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# A Tale of Three Spectrums: Deviating from Normative Treatments of Sex and Gender

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## ABSTRACT

This article presents pathways for deviating from sex and gender analyses norms to better incorporate sex and gender diversity in deviance studies. Synthesizing insights from emerging intersex, transgender, and gender-nonconforming scholarship and prior theorizing on the social construction of gender norms, I outline three separate, yet interrelated spectrums embedded in existing theorizing, and illustrate how more explicit engagement with each of these spectra individually and collectively may speak to unanswered questions and concerns about gender in society. In conclusion, I argue explicit attention to sex and gender spectrums creates possibilities for moving past binary norms in pursuit of better understanding the complexity of sex and gender in the social world.

## ARTICLE HISTORY

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## Introduction

Gender may be the most ubiquitous and essential concept in social science. Whether we look to measurements of sex and/or gender as one of the primary markers for defining any survey as representative or generalizable (Westbrook and Saperstein 2015), or the existence of gender (at the very least in the description of samples and/or use of pronouns) in qualitative (Kleinman 2007) and quantitative (Magliozzi, Saperstein, and Westbrook 2016) books and articles, there is very little published work that does not rely upon gender in some way. As Patricia Yancey Martin (2004) suggested, gender may be one of the most foundational, institutional and normative components of contemporary social life and social science itself (Ridgeway 2011).

Despite its broad usage, normative conceptualizations of gender have once again become the subject of heated debate alongside the emergence of intersex and transgender inclusive studies. Although the recognition of more fluid and complex sexed and gendered realities has been hinted at, and even explicitly noted on occasion, for at least 50 years (Garfinkel 1967; Goffman 1963; West and Zimmerman 1987), most of our work – across subfields, methodologies, and theoretical traditions – eschews such complexity in favor of (1) conflating sex and gender and (2) categorizing sex and gender into binary (i.e., either/or) notions of male/female or woman/man only.

This article draws on prior theorizing concerning the social construction of sex and gender as distinct, yet interrelated processes of social construction (West and Zimmerman 1987) to outline options for more comprehensive analyses of sex and gender. Alongside growing examples of intersex (Davis 2015), gender nonconforming (Lucal 1999) and transgender (Mathers 2017a) inclusive sociologies (see Table 1 for relevant terms) demonstrating the limitations of existing norms scholars draw upon to conceptualize sex and gender,<sup>1</sup> I outline paths for deviating from such norms suggested by both

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<sup>1</sup>For examples of such Pfeffer (2014, 2012) in relation to relationships; Schilt (2010) and Yavorsky (2016) in relation to workplaces; Sumerau, Cragun, and Mathers (2016) and Sumerau and Cragun (2015) in relation to religion; Mathers (2017b) in relation to nonreligion; Mathers (2017a) and Shuster (2017) in relation to interactional patterns; Schrock, Holden, and Reid (2004) and Stone (2009) in relation to social movements; Davis and Preves (2016) and Davis, Dewey, and Murphy (2016) in relation to medical

**Table 1.** Terminology.

Term	Definition
Sex and Gender Binaries	The classifications of sex and gender into two distinct oppositional forms of masculine and feminine selfhood promoted scientifically, religiously, and socially for at least the past 100+ years.
Transgender	An umbrella term referring people who do not conform to the sex-to-gender norms and sex assignment society placed upon them.
Cisgender	An umbrella term referring to people who do conform to the sex-to-gender norms and sex assignment society placed upon them.
Gender Nonconforming	An umbrella term referring to people who partially conform, or not, to the sex-to-gender norms and sex assignment society placed upon them.
Intersex	A sex identity referring to people whose biological credentials do not fit within binary conceptions of gendered and sexed bodies.
Ipso Gender	A term for intersex gender identity development recognizing there is no dominant sex-to-gender norm for intersex people.
Sex and Gender Conflation	The societal pattern within and beyond science to treat sex as if it is gender and gender as if it is sex despite the differences of these terms in empirical analyses.
The Sex Spectrum	The multitude of ways people may assign themselves or be assigned to a given sex category between female and male categories at either end of the spectrum of potential sex characteristics.
Gender norms	Socially constructed expectations people are taught to (1) assume will come alongside the assignment of sex categories; (2) correspond to socially constructed gender identities based upon current interpretations of masculine and feminine options; and (3) conform to or face stigma and discrimination from social authorities.
The Sex-to-Gender Spectrum	The multitude of ways people may (1) choose, (2) be coerced, (3) be encouraged, and/or (4) be naturally drawn, in some way we cannot yet empirically document, to conform/partially conform/not conform to the gender norms and expectations tied to a given sex assignment.
The Gender Identity Spectrum	The multiple ways people may identify within and between whatever current societal notions of masculinities and femininities exist in a given time and place.

