledge. Additionally, academia is a space for trans community building. Yet, many trans students, faculty, and staff have negative experiences within academia. As a result, academia is a site of both possibility and constraint for trans people. Possibilities for trans people within academia center on two primary areas: knowledge production and policies and practices. Constraints for trans people within academia derive from the presence of multiple systems of oppression and uneven efforts to address the needs of trans faculty, staff, and students. This entry explores the growth of both possibilities and constraints for trans people within academia, specifically addressing the duality of trans knowledge production and trans-affirming policies and practices.

Possibilities Within Academia

Knowledge Production

Academe holds much possibility for trans people, primarily through knowledge production about trans lives in traditional disciplines like psychology and medicine and in interdisciplinary fields like public health, women's and gender studies, and trans studies. Across areas of study, the development of scholarly communities within academia has increased knowledge about trans lives and led to trans experiences being addressed in affirming, life-giving ways. Faculty members, in concert with student activists, have created space for trans-supportive knowledge production, such as through advocating for archives, journals, and academic departments.

Various fields of study benefit from trans archival and library resources. The largest collection is the Transgender Archives at the University of Victoria in Victoria, British Columbia, which began in 2007 and consolidated various collections, including the Reed Erickson collection and the University of Ulster's Transgender Archive. Other important collections include the University of Michigan's National Transgender Library and Archives, which was dedicated in 2004, and the Digital Transgender Archives, which began in 2016 and was based at Northeastern University as of 2020. Additionally, some universities, like the University of Houston and Cornell University, have LGBTQ+ archives with significant trans content. These repositories have been instrumental in collecting and preserving the histories of trans people.

But similar to other archives, trans archives tend to consist mainly of the histories of white middle- and upper-class individuals and organizations.

Although trans research is included today in a number of academic journals, few journals focus on trans experiences. Two notable trans-specific journals are *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* and the *International Journal of Transgender Health*. *TSQ* is a peer-reviewed journal that publishes interdisciplinary work on the diversity of gender, sex, sexuality, embodiment, and identity. The *International Journal of Transgender Health* (formerly known as the *International Journal of Transgenderism*) is the journal of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) and offers a multidisciplinary approach to the field of trans health.

Trans Studies

Trans Studies represents a significant possibility for trans people, both inside and outside academia. One potent possibility of Trans Studies is the way the field shifts the narrative of mostly cis authors writing about trans lives to trans people creating knowledge, histories, and culture about their own communities. Sandy Stone's 1987 germinal essay "The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto" marked a key turning point in knowledge production about trans lives. More specifically, Stone was one of the first academics to speak from her lived experience as a trans person, rather than non-trans people writing about trans experiences. Prior to Stone's work, trans people shared stories via autobiographies, but these texts were not necessarily included in the academic literature. While there was scholarly interest in trans lives prior to the late 1990s, that interest had a cis gaze; in other words, prior scholarship typically examined trans lives from the perspective of non-trans people. A shift in knowledge production began in the late 1990s as a part of the larger sociocultural movement for greater recognition of trans lives and experiences.

Care for Trans Populations

The growth of medical and psychological interventions for trans people in the United States occurred within the context of academic settings in

the 1960s. For those who could access them, these options provided life-saving medical treatment. Innovations in gender-affirming medical care started in other countries many years prior. Although not affiliated with academia, Magnus Hirschfeld began performing medical interventions for trans people as early as the 1920s through his Institute for Sexual Science in Berlin, Germany. Academia—both historically and today—has served as a critical training ground for clinical staff working with trans patients.

Throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, many of the leading voices writing about the emergence of what was called *transsexualism* were medical providers, psychologists, and psychiatrists. These clinicians, including such notable scholars as Harry Benjamin, John Money, and Robert Stoller, were overwhelmingly white and male, and much of what they contributed to the academic literature framed trans people in highly medical and pathologizing language.

In addition to his research and writing, Money was principally responsible for the founding of the first gender clinic in the United States, which began at Johns Hopkins University in 1966. Several other academics and academic organizations also helped create gender clinics. Of the university-based clinics that started in the 1960s and 1970s, only a few, including those at the University of Minnesota, the University of California–San Francisco, and the University of Michigan, remain as of 2020. Some university-based gender clinics began significantly later, such as the one at the Oregon Health and Science University, which opened in 2015. Gender clinics represent an important way that academia has bettered the lives of trans people. While these facilities historically engaged in significant gatekeeping and severely limited access to their services, the development of university-based gender clinics enabled thousands of trans people to receive life-giving care.

Research Projects and Centers

Research projects and centers that address LGBTQIA+ issues generally, and trans issues specifically, bolster knowledge production about trans lives. Within the United States, the Social Cognitive Development Lab at the University of Washington conducts research about trans lives within the

broader context of social psychology and related fields. Similarly, the Social Perception, Attitudes, Mental Simulation Lab at San Francisco State University conducts social science research, of which trans projects are a part. Within medicine, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Medical Education Research Group (LGBT MERG) at Stanford University's School of Medicine conducts research about medical curricula. In terms of public policy and the law, Vanderbilt University is home to the interdisciplinary LGBT Policy Lab, and University of California–Los Angeles hosts the Williams Institute.

There are multiple centers concerned with LGBTQIA+ health issues, including the Center for LGBT Health Research at the University of Pittsburgh, the Center for LGBT Health Equity at the University of Southern California, the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society at La Trobe University, the Lavender Lab at American University, and the IMPACT LGBT Health and Development Program at Northwestern University. Additionally, the University of California–San Francisco and Stanford University began conducting a longitudinal study of LGBTQIA+ health in 2015, which is slated to last 10 years.

As of 2020, there are no LGBTQIA+ research centers across the continents of Asia and Africa, and much of the LGBTQIA+ research conducted within African contexts was completed by U.S., European, or Australian universities. For example, a study of Malawians' attitudes about LGBTQ+ people was conducted by a Malawi doctoral student studying at the University of Bergen in Norway. Outside the United States, it has been more common for nonacademic organizations to conduct research about LGBTQIA+ life, such as the Japan LGBT Research Institute, the Center for Applied Research on Men and Community Health in Vietnam, and the Health Education and Research Association in Macedonia.

There are only a few trans-specific research groups. These include the Trans Research Lab at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, which focuses on mental health research with trans people, and the University of Arizona's Trans Studies Research Cluster, which has its own faculty members in trans studies and produces the journal *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*.

Trans-Affirming Policies and Practices in Academia

Nondiscrimination Policies

In addition to academia's knowledge production, higher education has played a role in advancing policies and practices that lessen discrimination and increase the livability of trans lives. As a result of academic activism and the advocacy efforts of trans and non-trans people, more than 1,000 colleges and universities in the United States have nondiscrimination policies that include gender identity as of 2020. While these policies can be challenging to enforce and do not necessarily change the culture of an institution overnight, their enactment signals an important shift by recognizing that trans people are subject to discrimination and thus in need of specific policies that address the unique forms of oppression they face.

Coverage of Medical Interventions

According to one estimate, as of February 2020, fewer than 100 U.S. colleges and universities cover gender-affirming surgeries and hormones for trans students under their student health insurance policies, and another couple dozen cover only hormones. More than 50 colleges offer transition-related health care for faculty and staff. These policies represent an important possibility for trans students and staff, but the relatively small number of colleges that provide this coverage indicates the amount of work that still needs to be done. The growing number of colleges and universities that cover gender-affirming medical care is another example of how trans and non-trans activists and advocates have worked together to create change within academia. Knowledge produced within higher education spaces, such as the adverse consequences for trans people of not receiving transition-related treatment, is often used in efforts to change policy and practice.

Gender-Inclusive Housing

In addition to providing trans-supportive medical care, at least 272 U.S. colleges offer gender-inclusive housing as of February 2020. These institutions have created housing units, such as suites, apartments, residence hall floors, or buildings,

where students can have a roommate(s) of any gender. Developing gender-inclusive housing can be difficult in some cases because of the physical architecture of buildings and the lack of gender-inclusive bathroom and shower facilities. But, on some campuses, creating gender-inclusive housing can simply involve designating some residence hall rooms as available to students without regard to gender.

Chosen Name Policies

Another important area of possibility for trans students is the ability to have the names they use for themselves, rather than their dead names (i.e., birth names), appear on campus identification, course rosters, learning management and administrative systems, and campus directory listings. As of 2020, at least 260 colleges enable students to use their chosen names on campus records, but most do not allow a similar change to campus IDs. Increasingly, trans students can indicate their pronouns in course software systems and change their gender markers on campus documents without first needing medical intervention. Taken together, trans-inclusive nondiscrimination policies, transition-related health coverage, and the ability to change their names and gender markers on campus records all improve trans students' academic experiences.

Supportive Spaces

LGBTQ students and staff have successfully advocated for the creation of supportive spaces on campuses, particularly for the establishment of LGBTQ centers. In 2020, there were more than 175 stand-alone LGBTQ campus centers and more than 75 within women's/gender equity or cross-cultural/diversity offices. Most of these centers are housed within Student Affairs, and their primary aim is to serve students' needs through advocacy, social and educational programming, support to individuals and campus groups, and leadership development. These centers contribute enormously to the advancement of trans-affirming policies and practices, catalyzing many of the changes described in this entry.

Trans students have also created supportive spaces for themselves by founding trans student

groups and by making LGB student groups trans inclusive. The first LGB student groups to formally include trans people in their names and mission statements and the first trans-specific student groups were formed on college campuses in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Increased trans inclusiveness occurred as a result of greater public visibility of trans people on campuses and efforts by trans activists to change LGB student organizations. However, some of the newly named LGBTQ student groups marginalized their trans members by misgendering them and continuing to focus exclusively on sexuality-related issues. Not until the 2010s did many LGBTQ campus organizations become truly trans inclusive due to the growing number of trans students in these groups and a growing awareness of trans experiences among cis LGB students.

Constraints Within Academia

Knowledge Production

Knowledge production also represents a constraint for trans people within academia. Fields like psychology, medicine, and public health have done significant harm to trans communities. For example, trans people historically and currently report being denied health care, misrepresented in research, and abused by physical and mental health providers. Additionally, trans people are affected by the broader constraints within academe related to knowledge production, including peer-review publication processes and research funding availability. As mentioned earlier, there are few peer-reviewed journals dedicated to knowledge about trans lives, and the most prestigious journals in nearly all fields are unlikely to have any trans or trans-knowledgeable board members. Peer-reviewed academic journals rely on expertise from their respective fields, but there may be few available trans scholars in some fields. This means that scholars producing knowledge about trans experiences often face barriers in the publication process.

In terms of funding, few grants are designed to support trans research. Also, much of the LGBTQIA+ health research in the United States is funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Federal research grants like those from the NIH tend to be awarded to larger public and private research universities and prioritize particular types

of research. Smaller institutions and scholars who are in the humanities or using qualitative or emergent methods are disadvantaged by the current design of the research enterprise within academe.

Curricular Exclusion

In addition to the direct harm done by providers and researchers within higher education, academia is the primary training site for professionals in nearly all fields, including medicine, law, public health, psychology, and social work. Yet, few courses include content about trans lives. In most professional preparation programs, there is little LGBTQIA+ content and rarely opportunities to learn about serving the needs of trans people. In some cases, the LGBTQIA+ content for professional training programs is delivered by faculty in Women's and Gender Studies or related fields. This can pose a challenge for these departments, which are typically small and chronically underfunded, so providing "service" courses forces them to forgo offering courses for students within the major. A further problem with the "service" course model is that the content remains at a fairly introductory level, given how little most non-trans students know about trans people. Thus, despite there being a great deal of knowledge about trans life within academe, scant attention is paid to this knowledge within many fields. The little content about trans people that is included within the curriculum provides insufficient information (and sometimes misinformation) and is disconnected from the lived experiences of the trans people whom these fields should be serving.

Anti-Trans "Feminists"

An additional constraint within academe is that even fields that would seemingly be trans supportive, like Women's and Gender Studies, are not necessarily hospitable spaces for trans people and research in trans studies. A small but well-organized group of trans exclusionary radical feminists (TERFs) within British, Australian, and U.S. academe have made it their mission to undermine trans scholars and write scathing attacks on trans people. Often aligned with conservative groups, TERFs seek to delegitimize trans experiences, especially trans women's credibility. Academia continues to employ TERFs, and academic presses continue to publish their work,

despite being clearly discriminatory in their rhetoric and practices.

Lack of Mentorship

A final challenge in knowledge production is the fact that relatively few faculty members have a depth of understanding about trans lives and experiences to enable them to mentor younger generations of scholars. Some institutions do not have any trans-knowledgeable faculty, while others have only a handful in a limited number of departments. The lack of available mentorship constrains the kinds of knowledge that can be produced within academe. Undergraduate and graduate students are often forced to look for mentors and research advisers outside of their fields or even outside of their institutions, which creates obstacles to their work. On the whole, there is great potential for knowledge production within academia, but often it is stalled, fragmented, or limited.

Trans-Negative Policies and Practices in Academia

As much progress as academe has made in terms of creating policies and practices to support trans students, faculty, and staff, too few institutions have taken up the trans-inclusive practices outlined by experts in the field. Academia still has a long way to go to achieve research, scholarship, teaching, and learning communities that provide space for trans liberation and increased life chances. While over 1,000 institutions have added gender identity and expression to their nondiscrimination policies, this represents only about a fourth of U.S. degree-granting colleges and universities, so most trans people in academia still have no recourse if they experience mistreatment. Although nondiscrimination policies have never completely eliminated discriminatory practices, their symbolic function matters. Such policies send a signal that trans people are worthy of respect and inclusion, which can translate to better experiences for trans students, faculty, and staff.

Variable Experiences Within Academe

Trans faculty, staff, and students are subjected to discrimination and harassment within academia in

a variety of ways. For example, trans faculty and staff may experience a hostile work environment because of non-trans students' oppressive behavior. For trans students, non-trans faculty and staff may engage in oppressive behavior that negatively affects their living, learning, and student life environments. Given this variability, efforts to combat anti-trans hostility must similarly take a range of approaches.

But strategies for improving trans people's experiences in academia have been constrained, as the focus has been largely limited to creating policies and practices that address the specific needs of trans students. While such changes are critical to ensuring student success, these efforts must also include staff and faculty. Trans staff and faculty need to have institutional policies and practices in place that can address the discrimination they may experience from students or other employees, and non-trans staff and faculty need to be better trained on trans-inclusive policies and practices to help limit this discrimination.

While a significant amount of education about trans issues and lives occurs within academe, it has not resulted in a fundamental shift in how gender is understood. Changing how non-trans people think about, and therefore engage with, gender as a cultural phenomenon would increase the livability of trans lives and lead to greater liberation for trans people in academe.

Erich N. Pitcher

See also Archives; Campus Policies/Campus Climate; Campus Residence Halls; College Undergraduate Students; Gender Clinics in the United States; TERFs; Trans Studies

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ACLU

See American Civil Liberties Union.

ACTIVISM

Trans activism refers to purposeful efforts to improve the lives of trans people through making change to law, policy, societal attitudes, living conditions, and other factors that affect equity, justice, and quality of life. Activism necessarily implies an orientation toward changing the status quo and, because of its broad scope, can sometimes include strategies and approaches that conflict with one another. Trans activism has led to legal rights and cultural shifts. Past activism has also modeled behavior, actions, and coalition building that contemporary trans activists use as inspiration and guidance. Activism is important in the trans community to create positive change and as an end unto itself. Trans activism itself is a collection of efforts and works to create positive outcomes for trans people. This entry addresses definitions, types, and histories of trans activism; describes issues in 21st-century trans activism; and discusses important challenges related to the subject.

Defining Trans Activism

Trans activism includes a wide range of activities that involve advocating for the recognition, rights, and life chances of trans people. Generally, activism refers to efforts for social reform. Because it is grounded in social change, activism fundamentally resists the status quo. In the 21st century, the status quo for gender rights is inherently cisnormative and transphobic. Cisnormativity and transphobia are global phenomena, although how these dimensions of oppression manifest around the world vary. Trans activism seeks to disrupt and ultimately dismantle cisnormativity and transphobia in the service of trans rights and life chances.

Among trans communities, it is broadly agreed upon that trans activism is by, for, and about trans people. Some trans activists have picked up a slogan rooted in disability activism: “Nothing about us without us,” which means that efforts related to a minoritized group must include participation by

that group. Activism that does not include trans people or is not trans driven is not likely to be considered trans activism, even if its goal is to support trans people. Such efforts might instead be considered trans *allyship*. That said, much trans activism over the past several decades has overlapped with other groups’ interests. For example, some activist efforts in support of trans people are done under the banner of LGBTQIA+ activism, such as AIDS activism and expansion of nondiscrimination policies.

Trans activism includes strategies and efforts small and large, coordinated or independent. Activism may constitute a constellation of planned activities intended to complement each other or individual, even spontaneous, bursts of action. Because of the conflict between global cisnormativity and transphobia, on one hand, and the need to dismantle these ideologies to advance trans rights and life chances, on the other hand, trans activism is necessarily grounded in resistance. Activities that trans activism can entail include but are not limited to protests, demonstrations, letter-writing campaigns, legal actions, marches, riots, boycotts, education, artistic creation, and fundraising. These activities are often done through formal or informal coalitions of individuals and organizations. Many such coalitions, from not-for-profit organizations to less formalized collaborative groups, exist to build capacity for and advance trans activist goals. Other activist efforts are conducted individually. Over the years, some activists have been recognized for their work individually and as part of coalitions.

An important aspect of trans activism is intersectionality. An *intersectional* approach to trans activism considers how multiple systems of domination (e.g., racism, classism, ableism) connect and overlap with transphobia and cisnormativity to create additional harms against trans people who are part of multiple minoritized social groups, especially trans people of color. Many trans activists operate under the banner of intersectional efforts. Because intersectional trans activism focuses on social reforms that address multiple dimensions of oppression, some critics have suggested it is not trans activism because it is not specific only to trans people.

This conflict between intersectional and nonintersectional trans activists characterizes a broader conflict in trans activism. Because of the wide range of what constitutes trans activism, some individual activists and organizations disagree as

to what should be labeled as trans activism. Furthermore, the diversity of people who are trans means that activism by and for one group of trans people may be considered in opposition to another group of trans people. Such conflicts are an important aspect of trans activism in the 21st century.

Some Arenas of Trans Activism

Some of the specific areas in which trans activism has advanced rights and life chances for trans people include but are not limited to law and policy, medicine and health care, education, media, and sports.

Law and Policy

The arena of law and policy constitutes many trans activist efforts, in part because laws and policies implicate many other domains. For example, laws can dictate whether medical practitioners can prescribe gender-affirming treatments and hamper or enable trans people to access educational and recreational facilities. Major areas within the arena of law and policy include decriminalization, anti-discrimination, facilities, and documentation. Decriminalization points to laws that either overtly or subtly criminalize trans lives. For example, anti-crossdressing laws criminalize trans existence by requiring people to wear certain amounts of clothing “consistent with” one’s assigned sex. Although most trans people are not crossdressers, these laws originated in the 19th and 20th centuries before the contemporary language and culture shifts that have come to recognize the diversity of trans identities. Police would invoke these laws and require trans and other gender-nonconforming people to take off their clothes in efforts to degrade and humiliate. These laws have faded over time through activism in the form of legal challenges regarding individuals’ liberty to present more freely.

Efforts to expand antidiscrimination policies within state (i.e., government) and private (e.g., businesses) enterprises represent policy activism to broaden the protection of trans people from discriminatory practices in housing, employment, service, and more. These efforts occur at various levels. Large organizations like the National Center for Transgender Equality conduct such advocacy through a range of legal and educational

efforts. Small, even informal groups, such as student organizations, host events and engage with policymakers to broaden existing antidiscrimination policies and/or create new, trans-inclusive policies. Some of these organizations and coalitions also lobby for the expansion of hate crimes laws to include crimes against trans people. Some trans activists, however, have resisted expansion of hate crimes laws because of how such measures serve an inherently oppressive legal system, including what is sometimes called the prison-industrial complex. This tension between working on behalf of trans people within existing systems, oppressive as they are, and refusing to participate in oppressive systems is an example of a difference in activist approaches to intersectionality.

Antidiscrimination policies and the access to and use of facilities are closely linked. For trans people, access to facilities often centers on the availability and use of changing rooms, restrooms, dormitories, and other spaces that are separated by gender. Because many trans people are nonbinary and/or do not fit cisnormative assumptions regarding gender appearance, facilities that are male and female specific leave trans people open to discomfort and even harassment and violence. State and private entities have sought to clarify trans people’s use of facilities in inclusive and exclusive ways alike. Trans activists have responded to trans-exclusive facility policies, sometimes called “bathroom bills,” through law and policy lobbying; electoral political action; journalism, blogging, and other storytelling to raise awareness; and boycotts of businesses that enforce transphobic, cisnormative facility access.

Documentation refers to personal identification and organizations’ recognition of individuals’ demographic information, including gender and/or sex. The ability, or inability, for a trans person to change their legal gender on their birth certificate, passport, or other documents is a major example in this arena. Documentation also encompasses how organizations apply gender markers and names to individuals in databases and other information systems. Through activist efforts, such as awareness raising (e.g., trans-inclusive trainings, workplace education) and direct action (e.g., protests, legal actions) to change institutional and state policies, trans people have successfully shifted many organizations’ capacity to properly gender and name people in various documents and communications.

How laws are carried out, not just how they are written or intended, affects trans lives. For example, where there are ambiguities in state law regarding sex or gender markers on IDs, individuals within state government can choose to restrict trans people's access to changing their identification. Such restrictions made legally through mundane or everyday decision making are described as "administrative violence." Trans activists, such as Dean Spade, have sought to address administrative violence against trans people by drawing attention to these mundane decisions and seeking redress through new or adjusted policy.

Medicine and Health Care

Medicine and health care policies and practices are highly relevant to trans lives and thus have been an important arena for trans activism. Gender-affirming health care practices include hormone replacement therapy and certain surgeries, including procedures colloquially known as "top surgery" (chest reconstruction) and "bottom surgery" (gender-affirming procedures concerning genitals). These procedures are widely considered essential for many trans people's well-being. Expanding safe, affordable access to gender-affirming medical care and increasing medical practitioners' understanding of gender-affirming practices have been key issues for trans activists. Activism in this area has included trans providers and scholars presenting on relevant topics and providing trainings in their organizations and professional societies, as well as trans community organizations and individuals pushing medical practitioners to adjust practices and policies and lobbying for law and policy changes vis-à-vis health care.

Not all trans people require or even desire medical interventions related to their gender presentation, but all trans people do interact with the institutions of health care and medicine for the range of health care treatments. Efforts to support accessible, affordable, trans-affirming medical care include and transcend gender-affirming procedures specifically. Trans activism thus also aims to expand practitioners' capacity to affirm and care for trans people as patients dealing with the same range of medical conditions that cis people face.

Education

Education encompasses formal education, such as early childhood through postsecondary education, and informal education spaces such as museums and the arts. Trans activism has focused on the inclusion of trans individuals as students and teachers as well as on the content of what is taught. Activism in the education arena overlaps with other areas. For example, access to trans-inclusive facilities is vital for students, who spend large portions of their time in schools, and access to trans-affirming health care is needed for teachers and school administrators. The education area includes its own trans activism as well, from specific contexts like trans-inclusive sex education to the general expansion of concepts of gender in the curriculum and administrative practice. Activism by and on behalf of trans people is a way to ensure the well-being of trans people in schools and to educate other students and teachers by expanding their ideas about gender and the cisnormative binary categories of women and men.

Much activism in education advocates for trans-inclusive curricula. These efforts include teaching about trans history and the contributions to society of trans individuals. Trans inclusion can also manifest through educational activities. For example, a teacher may encourage students to reflect on their identities and the identities of their family and friends in regard to gender or may provide service learning opportunities with trans advocacy organizations. Trans activists urge these curricular efforts through school boards, laws regarding education, and direct contact with teachers and educational administrators.

Sex education is a major focus of activist attention. Trans-inclusive sex education rejects binary categories of sex, sheds cisnormative expectations regarding how individuals' bodies develop through puberty, and includes information about managing transition, such as healthy use of binders and puberty inhibitors. Providing trans-inclusive sex education is broadly seen as a trans activist effort and is carried out by organizations like Planned Parenthood. Additionally, in some regions and municipalities, trans-inclusive sex education is integrated into school curricula. For example, Ontario, Canada, briefly required trans-inclusive sex education in the 2010s before

right-wing politicians and trans-exclusive feminist groups reversed that policy.

Beyond curricular change, trans activists and educators seek to dismantle the gender binary and other cisnormative assumptions in schooling. For example, trans scholars, educators, and activists have challenged the use of binary gender reporting in the teaching of statistics. Through emergent scholarship in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, trans scholar-activists have advanced knowledge on how to support trans students from kindergarten through higher education. Furthermore, many activists create and share stories, fictional and nonfictional, about trans people and communities with schools and educators to promote the broader inclusion of trans perspectives and lives in education.

In higher education settings, trans students participate in activism through a variety of means, such as LGBTQIA+ organizations, meetings with institutional leaders, and campus committees. These activist efforts provide opportunities for trans college students to learn about organizing and strive to make their institutions more affirming.

Media

The effort to create and share stories about trans people transcends education. Many trans people have created film, television, music, journalism, books, art, and other media that tell trans stories. In media, trans activism largely constitutes a push for diverse representations that reject stereotyping and other harmful portrayals of trans people. Although trans representations existed in media prior to 2000, widespread efforts to spotlight trans stories, hire trans talent for these stories, and challenge cis people's (mis)representations of trans lives largely emerged in the 21st century. Notably, in the 2010s, Laverne Cox became the first openly trans person in the United States nominated for an Emmy Award in an acting category (for her role in the television show *Orange Is the New Black*); Janet Mock, trans media creator and activist, released her bestselling memoir, *Redefining Realness*; and a number of trans-related television shows and films premiered, including the television show *Pose*, which had the most trans writers, producers, and actors of any program, and the film *Tangerine*, whose main characters are trans sex workers played by trans actresses Kitana Kiki Rodriguez and Mya Taylor.

Trans activism through media is characterized by artists and activists engaging in storytelling, awareness raising, and advocating via various media platforms for trans rights and life chances. For example, Laverne Cox used her celebrity status to raise awareness of the story of CeCe McDonald, a Black trans activist who was imprisoned for defending herself against and killing a transphobic, racist attacker.

Sports

Trans activism in sports relates primarily to the ubiquitous binary gender categorizing of athletic competition. That is, because the vast majority of amateur and professional sports contests are sex segregated, with sex determined by cisnormative rules, trans participants are all but excluded. Even the Gay Games has discriminated against trans athletes. But despite these instances of exclusion, many trans athletes still train and compete locally and/or through organizations that practice trans inclusion. Such participation in the face of attempts to sideline trans people in sport is an activist effort, as are efforts to raise awareness about trans athletes and gender diversity more generally and to change the policies of sport governing bodies to enable trans people to compete.

Examples of Trans Activism in History

Scientific Advancement

In some contexts, scientific research can constitute activism. The early 20th century saw major strides regarding the science of gender diversity that challenged Western notions of the gender binary. Pivotal to these discoveries was the Institut für Sexualwissenschaft, or Institute for Sexology, founded by Magnus Hirschfeld in Berlin, Germany, in 1919. Although Hirschfeld was not trans, the Institute employed trans people and performed some of the gender-affirming medical interventions that trans people sought. In the 1930s, Adolf Hitler denounced Hirschfeld, and Nazis destroyed the Institute. Some of the Institute's work continued, both through the training of doctors who would later advance trans-affirming medicine and through case descriptions of trans people, some of which were included in Hirschfeld's 1910 book *The Transvestites*. Scientists and physicians thus

engaged in activism on behalf of human rights and dignity.

Social Networks

In the mid-20th century, informal and formal social networks of trans people in the United States emerged, creating a foundation for collective action. In the 1940s, Louise Lawrence, who would, in the 21st century, be recognized as a trans woman, developed correspondence networks with people who were arrested for crossdressing and housed people seeking trans medical care in San Francisco. Virginia Prince, a self-described transvestite who was part of Lawrence's social network, went on to build an even broader network in the 1950s. In 1952, Prince and other transvestites published *Transvestia: The Journal of the American Society for Equality in Dress*, a newsletter that would be the first of many political, awareness- and solidarity-focused publications produced by, about, and for trans people. Newsletters and zines would continue to be major sources of sharing trans art, poetry, stories, and news for decades to come. In the 1960s, Prince founded the Foundation for Personal Expression, which later transformed into the Society for the Second Self, or Tri-Ess. These organizations formalized the social networks Prince and other transvestites had created. In the wider social context of McCarthyism in the United States and violence against queer people, forming these networks constituted radical activism and, in fact, risked legal consequences to the activists.

The late 19th and 20th centuries also witnessed the emergence of drag ball culture. Ball culture involved young people dressing up and was especially prominent within Black queer communities. Throughout the 20th century, ball culture provided social spaces in which people could play with gender and develop social networks connected by gender nonconformity. Resistance and activism might be expressed in these contexts through dress and dance, but it was no less political in nature than the street protests that symbolized trans activism in the 1960s.

Riots, Protests, and Demonstrations

Spontaneous and planned responses to police violence represented some of the most visible

moments of trans activism in the mid-20th century in the United States. The Stonewall Riots in particular are famous for their role in trans history and LGBTQ+ history more broadly. Prior to Stonewall, however, there were protests against police at Cooper Do-nuts in Los Angeles in 1959, Dewey's in Philadelphia in 1965, and Compton's Cafeteria in San Francisco in 1966. In the cases of Cooper's and Compton's, police harassed patrons, many of whom were street queens, sex workers, and/or gay men, until the patrons fought back. Following the riot at Compton's Cafeteria, participants in the resistance and other allied individuals returned a second night and, in time, incited further organizing through organizations such as the youth organization Vanguard and the peer support group National Transsexual Counseling Unit. At Dewey's, the management began refusing to serve gender-nonconforming youth, until customers staged sit-ins and picketed outside the restaurant.

Likewise, Stonewall marked an important historical moment for trans activism, as well as the beginning of further organizing. In the early morning of June 28, 1969, police raided the Stonewall Inn in New York City's Greenwich Village, and the bar patrons who were allowed to leave remained outside, eventually resisting and fighting back against police. Many trans people were involved in the riots, including notable trans activists Stormé DeLarverie, Marsha P. Johnson, and Sylvia Rivera. It is believed that DeLarverie, Johnson, or another drag queen or crossdresser (as many trans people were described at that time) was the first to fight back against the police at Stonewall. After hours of fighting with police in the morning of June 28, groups of trans people, street youth, gay men, and others who had frequented Stonewall and other area gay bars returned to the site the next night to protest and continued to do so in the nights that followed.

Protests continued as visible activism efforts in subsequent decades, through movements such as antiapartheid, AIDS activism, Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street, and Black Lives Matter. Although none of these were specific only to trans people, trans activists rallied to many of these and other contemporary causes to address multifaceted issues such as anti-Black police violence and wealth inequities.

Organizing

In some ways, trans organizing dates back to Hirschfeld's Institute for Sexology, but it increased exponentially in the 1960s, especially after the riots at Compton's and Stonewall. Conversion Our Goal (COG), for example, was founded in San Francisco in 1967 and served as a support group, connecting trans people to resources and to each other. In New York City, among the organizations created in the months after Stonewall was STAR (Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries), founded by Johnson and Rivera. Through STAR, Johnson and Rivera aimed to safely house and care for homeless trans youth and to resist and protest police violence. STAR lasted from 1970 to 1973, but Johnson and Rivera continued agitating for trans youth and drag queens within the gay liberation movement for the rest of their lives.

The Gay Liberation Front (GLF) was one of the best-known organizations to emerge after Stonewall. New York City GLF activists planned the Christopher Street Liberation Day March in 1970 to commemorate Stonewall, and several U.S. cities followed suit. These first-anniversary recognitions of the riots in time spread worldwide and spawned organizations that celebrate June as Pride Month. Although trans people were integral to resistance at Stonewall and part of what was described as the gay liberation movement, they were purposefully sidelined within GLF and other gay organizing of the time. Trans organizations like STAR and the Queens Liberation Front (QLF) took the mantle of centering trans people in their efforts.

The sidelining and exclusion of trans people in gay and lesbian groups, as well as in feminist organizing, continued for the rest of the 20th century and, to a lesser degree, into the early 21st century. Trans organizing in this time period involved both creating trans organizations and agitating for inclusion in gay and lesbian and other organizations. In the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s, many gay organizations changed their names and sometimes missions to be more trans inclusive, although transphobia persisted in some of the organizations that had appended a "T" to their use of "LGB."

Trans people continued to build organizations in the service of trans rights and resistance. Trans activism grew exponentially in the 1990s with the creation of a wide range of organizations, including

the American Educational Gender Information Service (AEGIS), founded by Dallas Denny, and Transsexual Menace and, later, the Gender Public Advocacy Coalition (GenderPAC), founded by Riki Wilchins. Through AEGIS, Denny circulated information about trans issues and hosted large conferences and gatherings. Transsexual Menace was a protest group, and GenderPAC lobbied for trans rights laws and policies.

Vigils and Remembrances

Transsexual Menace, a direct action group founded in New York City in 1994, was involved in protesting and holding vigils for trans people killed because of their gender identity/expression. One such victim was Brandon Teena, a white transmasculine person who was murdered by transphobic assailants in 1993. The 1998 murder of Rita Hester, a Black trans woman, spurred Gwen Smith to create a website to honor trans victims of violence; the website later evolved into the Transgender Day of Remembrance, a day that memorializes those killed in anti-trans hate crimes and calls for trans activism internationally.

Storytelling

In the early 1990s, trans author and activist Leslie Feinberg published two works that proved foundational for trans life in the years to come: her memoir-style novel, *Stone Butch Blues*, and the political manifesto, *Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come*. Queer studies, which offered intellectual bases for trans existence, emerged around this time in academic circles and set the foundation for scholarship and the later emergence of trans studies as an academic field. In and outside of the academy, trans stories were increasingly told by trans people, in contrast to much of the 20th century, when trans lives were described in medical, pathological, or legal terms by non-trans people.

The emergence of massive online social networks such as Tumblr, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook in the 2000s and 2010s enabled individuals and groups to use online platforms to tell stories, advocate, and connect. On these platforms, hashtags (i.e., keywords that follow the # symbol) enabled connections between posts. Site

users employed hashtags such as #TransIsBeautiful and #GirlsLikeUs to advance positive, affirming images of trans people. Social media also presented a new forum to challenge people, including elected officials and celebrities, who promoted cisnormativity and transphobia. Finally, trans people have used social media websites to build social networks, which enables greater connectivity among trans people and more opportunities for activism in the community.

Benefits of Trans Activism

The goals of trans activism are to expand rights for and improve the lives of trans people. These goals benefit trans people's capacity to live and thrive. Furthermore, the expansion of rights for trans people benefits cis people. For example, some people who experience harassment because of their gender expression are cis; that is, although the person is not trans, they may be mistaken as trans by a transphobic aggressor. Using harassment and violence to enforce cisnormativity can extend beyond trans people to anyone who expresses gender outside traditional binary norms of femininity and masculinity. Manifestations of transphobia and cisnormativity can thus harm cis people, so eradicating anti-trans oppression is also in their interest.

Research finds that trans people who participate in activism experience positive psychological and social benefits. Coalitions of trans activists create a sense of community for those involved that may not have been fostered otherwise. Historically, those coalitions enabled trans people to create social networks that began through arrests and other acts of police violence and private business exclusion, such as the protests at Cooper Do-nuts and Stonewall. Such community, and the positive goals for trans people they work toward through activism, can support trans people's social connections and positive sense of self. The emergence of digital forms of activism, including social media campaigns and virtual community organizing, enables 21st-century trans activists to mobilize more quickly and on a larger scale than was possible when trans activist movements began. Even with the affordances of technology, however, contemporary trans activism relies on its heritage of courage and resistance in the face of a cisnormative and transphobic status quo.

Responding to this status quo creates an inherent paradox in trans activism: Participating in activism can benefit trans people, yet it requires emotional, relational, and physical energy as well as time focused on transphobia and cisnormativity, rather than simply living one's life in a state of equality and justice. Encouraging trans people to involve themselves in activism for the benefits therein ignores that such activism is a response to the harms of cisnormativity and transphobia. Although trans activism is beneficial, ultimately dismantling aspects of society that necessitate activism would be more beneficial.

Conflicts in 21st-Century Trans Activism

Trans activists in the 21st century are presented with some conflicts that play out across arenas and types of trans activism. Generally speaking, conflicts are rooted in representation and the diversity of identities and priorities within trans activism, as well as in the overlap (or lack thereof) with other groups and issues.

A challenge that arises in activism is that trans people who hold majoritized identities (e.g., white, wealthy) often dominate discourses and priorities related to trans activism, to the detriment of others in the community. This dynamic can lead to the erasure of trans people of color, especially Black trans people, and other trans people with multiple minoritized identities. Such erasure can include ignoring those communities' priorities and marginalizing the people themselves within activist efforts.

The differences between goals can emerge in a variety of ways. One example is related to inclusion in the military. Some U.S. trans activists advocated to lift the ban on trans servicemembers in the Armed Forces. Other trans activists opposed this effort, arguing that allowing the military to become trans inclusive would strengthen what is called the military-industrial complex and concomitant harms against minoritized people globally. This difference exemplifies conflicts between trans activists who seek inclusion in all spheres of life and trans activists who embrace an intersectional approach to fight against all forms of oppression.

Efforts to challenge the military-industrial complex point to trans activism that overlaps with

other groups' activism. Likewise, many trans activists partner with non-trans people in the service of issues such as immigration, policing, and environmental justice. For example, many trans people supported actions by Black and Latinx organizations in the United States to protest against police violence, incarceration, and immigrant detention, noting that Black and Latinx trans people experience considerable harm through the criminal justice and immigration systems.

Robert L. Hill and Kristen A. Renn

See also Black Lives Matter; Community Building; Compton's Cafeteria Riot; Cooper Do-nuts Riot; Feinberg, Leslie; Gender on Legal Documents; Health Care Access, Legal Issues; History; Identity Politics; Johnson, Marsha P.; K-12 Policies/Climate; LGBTQ Movement, Trans Inclusion In/Exclusion From; National Center for Transgender Equality; Nondiscrimination Laws, Federal, State, and Local; Online Communities; Rivera, Sylvia; STAR; Stonewall Riots; Transexual Menace; Transgender Day of Remembrance; Women's Movement, Trans Inclusion In/Exclusion From

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ADOPTION AND FOSTER CARE

The majority of trans people describe adoption or foster care as their preferred way of becoming a parent—however, little is known about the actual number of current trans adoptive and foster parents (in comparison to lesbian and gay adoptive and foster parents: for example, in 2007, it was estimated that lesbian and gay parents are raising 4% of adoptive and 3% of foster children). While adoption and foster care are the ideal pathways to parenthood among trans people, there are a number of financial, legal, and logistic barriers that they must navigate. Trans people represent a significant pool of potential parents for a large population of children in need, along with possessing unique strengths as prospective adoptive/foster parents.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, in 2017 there were over 400,000 children in the foster care system, 60,000 of whom were legally adopted, with 70,000 remaining available for adoption that year. Each year in the United States, the majority of children who are adopted are done so through the foster care system, with about a quarter of adoptions occurring internationally and a tenth being adopted domestically (outside of the foster care system). Based on a combination of representative U.S. surveys in 2007, over 2 million LGB people want to become parents through adoption or foster care and 111,000 LGB parents are currently raising adopted children, with thousands more parenting children from the foster care system. Some experts have emphasized that these numbers are great underestimates. Although the current number of trans adoptive and foster parents is unknown, the majority of trans people describe adoption and foster care as their ideal method of becoming a parent.

Among childfree trans people, adoption and foster care is described as the ideal pathway to parenthood, and this trend is on the rise. The majority of trans youth see adoption or foster care as how they envision becoming parents, with many not even considering biological parenthood. For some, adoption may not be their first choice, but is it the most realistic and feasible option due to the availability and functionality of their or their partner's reproductive systems (i.e., they understand that hormonal therapies would need to be delayed

or stopped due to the negative impact on sperm production and ceasing of the ovulation cycle). Many trans people describe their main motivation for wanting to become adoptive or foster parents as a way to give back to children in need and contribute to wider society.

There are a number of ways that trans people can become adoptive or foster parents, each with its own unique strengths and barriers. Trans people can become adoptive or foster parents as a single individual or in the context of a couple. The adoption process can take different forms, depending on the type of adoption agency. Typically, potential parents can work with either of two different types of agencies, public or private. Public agencies typically work within local or state child welfare systems. With public agencies, birth parents have lost their legal rights to their children, which often results in a lack of involvement of the birth family in the placement process. In addition, public agencies are more likely to have children who have higher rates of special needs or trauma-related challenges and are typically older. In contrast, private agencies facilitate both domestic and international adoptions. These agencies typically involve the birth family in the adoption process, often making decisions regarding potential adoptive parents. Last, private adoption is typically more expensive than public adoption.

Unlike adoption, foster care is not a permanent placement and does not always include the opportunity of future adoption. With foster care, agencies prefer to place children with biological relatives or family members first before allowing for permanent placement or adoption. Currently, over 400,000 children are in the U.S. foster care system, with about a quarter available for adoption. Owing to an insufficient number of qualified foster parents compared to the number of children, a quarter of these children will turn 18 years of age before having a permanent placement. It is important to note that children in the foster care system tend to be considered “higher risk,” since they are more likely to be older, have a history of childhood trauma and abuse, have higher rates of mental and physical health difficulties, and more often require more specialized care and services. Last, it is important to note that foster care is less of a financial burden compared with adoption, which can make this pathway to parenthood more feasible.

Barriers to Adoption or Foster Care

Even with the availability of adoption and foster care, trans people face a number of barriers to becoming parents through these methods. In general, society has negative views about trans people as parents, typically based on heterosexist and cissexist beliefs that children need both a mother and father who are cisgender. In one study, participants reviewed descriptions of potential adoptive parents, with the only differences being the parent’s sexual orientation or gender identity. In general, heterosexual cisgender parents were rated ideal, with the trans parents being the least preferred, especially among those who held more negative views toward trans people. These negatively held views of trans parents are reflected in many laws and policies regarding adoption and foster care.

A number of legal and policy level barriers affect potential trans parents. Currently in the United States, there are no federal legal protections for gender-based discrimination toward trans people. Being trans is not in itself a reason for agencies to deny services or refuse to work with potential parents, but owing to a lack of federal legal protection, agencies can make these decisions based on personal beliefs or opinions. As of 2020, 11 states allow state-licensed adoption and child welfare agencies to deny placements or refuse to work with trans people based on their gender identity. Only 24 states, along with Washington, D.C., prohibit discrimination toward potential parents based on gender identity. Among the remaining 26 states, 4 have protections regarding sexual orientation but not gender identity, and 22 states have no explicit legal protections based on gender identity or sexual orientation. Many agencies are willing to work with trans potential parents, but many trans people understandably (i.e., based on their experiences with discrimination in the broader society) believe that discrimination is pervasive and worry that they will face discrimination in the adoption process.

For those who decide to begin the process of becoming an adoptive or foster parent, they first need to find an agency willing to work with them. Even if an agency is willing to work with trans people, there remains the fear that other individuals within these agencies, the family court system, or birth families will discriminate based on gender identity. Because of these fears, trans people may

decide to conceal their gender identity—although there are legal and practical implications of this nondisclosure.

Legal professionals generally see early disclosure as important to facilitate the adoption or foster care process. The process, which involves stringent background checks, including medical and mental health histories, could result in the discovery of a person's gender identity. Many agencies require disclosure of all personal information at the beginning of the adoption or foster care process, which would include gender identity. If not disclosed prior to signing a contract with an agency but discovered later, that could be a violation resulting in termination. In contrast, some legal scholars have discussed that requiring disclosure could be an invasion of a person's privacy. Some couples have found additional ways to navigate nondisclosure, such as in a situation where one partner is trans and the other is cisgender. In this situation, the cisgender person could go through the adoption or foster care process as a single parent, without disclosing the presence of a partner. This would result in the trans parent not being legally recognized as a parent or guardian to the child. In sum, fears regarding disclosure, experiences of discrimination, and lack of legal protections can result in potential trans parents being apprehensive or deciding not to pursue parenthood through adoption or foster care.

Unique Strengths of Trans Adoptive or Foster Parents

Although trans people have reported perceiving and experiencing barriers in attempting to become parents through adoption or foster care, there are a number of potential strengths that trans people bring to being adoptive or foster parents. For example, trans people are more willing to adopt or foster children who are older and have behavioral difficulties, physical disabilities, and mental health diagnoses, compared with their heterosexual cisgender and sexual minority peers. In addition, trans people are comparatively more open to adopting or fostering sibling groups, which would allow more children to remain with members of their birth families.

There are two additional groups—namely, children of color and LGBTQ children—for whom

trans people could provide unique personal support. Due to trans people's being aware of, and often having had, negative experiences associated with these identities, trans people are in the unique position to relate to and understand these youth. Therefore, trans adoptive parents can provide valuable insight into these children's personal needs, along with being able to provide personal validation of these children's experiences. This is important given that, in the U.S. child welfare system, racial and ethnic minority children are disproportionately represented, specifically non-Hispanic Black children. According to the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System, in 2017 these children made up 23% of all children currently in the foster care system, although they comprise only 14% of the general population. Interestingly, trans people are more open to adopting or fostering a child of color, along with being more likely to identify as nonwhite, compared to their cisgender peers. Currently in the United States, over half of the adopted racial and ethnic minority children in the child welfare system have been adopted by white identified parents. Although controversial, some discuss potential issues with transracial adoption—specifically, whether white parents are the best adoptive parents of racial and ethnic minority children. Since one quarter of the children in the child welfare system identify as nonwhite, trans people represent a potential parent population with similar racial and ethnic demographics. Another statistically high population in the child welfare system are LGBTQ youth. In a study published in 2019, 30.4% of the youth in the foster care system identified as LGBTQ, along with 5% identifying as trans. Compared with the general population, LGBTQ youth are three times more likely (11.2% of general population) and trans youth are five times more likely (1.2% of the general population) to be in the child welfare system.

Conclusion

For trans people, becoming a parent through adoption or foster care is often seen as the preferred way to become a parent. With thousands of children in need of loving homes and thousands of potential trans people interested in becoming parents this way, trans people are a deeply undervalued

population in regard to the child welfare system. Negative assumptions or myths regarding trans people's capabilities as parents, along with the institutional discrimination trans people may face from adoption agencies, the child welfare system, and the legal system, cause millions of potential parents to be denied their right to become parents. With a strong commitment to becoming parents through adoption and foster care and the potential to fill multiple gaps within the child welfare system, trans people are an extremely underused resource available to the child welfare system and thousands of children in need.

Samantha L. Tornello

See also Decisions to Parent; Reproductive Health; Parenthood, Transition to

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AFFIRMATIVE THERAPY

For many years, therapists have often been perceived by trans people as gatekeepers to transition. Doctors would not write a hormone prescription without a referral letter from a mental health specialist; surgeons would not perform transition-related surgeries without a similar referral letter. Viewed in this light, many trans people did not consider that therapy might be beneficial beyond providing referral letters. This entry addresses what affirmative therapy might look like, beyond providing letters leading to treatment with hormones and surgery.

There are few populations as diverse as trans people. (Trans people cannot even agree on terminology, as some will not use the umbrella term *trans*.) The only thing this population has in common is calling into question birth gender assignment. What does affirmative therapy look like, then, for a population this diverse? Are there any commonalities in the therapeutic process from one client to the next? Absolutely.

Beyond the diversity of the population, another consideration is the complexity of the transition process. Few processes rock the lifeboat as thoroughly as transition. The changes that an individual undergoes may be dramatic externally, with the client looking completely different some years into transition. The changes may be completely internal and just as dramatically deep for the trans client whose path does not include physical transition. Yet again, there are indeed commonalities in the therapeutic process across diverse trans clients.