<sup>a</sup>The following list contains terms relevant to the current discussion but is by no means exhaustive. Further, these terms may shift over time and in relation to varied social contexts. For further discussion, see, Costello (2015); Davis (2015); Goffman (1977); Serano (2007); Stryker (2008); Sumerau and Mathers (2019); West and Zimmerman (1987); Westbrook and Schilt (2014).

current and prior theorizing. Further, I outline the possibilities of this path to (1) broaden sociological work on sex and gender, and (2) encourage deviance scholars to critically examine sociological norms of categorization, interpretation, and analyses. In so doing, I argue that attending to prior theorizing concerning the complex processes whereby sex and gender come to be recognizable in society provide opportunities for expanding analyses of sex and gender beyond binary simplifications.

Specifically, I argue that understanding the complexity of sex and gender requires attention to three spectrums operating at once. First, there is sex spectrum, or the ways people are assigned to one or another sex category based upon surface observation of the shape of their bodies in relation to existing norms (Garfinkel 1967; Goffman 1963). Then, there is the sex-to-gender spectrum whereby people assigned to a given location on the sex spectrum are then trained or socialized to behave in a certain way based on social expectations of that sex, and may thus conform, not conform, or partially conform to such lessons (Goffman 1977; West and Zimmerman 1987). Finally, there is the gender identity spectrum whereby people construct and develop their own identities as members of a given gender and sex group based upon their conformity, non-conformity, or partial conformity to sex-to-gender lessons and/or assignment to a given sex category (West and Zimmerman 1987).

As suggested by the citations above, these spectrums have been theorized and discussed in the past in a wide variety of ways (see also Connell 1987; Martin 2004; Ridgeway 2011). However, the bulk of empirical scholarship ignores such complexity to conceptualize sex and/or gender as simple, discrete, binary notions of male/female or woman/man for the purposes of analyses (see Sumerau

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knowledge; Stryker (2008); Nowakowski, Sumerau, and Mathers (2016); Wentling et al. (2008) in relation to college education; Jenness et al. (2014) and Jenness and Fenstermaker (2016) in relation to the criminal justice system; Cragun and Sumerau (2015), Cragun and Sumerau (2017) in relation to attitudes; Meadow (2011) and Westbrook and Schilt (2014) in relation to laws and government; Westbrook and Saperstein (2015) on survey research; Schilt and Westbrook (2009) and Meyer (2012) in relation to violence, media, and hate crimes; Miller and Grollman (2015) and Turner (1999) in relation to health disparities; and Schilt (2016) and O'Brien (2016) in relation to theory and history.

and Mathers 2019 for review). Here, I argue that a more productive method for understanding sex and gender in society involves analyzing the construction and operation of these spectrums, and explicitly noting such complexity in any studies of sex and gender in society. In so doing, scholars in deviance could critically examine norms limiting existing analyses of sex and gender within and beyond deviance studies.