A point of reassurance: Nothing stays the same, everything changes, and none of the decisions belong to the therapist. The job of the therapist is not to diagnose identity or to proclaim, “This is who you are.” Imagine lining up a group of people and going down the line proclaiming certain people are gay or lesbian while others are not. Although that may sound ludicrous, the presence of the diagnostic category Gender Dysphoria in the American Psychiatric Association's fifth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)* implies the notion that therapists can diagnose a trans person's identity.

The diagnosis of identity belongs to the client. The job of the therapist is to facilitate the process

and to provide clients a safe space to conduct the necessary exploration from which to make an informed decision about who they are. Deep self-exploration, going back to their earliest childhood memories of gender emergence, requires trust and centeredness. The job of the therapist, then, is to create the safe holding space for the client to access, the space that allows them to bring painful, upsetting, or overwhelming memories and current experiences into the moment.

The Therapeutic Setting

People whose identities are marginalized become vigilant in assessing the safety of their surroundings. Here are things a trans client might look for (either consciously or not) in assessing a therapist's office for emotional safety.

First, the building infrastructure itself. On their initial visit to a therapist's office, it is likely the trans client will notice the bathroom signage down the hall. How gendered is it? The caution that new clients always feel may be heightened for the trans person by bathrooms labeled "Men" and "Women" with no indication of awareness of trans or nonbinary identities.

Second, the waiting area. How neutral is the color scheme regarding gender? If there are magazines, what titles are they? Anything LGBTQ is a good sign, especially if it is current. However, having one copy of a 3-year-old magazine sends entirely the wrong message, one of tokenism. Are there any posters or artwork that show support for all kinds of identities?

Third, the therapy office. Is the therapist sitting in a position of equality with the client? Similar chairs? Is the therapist behind a desk? Again, clients who are marginalized have a heightened awareness of power differentials.

Fourth, the intake paperwork. Reassuring to a trans client, for example, is paperwork that states: What pronoun would you prefer I use for you in my chart notes? Even more reassuring is not asking about gender on initial paperwork at all, as this allows for a matter-of-fact conversation with all clients during the first session. This lets trans clients know that the therapist is not on autopilot about gender.

The therapist can then discuss how various insurance companies handle gender, that there may

be a need to misgender a nonbinary client because of the constraints of the billing system, and that the therapist recognizes pronouns and names may change over time and the client should let the therapist know if their pronouns shift, or they would like to try out a new name for a time, or that they have chosen a new name. The conversation itself is an intervention, normalizing that the therapist is aware that birth-assigned gender is not fixed reality.

The therapeutic alliance is the most important factor in working with any client. All the trans-supportive infrastructure in the world is not going to create that spark of connection that leads to excellent work.

The Therapist's Personal Gender Exploration

This raises the important issue of the actual therapist. How much internal work has the therapist done in assessing their own gender? "Informed about who they are" requires the client to do deep soul-searching into the nature of gender, gender roles, gender expression, how they feel about the gender they were assigned at birth, and whether there are aspects that work for them while others do not.

The question underlying all this exploration is, "What form of transition away from my birth gender assignment is right for me?" The therapist who has done similar self-exploration will be of greatest benefit to trans clients. If the therapist identifies as cisgender, is this identity based on self-exploration or an automatic assumption?

In many cultures, gender is viewed as fixed reality, automatically matching certain genital configurations. Gender is assumed at birth from a cursory examination of the baby's physicality. Often these days, this pronouncement is made before birth, based on an ultrasound examination. The baby is gendered before seeing the light of day and sometimes is feted with a gender reveal party while still inside the womb.

Some parents are now making the logical connection: Since there are trans people having to transition, this means the gender assigned them at birth was inaccurate. How, then, can one accurately assign gender at birth? Such parents have brought gender into consciousness as a social process, not a

fixed reality that automatically correlates with genitalia. It is precisely this paradigm shift about the nature of gender that is required of the therapist who works with trans clients. Here are some exercises that can help facilitate this paradigm shift:

- If the therapist has access to a multistall public bathroom that is open to men and women alike, experiment with using it and note the resulting emotions.
- If the therapist lives in an area where it is legal to use whichever bathroom fits their identity, regardless of their physicality or mode of dress, experiment with using the “wrong” bathroom and note what emotions arise.
- A cisgender, male-identified therapist might dress as a woman and move through the world in various social situations, doing their best to be seen as a woman, not as a man in a dress. Note the difference in social interactions and boundaries, as well as the resultant emotions.
- If the therapist cannot be seen as a woman, they will be seen as a man in a dress. Note the resultant social interactions and emotional responses.
- A cisgender female-identified therapist might attempt to be seen as an adult man. (This may require not speaking in public.) If the therapist has experience with theatrical makeup or know someone who does, adding facial hair will augment this experiment. Note the resultant social interactions and emotional responses.

These experiments are designed to highlight the nature of gender as a social process. Social boundaries, particularly with strangers, derive in part from unconscious assessments of gender. Bringing the system into consciousness as just that, a system, will help the therapist understand a trans client’s challenges.

These exercises can only give a glimpse, as the cisgender therapist is not changing their hormone balance. Shifting from being estrogen based to testosterone based or vice versa changes one’s perspective completely. People do not want to believe they are little more than a series of chemical reactions; those who have transitioned with the introduction of hormones understand how profoundly hormone balances affect the filter through which humans experience the world emotionally and intellectually.

Cisgender women who have been pregnant, have gone through menopause, or had erratic periods have experienced changes in their hormone balance, allowing a glimpse of what it feels like if the balance changes significantly. Cisgender men who have taken testosterone to boost low levels may remember experiencing an increase in energy and mental alertness, as well as a heightened sense of centeredness.

Testosterone and estrogen are naturally occurring hormones present in all humans. Those who transition physically are changing the dominant hormone in their body. Aspects of this process may resonate with the cisgender therapist, allowing a point of identification with a trans client’s process as they shift hormone balances.

Whatever modality resonates with a particular therapist, their job is to help a client reframe past experiences in service of defining the future. There are few cultures that welcome and celebrate trans identity; most trans clients have been raised within a culture that denigrates, mocks, or denies their identity. Helping them redefine gender as an innate identity issue, one only they can address, will help them develop the self-esteem and centeredness required to make the best decisions about transition.

Whether physically transitioning or not, whether nonbinary or claiming “he” or “she” as a pronoun, all trans clients will find their path smoother if they own their identities as being just fine. A therapist who models a matter-of-fact attitude of identity exploration as a good thing, regardless of where the journey takes the client, is giving the client precisely what they need from their early transition therapist.

The Therapeutic Alliance

One paradox of transition is that the closer the relationship between a trans client and a friend or family member, the less likely it is they can turn to that person for unconditional and congratulatory support during early transition. Initially, the friend or family member is going through their own transition process. The friend or family member has to let go of the old before they can be expected to embrace the new identity. This entails some form of loss and grief process—not a time for providing congratulatory support.

The close intimacy of the therapeutic alliance may provide the trans client with the one person who will congratulate them unreservedly when they reach each milestone—the legal name change, the ID card or driver license with the right gender, coming out at work or school, the first date—whatever the milestone is, the therapist experiences no grief in facing it with them. Therapy affirms the journey, wherever it leads.

Transition is an overwhelming journey for any client to consider. An analogy useful to share with trans clients is this. Transition is like driving down a dark deserted road at night. The headlights only illuminate the next 50 feet. Others have traveled this road, yet the client is alone on the journey. They can travel 1,000 miles down that road only ever seeing the next 50 feet. What a leap of faith to undertake the journey—and what a gift to a therapist, to be a companion along the way toward blossoming.

Reid Vanderburgh

See also DSM; Gatekeeping in the Transition Process; Gender Affirmative Model; Gender Labels; Therapist Training; Therapy/Therapist Bias; WPATH

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AGENDER PEOPLE

Agender is a gender identity term that can be defined as “without gender.” Conceptualized outside the gender binary, agender is most often included under the category of nonbinary gender identities, which, in turn, exists under the larger trans umbrella. Agender is most similar in meaning and use to other gender identity terms that signal an absence of gender, such as genderless, gender neutral, and neutrois. Current understandings of agender people have arisen from both the scientific literature and community-based forums, which provide more nuance than current research can offer.

Scientific Literature

The scientific literature rarely speaks about agender people as a distinct group. Rather, it highlights their experiences alongside genderqueer, gender-fluid, and gender-nonconforming individuals and as part of the larger nonbinary umbrella. Research focused on nonbinary identities has worked to distinguish the unique experiences of nonbinary people from those of binary trans people (e.g., trans men, trans women), who are more consistently studied. The literature on nonbinary identities largely aims to understand a marginalized experience (nonbinary) within a marginalized experience (trans). Thus, scholars study how agender and other nonbinary people conceptualize their identities outside the binary. Research also speaks to how agender people negotiate their identities socially, noting that the disclosure of an agender identity is likely met with questions, bias, and microaggressions. Often the underlying assumptions behind these reactions serve to question whether agender is a legitimate identity, suggest that agender people are not “sufficiently” trans, or otherwise force agender individuals to have to defend the legitimacy of their experience.

Qualitative, identity-based research focuses on how agender people make meaning of their gender. For example, agender people often describe having no internal gender or state that their gender is nonexistent. Many also explain that they are not attached to gender, that gender is not salient to their understanding of self, or that their identity is not modified by gender. In addition to characterizing their gender using these more traditional agender explanations, agender people in a recent study also described their gender using five other types of terminology: binary, nonbinary, blended, fluid, and transgender. Although sometimes participants did use binary language (female/male or feminine/masculine) to describe their gender identity, they did so to convey the ways that these terms, even combined, did not quite capture their identity. Similarly, some participants explicitly used nonbinary terminology to convey that their identity did not reside anywhere on a continuum between female and male. Participants also described their gender identity using blended terms, where gender was described as being “both” female and male, or as a blend or mix of the two, and fluid terms where the central characterization of their gender identity rested in flexibility and change (across time and context). Finally, agender participants used transgender terms (e.g., FTM, trans, transmasculine) as a way to describe their identity.

Research shows that many trans individuals use multiple labels for their gender, and this is true for agender people as well. Agender people may exclusively use the term *agender* to describe themselves, or they may simultaneously use multiple labels (e.g., agender, nonbinary, trans). Often individuals will shift usage of labels strategically in order to negotiate across different social situations. The approach to studying agender people reflects this complexity. While agender people are most often included in research studies and grouped with people of other nonbinary identities, they may also be included in studies of trans individuals, where people of all non-cis identities are grouped together.

Demographically, the research on agender people has suggested that nonbinary individuals (inclusive of agender people) tend to be younger than other individuals in the trans community. However, it is important to note that the majority of the

research that includes the experiences of agender people has been conducted online, often recruiting participants from social media outlets, such as Reddit, Tumblr, and Facebook, that provide support and community for agender individuals. It is not surprising, then, that the most nuanced and up-to-date understanding of agender people can be gleaned from community and online resources.

Community Literature

Agender people use social media sites in a variety of ways: to build community, gather and share information, vent about microaggressions, and as a tool for visibility and identity affirmation. In their personal accounts, agender users convey the difficulty of coming out and being recognized as an agender person when there are so few cultural markers to make their identity intelligible to others. Agender people are heterogeneous in their gender presentation and pronoun use. However, many people internalize universal norms that equate agender with androgyny or body dysphoria, leading users to ask questions like, “Do I look agender?” or “Am I trans enough?” In the absence of formal organizations or in-person community resources, online communities provide invaluable educational resources.

On one hand, there is a great need to bridge scientific and community literatures and for the scientific literature to account for the diversity of agender populations. On the other hand, studying agender as its own identity category may not be the best methodological or theoretical solution either. Because agender people may use multiple labels (and because many others do not have access to this term), comparing agender people with other nonbinary identities may not produce clear results. As more identity categories proliferate and shift how people articulate and experience gender, researchers must find ways to capture agender people’s experiences without relying on identity categories that may or may not account for the totality of trans lives.

Derek P. Siegel and M. Paz Galupo

See also Gender Binaries; Gender Labels; Microaggressions; Nonbinary Genders; Transgender as a Term

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AGING

Aging is typically understood to mean the changes that occur, over time, in a living organism—or the degradation of function that accompanies the passage of clock time. The fields that study aging are divided into two general areas: geriatrics (the medical/psychological facets of aging) and gerontology. The field of gerontology is divided into three subareas: *biomedical aging* (the study of biological age-related changes in the body), *psychosocial aging* (the study of age-related psychological and social changes over time), and *health planning and social policy* (the study of aging as it relates to such areas as Medicare/Medicaid, Social Security,

end-of-life challenges, and health care disparities and access).

Trans people face many of the same aging-related challenges as other individuals. However, they also have many unique ways of experiencing the consequences of aging. With the current presence of the first large cohort of out, trans-identified mid- to late-life individuals (i.e., trans boomers), understanding the challenges and needs of the members of this community has become increasingly important from both a biomedical and a psychosocial viewpoint. While trans people face many of the same aging-related challenges as cis individuals, trans people also have distinctive ways of experiencing the repercussions of aging.

Given the need for brevity and a lack of data, it is difficult to cover the global trans aging experiences in this entry. Consequently, this entry focuses on Western experiences, for which there are more data. It is through the lenses of gerontology and geriatrics that trans people's aging experiences are considered.

Who Are Contemporary Trans Elders?

This entry considers the age of entrance into the elder population to be 65 years. The Administration on Aging states that the U.S. population of persons 65 years or older numbered 39.6 million in 2009 (the latest year for which data are available). By 2030, it is projected that there will be about 72.1 million older persons in the United States. The National Institute on Aging global projections for the 65-years-or-older cohort are 524 million in 2010, with this number expected to increase to 1.5 billion in 2050.

It is difficult to provide an accurate estimate for the number of trans elders in the United States. There are many reasons for the absence of reliable population data on the trans elder community, including difficulties in identifying members of the population, trans people's hesitancy to self-identify as such, and trans erasure in many data-gathering instruments. As a result, identification of the trans population is challenging. Indeed, the trans-identified population is itself dynamic; in the past three decades, with the advent of more reliable surgical and hormonal interventions, more people are making the decision to transition from their birth sex or gender to an identity more consistent with who

they see themselves to be. Moreover, since 2000, some older adults, even into their 70s or later, are increasingly choosing to align their genital sex with their gender self-perception. Thus, even within the current cohort of trans elders, there is a diversity of life experience. This diversity will continue to broaden and grow as younger members of this community emerge and pioneer new labels. It is, however, possible to make some general population estimates.

Using 1999 U.S. Census data and an estimate of 3% to 7% transgender population prevalence, Tarynn Witten, a scholar in transgender aging, estimated that there were approximately 347,000 to 1,041,000 trans-identified persons in the United States over 65 years of age. Based upon more recent 2010 population estimates, Witten has argued that the U.S. population estimates should be revised to be between 1.2 and 2.8 million trans-identified individuals over 65 years of age. Others have estimated that the transgender population is only 0.3% prevalence, which means that the population estimates range from 409,702 to 1,229,106 over the age of 65. There is little information available to make population estimates for trans elder populations in other specific countries.

Social Factors in Aging

Context

Extensive research indicates that a significant proportion of today's trans-identified individuals have grown up within a biomedical and psychosociopolitical context of violence and abuse. Persons who identify as "gender variant" are frequently subjected to a variety of forms of discrimination (e.g., age, employment, financial, medical), stigma, sexual violence, and elder abuse, as well as hate crimes. Such discrimination has historically been reinforced by the inclusion of *transgender* as a mental disorder in the past editions of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* for diagnostic classification (transgender is now replaced with the term *gender dysphoria*). Surveys of trans adults aged 50 years and older found that more than one third of respondents had experienced discrimination in health care. Eighty-three percent had suffered one or more experiences of abuse (e.g., physical, mental, financial, self, sexual), many before the age of 18 years. More

than 70% had thought about or attempted suicide. Moreover, given that many of the current elders of the trans population grew up in this adverse biomedical and psychosocioeconomic environment, they tend to be fearful and/or unwilling to interact with health care providers as well as other systems-level entities such as law enforcement or religious organizations.

Ageism and Its Consequences

Western elders are often discriminated against as a consequence of their actual chronological age or because of how old they appear. For example, some potential employers may believe that elders are "too expensive" to pay for, that elders cannot "perform" certain predefined tasks, or that they have a longer learning curve than younger potential employee candidates. Trans elders face these and additional barriers in employment. Many jobs depend upon how a person looks; consequently, "passing" may be important. Transphobia can limit job availability, thereby diminishing hiring potential.

Different age cohorts are now appearing in the trans community. Cohort effects are important in understanding ageism and other factors within the gender-nonconforming community. Trans elders often hold viewpoints that come from different life histories. For example, words like *queer* may mean different things to different generational members. This can create intergenerational conflict and thereby generate subsequent ageist perspectives that may propagate within the trans community. Complicating matters is the intersectionality of ageism and trans identity with racism and other isms. While there is increasing research concerning these intersectionalities, much more needs to be known.

Social Support Networks

There is abundant gerontological research literature supporting the importance of social networks in aging. These networks may involve birth families, legal families, families of choice, friends, individuals from various social organizations (clubs, religious organizations, service organizations, health care systems), and other support individuals such as caretakers and health caregivers. It is well known that individuals with stronger social support networks are less susceptible to the

negative consequences of aging. However, identifying as trans often profoundly affects network structures and can actually increase susceptibility by altering or reducing network structure and connectivity.

Family Structure and Function

Many of today's trans elders came out after their children had reached adulthood and left home. For some of these elders, their family members were supportive of the transition while others suffered strains and even breaks in family connectedness. Estimates from recent large cross-sectional research studies suggest that 40% of the overall community has never been married and as much as 55% of respondents have no children. Further, research by Karen Fredriksen-Goldsen, a scholar in LGBT health and aging, as well as research by Tarynn Witten, suggests that between 25% and 30% of trans-identified individuals live alone. To compensate for social network loss, many trans elders created families of choice. Yet over 30% of Witten's respondents stated that they did not know who would take care of them in the event of a major illness or when the need arose.

Religiosity/Spirituality and Faith Support Networks

The importance of spiritual/religious networks in the lives of the elderly cannot be overestimated. There is an enormous research literature on this subject. This importance is also true for those who identify as trans. However, trans identification can bring an individual into direct conflict with religious institutions, many of which see trans identities as sinful. Trans-identified individuals belong to a diverse array of religions and faiths, and issues facing religious involvement within the trans-identified community are complex. Positive religious and spiritual experiences can enhance resilience, reduce stressors, and create important social networks. Negative religious experiences can result in the opposite—heightened risk factors and more negative physical and mental health outcomes. Indeed, trans individuals have been denied funereal rights, ostracized publicly in front of their church, abused in religious nursing homes, and denied access to last rites and even to the spiritual support of their former churches.

Friendship and Intimacy Networks

As friends and family members die or move away, many elders find that their friendship support networks gradually diminish. Trans elders not only suffer these changes in network support but also lose friends and family due to their gender transition. Some individuals address this challenge by acquiring a pet. Others build networks via the Internet or by attending trans-related community events. Some simply choose to live alone. Of those who choose to live alone, research shows a significantly greater number having “feminine” gender self-perceptions than having “masculine” self-perceptions. Many elders hope that the transition will not affect those family relationships that are in place prior to transition. Rarely, however, is this the case. Transition may ultimately be associated with subsequent divorce, isolation from family and friends, and a significant degree of aloneness.

Intimacy, sexual or otherwise, is important across all ages. However, as the body ages, it is not often perceived as being as attractive as it once was. In addition to the natural processes of aging, the trans body may age in ways that make it ambiguous and uncomfortable for potential dating partners. Further, the stigma of being trans identified also diminishes the potential dating population pool. Many potential partners, upon discovering that an individual is trans identified, feel violated, and the relationship will end, sometimes violently.

One common perception of elderly persons is that they lose their desire for sexual intimacy. While age-related changes may alter sexual ability, this does not mean that it alters sexual interest and a desire for physical intimacy. In fact, many trans elders have an increased desire to experience sexuality in their new identity. This may lead to behaviors that are considered a “second adolescence.” Elders of the population are frequently untrained in the important sexual protection measures for today's world, and this can lead to increased risk of HIV/AIDS/sexually transmitted infections in later life.

Sexuality is a key component of quality of life and well-being, and the need to express one's sexuality continues into old age and may even continue into nursing home or at-home eldercare environments. Caregivers in such environments may find expressions of sexuality difficult in the general elderly population and more difficult with

trans-identified persons. This can be particularly complex when the trans person has dementia or when the physical body and the gender expression do not appear to be in sync with each other.

Financial Factors in Aging

Employment barriers exist not just around chronological age (age-related bias) but also around whether or not the trans individual “passes.” We do not know very much about the fiscal status of the trans-identified population as a whole. The work of Fredriksen-Goldsen and her team shows that 47.56% of her respondents were below the 200% poverty level. Witten’s work showed 37% of her respondents were living below the 2013 federal 200% poverty level for a family of one person, and 56% were living below the poverty level for a family of two persons. Considering only those individuals over the age of 65, Witten’s research indicated that 28.9% were living below the 200% poverty level. Moreover, Witten found that individuals with “feminine” gender self-perceptions had higher income levels than those individuals with “masculine” gender self-perceptions. Many of Witten’s survey respondents stated that they did not have enough money, or had just enough money, for basic life requirements. Additionally, many felt that they were under moderate to extreme financial strain.

Retirement and Pension Planning

Like many other life phases, retirement can be complex. The differences between age cohorts and their plans for retirement are significant. Balancing the need to transition with the needs of a solid fiscal retirement can be problematic. When people think about retirement, they typically consider such things as where they will live, how they will support themselves, what kind of medical care they will be able to afford, and how they would like to live out the remainder of their lives. These are natural concerns for all individuals, trans and non-trans alike. Witten’s research has shown that only 59.5% of respondents, across all ages, have a pension or other form of retirement plan and that this too varied by gender self-perception. When asked why they did not have pension plans, individuals cited underemployment, needing everything they

earn just to survive, barely surviving day to day, and using retirement funds for transition expenses.

Health Care Factors in Aging

There are now many well-known considerations that contribute to a healthy and satisfying quality of life for all individuals across the life span, including trans persons.

Self-Care

Self-care is essential. Exercise (walking, bike riding, water-related exercise, and other aerobic exercises) is crucial. Maintaining a quality diet is important. Keeping cholesterol intake down, watching for fatty liver disease, not overindulging in sugary food and drink, and minimizing alcohol intake are important contributors to a better level of physical health. For individuals who take hormones, stopping smoking should be a priority. Smoking significantly increases the risk of cardiovascular and cerebrovascular events. Aging increases the risk for these events; smoking exacerbates that risk. Regular monitoring for diabetes, HIV, and colon cancer are all part of taking care of the elder trans body and should be part of regular self-maintenance. Regular oral hygiene should be part of the daily routine. As individuals age, it is increasingly possible to lose teeth because of cavities, periodontitis, and general oral infection. Tooth loss can lead to numerous negative medical consequences. While there is no research on how hormones may mediate this, research does show that simple things such as dry mouth can exacerbate oral health problems.

Medical Care

Some things require visits to a health care facility (clinic, physician’s office). If one has the body part, one has to take care of it (e.g., getting regular cervical examinations and Pap smears or getting regular prostate examinations). While there are no clear-cut data on risk factors around hormone use in the trans population, research shows that hormones can influence the occurrence of breast, uterine, ovarian, and prostate cancer. Breast cancer screening should be a regular part of every individual’s physical examination. Periodic screening

for osteoporosis should also be a regular part of every trans elder's physical examination. Hormones can mediate bone protection and bone loss.

It is now estimated that one in three people will develop Alzheimer's disease (AD). For trans-identified individuals, the onset of AD means eventual loss of the current identity and has severe implications for later-life care and for the well-being of the individual. Periodic monitoring for AD and other forms of dementia should be a regular part of the trans elder's medical care.

The literature on trans persons and aging documents the increased use of alcohol, drugs, and smoking with age. As individuals age, social networks begin to collapse, ageism becomes increasingly present, financial difficulties increase, and health begins to decline. Coupled with these normative factors, elders begin to face their own mortality. Moreover, along with these changes, trans persons must face questions around self-actualization. All of these factors can drive increased substance abuse as the trans person ages.