Throughout this article, I thus outline the three spectrums of sex and gender suggested by prior theorizing and demonstrate how attention to such spectra provide opportunities for realigning the theoretical and methodological norms of today. In so doing, I synthesize insights from works often considered classics in current graduate programs (see, e.g., Garfinkel 1967; Goffman 1963, 1977; West and Zimmerman 1987) with emerging observations from intersex and transgender inclusive scholars and works in more recent years (for a review, see Sumerau and Mathers 2019). To this end, I outline the components of each spectrum (see also Table 2), and then discuss some ways attention to this spectrum could advance and expand existing sex and gender studies in deviance studies.

## The sex spectrum<sup>2</sup>

The sex spectrum involves the process of sorting human bodies into categories based on the interpretation of genital appearance (usually) at birth (Davis 2015). Rather than a natural occurrence, sex assignments, as West and Zimmerman (1987) note, are the result of cultural and social maneuvers by people granted the authority to classify human life based on existing norms (Butler 1999). At present, humans are generally assigned to only female and male categories with the possible spectrum of differences in sex characteristics, and those defined as intersex are often forced into bodily conformity to the male-female options. This process typically results in sex assignment being one of the first socialization experiences humans encounter (Goffman 1977).

It is noteworthy that the two-sex system is enforced as vigorously as any other major ideological tradition (Davis, Dewey, and Murphy 2016). Although proponents of this binary simplification of human possibility often seek to justify the system through biological claims, empirical biology does not support such assertions (Fausto-Sterling 2000). Likewise, proponents may attempt to argue that chromosomes or genetics cause sex categorization in a natural manner, but such “appeals to nature” (Scott and Lyman 1968) ignore the fact that most people are never tested genetically, and that (1) such tests typically produce mixed results rather than any discernable sex categories and (2) rely upon the interpretative work of people socialized into two-sex norms to analyze the results (Roen 2008). Rather than anything natural, such justifications reveal efforts to erase the sex spectrum through an ideological commitment to a two-sex norm.

Binary sex assignment, however, is not only an issue at the beginning of life or in the cases of intersex people harmed in the process. As Westbrook and Saperstein (2015) note, it is also a common practice in survey research wherein, rather than asking about sex and/or gender explicitly, data collectors guess or otherwise assign respondents to male and female sex categories (see also Ivankovich, Leichter, and Douglas 2013; Sumerau et al. 2017). This means that rather than self-reports of sex or gender, most surveys only have whatever interpretation of sex and gender norms a given researcher uses to sort people into specific, binary categories. As such, we only know what researchers thought the respondents’ sex was based on social norms concerning how to present

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<sup>2</sup>As noted on Table 2, it is important to recognize that the term “cisgender” does not apply to many intersex people because they were forced into binary sex assignment. As some (Davis 2015) intersex scholars and activists suggest, their social location is better captured with another term. Costello (2015) suggests “ipso gender” or gender in the same place, rather than cisgender, gender on the same side as dominant gender scripts. This is because many intersex people take the transgender or gender nonconforming sex-to-gender pathways (and identify in various ways), but many others do identify with the sex-to-gender pathway based on the sex they were forced into at birth. They do not, however, simply conform (i.e., cisgender), but rather generally experience considerable trauma via the translation of binary sex-to-gender scripts rather than sex spectrum assignment and scripts in society at the hands of scientists and others. As such, there is often no gender script for their sex-to-gender pathway, and thus rather than conform, not conform, or partially conform, they can be seen as occupying the same place (on the sex spectrum) because their sex is non-binary.



**Table 2.** Sex and gender spectrums.

Sex Spectrum (i.e., I was told my body was)	Intersex (i.e., I was told I was female/male, but I was forced into these body types, but I do not biologically fit into these options)	Sex to Gender Spectrum (i.e., How I reacted to who I was told I was based on what I was told my body was)	Gender Identity Spectrum (i.e., who I identify as in terms of identification and presentation)
Assigned female		Conform to sex-to-gender norms (Cisgender) Partially conform to sex-to-gender norms (Gender Non Conforming)	Woman Butch woman Masculine woman Androgynous Woman Transman Transmasculine Non-binary Person Genderqueer Agender Gender Fluid Gender Neutral Androgynous Woman/Man
Binary Assignment into female or male	Intersex Realization	Do not conform to sex-to-gender norms (Transgender)	
Assigned male		No sex-to-gender norm, but felt a stable gender identity on masculine or feminine end of spectrum (Ipsos Gender)	Transgender (however identified) Man Fem man Feminine Man Androgynous Man Transwoman Transfeminine Non-binary Person Genderqueer Agender Gender Fluid Gender Neutral Androgynous
		No sex-to-gender norm, but felt fluid or flexible gender identity across or between masculine or feminine ends of spectrum (Ipsos Gender) Conform to sex-to-gender norms (Cisgender) Partially conform to sex-to-gender norms (Gender Non Conforming)	
		Do not conform to sex-to-gender norms (Transgender)	

\*The pathway of a being moves from left to right from one column to the next over time at the beginning of social life, and in some cases, at varied times throughout the life course.

<sup>a</sup>Note (1) these are only some of the examples that I alone have come into contact with in the empirical social world (i.e., met people who identify as such) in my life to date, (2) these are arranged in no particular order, and (3) intersex itself is another spectrum that could be more fully studied and brought into research with more data and collection of intersex voices, experiences, and identity process in our discipline (see also Davis 2015).

femininity or masculinity to others.<sup>3</sup> Considering how many of our models, predicted probabilities, and theories are rooted in statistical patterns based on these norms, it may be very uncomfortable for us to think about which of our findings might be different if we had the self-reported sexes and/or gender of respondents instead of the guesses researchers made based on the respondents' "presentation of self" (Goffman 1959) on a particular day.

This question suggests a multitude of unanswered questions. How accurate are data collectors' sex assignment attempts, and how exactly do they do this "interpretive work" (Goffman 1963)? How do stigma and other social beliefs about this or that sex or gender presentation impact who gets assigned to what category in a given survey? What would predictions of the ways sexes relate to a given social pattern or patterns be like with more empirical measures of sex and/or gender instead of interpretive sex assignment by strangers from (usually) only one encounter? How many intersex people are hidden in our surveys, and how might these people respond similarly or differently than others? How do intersex people feel about the absence of their experiences in surveys utilized to discuss what the larger world looks like? How does such absence effect their own experiences with stigma and identity development? These are but a few questions deviance scholars could explore by deviating from sex assignment norms in social research.

Beyond these questions, the sex spectrum itself is also necessary for understanding any social and/or biological conceptualization of gender (West and Zimmerman 1987). In fact, scholars have long commented on the necessity of understanding that while sex and gender were not, in fact, the same concept or (in the language of the time) social role, the relationship of one to the establishment and maintenance of the other was a social norm in need of constant and critical analyses (Connell 1999; Smith 1987). If, as scholars noted at the time, one is assigned to "Z" sex (sex spectrum), then, one will be instructed to act in ways considered normal at the time for "A" gender (sex-to-gender-spectrum), and if, one does act in "A" way that "A" gender is expected to act, then others will assume one is, in fact, "A" gender and further, "Z" sex (gender identity spectrum). Although suggested by this series of if/then propositions (see again, West and Zimmerman 1987; see also Goffman 1959, 1977; 1963), the sex spectrum, as well as social norms limiting this spectrum of possibility to only two binary options, create a wide variety of avenues for analyses. Why, instead, have researchers almost entirely limited our analyses to social re-constructions of a sex binary instead of focusing on the ways this binary is constructed, enforced, and made to seem normal in social life (Davis 2015)?