Many contemporary trans elders decided to transition or transitioned in midlife to later life. Later-life transition carries a number of additional challenges. Hormones may or may not be desired. If desired, hormone levels must be monitored carefully. There is very little research literature on mid- to later-life hormone dosing. Similarly, little is known about when to stop hormone use. Moreover, in an effort to attain more rapid transition, some elders may abuse/misuse hormones, getting them over the Internet or from illegal providers rather than seeking out competent medical supervision. Side effects of abuse can range from minor damage to loss of life.

Some trans elders desire gender confirmation surgery, while others do not or cannot afford it even if they so desire it. Surgery in midlife to later life carries with it certain additional risks due to the person's age. While age is not an exclusion from transition, age-related changes can affect the transition process. Physical changes in the body may make healing slower and can result in unsatisfactory postsurgical results. Risk of cerebrovascular or cardiovascular events may increase as well.

Mental Health Care

Gerontological literature has established that early life and life course negative events can

increase later-life mortality and morbidity. Given the endemic history of violence, abuse, discrimination, isolation, and transphobia experienced by current trans elders, it is not surprising that trans-identified individuals have significantly higher rates of stress, depression, anxiety, and fear than either their LGB peers or gender-nonconforming individuals. Suicidal ideation has been shown to be significant in trans people, and suicidal ideation increases in all elders whether or not they are gender nonconforming. Some trans persons have stated that they have plans in place to commit suicide before needing to access eldercare.

Research and community reports document that today's elder trans persons have a history of suffering violence and abuse (physical, mental, financial, sexual, and verbal) across the life span. Growing older increases vulnerability to such abuse. Elder abuse can also appear in the form of not allowing elders to live as their actualized selves in eldercare facilities, disrespect, denial of hormones, outing the elder, and failure to provide needed medical attention and sharing of medical information. Research has shown that many trans elders fear what will happen to them in eldercare facilities and that they would rather live out their lives at home if at all possible.

Paying for Later-Life Care

Survey research data suggest that most trans elders expect to use some combination of personal savings and government support to pay for later-life care. Medicare Part B is the part of Medicare that covers routine preventive care. However, trans persons may face challenges in coverage when medical identification does not match gender presentation. Medicare Part D covers prescription drugs. Many elders cannot afford Part D, and problems may occur when Medicare deems hormones as not medically necessary. And because Medicare does not currently cover transition-related surgeries, these additional costs must be borne by the elder desiring them. For a number of elders, these costs come out of retirement funds.

Although it was not true in the past, military veterans are now able to obtain transition-related care through the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). All necessary preventive care, hormone therapy, mental health services, preoperative evaluation, and

postoperative care are now available to veterans. The VHA does not provide for transition-related surgeries. In some states, incarcerated individuals may be allowed to have prescribed hormones.

Legal Challenges in Later Life and at End of Life

Later-life and end-of-life challenges provide many complex scenarios for those who do not identify as trans. For those so identified, this time period may become even more complex and difficult. Transgender status can have a profound effect on many later-life and end-of-life facets. Research study data show that the trans-identified population as a whole is significantly unprepared for any sort of end-of-life issue, with less than 30% of survey respondents having advance directives or powers of attorney in place. Legal documents should detail the trans elder's wishes should they be unable to speak for themselves, detail final wishes, state who has control of the body, detail visitation rights at any medical facility, provide for one person to speak for the elder in the event that legal and medical decisions need to be made, and protect the trans elder should family relationships be strained. Other legal documents affect partners and families. Trans elders need to have carefully crafted wills and estate plans in place to protect any partnerships that developed during their lives. Wills also speak to how possessions will be distributed, and these are important, as families of choice are not protected legally without such documents. Insurance and Social Security can be problematic due to marriage laws and name changes.

End-of-Life Factors in Aging

Given the long history of negative interactions with the health care system, trans elders are very reticent to make use of traditional eldercare facilities. Nearly 40% of Witten's survey respondents stated that they had little to no confidence that they would be treated respectfully. Respondents stated worries and fears around being given the incorrect drugs, being denied hormones, being denied needed care, physical and verbal abuse, fears of being forced to leave the nursing home and becoming homeless, and not being allowed to live out the remainder of their days as their true selves.

Additionally, trans elders have expressed fears that their last wishes would not be carried out. Survey respondents' concerns revolved around such things as incorrect name/gender identity on death certificates and/or gravestones. Others expressed fear that funeral directives would not be respected. Autopsy also represents a challenge, as some trans elders are not out and their true birth sex may be discovered only upon autopsy. As a result of these worries, some elders of the community have stated that they are prepared to detransition (undo as much of the previous surgeries and hormone treatments as possible), while some individuals have self-euthanasia plans in place in order to avoid having to worry about getting older.

As death approaches, many factors come into play. Pain management (palliative care) may become important, as will hospice care. Given that many trans elders are fearful of the kind of treatment they will receive during this period of life, this fear may lead to dissatisfactory end-of-life experiences for the dying and their respective family, friends, and allies. Religious/spiritual/faith needs can become critical during this time but may be problematic because of the transgender identification of the dying person. Closure events become important both for individuals who are dying and for those around them. Self-identity may be lost due to dementia, creating a strain for support staff and families. Delirium may cause confusion and inhibit the ability to meet someone's final needs. Much research needs to be carried out in this area. We also know little about end-of-life issues for trans elders in Veterans Affairs facilities or for those who are incarcerated.

For families of trans elders, death can also be difficult. Numerous gender-related questions become important. Should the funeral be open or closed casket and, if so, how should the deceased be dressed? Funeral ceremonies can become challenging not just from the perspective of how to refer to the deceased but also from the perspective that some religious organizations believe that being transgender is a sin and refuse to allow ceremonies to take place in their facilities or to allow the deceased to be buried in their graveyards. Obituaries can become challenging when one considers how to refer to the gender of the deceased. Legal control of the body and of various postdeath decisions can also be complex when considering

whether the family of origin versus the family of choice has final legal decision-making power.

Conclusion

As seen through the lenses of geriatrics and gerontology, it is evident that aging is a complex, multi-level process that involves many challenges. Identifying as trans adds to those challenges. Today's trans elders have endured a history of violence, abuse, discrimination, and denial of care that still persists. Notably, this is particularly true for African American trans women. Trans identification can lead to a multifaceted state marked by depression, sadness, loneliness, anger and frustration, anxiety, regret, feelings of loss, and decreased levels of happiness. In addition to psychological stressors, trans and gender-nonconforming people are frequently at increased financial risk. Financial stability may be sacrificed due to lack of employment or the high cost of surgeries. Loss of a job can undermine a relationship or family, leading to anger, resentment, frustration, depression, and isolation. The body of literature on trans experiences of later life and end of life is relatively new and still growing. As younger cohorts move into middle and old age, many more questions will need to be answered. There is still much to learn about patterns and implications of the aging transgender life course.

Tarynn M. Witten

See also Death and Dying; Health Care, Discrimination; Hormones, Adults; Nonbinary Genders; Religion/Spirituality of Trans People

Further Readings

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AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is a not-for-profit civil rights and civil liberties organization that was founded in 1920. For more than 100 years, the ACLU has worked in courts and legislatures to defend the U.S. Constitution and U.S. civil rights laws. Although perhaps known best for the organization's free speech work, the ACLU was one of the earliest defenders of trans rights in the United States. It continues to advocate and bring pioneering litigation to further gender justice in areas such as access to employment, restrooms and other single-sex facilities, health care, and athletics, as well as with respect to the treatment of prisoners and detainees.

In the first half of the 20th century, the ACLU's work on behalf of LGBTQ people often focused on challenging criminal restrictions on expressions of gender and sexuality outside of heterosexual

norms. The first LGBTQ case that the ACLU took on was a challenge to an attempt in 1936 to ban a theatrical performance of Lillian Hellman's play, *The Children's Hour*. When the play's producers sought to hold a performance in Boston, the city's mayor informed them that the play's "lesbianism" violated "community standards." The ACLU represented the producers in a suit in federal court. Although the lawsuit did not address trans issues directly, it was the start of a long history of defending the rights of people to live and express themselves authentically in life and in art.

In 1967, the ACLU worked with the Redd Foxx Club, a bar in Los Angeles that hosted performances by Sir Lady Java, a well-known trans performer. At the time, a local law made it illegal for someone to dress as a person of the "opposite sex." The Los Angeles police threatened to arrest the owner of the Redd Foxx if Sir Lady Java continued to perform. The ACLU threatened litigation if the police did so. As in these two cases, the ACLU often defended the rights of LGBTQ people against government censorship and criminalization in the 20th century.

Most of the ACLU's work in support of trans people has been in the 21st century, as the organization has increasingly prioritized LGBTQ advocacy work generally and trans advocacy work specifically. While the majority of national LGBTQ legal organizations, including the ACLU, focused on marriage equality for same-sex couples from the early 2000s to the Supreme Court's *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision in 2015, the ACLU also pursued pivotal trans rights cases in federal court throughout this period. For example, in 2001, the ACLU achieved an important district court victory in *Hyman v. Louisville*, defending the validity of a Louisville, Kentucky, ordinance prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. This case foreshadowed the growing number of challenges to trans-inclusive nondiscrimination policies in the 2010s.

Between 2005 and 2009, the ACLU litigated the landmark federal case of *Schroer v. Billington* under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and the U.S. Constitution. The case involved a woman who is trans and was hired by the Library of Congress when they thought she was a man and then had her job offer rescinded when she informed her future employer that she is a woman and would be

starting the job consistent with her true gender. The case was instrumental in continuing to advance the argument that anti-trans discrimination is sex discrimination under federal civil rights laws.

The arguments that the ACLU and other legal groups developed over decades to protect trans people from discrimination culminated with the Supreme Court ruling in three cases in 2020 that sex discrimination under federal employment law includes discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation. The ACLU was counsel for two of the three plaintiffs before the court. One case involved a woman who, like Diane Schroer, lost her job just because she was trans. Aimee Stephens was fired when her employer learned of her gender identity; this led to financial hardships and disruptions in her health care that tragically resulted in her premature death from kidney disease while her case was pending before the Supreme Court.

The ACLU has been involved in other Supreme Court cases defending the rights of trans people, beginning with the 1994 pivotal prisoner rights case, *Farmer v. Brennan*, brought by Dee Farmer, a Black trans woman in federal prison, who had been repeatedly beaten and raped after being incarcerated in a prison for men. The ACLU represented Farmer at the Supreme Court, which ruled that ignoring the risk of serious harm to prisoners violates the Constitution. In lower federal courts, the ACLU has also secured critical wins for trans prisoners, including in the case of *Fields v. Smith*, which struck down a Wisconsin law restricting state spending on health care for trans prisoners. These cases have set important legal precedents in protecting trans prisoners across the country.

Between 2015 and 2020, the ACLU increased its legislative advocacy and litigation on behalf of trans people, particularly trans youth. The organization lobbied state legislatures to prevent the enactment of laws restricting the rights of trans people to access public spaces and health care. When, in 2016, North Carolina passed a law that required people to use the public restrooms matching the gender marker on their birth certificates, the ACLU and Lambda Legal immediately filed a lawsuit to block the measure. Likewise, in 2020, when Idaho passed a law banning trans student athletes from participating in sports according to their gender identity, the ACLU quickly sued. Over

the years, defending the rights of trans people to live authentically and with dignity has become a central part of the ACLU's work.

With a broad network of advocates and significant resources, the ACLU has been a leader in the fight for trans justice. The organization's LGBT and HIV Project, which includes four out trans attorneys, is helping to lead its work and vision moving into the group's next hundred years.

Chase Strangio

See also Activism; Bathroom Discrimination; Gender Identity Discrimination as Sex Discrimination; Inmates and Incarceration; Lambda Legal; Nondiscrimination Laws, Federal, State, and Local

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ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL TIMES

In the Western imagination, trans people are closely associated with modern medical techniques such as hormone therapy and plastic surgery. People therefore often assume that being trans is a product of modern medical science. However, the notion of a strict gender binary is not held by many traditional cultures around the world. The history of Europe and the Middle East is also full of examples of people living gender-diverse lives. This entry will show

that trans people have existed throughout history and that being trans is therefore presumably part of the human condition.

Mesopotamia

We begin in the 23rd century B.C.E. in Ur, one of the oldest cities in the world. A hymn to Inanna, attributed to the Sumerian princess Enheduanna, claims that the goddess has the power to “turn a man into a woman and a woman into a man.” It is unclear what this means and how such powers would have affected ordinary Sumerian life. However, a description of a festival in honor of Inanna talks of celebrants wearing men’s clothing on the right side of their body and women’s clothing on the left. An inscription on a statue fragment refers to a devotee of Inanna called Silimabzuta, who is described as a “person-man-woman.” Clearly, some level of playing with gender was central to the worship of Inanna. Inanna, known as Ishtar in Babylon and Assyria, continued to be worshipped for over 1,500 years until the rise of the Persian empire and the arrival of Alexander in the Middle East. Similar goddesses were worshipped in the region throughout the Roman period.

Ancient Rome

Cybele Comes to Rome

There are few obvious examples of gender diversity in the early history of Europe, but things changed significantly in 204 B.C.E., when Rome enlisted a foreign goddess in its fight against its rival Carthage. Following the advice of an oracle, Rome purchased a statue of a goddess called Cybele from the country of Phrygia in modern Turkey. She was installed with great honor in the city. As Magna Mater (Great Mother), she became a major feature of Roman religious life, despite the behavior of her devotees being distinctly un-Roman in their transcendence of gender norms.

Among the worshippers of Cybele were people called Galli. They were assigned male at birth but were castrated and lived as women. They often worked as beggars, and historians have drawn parallels to the *hijra* of modern India. Popular imagination has it that the Galli castrated themselves, perhaps with a flint knife as described in

Catullus’s Poem 63, but safe castration was a common feature of Roman medicine. A medical instrument found in the Thames and now in the British Museum is thought to have been used for the safe removal of testicles by the local temple of Cybele.

Views of the Galli

By Imperial times, the cult of Cybele was well established in Rome with a temple on the Palatine Hill, next to the Imperial Palace. But many Romans, perhaps especially the elite men who have provided most of the surviving written records, did not approve. The satirist Apuleius, in his comedy *The Golden Ass*, described them in a way reminiscent of a troupe of modern-day drag queens.

Philo of Alexandria, a Jewish historian from Egypt in the period of Roman rule, gives a description closer to that of modern trans women. He refers disapprovingly to people who “have desired to be completely changed into women and gone on to mutilate their genital organs” (*Special Laws*, 3:41).

Around the time that Philo wrote, Jesus of Nazareth was preaching in Judea. The Apostle Matthew records that Jesus held forth favorably regarding eunuchs, including those who have castrated themselves for religious reasons. This comment was to have major implications for early Christians, but at the time, Jesus could have only meant people like the Galli as they were the only ones being castrated in this way.

The Galli and the Law

One of the earliest references to a Gallus is a legal case from 77 B.C.E. involving a disputed will. One Genucius had been left money by a friend. The will was challenged, and a magistrate upheld the challenge as under Roman law, only men and women could inherit. Genucius, as a Gallus, was neither.

Under Roman law, a eunuch could not be a citizen. Roman citizens had substantial legal privileges denied to noncitizens, so any citizen wishing to become a Gallus would be sacrificing a lot more than body parts. The status of the Galli received a significant boost under the Emperor Claudius (41–54 C.E.) who added the Rites of Attis to the official Roman religious calendar. Attis, the subject of Catullus’s Poem 63, was said to have been the

first person to castrate himself in honor of Cybele. This meant that there was an official day (March 24) on which Roman trans women would have their surgery, and it was a religious holiday.

Roman society gradually became less brutal in some ways with time, and attitudes toward castration changed. Domitian (81–86 C.E.) banned the castration of children, and Hadrian (117–138 C.E.) allegedly banned all castration, even if it was voluntary. This might have been an issue for the cult of Cybele, but evidence from the time of Hadrian's successor, Antonius Pius (138–161 C.E.), suggests that it was still possible to buy a castration permit. Hadrian had not banned castration; he had taxed it.

Elagabalus and Sporus

In 218 C.E., a 14-year-old known as Elagabalus unexpectedly became emperor thanks to political machinations following the assassination of Caracalla. Growing up in the region we call Syria, Elagabalus had become a devotee of local religions and had a more flexible attitude to gender than did the conservative Romans. Contemporary historians described the young emperor as dressing in women's clothing, flirting with palace guards, and marrying a male charioteer. Cassius Dio states that a substantial reward was offered to any physician who could provide Elagabalus with a vagina.

Martin Icks, in his biography of Elagabalus, notes that Dio was writing after the assassination of the young emperor and had every reason to invent scurrilous rumors. Nevertheless, it seems clear that Elagabalus was someone who was dealing with personal gender issues and, by modern standards, may have identified as female.

This, however, was not the first reference to possible vaginoplasty in Roman history. In 67 C.E., the Emperor Nero married a young person known as Sporus. We are told that Sporus was castrated, and Nero offered a substantial reward to any surgeon who could make his new wife fully female. In *The Twelve Caesars*, Suetonius uses the phrase "*in muliebrem naturam transfigurare*" (transform into a natural [woman]), which may be the first use of the term *trans* in such a context (Suetonius, n.d., 28:1).

Modern historians view the story of Sporus with horror, talking of a helpless victim of the cruel and capricious Nero. Yet contemporary sources

show Sporus embraced the role of empress and was provided with education on how to behave like a high-class Roman woman. Nero and Sporus went to Greece on holiday, where the crowds wished them a happy life and many children.

Sporus was one of a small group of loyal companions who went with Nero when he fled Rome fearing assassination. The emperor eventually took his own life, but his companions were captured. Rather than be killed as we might expect, Sporus became a pawn in the battle for succession, being courted by two of the claimants to the throne. This suggests that even elite Roman men saw Sporus as having some of the cachet of an empress.

Intersex in Rome

Roman society seems to have been comfortable with the idea of people "changing sex." Stories of such transformations appear in mythological tales, several of which are featured in Ovid's narrative poem, *Metamorphoses*. Some writers, including Pliny, claim to have met people who had transformed. Romans would have been more familiar with intersex people than we are today, as births took place in the home and there was no option for obviously intersex babies to be surgically altered.

Early Roman law gave fathers the right to kill any baby that they deemed deformed, but attitudes softened through history. In the Roman Republic, intersex people might be sacrificed to appease the gods in the case of a bad harvest or a lost battle. However, older intersex children are mentioned, suggesting that at least some Roman parents protected their offspring. By the time of the Empire, anyone with an unusual body was potentially valuable as an exhibit in the theater or an interesting slave that wealthy Romans could show off to their friends.

The most famous intersex person from Roman times is the philosopher Favorinus, who is described in *Lives of the Sophists* by Philostratus as follows: "He was born double-sexed, a hermaphrodite, and this was plainly shown in his appearance; for even when he grew old he had no beard; it was evident too from his voice which sounded thin, shrill, and high-pitched, with the modulations that nature bestows on eunuchs also" (Philostratus, n.d., 23).

Historians have suggested that Favorinus exhibited Reifenstein's syndrome and would not have gone through male puberty. Despite this, he became

a court favorite of Hadrian and was well known throughout the Empire. This speaks volumes for his skill as a philosopher and perhaps some shifting of Roman attitudes toward gender diversity.

The Rise of Christianity and the Medieval Period

When Christianity became the state religion of Rome, all other beliefs, including the worship of Cybele, fell on hard times. The early Christians took a stern line on sexual morality. Indeed, it is thanks to Christians that we know of the existence of castration permits. A man who is castrated cannot fall into sin, and Jesus had spoken favorably of those who castrate themselves for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake.

With time, the idea that becoming castrated made you more holy took hold in the Christian church. In the Byzantine Empire, it was common for monks to be eunuchs. This, in turn, made space for other forms of gender diversity. There are several tales of assigned female people who entered monasteries and lived successfully as men for many years. This would have been much easier to do if a high-pitched voice and lack of beard could be explained by castration.

One example is the life of Saint Euphrosyne, as told by an English monk, Ælfric, in his *Lives of the Saints*. A resident of Alexandria, Euphrosyne escaped an arranged marriage by entering a local abbey claiming to be a eunuch called Smaragdus. Ælfric effortlessly switches pronouns at the point of gender transition and refers to Smaragdus as male from then on.

The Story of Silence

This 13th-century story, written in French, is an Arthurian romance. It is set after Arthur's time, but Merlin has a major role. Silence is the child of the Duke of Cornwall and is raised as a boy to provide the duchy with a male heir. An excellent warrior, Silence earns a place at court where the lustful queen takes an interest in the handsome young knight.

During the story, Silence is beset by the opposing voices of Nature and Nurture. Nature insists that Silence was born a girl and should accept the truth of that. Nurture insists that Silence enjoys being a knight and would be foolish to give up the

social advantages that masculinity provides. The discussion of gender roles and stereotypes seems remarkably modern today.

Eleanor Rykener

In 1395, the mayor of London was asked to try the case of a sex worker. The accused wore women's clothing and used the name Eleanor Rykener but was discovered to have a penis and also used the name John. Given that Rykener was doubtless hoping to minimize any punishment, it is hard to infer much about identity from the court transcript. Rykener did claim to have had female clients as well as male, but being Eleanor was not a one-off. Female friends had allegedly helped Rykener with clothing and to develop a convincing female personality. Rykener also claimed to have worked doing embroidery, and as a barmaid, while living as Eleanor.

Cheryl Myfanwy Morgan

See also Ancient/Medieval Times, Jews and Judaism; History; Intersexuality; Religion/Spirituality of Trans People; Transgender as a Term

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ANCIENT/MEDIEVAL TIMES, JEWS AND JUDAISM

Although it is anachronistic to apply modern constructs of sex and gender to earlier times, one can state that the classical texts of Rabbinic Judaism discuss gender ambiguity, gender transition, and other relevant topics. The texts reveal that throughout the ages, rabbis have been aware not everyone fits a gender binary. They categorized and classified a number of gender constructs beyond male and female and explicitly discussed whether their intersex constructs were independent constructs or subcategories of female and male. Gender transition is discussed in some of the texts. There are also textual records of discussions relevant to topics such as deadnaming, crossdressing, and castration.

Rabbinic Gender Constructs

The gender binary and nonbinary challenges to it are found in rabbinic texts from late antiquity and onward. Biblical exegesis explores intersex individuals and gender transition in biblical narratives. While the Babylonian Talmud (sixth or seventh century C.E.) contains many such discussions, it also records third-century C.E. sage Abba Arikha as saying that everything is created in the binary as either male or female.

The rabbinic corpus tends to try to force the nonbinary gender constructs it derives from both biblical narrative and actual bodies into a binary system. Ancient and medieval rabbinic Judaism was a heavily gendered religion, and as such, it was seen as imperative to delineate the sexes so as to know which gender construct applied to any given individual. Following the discourses of their time, these texts do not distinguish between gender and sex.

Using biology as their authors understood it, the rabbinic texts offer an array of gender constructs based primarily upon phenotyping of external genitalia and the development (or lack/delay thereof) of secondary sex traits. Beyond female and male, the four main Jewish gender constructs present in Jewish texts from late antiquity and onward are *androgynos*, *tumtum*, *saris*, and *aylonit*.

Androgynos

Rabbinic society defined *androgynos* as someone who externally appears to possess at least some portions of both female and male genitalia. Androgynos is the only nonbinary gender construct that the Mishna (the first authoritative collection of texts embodying the oral tradition of Jewish law) explicitly says may be a distinct gender. As they were generally perceived as ambiguously both male and female (and not a third gender), the texts state androgynos were required to uphold both the strictures imposed upon males and those imposed upon females. *Androgynos* is a Greek loanword, indicating Jewish concepts of gender did not develop in isolation.

The Tosefta and the Mishna (both second century C.E.) compare and contrast androgynos with males and females. Among the various behaviors codified for androgynos was that a marriage to a woman may be valid but not one with a man. The Babylonian Talmud quotes one sage who says the biblical prohibition of a man lying with a man as he does with a woman is not about male-male relations but instead prohibits males from having vaginal intercourse with androgynos.

A fifth-century C.E. midrash (literally, “textual interpretation”; ancient commentary on part of the Hebrew scriptures) states humanity was initially a single androgynos being before being split into a male Adam and a female Eve. While there are alternate understandings of the creation narrative, the 11th-century C.E. Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac (Rashi) included this in his biblical commentary.

Tumtum

A *tumtum* is generally understood as someone with no clearly visible external genitalia, which some ancient texts say is due to a layer of skin covering their genitals. The Mishna says removing this skin can reveal their gender. One Talmudic opinion classifies someone with descended testicles but no visible penis as a *tumtum*, although other texts categorize such individuals as *saris hamma*. The Mishna states a *tumtum* is either male or female, but so long as their genitalia are not visible, their gender is indiscernible. The texts say a *tumtum* must follow the religious strictures of both males and females. Some read the Talmud as saying *tumtum* is a distinct gender.

The Talmud offers an understanding of the biblical characters Abraham and Sarah as *tumtumim* who could only have children after divine intervention to clearly render them as male and female.

Saris

Saris is generally translated as eunuch and in classical rabbinic texts is divided into two subcategories, *saris hamma* and *saris adam*, meaning someone born a saris or someone who became one later in life. This category includes those identified as male at birth who are lacking or have damaged some portion of their genitalia, and some include any man who is congenitally infertile or perhaps impotent. The medieval texts indicate that a saris may undergo traditionally female development at puberty. In the biblical narrative, eunuchs were often royal servants, and sometimes their gender status allowed them to interact with women in ways that other males were not.

Aylonit

An *aylonit* is someone identified as female at birth who never goes through puberty, has a significantly delayed puberty, is congenitally infertile, or only develops male sex characteristics upon reaching puberty. The Talmud offers the possibility that the biblical matriarch Sarah was an *aylonit* as an explanation for why she did not bear a child in her younger years. While generally coded as female, there are divergences predominantly relating to marriage and intimacy.

Other gender constructs are sometimes discussed in modern literature as rabbinic genders, but Jewish texts through the Middle Ages view them as clearly either male or female. The texts do apply gender role restrictions (especially pertaining marriage), which could imply they are coded as incomplete males or females. The most discussed of these is that of an *isha katlanit* (Hebrew for a deadly woman), who is forbidden from remarrying if she has been twice widowed.

Transition

From works of late antiquity such as midrashim and the Talmud to medieval poetry and works of

kabbala, or mysticism, there are multiple cases of gender transition present in classical rabbinic texts.

As was mentioned above, Midrash Rabba offers the possibility that Abraham and Sarah were *tumtums* until divine intervention provided them with male and female genitalia, rendering them fully (in the eyes of the rabbinic texts) male and female.

The Talmud discusses a few cases of gender transition. In discussing the birth of Dina to Leah in the biblical narrative, the Talmud explains that originally Leah was pregnant with a boy, but she believed that if she had another son, that would mean her sister Rachel would not have another son. The Talmud says that upon this realization, she prayed to have a daughter and not a son, and her fetus was then changed in utero from male to female.

The Zohar (a 13th-century C.E. kabalistic work) conceives of God as androgynous, just as Adam was before Eve was split off. Since it understands humans should try to emulate God, it instructs everyone to strive to be simultaneously male and female despite our gendered bodies.

The desire to possess different genitals than those one is born with is expressed in a poem by Kalonymus ben Kalonymus. While scholars debate if this was sarcasm, the poem demonstrates at least some space for discussion of gender transitioning in the 14th century C.E. In the 16th century C.E., Rabbi Yosef Karo described human souls as either male or female and wrote of cases where the gender of a soul differs from the gender of the body it inhabits.

Most of the gender transitions discussed in ancient and medieval Jewish texts were supernatural and without physical human intervention. The exceptions are the castration of eunuchs and removing the flap of skin over the *tumtum's* genitals.

Relevance to Modern Trans Understandings

Rabbinic texts of antiquity and the medieval era raise several other issues brought up in modern Jewish discussions of trans topics. These include prohibitions on crossdressing, castration/sterilization, and deadnaming, as well as texts highlighting the value of human life. Although relevant to trans inclusion, not all of them are so contextualized in classical rabbinic texts.

Crossdressing

Antique and medieval rabbinic biblical reception understood the biblical text as prohibiting a man from wearing women's clothes and vice versa. Classical rabbinic texts convey debates about exactly what is included in this prohibition and under what circumstances it may apply. It may have included using or wearing another gender's clothes, tools, or ritual items. It may prohibit women using weapons and armor or men removing their body hair in certain or perhaps all manners.

Some medieval texts had narrower understandings of the prohibition. Rashi Shlomo Yitzhaki says that the prohibition actually only applies in cases meant to deceive people for illicit sexual relations, and some of the medieval texts actively permit crossdressing for the holiday of Purim, during which celebrants may wear costumes based on characters in the biblical Book of Esther. Rabbi Maimon ben Maimon (Maimonides, also known as the Rambam, 12th century C.E.) understood the prohibition as part of avoiding paganism, thus possibly leaving room for crossdressing to be permitted when not related to idolatry.

Castration/Sterilization

Sifra (2nd century C.E.) and the Tosefta understand Leviticus as prohibiting Jews from damaging, sterilizing, or castrating male and possibly also female reproductive organs. The Talmud discusses whether drinks causing sterilization are permitted. The Talmud also discusses whether an act that would otherwise cause male infertility remains prohibited if one already is infertile. Maimonides does not permit physically damaging male or female reproductive organs, but he does permit women to consume sterilizing compounds.

Deadnaming

The biblical narrative includes several cases of name changes. In some cases, such as Abraham and Sarah, the texts say one should not call them by their original names. One Talmudic sage says his life was extended because he only called people by their correct names. Midrash Tanhuma states that names can influence people's behavior and direction in life, and the Talmud gives examples of this. Some learn from Adam's naming of the animals

that names are holy and eternal and thus advocate that while one can add or alter names, they should not entirely abandon their original name, but other sources allow one to do so. The Halakhic codes (Jewish law and jurisprudence, based on the Talmud) indicate that one's legal name remains whatever people call them but recognize that even if only a minority of people accept a new name, it can take precedence as the primary name, although the old name may not be fully eradicated until everyone has ceased using it. The midrash teaches that only after changing the names of Abram and Sarai to Abraham and Sarah were they able to have children, and if one reads this together with the midrash that they underwent gender transition, it may be a late antiquity story of name change accompanying gender transition.

Pikuach Nefesh

One of the key principles in Jewish texts from late antiquity onward is that of *pikuach nefesh*, preserving human life. The Mishna says saving a single life is akin to saving the whole world. The Talmud says one may violate any of Judaism's behavioral norms except for murder, idolatry, and having certain illicit sexual relations in order to save a life. The Mishna says norms may be violated even if it is unsure that doing so will save a life or even there is only a chance life is at risk. The Talmud says *pikuach nefesh* applies not only in cases of physical threats but also in mental and emotional ones. While *pikuach nefesh* is not applied to transitioning or trans inclusion in pre-modern eras, modern scholars reference these texts in deliberating whether to permit activities otherwise discouraged in Jewish tradition.

Tyson Herberger

See also Crossdressing, History of; Intersexuality; Jewish People; Nonbinary Genders

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ANDROGYNY

Androgyny has had a variety of definitions throughout history in different fields of study. Within psychology, androgyny most commonly refers to gender expressions that incorporate both “masculine” and “feminine” traits. What traits are deemed masculine or feminine is determined by societal norms and differs across cultures; therefore, androgyny may have different meanings in different cultures and over time as gender roles change. Androgyny and its adjective form *androgynous* have also been used less frequently by some as a gender identity. An androgynous gender identity refers to an identity including both masculine and feminine characteristics and would most likely fall under the umbrella of nonbinary gender identities. In the past 20 years, *androgynous* has also been used by some interchangeably with the term *gender nonconforming* to refer to those whose gender expression or presentation differs from societal expectations based on one’s sex assigned at birth. Androgyny is a relevant concept within trans communities because many identify with having androgynous gender expressions or identities, and androgynous gender expressions are often the target of stigma, harassment, and violence.

The term *androgyny* stems from the Greek roots *andro* (male) and *gyn* (female). The adjective *androgynous* dates to the early 17th century and

was derived from the term *androgynē*—used in the 14th and 15th centuries in France and England. *Androgynē* is a term used today and typically refers to nonbinary people with androgynous gender expressions. Historically, androgyny and androgynous often referred to people or animals with a combination of “male” and “female” physical sex characteristics and have since been replaced with the term *intersex*.

Androgyny has existed throughout history and is found within every culture. In many cultures in ancient history, individuals with androgynous traits were viewed positively and at times idealized by ancient Greek myths. Many non-Western cultures embraced and/or continue to embrace androgynous community members and recognize gender identities outside of the gender binary, such as *tumtum* in Jewish culture or *hijra* in East Indian culture. Androgyny became stigmatized during the rise of Christianity and in the era of European colonialism beginning in the 12th century, when androgyny was associated with same-sex desire, which became highly stigmatized.

Androgyny in Psychology

Sandra Bem is thought to have popularized the concept of androgyny in the field of psychology with the development of the Bem Sex-Role Inventory in 1974, one of the most widely used measures of gender expression. The measure classified individuals into one of four gender role orientations: masculine, feminine, androgynous, or undifferentiated. According to this measure, a feminine individual was defined as someone who ranked high on feminine traits and low on masculine traits, a masculine individual ranked high on masculine traits and low on feminine traits, an androgynous individual ranked high on both masculine and feminine traits, and an undifferentiated individual ranked low on both masculine and feminine traits. Bem’s work separated masculinity and femininity into two dimensions that allowed for people to hold combinations of both rather than one spectrum in which femininity and masculinity were seen as opposing one another. Bem hypothesized that androgynous individuals were more flexible and mentally healthy compared with those of other gender role orientations and that androgyny would contribute to more effective

leadership and parenting styles. However, these hypotheses have not been substantiated by subsequent research.

Androgynous Expressions

The social acceptability of androgynous gender expressions and presentation has changed over time, with androgyny becoming more socially acceptable, especially among women. Strict gender roles shifted in the 1960s and 1970s, coinciding with feminist movements that fought to change gender roles, particularly of women in the workplace and at home. Some women intentionally changed their gender expression to be more masculine as a political statement that women should be treated as equal to men. Also, at this time, popular musicians such as Elvis Presley, Jimi Hendrix, and David Bowie departed from conventional masculine norms by performing in flashy, androgynous costumes and stage makeup. However, these popular figures did not necessarily increase the acceptability of androgyny in men as effeminate men continued to be highly stigmatized.

Discrimination and Prejudice

Androgynous and gender-nonconforming expressions have been associated with LGBTQIA+ communities, and research has found a strong correlation between gender nonconformity and having an LGBTQIA+ identity. However, this correlation does not indicate causation; gender nonconformity does not dictate someone's sexual orientation or gender identity or vice versa. Research thus far has found that gender-nonconforming LGBQ individuals are at increased risk of discrimination, victimization, and harassment compared with gender-conforming LGBQ individuals, thus also increasing their risk for psychological distress and mental health concerns. It is unclear whether gender-nonconforming individuals are targeted because they are perceived as LGBQ or because of discomfort with gender nonconformity.

Androgynous gender expressions, which may lead to gender ambiguity, have also been associated with increased risk of stigma and violence toward trans people. As such, many trans individuals practice "hyperfemininity" or "hypermasculinity" to avoid being targets of violence. There is emerging evidence suggesting that nonbinary

people may be at even higher risk for harassment compared with trans men and trans women. Some have hypothesized that this finding may be explained by stigma toward androgynous gender expressions. However, more research is needed to understand this finding.

Misconceptions About Androgyny

Nonbinary people have gained more visibility and more social acceptance than in the past. With this visibility, more stereotypes and misconceptions have emerged about nonbinary people. One major stereotype is that nonbinary people look androgynous, which is true for many but not for all nonbinary people. This stereotype has led to feminine and masculine nonbinary people feeling invisible and that their identities are more likely to be questioned or invalidated. Additionally, androgyny in mainstream media has often been represented by white, thin, masculine individuals who were assigned female at birth. Other androgynous individuals outside of these identities still feel highly stigmatized and excluded from spaces that only accept certain types of androgyny.

Em Matsuno

See also Gender Expression; Gender Functions; Gender Labels; Gender Nonconformity; Nonbinary Genders

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ANTI-TRANS THEORIES

Gender is one of many facets of diversity, and depathologizing gender is the focus of ongoing advocacy efforts. Historically, cisgender (cis) individuals have misunderstood and poorly conceptualized gender dysphoria in academic literature, which in turn has perpetuated views that trans individuals' gendered experiences are illegitimate and invalid. Instead of recognizing gender identity and expression as a human right and diverse experience, theories have emerged to maintain a socio-cultural hierarchy and to further stigmatize trans individuals (e.g., medically transitioning is a necessity in order to conform, to fulfill a sexual fetish or deviant need, and/or to follow a current trend to fit in with peers). This entry discusses two anti-trans theories that have been a source of significant criticism and debate: rapid-onset gender dysphoria and autogynephilia. The entry entails a description of the theories, select criticisms of these theories, and a discussion of where these theories stand today.

An Anti-Trans Theory Related to Youth: Rapid-Onset Gender Dysphoria (ROGD)

Rapid-onset gender dysphoria (ROGD) is a concept that originated in 2016 on three blog sites (4thwavenow.com, youthtranscriticalprofessionals.org, and transgenderstudies.com) that are known to be critical about affirming trans identities. *ROGD* is a term developed to describe parents' experiences with a child coming out as trans suddenly during adolescence after being involved with trans-oriented social media or being pressured by trans-identified peers. The involvement by young trans individuals in trans-related media content and peer relationships prior to coming out was used as evidence for a "social contagion" or a trend-like phenomenon to delegitimize youth's gender identities. In February 2017, a poster abstract on ROGD by Lisa Littman was published in the *Journal of Adolescent Health*, which marked the first instance of ROGD being included in an academic source. Consequently, this abstract's publication elevated this line of discourse to the academic literature, paving the way for subsequent references and citations. As a result, an empirical journal article soon followed by the same author,

appearing in *PLoS One*. This article suggested that ROGD is a new clinical presentation of gender dysphoria primarily affecting trans boys and trans masculine adolescents around puberty. Since its appearance in the academic literature, other scholars have critiqued this argument as being methodologically flawed and indicative of a trans myth. The timeline of developments in the discussion around ROGD has been well captured by a number of other authors, including Julia Serano and Zinnia Jones.

A scientific critique of this study is that it violates principles of research methods by using a pathologizing framework and language. For example, Littman uses terminology (e.g., cluster outbreaks) that promotes the conceptualization of gender dysphoria and identification as trans as a contagious disease or disorder. The aims provided in the article are as follows: "(1) to describe an atypical presentation of gender dysphoria occurring with sudden and rapid onset in adolescents and young adults; and (2) to generate hypotheses about the condition, including the role of social and peer contagion in its development." Likening trans identities to a disease is in conflict with national and international organizations whose positions clearly state that identifying as trans is not a mental disorder (e.g., the American Psychiatric Association, the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, and the World Health Organization). As such, bias appears to be present from the basic premise of the study and continued through each stage of the research process.

Select Criticisms

ROGD has been critiqued as anti-trans propaganda and bad science. ROGD is not recognized in the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)* or the World Health Organization's *International Classification of Diseases (ICD)*, although late-onset gender dysphoria is an existing clinical subtype that is present in published literature and diagnostic manuals, such as the *DSM-5*. In both implicit and explicit ways, the conceptualization of ROGD pathologizes a young person's gender exploration and identity. ROGD suggests that a young person is influenced by larger social trends or is going through a time-limited phase, rather than

their identity exploration process being a valid and authentic gendered experience. Concerningly, if future publications are framed from a ROGD conceptualization and draw on similar language (e.g., “rapid onset”), then this literature could be used as evidence and a justification to restrict access to critical gender-affirming interventions, peer interactions, and information/knowledge to assist with gender literacy. For example, a parent whose adolescent child is actively exploring their gender identity may refuse to help their child connect with health providers or attempt to limit their social interactions with supportive and affirming peers and other important adults (e.g., teachers) if they believe that such activities could contribute to the “rapid onset” of a trans identity.

Beyond the conceptual critiques of ROGD, numerous other critiques have been made regarding the science behind this theory. That is, the methodology used to collect data and analyze findings was fundamentally flawed in a number of critical ways, contributing to weak and biased results. First, self-selection bias was a concern of the recruitment process. The consent form described the social contagion premise, despite it not being a criterion for study inclusion. Describing the study in this way could motivate specific groups who agree with the premise to choose to participate. Sampling bias was also evident in that the 256 participants were solely recruited from the three aforementioned trans-critical websites whose readership included parents who used the websites to share experiences of their children that were consistent with the concept of ROGD. As a result, the study sample only included parents who, from the start, were skeptical of their child’s gender identity and felt like ROGD may apply. Recommendations regarding best practices in sampling and recruitment, which would maximize generalizability of study findings, would necessarily involve random sampling from the general target population. Although trans populations (and, consequently, family members of trans participants) are considered hard to reach given their continued relative invisibility in societal institutions (e.g., not collecting data beyond “male” and “female” in many institutional settings), sampling should nonetheless focus on reaching a broad, and as random as possible, range of members of the target population. In this study, however, only a specific subset of the

larger target population—parents or caregivers of trans youth—were recruited and who represented a narrow sociopolitical stance, which results in profound sampling bias.

Littman’s study was descriptive and used an online quantitative and qualitative design. Littman created the 90-item survey but did not provide psychometric properties of survey items; in turn, the reliability and internal validity of the measure are unknown. Moreover, science scholars have long pointed to the common reliance on statistical significance as suggesting that a theory is true as one of the most flawed and scientifically unsound practices to emerge in the social sciences. Psychological theories, such as those regarding gender, need to be rigorously evaluated using best practices in methodology and statistical analysis, through replication, and by testing alternative explanations. In this regard, the early research of ROGD falls well short.

Another critical concern in the methodology underlying Littman’s ROGD paper is that although the parents themselves who were sampled may have been surprised by their child’s trans identity or felt that their identity development was rapid or abrupt, data from the youth themselves were not collected. Importantly, this sampling decision reveals an important gap concerning the parents’ accurate perception of their child’s gender identity. That is, the youth themselves may not have experienced their gender identity development as rapid or a sudden onset. Rather, they may have chosen to not disclose their trans identity to their parents or caregivers for a variety of reasons, which could include confidence, feeling unsafe, worry of family rejection, and only just recently gaining the language to describe their experience.

What Has Happened Since the Publication of the Term ROGD?

Since Littman’s original publication, the editor-in-chief of *PLoS One* has offered a written apology to the trans and gender-diverse community, along with an explanation that a postpublication review of the Littman article was conducted. Through this review, the study and results were deemed a valid contribution to the scientific literature, and Littman revised the paper to address concerns regarding the study’s title, abstract, purpose, methodology, and

conclusions. For example, some updates to the article include providing more detailed descriptions about recruitment methods and sites, a stronger emphasis that the study is solely based on parental observation, additional discussion of ROGD and late-onset gender dysphoria, and further discussion of limitations and biases. The subsequent revision was therefore republished.

However, leading international trans and psychological health associations (e.g., World Professional Association for Transgender Health, the Australian Psychological Society, and the Australian Professional Association for Transgender Health) published official statements noting that ROGD is not currently recognized as a clinical phenomenon. These statements also emphasized that ROGD should not be used to limit appropriate gender-affirming care that follows existing standards of care and clinical guidelines. The Australian Psychological Society further challenged the notion that social media or peer pressures influence a person's gender and noted that this narrative may be harmful to young people's well-being. Of note is that some authors do support additional research investigation into ROGD as a distinct clinical presentation.

Autogynephilia: A Debunked Adult Anti-Trans Theory

Another theory that propagates anti-trans stigma in its conceptualization regarding gender identity and gender identity processes is autogynephilia. In contrast to ROGD, the theory of autogynephilia has been present in the literature since the 1980s and 1990s. Ray Blanchard developed the theory of autogynephilia to offer a typology of trans women and trans feminine individuals, which he described as the identification of an erotic orientation. The term *autogynephilia* has Greek roots and can be translated to "love of oneself as a woman." Anne Lawrence suggested that autogynephilia may be conceptualized as a paraphilia and a sexual orientation, in contrast to being considered gender identity among trans women and trans feminine individuals.

Blanchard's theory suggests that there are two subtypes of trans women and trans feminine individuals: homosexual transsexuals and autogynephilic transsexuals. In her critique, Julia Serano

(2010) described the definition of the homosexual transsexual subtype as a feminine gay man who medically transitions in order to attract and seduce heterosexual men. These individuals supposedly have a feminine expression from an early age and do not experience sexual arousal when dressing in clothing or fantasizing of oneself as a different gender than their assignment at birth. The second subtype is autogynephilic transsexuals that Blanchard described as a misdirected sexual variation in which men who are not gay experience sexual and erotic arousal when fantasizing of themselves as women. Some authors argue that this second subtype is a paraphilia, and this sexual motivation and fantasy is a driving force for starting medical transition.

Select Criticisms

The theory of autogynephilia has been considered by many scholars and activists/advocates as controversial, misleading, and stigmatizing. In developing the theory, Blanchard relied solely on his clinical samples. He did not empirically derive his two subtypes of trans women and trans feminine individuals but instead categorized them based on sexual orientation. The idea that trans women and trans feminine individuals can be easily divided into only two categories is an oversimplification of the diversity within this community and conflates gender and sexual orientation. It is notable that Blanchard does not seem to acknowledge that some cultures understand gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation as separate but related concepts. Blanchard's blatant disregard of individuals' gender identities and lived experiences as women and trans feminine individuals (by referring to them as men) is glaring. Furthermore, it is an unfounded claim to definitively state that the presence of autogynephilia is the primary underlying condition of gender dysphoria and the motivating force for medically transitioning (for those who experience autogynephilia).

This conceptualization of autogynephilia is unnecessarily pathologizing for trans women and trans feminine individuals. The focus on sexual motivations and fantasies that are described as a paraphilia has significant social, clinical, and policy implications. Distinguishing between a paraphilia versus a paraphilic disorder can be easily confused;

further, this problematic terminology and confusion can contribute to discrimination. As Serano suggested, associating trans individuals—and, indeed, trans identity—with a paraphilia can lead to common assumptions associated with paraphilias, which often include nonconsensual or criminalized sexual behavior engagement. In reality, however, trans women and trans feminine individuals are often oversexualized in today's society, as particularly evident in media depictions, and this may be a nonconsensual experience by the trans woman or trans feminine person who is the target of that oversexualization. Ultimately, this oversexualization and objectification are consistent with dominant implicit cultural dynamics that equate women's value as a person to how they can be used by others for sexual gratification, a process often referred to as sexual objectification. Sexual objectification such as this is dehumanizing and intersects with other facets of transphobic oppressions. Furthermore, suggesting that experiences of autogynephilia are a phenomenon specific to trans women and trans feminine individuals is false, as cis women have reported being sexually aroused by thoughts of themselves as women.

Finally, Serano noted that a scientific flaw in Blanchard's theory is the assumption of causality. The theory posits that the sexual motivation or impulse is misdirected, causing erotic arousal with the thought and fantasy of the self as a woman, which causes gender dysphoria and subsequently the interest and pursuit of medical transition. However, Blanchard's conclusions are based on his correlational evidence, another related anecdotal theory (e.g., erotic target location errors), and does not account for alternative reasons or effects that could explain the gendered and sexual experiences of these individuals.

A Debunked Theory?

Several papers have been published that describe conceptual flaws in the autogynephilia theory, while other studies have pointed to empirical findings that contradict the underlying central tenets of autogynephilia. The scientific discourse regarding autogynephilia has played out publicly since Blanchard's early works, with proponents and critics continuing to publish and refute each other's central assertions. However, in one succinct

statement summarizing this back-and-forth discourse, Julia Serano (2010) states,

If proponents of autogynephilia insist that every exception to the model is due to misreporting, then autogynephilia theory must be rejected on the grounds that it is unfalsifiable and therefore unscientific. If, on the other hand, we accept that these exceptions are legitimate, then it is clear that autogynephilia theory's two-subtype taxonomy does not hold true. (p. 181)

Conclusion

Anti-trans theories exist to further invalidate and delegitimize trans individuals of all ages. As efforts to increase gender literacy and trans-affirming care become more prevalent, strategies for refuting such theories will continue. However, trans and gender-diverse communities are known for their strength in challenging and dismantling systems that try to disempower and disenfranchise. Yet, institutional efforts continue to try to marginalize and oppress gender diversity by pressuring people of all ages to conform to binary gender stereotypes and attempting to block efforts to assist individuals with being their most authentic and genuine versions of themselves. Implications for these theories are far-reaching and include, but are not limited to, further stigmatizing and marginalizing trans and gender-diverse individuals, making it difficult for them to have access to basic human rights (e.g., health care, discrimination protections), and perpetuating oppression. The science upon which these theories rest has been widely critiqued by members of the scientific community as being fundamentally flawed, from sampling and recruitment limitations, to core construct measurement problems, to overall study design. By appropriately criticizing and debunking these theories, the movement toward gender affirmation and respect for all people's basic human rights can and will continue.

G. Nic Rider and Elliot A. Tebbe

See also Activism; Affirmative Therapy; Coming Out; Gatekeeping in the Transition Process; Gender Panics; Identity Politics; Parent Advocacy Groups for Trans Children; Transphobia

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ARCHIVES

In the narrowest sense, archives are collections of records or historical materials that are professionally curated and maintained for the purpose of preservation and access. More broadly, the term *archives* has been used both as a theoretical concept and as a vernacular description for any collections of materials. In all senses of the term, archives have been important for Trans Studies, particularly as a resource for primary source accounts of trans lives. This entry offers a brief introduction to trans-specific archival efforts and the complexities involved in representing trans experiences in the historical record.

Although the term *transgender* was popularized in the late 20th century in North America, historical evidence shows that people have transgressed gender norms throughout human history and around the world. Thus, while the discipline of Trans Studies is only a few decades old, the practices and experiences it is based on have been ongoing for millennia. This presents several important challenges: How do we understand and interpret historical practices of gender expression that occurred prior to the emergence of the concept of “trans”? And, how do we account for different cultural contexts (both historically and currently) where there are divergent understandings of gender identity, particularly as it relates to or is conflated with sexual identity or sexual practices? To pursue these questions, archives have offered rich sites for academic exploration.

Historical materials relevant to Trans Studies can be found in a wide variety of archival contexts. Beginning in the 1980s, there have been a few independent efforts to collect trans history, such as the National Transgender Library and Archive, which began in Georgia and is now housed in the Labadie Collection at the University of Michigan, and the Trans-Gender Archive, which began at the University of Ulster in Northern Ireland and is now housed in the Transgender Archives at the University of Victoria (which is currently the largest trans archival collection in the world). There are also many LGBTQ-specific archives in North America—such as The ArQuives in Toronto, Ontario; the GLBT Historical Society in San Francisco, California; and the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives in Los Angeles, California—where an abundance of trans history has been collected and preserved. Finally, in more general archives, such as university special collections, historical societies, and state and federal archives, trans-related materials have often been collected inadvertently, although more institutions now devote resources to intentionally collecting in this area (e.g., Cornell University's Human Sexuality Collection, the San Francisco Public Library, and the Wellcome Library in London)

In addition to these brick-and-mortar sites, trans materials can be found in countless archival contexts online. Initiatives such as the Digital Transgender Archive, OutHistory.org, and the Queer Digital History Project support the digitization of historical materials, the development of interpretive resources, and the preservation of born-digital content. Akin to brick-and-mortar archives that inadvertently hold significant trans materials, popular online platforms—such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, along with tools such as WordPress, wikis, and group forums (i.e., YahooGroups and GoogleGroups)—include such a wealth of materials relevant to trans lives, history, and community building that numerous scholars advocate that these platforms should be treated as archives as well.

Across this range of archival contexts, researchers can find many types of materials, including periodicals, newsletters, clippings, personal and organizational records, photographs, letters, diaries, clothing, academic work, brochures, and many other formats. Some of these materials represent

the firsthand experiences of trans people (such as journals, letters, and photographs) and the emergence of trans identities and communities (such as newsletters and organizational records). Other materials document trans people's confrontations with the state (such as arrest records for violations of crossdressing laws), harmful encounters with non-trans people (such as police records for incidents of violence), and sensationalistic exposés of gender nonconformity (such as magazine and news coverage). This diversity of sources points to a significant tension in the archival record between materials that are *by* trans people and materials that are *about* trans people.

While archives have demonstrated increasing commitments to expand their trans holdings, what cannot be found in archives is perhaps as important as what can be found there. Generally, the experiences of more privileged factions of trans communities—such as those who are white, able-bodied, and economically advantaged—are overrepresented in archives, particularly when comparing materials created by trans people to materials created about trans people. In other words, more privileged trans communities have been able to create more materials about themselves and have also been able to find a secure, permanent archival home for those records. This inequity in archival representation has been the focus of recent efforts to capture other forms of historical memory, such as oral histories, in order to broaden and deepen trans-related holdings in archives. Yet there remains a great deal of work to be done to balance who is represented in archival holdings and how those archives are dispersed globally.

Even beyond the politics of who is represented in archives, it is critical to consider a more theoretical question: What can (and should) the archival record capture of trans experiences? After all, what is collected in archives are only fragments of lives, offering fleeting glimpses into complicated lifetimes. Particularly with respect to trans history, the challenge of accounting for bodies and embodied experiences in archival contexts presents a formidable obstacle when attempting to document trans lives. There are also instances when it is not desirable to have materials archived, especially for trans people who have carefully presented their own history and identity and for whom archives have the potential to betray them and undermine their security.

Yet despite these complexities, archives have and will continue to serve as a generative site of inquiry for Trans Studies. Archives collecting trans materials contribute to personal identity development, community formation, political activism, the enrichment of the historical record, and scholarly work that touches upon all of these areas.

K. J. Rawson

See also Academia; History; Identity Development; Representations in Popular Culture; Social Media; Trans Studies

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ARTISTS, CANADIAN

Since the concept of transness entered public consciousness in the 1950s, artists like Stormé DeLarverie and Delisa Newton have showcased their trans identity as part of their performances and, in the process, exhibited new ways to understand societal conceptualizations of gender and sex. Trans artists today remain on the forefront of creating groundbreaking work that pushes gender and sexual binaries. Particularly innovative has been the work of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) trans artists, who take an intersectional approach to fight white supremacy and transphobia in tandem. Because the experiences of white trans artists are prioritized in scholarship on artists, just as white people are at the forefront of trans studies scholarship more generally, this entry focuses on the work of BIPOC Canadian artists as an intervention in these traditional whitening practices. The artists covered are Ravyn Ariah Wngz, Rosina Kazi, Kyisha Williams, Tobaron Waxman, Aiyana Maracle, and Raven Davis.

Ravyn Ariah Wngz

Ravyn Ariah Wngz, also known as the Black Widow of Burlesque, is an Afro-Indigenous trans woman based in Tkaronto/Toronto. She cofounded ILL NANA/DiverseCity Dance Company, a queer multiracial dance company, and her career as a choreographer and dancer has spanned two decades. Her work has largely focused on breaking down the barriers of transphobia, ableism, and sizeism in dance that shut people out of experiencing and moving in their bodies. Wngz confronts head-on the anti-Blackness inherent in dance and much of the arts, weaving Black liberatory struggles into her content and choreography. Her work combines traditional ballet practice, street styles, and vogue, bringing an activist aesthetic into all that she does. Wngz's activism has resonated globally, with a speech she gave following protests against racist monuments in Tkaronto garnering over three million views as of August 2020. Her artistic performance and activist practices have galvanized people around ideas of justice, liberation, and freedom.

Rosina Kazi

Similarly, nonbinary artist Rosina Kazi's work has acted as a provocation for discussions of environmental justice, white supremacy, and transphobia for the past three decades. Their music, both as a solo artist and as part of the Tkaronto-based electronic duo LAL, speaks to structural and systemic violence and the power of activists fighting for change. For example, their song "Self Defense" speaks to the ongoing surveillance and violence facing racialized people in Turtle Island (i.e., North America) and Inuit Nunangat, the homeland of the Inuit in Canada. It describes a world where racialized artists and activists are not safe from a state that seeks to stop their revolutionary creative practices.

Kyisha Williams

Black, nonbinary filmmaker and actor Kyisha Williams creates short narrative and documentary projects on socially relevant issues. They take what can be considered "heavy" topics (such as incarceration, sexuality, and assault) and make them accessible and easier to discuss by crafting character-driven, engaging stories. In other words, Williams takes "hard to look at" issues and makes them beautiful.

They use film, as it provides an opportunity to work collaboratively and to take part in healing our society by engaging audiences in vital dialogue about how we live or could live. A critical part of Williams's work is discussing the nuances of trans experiences and the need to address the criminalization of trans women of color.

Tobaron Waxman

Tobaron Waxman is a curator, visual artist, and trained vocalist in Jewish liturgical music who combines these skills to create site-specific installations. Waxman, a former Orthodox Jew as well as trans, often uses traditional Jewish religious motifs to shed new light on issues of identity, gender, religion, and politics. For example, in the 2006 piece *Amidah Triptych*, Waxman inserts a nude trans man into scenes of men reciting the Jewish prayer, reflecting that trans men belong in this setting, but, as symbolized by the man's nakedness, they remain vulnerable to scrutiny and expulsion. Waxman was the first trans artist to be exhibited in a major Jewish museum.

Aiyyana Maracle

The late Indigenous (Haudenosaunee) artist Aiyyana Maracle was a performance and video artist, storyteller, and theater director whose work called attention to precolonial Indigenous cultural traditions that recognized more than two genders. Maracle's work sought not only to decolonize gender but also to forefront the voices of Indigenous trans women like herself, who have been erased from history and are still largely ignored today. Her one-person show, *Chronicle of a Transformed Woman*, which she subsequently published as a book, detailed her use of traditional medicine rituals during her transition process and her struggles against colonization.

Raven Davis

Two-spirit (Anishinaabe) visual artist Raven Davis, who works between Toronto and Halifax, uses performance, photography, installation art, and other mixed-media methods to advocate for disability justice and address ongoing colonialism and violence toward Indigenous people. They root

their work firmly in disability arts practices, which draw on disability theory and disability justice organizing and bring together Deaf, Mad, sick, and disabled artists. Davis's work also directly calls out the Canadian government for its role in the violence faced by Indigenous people. From jingle-dress dancing on a bloody Canadian flag to producing large-scale photographs that mock Parks Canada 150 advertisements by inviting tourists to visit reservations, Davis challenges white supremacy, colonial violence, and systemic transphobia.

Syrus Marcus Ware

See also Artists, U.S.; Black People; Film; Indigenous People

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ARTISTS, U.S.

Growing up in a cisnormative society characterized by an entrenched gender binary, trans people have had to invent and create a space for themselves. It is thus not surprising that many trans people have been artists and have developed groundbreaking work in various media. Through their artistic contributions, they have helped establish an identity

and a discursive place for themselves and the larger trans community. Moreover, given that trans artists challenge societal assumptions about gender, it is likewise not surprising that many also do not conform to the expectation that they limit themselves to one artistic genre; instead, they tend to produce work in a variety of disciplines and/or mix different media. This entry discusses six contemporary U.S. artists who have received widespread critical acclaim: micha cárdenas, Zackary Drucker, Juliana Huxtable, Amos Mac, Wu Tsang, and Alok Vaid-Menon. These artists express themselves through numerous creative forms, including performance, film, digital media, photography, self-portraiture, fashion design, poetry, and prose.

micha cárdenas

A first-generation Colombian American, micha cárdenas is a trans female educator, writer, digital media artist, and clothing designer. She is an assistant professor of Art and Design: Games + Playable Media at the University of California–Santa Cruz, and coauthor of the books *The Transreal: Political Aesthetics of Crossing Realities* (2012) and *Trans Desire/Affective Cyborgs* (2010).

Her artistic work supports the health and welfare of people, especially trans women of color, and the planet using interactive media design, virtual reality, science fiction, and performance. In 2015, cárdenas created the online, interactive game *Redshift and Portalmetal*, which focuses on a trans woman of color who must travel to other worlds because her planet's environment is becoming unlivable. In describing the work on her website, cárdenas states that the game poses the question, "As climate change forces us to travel to the stars and build new homes and families, how do we build on this land, where we are settlers, while working to undo colonization?"

In 2020, cárdenas created *Sin Sol (No Sun)*, an augmented reality game that tells the story of climate-induced wildfires through the eyes of a trans Latinx artificial intelligence hologram. Set 50 years in the future, the game depicts the environmental collapse occurring now using three-dimensional scans of forests from the Pacific Northwest. Like *Redshift and Portalmetal*, *Sin Sol* considers how climate change intersects with race, gender, and immigration, as well as the interplay between personal trauma and environmental trauma.

cárdenas's projects are not limited to virtual reality and future worlds; through her art, she also seeks to have a direct impact on the lives of marginalized peoples today. For example, she has collaborated on *UNSTOPPABLE*, an effort to design and disseminate information about how Black communities can produce DIY bulletproof clothing to address the horrific rate of murders of Black people, particularly Black trans women. She also initiated the development of *Local Autonomy Networks (Autonets)*, online and offline community networks that exist outside of corporate-owned infrastructures, including a line of mesh-networked electronic clothing that can alert other nearby Autonet garment wearers that someone needs help and their location. The project aims to increase community autonomy and reduce violence against people because of their race, gender, and sexuality.

Zackary Drucker

Zackary Drucker is a white trans female photographer, actor, and film and television producer whose work documents her own and other trans people's experiences. For example, she had a 6-year relationship with trans male film producer and director Rhys Ernst, which they recounted through photographs that they exhibited as "Relationship" at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 2014. The photos chronicle the development of their relationship and their different gender transitions and capture everyday moments in their lives, like trips together and relaxing at home, which serve to humanize and valorize the relationships of trans people. "Relationship" was released as a book in 2016.

Drucker and Ernst have also collaborated on other projects. They created the short film *She Gone Rogue* (2012), in which Drucker plays a fictional character who has dreamlike encounters with the groundbreaking trans women performers Flawless Sabrina, Vaginal Davis, and Holly Woodlawn. The film is both an homage to the artists, who were role models for Drucker, and a representation of Drucker's need to "go rogue" and forge her own gender path. Drucker and Ernst also worked together from 2014 to 2017 as consultants and producers on the Amazon series *Transparent*, where they sought to ensure that trans people were portrayed accurately, and on *This Is Me* (2015), a series of 5- to 6-minute documentaries about issues

faced by trans people today based on topics raised in *Transparent*. Drucker is featured in an episode on trans women sisterhood.

A central theme of Drucker's artistic work is the need for trans people to take control of how they are represented. This concern is also evident in her support of other trans artists. In 2017, she edited a special issue of *Aperture* magazine on "Future Gender," which focused on how trans people from different countries have used photography to illustrate their own lives, communities, and histories.

Juliana Huxtable

A Black trans female visual artist, writer, performer, model, and DJ, Juliana Huxtable explores the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality in her art using a variety of media, including self-portraiture, text-based prints, writing, and music. Among her best-known works are photographic images in which she places herself within historical and Afrofuturistic settings, signaling that Black trans people have and will continue to exist. For example, in *History (Period Piece)* (2013), Huxtable superimposed an image of herself with U.S. and British flags in her hair against a tapestry depicting merchant ships from the era of colonization and the slave trade. The piece simultaneously addresses how this history informs conceptions of Blackness, transness, and queerness today and how Huxtable herself must contend with this past.

Two of her other visual works, *Nuwaubian Princess* (2013) and *Untitled in the Rage* (Nibiru Cataclysm; 2015), are nude self-portraits that have an ethereal quality, as if to suggest a vision of a world in which the bodies of Black trans women can be centered and respected. In *Untitled in the Rage*, Huxtable, whose skin is painted turquoise green and her long braids highlighted in neon yellow, is sitting on her heels and positioned in profile, so that her body draws in the viewer. But while the image invites one's gaze, its representation of a trans woman of color challenges stereotypical ideas and ideals of race, gender, and sexuality. At the same time, the supernatural and fantastical elements of the piece, along with the reference to the Nibiru Cataclysm (a supposed impending disastrous encounter between the Earth and another planetary object), point to the existence of different realities and the fluidity of identities.

Huxtable has also created works that address her experiences growing up, her interest in science fiction and online spaces, and how race, gender, and sexuality are conceptualized in the digital age. In the series *Seven Archetypes* (2012–2013), she contextualized her gender transition alongside dominant constructions of gender and sexuality. In *Untitled (For Stewart)* (2012), Huxtable created a color inkjet print of one of her all-caps, stream-of-consciousness poems that describes the misogyny of video games, the blurred lines between video games and pornography, her alienation from boys, and her vision of herself as female. This poem was featured in her poetry book, *Mucus in My Pineal Gland* (2017). She also cowrote, with artist Hannah Black, the science fiction novella *Life*; it is a narrative about two risk analysts taking on the ultimate catastrophic assessment: an impending apocalypse.

Amos Mac

A white trans male photographer, editor, and writer, Amos Mac has greatly increased the visibility of trans people through a variety of media. In 2009 he cofounded, with Rocco Kayiatos, *Original Plumbing*, the first U.S. print magazine focused on trans male culture, and served as its editor for the 20 issues that were published over the next decade. The magazine's photographs (many taken by Mac) and stories helped many trans men to see images of people like themselves, and its coverage of topics like developing careers and becoming fathers addressed issues that were not being discussed anywhere else at the time. Highlights of the magazine were reprinted in a book, *Original Plumbing: The Best of Ten Years of Trans Male Culture*, in 2019.

In addition to his photography for *Original Plumbing*, Mac's pictures have been featured in dozens of publications, including the *New York Times*, *Interview*, and *Out*. In 2011, he published his photographs of Zackary Drucker in *Translady Fanzine* and the exhibition "Distance Is Where the Heart Is, Home Is Where You Hang Your Heart." Mac also contributed to Drucker's "Future Gender" issue of *Aperture* magazine with photographs of Juliana Huxtable. In 2015, he broke new ground by photographing that fall's collection of the H&M fashion brand "& Other Stories," which was the first such photo shoot to use all trans models and crew members.

In recent years, Mac has written for television and film. He was the associate producer for the documentary series *Gaycation* (2016–2017), which explored LGBTQ cultures around the world, and is currently a story editor for the relaunch of the teen drama series *Gossip Girl* (2021). With film director Aisling Chin-Yee, Mac cowrote *No Ordinary Man* (2020), a documentary feature about trans male jazz musician Billy Tipton.

Wu Tsang

Born to a Chinese father and a Swedish American mother and identifying as gender fluid, filmmaker, visual artist, and performer Wu Tsang has described herself as being in a place of “in-betweenness.” This sense of existing outside of traditional categories is similarly reflected in her work, which often dismantles the boundaries between fiction and documentary, performance and realism, and public and private spaces. A case in point is Tsang’s first feature film, *Wildness* (2012), which centers on the Silver Platter, a Los Angeles bar that catered to LGBTQ Latinx immigrants.

Wildness, which premiered at the Museum of Modern Art, developed out of a weekly performance art party of the same name that Tsang co-organized at the Silver Platter from 2008 until the bar closed in 2010. The film depicts how the parties led to the mixing of the bar’s long-time patrons with young artists and performers and how the two groups at times had to address differences in race, gender, class, and culture. A central question of *Wildness* involves the development of safe spaces: What does it mean to different communities, and when two communities are marginalized, whose safety takes precedence? While the film takes a narrative approach, it also has elements of magical realism, with the bar itself serving as one of these narrators. Through this technique, Tsang shows that environments are multifaceted and dynamic—as much actor as acted upon.

Another of Tsang’s films, *Duilian* (2016), likewise blurs the line between imagination and reality. It envisions the intimate relationship thought to have existed between Qui Jin, a turn-of-the-20th-century Chinese poet and revolutionary, and Wu Zhiying, a calligrapher with whom Jin frequently collaborated. In the film, Tsang plays Zhiying, and boychild, a gender-nonconforming performance

artist with whom Tsang has often collaborated, plays Jin. Scenes of the two of them conversing in Jin’s poems are interspersed with sequences of wushu martial arts and documentary-style footage of boychild in 19th-century clothing walking through the streets of contemporary Hong Kong. Although fictive, *Duilian* serves to write the couple into history, which is especially important given the erasure of their relationship then and often still today.

Alok Vaid-Menon

Alok, as they are known professionally, is a nonbinary trans femme Indian American performance artist, writer, and fashion designer. They first gained critical acclaim as part of the spoken word duo DarkMatter with Janani Balasubramanian from 2013 to 2017. The group’s name and poetry called attention to the invisibility of queer and trans people of color, and their performances highlighted how predominantly white queer and trans communities, like the larger white society, often marginalize people of color and fail to examine their racial privilege.

Alok’s physical appearance (which often mixes traditionally male and female gender expressions) and artistic work challenge the gender binary and what constitutes “female” and “male” aspects of presentation. They are the author of *Femme in Public* (2017) and *Beyond the Gender Binary* (2020); the latter is a book aimed at teens and young adults in which Alok uses some of their experiences as a gender-nonconforming individual to point out how society tries to limit gender expression when the only actual boundaries are people’s imaginations.

Alok’s fashions are also designed to confront gender binaries, as well as transmisogyny, femmephobia, and racism. In 2019, they released *Natural Bodies*, their third fashion collection, which took pieces and elements of clothing that are stereotyped as for women and “feminine” (e.g., skirts, gowns, frills, bright colors) and questioned why these aspects of dress are gendered and not readily available to people of all genders. At the same time, Alok linked the dismissal of femme fashion as superficial and inauthentic to the denial that trans women are “really” women by naming each design after a word that is used to reject the authenticity of trans identities, such as “biological” and

“innate.” Alok’s collection speaks to the genuineness of the lives of femmes, particularly trans femmes of color, and forces the viewer to recognize how cisness, masculinity, and whiteness are commonly treated as “natural.”

Genny Beemyn

See also Artists, Canadian; Film; Geek Culture; Musicians; Tipton, Billy; *Transparent* (TV show)

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ASIAN AMERICAN PEOPLE

Asian Americans constitute a small but growing segment of the trans community. Trans Asian Americans face marginalization both within the transgender community and within the Asian American community. The trans Asian American population is exceptionally diverse.

Marginalization and Diversity

Just as trans Asians and Pacific Islanders (APIs) face marginalization within heteronormative API communities, so trans APIs can face marginalization

in the white-dominant LGBTQIA+ community; to understand trans APIs, one must understand their position in both spheres.

The trans community in the United States—like the Asian American community—is characterized by great demographic diversity as well as diversity in terms of gender identity and expression. The trans community obviously includes individuals of every racial and ethnic background, including African Americans, Latinos and Latinas (Latinx has recently become popular as a gender-neutral term to describe them), Asian Americans and Native Americans, and white people of every European national origin. The diversity of the trans community in terms of gender encompasses people who pursue medical interventions, those who do not, those who identify as men or women, those who identify as genderqueer or nonbinary, those who crossdress part of the time, those who do some form of performative drag as entertainment, those who undergo a purely social transition, and of course those who are assigned male sex at birth and those who are assigned female sex at birth as well as those who are intersexed but nonetheless assigned male or female at birth.

Likewise, the Asian American community includes the full spectrum of gender identity and expression as well as a wide variety of national origins and ethnicities. The term *Asian American*, like the term *trans*, is both a social construction and a term of relatively recent origin. Until the mid-20th century, the now-derided term *Oriental* was in common usage throughout the United States and the English-speaking world but has since been rejected because of its Orientalist baggage and the pejorative connotations associated with it. But, just as the term *Asian American* gained favor in the 1970s and 1980s, so in the late 1990s, other terms came to the fore, such as Asian/Pacific Islander and Asian Pacific American (APA). Of course, all terms of self-identification and group identification are social constructions, and all have a relatively arbitrary relationship to the individuals and groups they designate, but some terms are more accurately descriptive, empowering, and/or inclusive than others, and so it is with both trans and Asian American.

Consider the terms that preceded both trans and Asian American. In the case of trans or transgender, these terms came into increasingly common usage

from the 1970s onward to unite disparate groups who otherwise might be referred to as transsexuals, transvestites (or crossdressers), and drag queens, to mention a few terms commonly used up until that point. Similarly, before the adoption of the term *Asian American*, those who now identify as such had available to them only either *Oriental* or nationality-specific terms such as *Chinese*, *Indian*, *Filipino*, or subnational terms of identification. Thus, both with the trans community and with the Asian American community, the use of these more empowering terms enabled members of those communities to identify with broader formations and organize politically across different categories.

To understand trans APAs requires that we know something of the Asia/Pacific region to which they trace their origin or ancestry, for the APA communities in the United States have been shaped by the history of Asia and the Pacific even as they evolve within the context of U.S. history and American society. And in fact, Asia is by far the world's largest continent by area and holds 59.54% of the world's population; East Asia (21.53%) and South Asia (24.89%) each account for a quarter of the world's population. Asia has between 24 and 52 countries, depending on how one defines a national state and whether one includes Middle Eastern countries contiguous with the Asian continent. The Pacific is the world's largest ocean, and Oceania is vast in size but holds just 0.55% of the world's population scattered across tens of thousands of islands. Taken together, the Asia/Pacific region encompasses a wider array of ethnicities, cultures, languages, dialect, and religions than any other.

It is ironic that APAs are routinely referred to as a "minority" group in the United States, given that Asians constitute nearly 60% of the world's total population, but Americans of Asian and Pacific origin are just 6.1% of all Americans, boosted by the increasingly large waves of immigration from Asia since Congress enacted the Immigration Reform Act in 1965. In fact, APAs are the fastest growing demographic group in the United States and "Asian America" encompasses people of scores of different national origins, hundreds of subnational communities of origin, and thousands of ethnolinguistic groups from across the Asia/Pacific region. Hence, to speak of "trans APIs," one must speak of a complex intersection of trans and Asian America.

Furthermore, it is important to understand that there is no single Asian understanding of trans or gender variance but rather thousands of different understandings (or misunderstandings). It is therefore difficult to make any generalizations about trans acceptance in the Asia/Pacific region. However, it is certainly true that in no country in contemporary Asia and the Pacific today is there full trans acceptance, whether in the relatively tolerant Buddhist-majority Thailand and the somewhat tolerant Roman Catholic-majority Philippines or the relatively hostile People's Republic of China (PRC) or the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which long ago adopted the extreme form of fundamentalist Wahhabi Islam.

Traditions and Identities in Premodern Asian and Pacific Islander Societies

In every premodern Asian and Pacific Islander society, there is some form of "third sex/third gender subject position," to use anthropologist Gilbert Herdt's term.

Korea alone has at least four distinct traditions that anticipate contemporary LGBTQIA+ identities. First, there was the *hwarang* warrior elite—sometimes referred to as the "flower boys of Silla"—an elite corps of archers who dressed in long flowing gowns and wore makeup. Second, there were the *namsadang*, the troupes of actors who went from village to village. Among the *namsadang*, the youth played women's roles, as in Elizabethan English theater. It is said that the youth were often lovers of the older men in the corps. Third, there was the tradition of "boy-wives," in which youth would wed older men for a period of time. And finally, there is the *paksu mudang*—the male shaman who performed what was a woman's role in the ancient shamanic spiritual tradition indigenous to Korea. To speak of "trans APIs" before the late 20th century therefore is to engage in anachronism; it would be more accurate to speak of the proto-transgenderal—those who resemble contemporary trans people in some respects while differing from them in others, yet still anticipating contemporary trans identity or identities.

An example of the proto-transgenderal can be found on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi, where feminine males carry on the *bissu* tradition, while

in India, the ancient tradition of the *hijra* continues to the present day. Vietnam also has a shamanic tradition, known as *dao mau*. The Pacific Islands have many homoerotic and proto-transgenderal traditions, including those of the *māhū* in Hawai'i, the *fa'afafine* in Samoa, the *fakaleiti* in Tonga, the *vaka sa lewa lewa* in Fiji, the *rae rae* in Tahiti, the *fafafine* in Niue, and the *akava'ine* in the Cook Islands. And of course, there are the traditions of theatrical crossdressing such as the Beijing opera *dan* in China and the kabuki *onnagata* in Japan.

Various identity formations and practices that anticipate contemporary trans identities exist in every premodern Asian and Pacific Islander society whether contemporary Asians and Americans are aware of them or not; any assessment of the intersection of trans and API/APA should at least acknowledge this hidden history. This history is relevant to an understanding of the challenges facing those at the interstices of trans and API/APA insofar as all too many APAs and APIs have internalized more modern (mis)understandings of trans and gender variance as being foreign to their countries and cultures of origin, when in fact the opposite is true.

Immigration and Inclusion

Although APIs have lived in what is now the United States since the mid-19th century, it was only with the great waves of Asian immigration in that century that APIs attained visibility in American society, which produced a hostile and at times violent reaction. The needs of trans APIs today reflect aspects of that history that continue to the present day, including the financial precarity of so many APA immigrants. Those who are gender variant in some way labor under multiple oppressions of gender identity and expression as well as race, ethnicity, national origin, and citizenship status. While trans API immigrants are as much in need of services for immigrants as cis APIs, they may be reluctant to go to organizations and social service providers serving immigrant communities for fear of discrimination and further marginalization. Those trans APIs who are undocumented face all the formidable challenges of other undocumented immigrants as well as discrimination and marginalization based on their gender identity or expression. Unfortunately,

organizations and institutions serving the white-dominant mainstream LGBTQIA+ community may be indifferent to the special needs and complex challenges of trans APIs, especially migrants.

U.S.-born English-speaking trans APIs may not face the challenges that API immigrants do but may still face discrimination and marginalization within the LGBTQIA+ community as well as in mainstream American society. They may also face the exoticization and fetishization of API identities that are unfortunately still prevalent in the United States today. And trans APIs, regardless of English-language proficiency and regardless of how long they have lived in the United States, may face the same challenges as other people of color with regard to police harassment and maltreatment in the criminal justice system as well as the health care system and in the provision of social services.

It is impossible to estimate the population of trans APAs because the U.S. Census does not include questions about sexual orientation or gender identity. While it is true that some LGBTQ organizations have extrapolated estimates of LGBTQIA+ Americans from census figures documenting the number of households in which two adults of the same sex (assigned at birth) are living together, that extrapolation—questionable even with all-white households—becomes even more so in the case of Asian households, given the “homosexuality” of Asian and Pacific Islander societies. Indeed, extrapolating the number of trans APAs is simply impossible using the census as it is currently constituted.

About the only generalization that one can make about trans APAs and APIs is that they face the same patriarchal oppression and trans(gender) phobia as white trans people with the added multiple oppressions of race, ethnicity, national origin, and immigration and citizenship status. At the same time, trans APIs and APAs are increasingly visible in American society and in the Asia/Pacific region; this visibility, in turn, highlights their notable diversity.

Pauline Park

See also Philippines, Gender Categories; Racialized Femininities; Racialized Masculinities; Research Questions About Gender Identity; Tom; Transpinay

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ASYLUM

Asylum is a form of legal relief and protection to migrants who are fleeing persecution in their countries of origin. For many trans migrants, asylum is often the only option to apply for legal status in the United States, given the family reunification and social class biases of the U.S. immigration system. The two most common ways to apply for legal permanent residency are through direct family ties or through sponsorship by an employer. Many trans people experience family rejection and cannot access legal status through family reunification. Additionally, trans people face many barriers to education and employment and often do not have access to the cultural, class, and economic capital required for labor migration to the United States, which privileges highly educated professional workers. To apply for asylum, trans migrants must be able to prove that they experienced persecution on the basis of their gender identity and be able to navigate numerous social and legal barriers to asylum. Trans studies scholars have theorized asylum for trans migrants in order to understand how legal processes are shaped by essentialist constructions

of sexuality, gender, and race, as well as how ideologies of normative sex and gender inform ideals of citizenship and national belonging.

Applying for Asylum

The 1951 United Nations (UN) Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees form the foundation of international law governing the rights of refugees and asylum seekers. The United States signed the UN Convention and the Protocol in 1969, and in 1980, the U.S. Congress passed the Refugee Act, which adopted the human rights standards laid out by the UN and established a system for the admission of refugees and asylum seekers in the United States. The 1980 Refugee Act codified the UN definition of a refugee as someone who is fleeing persecution or who has a “well-founded fear” of persecution “on account” of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. The persecution must be committed by the government or by individuals or groups that the government refuses to or cannot control, and applicants must show a nexus between the persecution they experienced and the grounds on which they are applying for asylum. All asylees have to fit this definition of refugee but are subject to different bureaucratic procedures. To apply for asylum, an individual must enter the United States and then apply, unlike refugee applications, which are processed abroad.

There are two ways to apply for asylum in the United States: affirmatively and defensively. Affirmative applications are from individuals who are currently in the United States and decide to apply for asylum before they are put into removal proceedings by the government. These applicants submit an application and then receive a nonadversarial interview with an asylum officer. Defensive asylum applications are from individuals who have already been put into deportation proceedings and are arguing for an asylum claim as a defense. Noncitizens whose affirmative applications are denied and who are not in lawful status are also placed in removal proceedings. Once in removal proceedings, noncitizens are subject to mandatory detention while their asylum cases proceed, which may take months or years. Defensive applications

go directly to immigration court, where the applicant must argue for their case in front of an immigration judge and in the presence of an attorney from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) who will argue for the deportation of the applicant. The main purpose of the asylum interview and immigration court hearing is to establish the applicant's credibility and their eligibility for legal relief, which can take the form of a grant of asylum, withholding or removal, or protection under the Convention Against Torture (CAT). The latter two forms of relief can only be granted by an immigration judge, not an asylum officer.

Trans Asylum Applicants

Asylum adjudicators and immigration courts began to recognize gender and sexuality as grounds for asylum in the late 1980s and early 1990s, through cases dealing with women fleeing domestic violence as well as with lesbian and gay applicants. These cases opened the category of "membership in a particular social group" to sexuality- and gender-based asylum claims, which set a legal precedent for trans asylum seekers. In 1994, Attorney General Janet Reno issued a memo establishing that gay men and lesbians constituted a particular social group, and in 2000, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decided *Geovanni Hernandez-Montiel v. INS*, which became the first published case involving a trans asylum applicant. Geovanni Hernandez-Montiel, a teenaged migrant from Mexico, was granted asylum not as a transgender woman but as a "gay man with a female sexual identity," demonstrating how trans asylum applicants in the late 1990s had to use creative legal strategies and draw on established legal categories of gender and sexuality to build their cases and be legible to asylum adjudicators. This formulation of "gay man with a female sexual identity" was the established legal precedent available for trans asylum applicants until 2007, when the Ninth Circuit Court decided *Nancy Arbillas Morales v. Alberto Gonzales* and used the language of "male-to-female transsexual" and female pronouns to refer to Morales, implicitly recognizing "transsexuals" as a particular social group.

Since 2007, there have been several more published circuit court decisions that recognize "transgender" and "transsexual" as particular social

groups. However, even though there was a lack of published cases during the early 2000s that used the category of transgender, immigration attorneys in the United States were able to obtain grants of asylum for clients in affirmative asylum proceedings, which were not published and therefore could not be established as precedent. The adoption of transgender as an established legal category in precedential asylum law was in part a consequence of the increased circulation of the language of "transgender" in national and international human rights discourses and by the advocacy efforts of immigrant rights organizations. For example, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services worked with the national LGBTQ immigrant rights organization Immigration Equality for 2 years to develop a training module for asylum officers to learn how to better adjudicate asylum claims by LGBTI persons. Released in 2012, the module, "Guidance for Adjudicating Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGBTI) Refugee and Asylum Claims," provides recommendations on how asylum officers should consider trans asylum applicants in relation to the "particular social group" category.

Even though legal precedent has established that persecution on the basis of one's trans identity constitutes grounds for an asylum claim, many social and legal barriers exist for trans migrants applying for asylum. Social class and gender not only shape the ability of trans people to migrate to the United States to file an asylum claim but also constrain access to an immigration attorney, whose services are necessary to help the applicant navigate the complicated legal system and develop the strongest possible case, which may include country condition reports, expert witnesses, and other forms of evidence. Although national LGBTQ immigration organizations such as Immigration Equality, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, the National Center for Immigrant Justice, and the Transgender Law Center have asylum programs and provide pro bono legal support for many trans asylum seekers, many trans migrants might not be aware of these resources. Furthermore, the increasing criminalization of immigration since the 1990s has created more legal barriers that disproportionately affect trans asylum applicants. For example, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 implemented a 1-year filing deadline for asylum, expedited removal laws,

and enacted mandatory detention. The REAL ID Act of 2005 also increased the burden of proof on applicants for asylum and withholding of removal claims, requires applicants to corroborate their claims with additional evidence, and makes it easier for an asylum adjudicator to determine that the applicant lacks credibility.

Theorizing Asylum

Scholars have examined asylum cases and the history of asylum for trans migrants in order to understand how legal processes are informed by social constructions of gender and sexuality. Asylum decisions are framed as legal matters of fact, yet asylum is actually a form of discretionary relief, not a right to be automatically granted by an asylum officer or immigration judge. The unevenness of asylum grant rates across adjudicators and regions illustrates how decisions can be informed by the transphobia, homophobia, or racism of the asylum officer and immigration judge. Some scholars have focused on how the immutability standard in asylum law, which requires trans applicants to demonstrate a nexus between their trans identities and the persecution they have experienced, produces legal definitions of gender and sexuality as biological and innate. Trans asylum applicants have to present their gender and sexual identities as essential and fixed, even though the basis of their asylum claims rest on the argument that they have experienced persecution as a result of shifting gender identity and presentation. Applicants need to show that they are recognizable as trans or gender nonconforming in both their written statements and through their bodies when they appear before an asylum officer or immigration judge. In this way, trans asylum provides a vantage point for examining how gendered and sexualized subjects are made legible to legal institutions as being worthy of protection.

Trans asylum also functions as a site for understanding citizenship and national belonging as structures undergirded by racialized ideologies of sex and gender. Scholars have explored this in several ways. First, they have analyzed how the asylum process tends to reproduce the exclusions that structure the regular immigration system. Historically, asylum law has been interpreted in ways that presume a male subject fleeing an

oppressive regime. Starting in the late 1980s, courts began to expand interpretations of asylum law to include gender- and sexuality-based claims, yet the asylum process still privileges applicants who are male, are heterosexual, have higher socio-economic status, and are from particular countries. This is due to the ways that asylum determinations are often shaped by U.S. foreign policy concerns and the ways that gender, race, and class shape a migrant's ability to obtain a successful grant of asylum. Second, scholars have investigated how the asylum process requires trans migrants to provide very detailed accounts of violence they have experienced and to show that their countries of origin are unsafe places for trans individuals as a larger group. Trans and queer migration studies scholars argue that this requirement of demonstrating systemic persecution illustrates how the asylum process reproduces dominant forms of racism and imperialism through the attribution of homophobia and transphobia to other cultures and other nation-states. Asylum applicants must represent their countries of origin as violent and oppressive places for trans people, in contrast to the United States, which, as the country granting asylum, is positioned as a democratic and safe space for trans migrants. This construction obscures the ways that the U.S. asylum process itself subjects trans migrants to inhuman treatment and physical and sexual violence in immigration detention centers. The construction of the United States as a welcoming space for trans migrants also contrasts with the discrimination and forms of structural inequality that trans communities within the United States disproportionately experience.

Tristan Josephson

See also Citizenship; Discrimination; Embodiment; Immigrants and Immigration; Migrants, Legal Issues; Policing of Trans Bodies; Violence

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ATHLETES, COLLEGE SPORTS

Because sports teams have historically been separated based on a binary understanding of sex, the question of which team a trans athlete can play on has challenged sports organizations (1) to develop policies that enable trans students to participate according to their gender identity and (2) to address how biologically based sex differences might affect their participation on sex-segregated teams. This question is particularly salient for trans women seeking to join women's teams. Trans female athletes often face opposition, as well as an assortment of eligibility rules, depending on the steps they have taken as part of their transition, as well as where they live and their level of play. But both trans women and trans men are becoming more visible in collegiate athletics, which is helping to change an aspect of college life in which transphobia often remains rampant.

Policies for Trans Student Athletes

Policies for trans student athletes vary according to level of play. These policies focus on binary trans people and, as of 2020, very few specifically included nonbinary trans identities.

NCAA Policy Recommendations

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) governs intercollegiate athletics for more than 1,200 member institutions. The NCAA began thinking about how to include trans athletes in college sports in 2009, when it convened its first meeting to discuss the topic. In 2011, the NCAA released a trans policy recommendation, which member institutions could either adopt or develop a different policy that met with the NCAA's approval. At the same time, it issued the "NCAA Inclusion of Transgender Student-Athletes" resource guide to help colleges ensure that trans athletes received fair, respectful, and legal access to sports teams. The guide included recommendations for best practices related to facilities use, inclusive language, dress codes and uniforms, and the education of athletics staff and athletes.

The NCAA policy recommended when and on what team trans athletes could compete, based on the level of testosterone in their bodies as indicated by testing. Trans men who are medically transitioning commonly take testosterone, but it is considered a banned substance in sports because of its performance-enhancing effects. As a result, trans male athletes need to receive a medical exception to begin taking testosterone. Once these athletes start on testosterone, they can immediately play on a men's team but are no longer eligible to compete on a women's team. Trans male athletes who socially transition, which may include changing their name, pronouns, and/or appearance but who do not take testosterone, may continue to compete on a women's team.

In contrast, trans female athletes must complete 1 calendar year of testosterone suppression treatment before they can join a women's team. In the interim, they can continue to compete on a men's team, even if they socially transition. The purpose of requiring trans women to undergo this treatment prior to participating on women's teams is to try to maintain competitive equity among cis and trans women. However, some trans advocates believe

that the policy is discriminatory and unethical because it forces trans women to medically transition when they may not want or be ready to do so.

The NCAA policy recommendation has enabled many trans athletes to participate in college sports according to their gender identity. In 2005, Keelin Godsey, a track and field athlete for Bates College, became the first known trans athlete in the NCAA when he socially transitioned and continued to compete on the women's team and subsequently in two women's Olympic trials. In 2010, Kye Allums, a basketball player for the George Washington University women's team, came out as a trans man and became the first openly trans NCAA Division 1 athlete. Since the implementation of the NCAA recommendation, hundreds of trans athletes have participated across all sports without issue. Although trans men have had an easier time participating, some trans women also have competed. In 2019, Franklin Pierce College runner CeCé Telfer became the first openly trans collegiate champion when she won the Division II championship in the 400-meter hurdles. Telfer's success, however, sparked a national debate about the inclusion of trans athletes.

Intramural Sports

The National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA), which governs collegiate recreational sports that participate in the NIRSA championship series, implemented a trans-inclusive policy in 2015. The policy allows trans athletes to compete in intramural sports and sports clubs based on their gender identity, without restriction. Colleges with intramural teams that are not involved in NIRSA events can develop their own policies for the participation of trans intramural athletes. These policies have largely supported trans students in competing according to how they identify their gender.

Opposition to Trans Athletic Participation

Trans women are often the focus of harsh criticism for wanting to participate in sport, while trans men frequently receive less attention and do not experience a similar level of pushback, even if they stay on a women's team and are successful in their sport. Additionally, the participation of trans

women on women's sports teams has become a political flashpoint that threatens the ability of athletics leaders to adopt sound policies that enable trans athletes to participate according to their gender identity.

The scientific understanding on which the NCAA recommendation is based is evolving. Currently, there are few studies of trans athletes and the impact of hormones on transitioning bodies. As more research considers the effects of hormone treatments on athletic performance, collegiate policies must be able to change to reflect new knowledge.

Additionally, policies for collegiate athletics may be challenged by state laws that require student athletes to compete as the sex they were assigned at birth. In 2020, Idaho passed such a law, banning trans women from participating on women's teams at the youth, high school, and collegiate levels. Because this law is contrary to the NCAA recommendation, colleges in the state will be forced to decide which to violate, if the law is not overturned in the courts. The outcome will have tremendous repercussions for trans athletes.

The challenge for all institutions and the NCAA is to determine how best to encourage the participation of trans athletes in college sports while being limited by a model of athletic competition that is based on sex segregation.

Pat Griffin and Chris Mosier

See also Athletes, Pro Sports; Gender Binaries; High School Sports; Hormones, Youth; Olympic Athletes

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ATHLETES, PRO SPORTS

Since Renée Richards's successful quest to compete in events sponsored by the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) in 1977, the circumstances under which trans people have the right to compete in professional (and elite amateur) sports has been a point of contention within sport associations, scholarly research, and wider public discourse. Individual trans athletes have been catalysts for ongoing debates about the extent to which human rights extend to sport participation and the development of policies by sporting bodies. The vast majority of controversies have centered on the participation of trans women in women's sports because of the assumption that past exposure to higher levels of testosterone constitutes an unfair competitive advantage over cis women competitors. Supporters of trans participation include leading scholars in the field, who, as discussed in the sections that follow, refute arguments about biological advantage and draw attention to the flawed science of sex difference that is employed to arbitrate questions of eligibility for trans and cis women alike in women's athletic competition.

The Assumptions of a Two-Sex System and Male Athletic Advantage

Objections to the participation of trans women in sport center on two taken-for-granted assumptions: that there are only two sexes and that men as a group have an athletic advantage over women as a group. These assumptions about binary sex differences inform a particular moral panic around the participation of trans women in women's sports. Even though Richards was not a particularly successful professional athlete, she was alleged to have an unfair advantage because of having been assigned male at birth, and the need to prevent the perceived advantage of trans women has become a persistent feature of policies designed to regulate their inclusion in amateur and professional sport. In contrast, trans men are viewed as either fundamentally limited in competition against cis men by having been assigned female at birth or as having their performance unfairly enhanced in competition against women if they take testosterone as part of their transition process. The debate

about the inclusion of trans athletes involves questions as to the extent to which hormone therapy effectively changes biological characteristics associated with an assumed male athletic advantage.

Feminist science studies and critical sports scholarship have successfully troubled both the naturalness of the two-sex system and fundamental male athletic advantage. This research emphasizes two findings that are relevant to the participation of trans people in sport: first, that there is no clear line of demarcation between male and female bodies, and second, that existing gendered overlaps in athletic performance are systematically rendered invisible. The underlying assumption of sex-segregated sporting spaces is that someone who is born male naturally has an unfair advantage when competing against girls and women in sport. A number of scholars have refuted this assumption of athletic superiority. So-called male and female bodies develop in social contexts that assume and privilege male athletic competence at the expense of female physical development. Critical feminist sports scholars focus on the role of sport in contributing to gender inequality by reinforcing orthodox masculinity and perpetuating sexism. Within this field is an emergent subset of research that views the sex segregation of amateur, elite, and professional sport as deeply problematic.

The Role of the International Olympic Committee

Policies for the participation of trans athletes in amateur and professional sports have been greatly influenced by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The IOC first developed a trans participation policy in 2004. Colloquially known as the "Stockholm Consensus," this policy required transsexual athletes to undergo complete hormonal transition at least 2 years prior to competing in an Olympic event, to undergo genital-reassignment surgery, and to have documents proving legal recognition of their new sex by their home governments. Many international and national sporting bodies followed the IOC's lead by developing identical policies. The Stockholm Consensus was widely criticized by sport scholars on the grounds that genitals are irrelevant to athletic performance, that the expense and/or invasiveness of surgery is a barrier for many athletes, and that many governments

refuse to supply legal documents designating the appropriate legal sex identity.

In 2016, the IOC announced that trans athletes would be eligible to compete in the Olympics without having undergone gender-affirming surgery. While it is seen by many as an improvement over the prohibitive requirements of the Stockholm Consensus, it continues to reflect an ideological commitment to a two-sex system (albeit a more complicated one) and an unquestioning belief in male athletic superiority. Trans women are required to follow a hormone regimen that negates the “performance-enhancing” effects of testosterone, whereas trans men are not required to submit to any hormonal regimen in order to participate as men in men’s sports.

The policies and controversies regarding trans inclusion in sport overlap with those relating to gender verification testing for women athletes and supposed biological boundary markers between male and female athletes as they relate to eligibility for participation. Critical scholarship troubles binary sex categories and male superiority by observing that sex differentiation is far more complex, citing people born “intersex” as an example. There is considerable debate over what percentage of the population is born with intersex characteristics; the numbers are impossible to verify because many people with intersex conditions are invisible—that is, they are not characterized by ambiguous genitalia but feature so-called chromosomal “abnormalities” that are often never detected. Indeed, women athletes who “failed” the scientifically flawed gender verification tests that the IOC and its affiliated organizations required of all women competitors from the 1950s to 2004, and on a case-by-case basis subsequently, have often learned that they are intersex only as a result of this process itself. Obviously, the vast majority of people never experience such testing, so the data relating to the frequency of intersex conditions is fundamentally limited.

Openly Trans Athletes in Professional Sport

Since Richards’s groundbreaking participation in the WTA, only seven trans athletes from four countries are known to have competed in professional sport, five in women’s sports (Australian Mianne Bagger in golf, Canadian Michelle Dumaresq in mountain bike racing, American Fallon Fox in mixed martial arts,

Brazilian Tiffany Abreu in volleyball, and Australian Hannah Mouncey in Australian rules football) and two in men’s sports (Canadian Harrison Browne in ice hockey and American Patricio Manuel in boxing). Seemingly, many trans individuals have not sought to compete, or at least not been open in doing so, because of a fear of criticism and opposition. This is especially the case for trans women competing in women’s sport.

In fact, all five out trans women professional athletes encountered discrimination and had to fight attempts to keep them from participating in their sport. For example, when Bagger first began competing professionally in the mid-2000s, most professional golf associations barred trans women players by stipulating that competitors must be “female at birth,” a policy no doubt prompted by Richards’s earlier success against the WTA. Bagger worked hard to educate the leadership of national and international professional golf associations to change this rule. Her efforts, combined with the 2004 ruling by the IOC enabling fully transitioned athletes to compete, led many golf associations to change their policies. It was not until 2010, however, that the Ladies Professional Golf Association amended its bylaws to allow trans women to compete.

Fallon Fox’s career in mixed martial arts (MMA) was likewise negatively affected by transmisogyny. Even though she qualified to compete according to the requirements of the IOC and had been ruled eligible by state licensing bodies, she was prevented from having bouts by the refusal of the Ultimate Fighting Championship MMA promotion organization to include her on fight cards. She was also left off the list of Unified Women’s MMA rankings as a result of open bias against trans women. The opposition contributed to Fox retiring in 2014.

In contrast to Fox’s experience, Patricio Manuel has been more widely accepted, earning support from the MMA and a sponsorship deal with the fitness equipment corporation Everlast. This is consistent with assumptions, rendered in trans participation policies, that trans men have no advantage over cis men in competition, unlike pseudo-scientific claims that view trans women as having just such an advantage.

Sex Segregation in Sport

The experiences of these trans athletes reflect the foundational role of modern sport in normalizing

an ideological binary sex system and male athletic superiority. Sex segregation is one of the central features of major professional sports worldwide, such as ice hockey, football (including soccer, Canadian and American football, and Australian rules football), tennis, basketball, and golf. Female athletes are required to develop and compete in their own leagues and typically earn a fraction of the amount of money made by male athletes. The lone exception is tennis, where the popularity of the women's game, along with advocacy from women players and their supporters, has resulted in equal purses for men and women at major tournaments in recent years. The fact that the names of professional women's sports associations are specifically gendered while men's remain unmarked (e.g., the Ladies Professional Golf Association versus the Professional Golf Association, the Women's National Basketball Association versus the National Basketball Association) is a powerful example of how sport is assumed to be a masculine realm. Understood in this light, the maintenance of male privilege in professional sport depends on the fierce patrol of its gendered borders. The regulation of the bodies of women and trans people reflects the extent to which all people not categorized as male are interlopers.

Sex segregation in sport is grounded in a vision of sex as a binary system that conforms to Eurocentric norms, whereby males and females are considered fundamentally different kinds of humans, and that emphasizes difference via the deliberate invisibility of similarities between male and female athletes. Despite documented overlaps between male and female athletic performance, mainstream sporting policies continue to lean heavily on a Western trope of white female frailty. The ideology of the two-sex system is grounded in anti-feminist gender essentialist theories that correlate naturalized and stereotypical masculinity with biologically defined males and femininity with biologically defined females—an argument that was used to keep girls out of sports prior to the 1970s.

The limited nature of inclusion permitted by the IOC continues to reinforce binary-based understandings of sex difference. Such trans inclusion policies tend to be conservative in that they reify, rather than challenge, the sex binary that is instrumental in gender inequality and anti-gay and anti-trans oppression. As a result, many trans

people are left out when it comes to participation in amateur and professional sport, including those who do not conform to binary understandings of sex difference, who do not successfully “pass” as men or women, or who are unable to access trans-affirming health care.

It is simplistic but instructive to speak of two classes of trans people on the basis of family support combined with socioeconomic privilege. Barriers to accessing the affirming health care that ameliorates gender dysphoria and aids assimilation (whether that is the desired goal or not) include nationality, poverty, racism, lack of health insurance, lack of family support, geographic inaccessibility, binary nonconformity, immigration status, mental health issues/trauma, and coming to understand oneself as trans too late to redirect puberty. And nonbinary athletes typically have literally no place to play. Sport policy has not even begun to take these issues into consideration.

Ann Travers

See also Athletes, College Sports; Gender Binaries; High School Sports; Olympic Athletes; Richards, Renée

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AUTHORSHIP OF TRANS LITERATURE

Scholars in science, medicine, and public health have brought renewed visibility to gender inequity among professional ranks within these fields. Some scholars, such as Geordan Shannon and Cléo Chassonnery-Zaïgouche, have referred to a process of “gender reckoning,” calling attention to the phenomenon of critical gender analysis within academic disciplines and the concomitant imperative for better gender representation among faculty and other scholarly positions, to transform research priorities, values, and impact. In the trans health field, a recent evaluation analysis of published studies by Waleed Sweileh (2018) revealed that out of the top 10 authors who are major contributors to trans literature, only one researcher is openly transgender (trans)-identified. This analysis accounts for at least a century of peer-reviewed publications on trans health and represents a body of work that is rooted in cisnormativity and cisgenderism; trans publications reflect a predominantly cisgender (cis)-centered context of research, whereby cis researchers’ perspectives are valued and privileged and trans researchers’ voices are marginalized. This entry addresses factors implicated in, and problems resulting from, gender disparity in trans literature and in particular the lack of trans representation among authors of trans health scholarship. This essay also offers a blueprint for organizations and institutions to address this issue.

Factors That Contribute to Lack of Trans Representation in the Authorship of Trans Literature

Underadmittance of Trans Scholars in Advanced Degree Programs

To understand the disproportional gender composition in trans authorship, it is crucial to examine structures accountable for producing researchers, namely, research organizations and institutions. Specifically, this authorship disparity reveals who gets accepted into higher education institutions, attains advanced training and credentials to engage in trans research, and achieves authorship in peer-reviewed journals. According to the 2015 United States Transgender Survey (USTS), a national survey of over 27,000 trans people, as well as the 2019 U.S. Census data, trans people are underrepresented 2.5 times less

in doctoral programs and 1.7 times less in professional programs compared with cis people. This disparity is driven by trans students’ well-documented experiences of transphobia, discrimination, and mistreatment in higher education, which negatively affect their access to a range of opportunities (mentorship, inclusion in research collaborations and networks, authorship) and contribute to their retention and academic success. Lack of representation and success in these programs reduces trans students’ chances of successfully competing for federally funded research awards and being hired as faculty. Admission committees, therefore, play an important point of influence given their power to challenge the status quo of cisnormativity and cisgenderism in higher education. Once admitted to advanced degree programs, academic administrators and leaders have significant roles in challenging tokenism of trans scholars in academia and in cultivating gender-inclusive and gender-affirming training environments that can maximize the success of young trans scholars.

Lack of Investment in Trans Research and Researchers at the Funding and Authorship Levels

At the funding and authorship levels, federal grant institutions and scientific journals are currently not collecting gender identity data from researchers to examine gender disparities in awardees and authorships beyond the male/female binary. A 2019 study by Travis Hoppe, titled “Topic Choice Contributes to the Lower Rate of NIH Awards to African-American/Black Scientists,” demonstrated that African American/Black scientists, particularly women, receive lower grant scores and funding relative to their white counterparts. This disparity was mainly attributable to these scholars proposing community-level health interventions (e.g., addressing health disparity, reproductive health) rather than biomedical studies (e.g., focusing on stem cells, vaccines, molecular biology), possibly reflecting a value at higher levels of research funding and administration regarding which types of research are “worthy” of investment. Similarly, scientific journals are more likely to publish studies authored by cis men than by cis women. These findings have potential implications for trans literature, particularly in trans health research, given that establishing trust and collaboration between trans community members and scientists is crucial to

Table I Recommendations to Address Gender Disparity in Trans Health and Empower Emerging Trans Researchers

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>For Research Organization and Institutions</i>	
Use gender equity lens in recruitment and admission process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Set gender equity goals that explicitly measure number of trans students in admitted student pool. – Incorporate a transgender identification questionnaire in student application forms and/or school records. – Include trans faculty and trans students as part of admission review committees. – Allocate recruitment funding and resources that target prospective trans applicants.
Hire trans faculty and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Hire trans faculty and staff across all levels of the organization and/or institution. – Create a resource pipeline to retain and advance graduating trans students to become faculty and/or staff members. – Include trans faculty and trans students as part of hiring committees.
<i>For Journals</i>	
Collect gender identities in journal management systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Collect gender identities beyond the female/male binary of authors submitting manuscripts and other publication pieces. – Track the number of submission outcomes (e.g., rejection, acceptance) by gender.
Invite and commission trans researchers and authors on trans health and/or related topics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Invite trans researchers and authors to write commissioned pieces regarding trans health and/or other relevant topics.
Invite trans researchers as reviewers and/or editors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Meaningfully invite and hire trans researchers as Reviewers, Editors, and/or staff across all levels of journal organization.
Challenge manuscripts written with cisnormative and cisgenderism framing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Recognize and challenge articles during the peer-review process to refrain from promoting cisnormative and cisgenderism framing throughout the manuscript, including definitions and recommendations that medically pathologize trans people and widen inaccessibility of trans-related health services.
<i>For Federal Grant Institutions</i>	
Collect gender identities in federally funded grant application systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Collect and track gender identities beyond the female/male binary of lead and coinvestigator applicants who apply for federally funded grants.
Fund trans research that is trans-led.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Establish research funding streams (e.g., request for proposals, early investigator awards) catered to trans research that is trans-led.
Invite trans researchers as study/grant reviewers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Meaningfully invite trans researchers as study/grant reviewers.
<i>For Cisgender Researchers</i>	
Cite trans researchers and authors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Support the work of trans researchers and authors by intentionally acknowledging and citing their manuscripts and other publications. – Unlearn cisnormative models/framework and learn new ones put forward by trans researchers and authors.
Recognize privilege in being a cisgender researcher.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Recognize that cisgenderism and cisgenderism are pervasive in the field of trans research and literature and that this culture and practice are often upheld, protected, reinforced, and benefited by cisgender researchers.

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Description</i>
Mentor and make space for trans researchers and authors in writing manuscripts and designing trans research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Grant space for emerging trans researchers and authors to lead and/or co-lead manuscripts and other relevant projects. – Provide meaningful mentorship by treating trans mentees with autonomy and respect and deferring toward their expertise when appropriate.
Invite community trans collaborators and members to be authors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Meaningfully invite and include trans collaborators and community members to participate in research manuscripts and other projects, while simultaneously challenging tokenism in such participation.

Source: Authors.

study success. In addition, cis researchers are currently more often published in trans health than are trans researchers. In cases when trans people are included in federally funded studies, trans samples are often lumped with those intended for cis people (cis men-who-have-sex-with-men studies), contributing to a system in which trans issues are investigated as supplementary to cis-focused research. Additionally, there are no systematized data showcasing federally funded studies that invest in trans studies led by trans researchers. Without data to distinguish trans researchers at the funding and authorship levels, analogous studies examining disparities in authorship and the ratio of submission to acceptance/rejection by gender identity cannot be conducted.

Common Problems With Lack of Trans Representation in Trans Literature

Gender disparity in trans literature sheds light on who holds power and privilege in shaping this scholarship. The overrepresentation of cis authors reflects the ways in which narratives, terminology, theories, and recommendations are fomented from a cisnormative, cisgenderist viewpoint. These norms have been established as gold-standard research practices despite challenges from trans researchers and communities.

For example, in the field of trans health, the term *transgender* has consistently been defined on the basis of biological sex (e.g., “people whose gender does not match their sex assigned at birth”) even though trans researchers and writers have detached biological sex as a qualifier and defined trans based solely on gender identification. Moreover, dominant

narratives and medical constructions of trans people’s transition experiences are framed similarly (e.g., born/trapped in the wrong body), contributing to what trans trailblazer and writer Janet Mock (2012) describes as a “convenient, lazy explanation [that] fails to describe trans people . . . that makes trans people’s varying journeys and narratives palatable to . . . the cis masses” (para. 3). Nearly all trans research papers begin by defining trans populations according to this construction while cis studies do not define what cis means, thereby reinforcing cisnormativity in research.

Such cisnormative framing also feeds into clinical recommendations. For example, requiring a gender dysphoria diagnosis for access to medical gender affirmation (hormone replacement therapy, gender-affirming surgeries) creates additional barriers to health care and promotes stigma toward trans individuals. Trans scholars have criticized these requirements for pathologizing trans identities, widening health care inaccessibility, and reifying the gender binary to the detriment of trans individuals.

Conclusion

Given the ways in which hegemonic cisnormativity and cisgenderism have pervaded trans literature in general and trans health scholarship specifically, it is critical for the voices of trans researchers and writers to be pragmatically and intentionally uplifted, centered, and supported. Table 1 provides suggestions for moving the field toward this goal. These recommendations are an embarkation toward empowering emerging trans scholars as authors to the benefit of the trans literature.

Arjee Restar, Wesley King, and Don Operario

See also Demographics of the Trans Community; Erasure; History; Intersectionality in Research; Mock, Janet

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AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

Since the 1930s, trans individuals have published autobiographies not only to tell or to clarify the stories of their lives but also to educate others in an effort to gain greater acceptance for trans people. Many of the early autobiographies were written by trans women, whose gender identities had been revealed by the press. Forced into the media spotlight because they were trans, their work often served as a response to the stereotypes and misinformation circulated about their experiences. In the 2000s, trans male autobiographies became more commonplace. Although comparatively fewer autobiographies have been published by nonbinary trans individuals, a growing number of such works in the 2010s, along with relatively more works by trans people of color and trans youth, have led to better representation of the diversity of trans identities.

Trans Autobiographies, 1933–1983

Given the unprecedented news coverage that Christine Jorgensen received beginning in 1952 for being the first publicly recognized person from the United States to have had what was then called a “sex change,” it is not surprising that her 1967 life story would be the most widely known among the

early trans autobiographies. But the earliest trans autobiographies were published by Europeans; the first known book-length account is the narrative of Lili Elbe, a Danish painter who became one of the first individuals to undergo gender-affirming surgeries. Shortly before her death following one of these surgeries in 1931, Elbe requested that her friend Ernst Ludwig Hathorn Jacobson develop a book based on her diary entries, letters, and dictated material. Jacobson published the resulting work, *Man Into Woman: An Authentic Record of a Change of Sex*, posthumously under the pseudonym Niels Hoyer.

After *Man Into Woman*, another trans autobiography was apparently not published until 1954, when two works were written by British trans people in the wake of the international publicity surrounding Jorgensen's transition. Robert Allen's *But for the Grace: The True Story of a Dual Existence* describes how he was assigned female at birth but petitioned the British government to amend his birth certificate in 1944—one of the country's earliest officially recognized gender changes. *Roberta Cowell's Story by Herself* is an account by the woman who had the first known vaginoplasty in England and who was legally recognized as female in 1951.

Being the first British trans woman to undergo surgery and having achieved some fame previously as a race car driver, Cowell's transition made headlines in Britain. The outing in the British tabloid press of models April Ashley and Caroline Cossey (known as Tula) generated similar public interest. Both recounted their experiences in 1982 autobiographies: *April Ashley's Odyssey* and *I Am a Woman*, respectively. Even more attention was paid to the transition of renowned British author and travel correspondent Jan Morris, who wrote the best-selling *Conundrum* (1974).

In the United States, the best-known trans autobiography in the late 20th century was Renée Richards's *Second Serve* (1983). Richards became famous in the 1970s for successfully suing to overturn a ban on her playing professional women's tennis because she was a trans woman. But rather than discussing her court case or her pro tennis career, Richards devoted the majority of *Second Serve* to detailing her struggle to accept her gender identity. She detailed her subsequent life in *No Way Renée* (2007). Lesser known autobiographies

of the era by U.S. trans women included socialite Dawn Langley Simmons's *Man Into Woman* (1971), singer Canary Conn's *Canary* (1974), journalist Nancy Hunt's *Mirror Image* (1978), and Sharon Davis's *A Finer Specimen of Womanhood* (1986), the first known autobiography by a Black trans person.

Notably absent from the 1960s through the 1980s were published narratives by trans men, with the major exception of Mario Martino's *Emergence* (1977), which focused on his struggles to reconcile his sense of himself as a man with his conservative Catholic upbringing. A few trans male autobiographies were published in the 1990s, most notably Paul Hewitt's *A Self-Made Man* (1995), Mark Rees's *Dear Sir or Madam* (1996), and Dylan Scholinski's *The Last Time I Wore a Dress* (1997). The latter book tells the horrific story of how Scholinski's family institutionalized him during his high school years for his gender nonconformity.

Contemporary Trans Autobiographies

While not strictly autobiographies, the publication of Leslie Feinberg's semi-autobiographical novel *Stone Butch Blues* (1993) and Kate Bornstein's collection of personal essays and performance works *Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women, and the Rest of Us* (1994) helped usher in a new generation of trans narratives that were more than stories of personal acceptance and transition and that largely did not ascribe to stereotypical notions of gender, even if the author identified as a binary trans person. Moreover, the popularity of Feinberg's and Bornstein's works, along with the growing visibility of trans people, led publishers, including many major presses, to take a greater interest in trans books, and an unprecedented number of trans autobiographies were published in the early 21st century. The ease with which people can self-publish today has also contributed to the rapid growth in the number of books about individual trans experiences.

At the same time, the writers of trans autobiographies have become much more diverse. In the 20th century, there were only a few autobiographies by trans people of color published, notably Davis's work and the Lady Chablis's *Hiding My Candy* (1997). Although there continues to be a

scarcity of autobiographies by trans people of color, the works of two of these authors have been among the most acclaimed in the genre. Janet Mock's *Redefining Realness* (2014) vividly illustrates the intersections of racism, classism, and transmisogyny, as she recounts how she struggled in her teens as a Black trans woman to pay for hormones and gender-affirming surgery and was only able to do so through sex work. In 2017, Mock released a follow-up memoir focusing on her experiences in her 20s, *Surpassing Certainty*. Willy Wilkinson's *Born on the Edge of Race and Gender* (2015) likewise offers an intersectional analysis of his experiences as an Asian American trans man, which includes having a chronic illness, medically transitioning, and being a father. Other notable autobiographies by trans people of color include Toni Newman's *I Rise* (2011) and Ryka Aoki's *Seasonal Velocities* (2012).

Similarly, while there had been few trans male autobiographies published in the 20th century, a number of such works have come out since then, including Jamison Green's *Becoming a Visible Man* (2004), Matt Kailey's *Just Add Hormones* (2005), Max Wolf Valerio's *The Testosterone Files* (2006), and Dhillon Khosla's *Both Sides Now* (2006). Green's book was especially significant because he told not only his own story but also the history of trans male community building, in which he was a central figure.

Reflecting how more and more trans people are identifying as nonbinary, a growing number of trans autobiographies are by nonbinary individuals. The most celebrated of these works is Jacob Tobia's *Sissy* (2019), which they subtitle "a coming-of-gender story," as the book relates how they came to embrace their femininity and take pride in their gender nonconformity, such as simultaneously having facial hair and wearing high heels. Another acclaimed nonbinary autobiography is Maia Kobabe's graphic memoir *Gender Queer* (2019), which describes coming-of-age experiences like starting school, getting one's period, and beginning to date from the perspective of someone who is nonbinary and asexual.

Still, the vast majority of trans autobiographies continue to be published by trans women. Among such works published since the late 1990s are books by Jayne County, Deirdre McCloskey, Aleshia Brevard, Calpernia Addams, Donna Rose,

Beth Elliott, Kristin Beck, and Sarah McBride. The most prolific and best-selling trans autobiographer is English professor and *New York Times* Contributing Opinion Writer Jennifer Finney Boylan. Beginning with *She's Not There* (2003) and continuing with *I'm Looking Through You* (2008), *Stuck in the Middle With You* (2013), and *Good Boy* (2020), Boylan has discussed such topics as her marriage (which continued after her transition), parenting, and her experiences with having dogs throughout her life. Another trans female autobiographer of note is poet and English professor Joy Ladin, who described her struggles with being true to herself and how her transition affected her family, career, and Jewish beliefs in *Through the Door of Life* (2012). Ladin, the first openly trans person to be teaching at an Orthodox Jewish university, further formulated her thoughts on being trans and Jewish in *The Soul of the Stranger: Reading God and Torah From a Transgender Perspective* (2018). Another important Jewish trans narrative is Abby Stein's *Becoming Eve: My Journey From Ultra-Orthodox Rabbi to Transgender Woman* (2019).

Because of the plethora of trans autobiographies since the early 2000s, a trans person today has to have a unique experience in order to interest most major publishers in their stories. A case in point is Thomas Beatie, a trans man who became famous for becoming pregnant and giving birth to a child after transitioning. His life story, *Labor of Love* (2008), was published soon after his first child was born.

As in the past, trans people who were famous before they came out publicly as trans became even more known afterward and took advantage of their celebrity status (and ghostwriters) to publish their autobiographies in the 2000s. Chaz Bono, the child of Sonny Bono and Cher, wrote *Transition* (2011), and gold-medal-winning Olympic decathlete and reality television star Caitlyn Jenner wrote *The Secrets of My Life* (2017). Jenner's book became a bestseller but more because of her star power than the quality of her narrative.

Another celebrity to write an autobiography, YouTube and reality television personality Jazz Jennings, was part of a new trend in trans autobiographies in the 2010s: books by trans youth. Her book, *Being Jazz* (2016), recounts not just her moments of fame but also her struggles to be

seen as female, which included the need for her family to fight for her right to play girls' soccer. Two other trans youth autobiographies are Katie Rain Hill's *Rethinking Normal* (2014) and Arin Andrews's *Some Assembly Required* (2014). The two books are companion pieces: The writers—a trans woman and trans man, respectively—medically transitioned in their mid-teens and dated each other, which both discuss in their works, which they wrote in their late teens. Hill's account is the more heartbreaking: Because of bullying from other youth and internalized self-hatred, she tried to take her life at 8 years old and continued to suffer through her tween years before accepting herself. But the most heart-rending youth narrative is Zane Thimmesch-Gill's *Hiding in Plain Sight* (2015), in which he describes being homeless as a teen and having to survive on the streets because he could no longer tolerate his family's hostility. The autobiographies by trans youth vividly demonstrate the importance of parental support. For these authors, it was the difference between being able to socially and medically transition relatively easily versus having to struggle to embody one's identity.

The Evolution of Trans Autobiographies

Trans autobiographies, like trans people themselves, have significantly progressed over the past 75 years. As trans people have become less of a sensation in the dominant society, so too have their personal narratives focused less on the spectacle of being trans. Today, trans autobiographers can write memoirs that address the complexities

of their lives and can be more than their gender identities.

Genny Beemyn

See also Bono, Chaz; Bornstein, Kate; Boylan, Jennifer Finney; Elbe, Lili; Feinberg, Leslie; Jenner, Caitlyn; Jennings, Jazz; Jorgensen, Christine; Mock, Janet; Morris, Jan; Richards, Renée

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AUTOGYNEPHILIA

See Anti-Trans Theories.

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