### The sex-to-gender spectrum

The questions raised by the lack of attention to the social construction of sex, the sex spectrum, and the binary assignment of people by social authorities also shows up in the overwhelming absence of analyses concerning how one gets from being assigned to a sex to developing a gender identity. This process between the beginning and end points of sex to gender development, as West and Zimmerman (1987) noted, contains the social construction of sex and gender as well as the possibility of understanding, changing, and even deconstructing such processes, norms, and inequalities (see also Garfinkel 1967; Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock 1996; Sumerau, Mathers, and Moon 2019). However, most of our work either assigns people to sex categories and uses these as a proxy for gender (survey methods) or examines how people who self-identify as a gender present themselves in ways that affirm or challenge existing norms for that gender (qualitative methods). As such, the space between "sex assignment is gender" and "gender is performed this way" remains as undertheorized as when West and Zimmerman (1987) outlined this pathway over thirty years ago (Moon, Tobin, and Sumerau 2019).

<sup>3</sup>To give just two examples of this point, I am personally aware of, for example, (1) a nonbinary transgender person who saw their own comments on a survey show up as given by a female (they were not assigned female and have not, at least so far, transitioned to a female body, but were dressed in accordance with feminine norms), and (2) an intersex person who saw their responses on a survey listed as a male (they have never been assigned or biologically male that they know of, but they do present in a more masculine manner most of the time).

The lack of attention to sex-to-gender processes, however, may be tied to debates about social and biological pathways to sex and gender throughout the sciences at present. Specifically, it mirrors patterns that emerged in research after West and Zimmerman (1987) and other scholars called for greater attention to gender in the late 1980's. In survey research, for example, it is not uncommon to see work using the same measurements in the 1980's and 1990's, but in the 1980's the respondents were called males and in the 1990's they were called men. Likewise, much survey research says it focuses on women and men in its published form, but the documentation generally says that respondents were only categorized into male or female categories through the interpretation of the data collectors (Westbrook and Saperstein 2015). In both cases, sex is conflated with gender. Whereas earlier work used the term sex to refer to *sex and gender dynamics* in society, the latter work just flipped the language to use gender to refer to the same thing.

I do not mean to suggest this was an intentional development. In fact, the recent decision by the General Social Survey to add more expansive sex and gender questions to the survey only occurred after over a decade of advocacy by sex and gender scholars seeking more empirical measures of sex and gender in surveys (Compton, Meadow, and Schilt 2018). Rather than anything intentional on the part of survey researchers, I think such conflation came from the same norms in the broader society. This is even more likely because qualitative studies reveal the same pattern. We can see this when such studies in the 1980's focused on race, sex, and class, and then shifted in the 1990's to focus on race, gender, and class instead (for review, see Schrock and Schwalbe 2009). Here again, there was no real change beyond linguistics. Sex became gender the same way it often does in the broader society. Following West and Zimmerman (1987), here I once again suggest we may be better off examining the processes whereby sex connects to gender than by simply treating sex and gender as synonyms (see Davis 2015; Garfinkel 1967; Goffman 1977; Lucal 1999; Schrock and Schwalbe 2009 for similar suggestions over the past few decades; see Sumerau, Mathers, and Moon 2019 for a recent review).

To do this, we must simply return to prior observations about the processes whereby sex, sex-to-gender, and gender occur in society. Following West and Zimmerman (1987), people are assigned to (presently, almost always binary) sex categories within the sex spectrum. Then, people are instructed to conform to (again, almost always binary) genders within the gender identity spectrum. Here is where we pick up the missing piece in most work on sex and gender to date. One may, despite tremendous interactional (West and Zimmerman 1987) and institutional (Martin 2004) resistance equally be able to, (1) conform to the gender assigned to the sex they were assigned by society (cisgender); (2) partially or only sometimes or in a back and forth manner conform and not conform to the gender assigned to the sex they were assigned by society (gender nonconforming); and/or (3) not conform to the gender assigned to the sex they were assigned by society (transgender). The adoption of one or multiple options within this list may be conscious, unconscious, or anywhere in between, and may be driven by biological, psychological, and/or social development.

The first option, conformity, is what we may call the *cisgender sex-to-gender pathway*, or the social construction of a cisgender self. The second option, semi or partial conformity, is what we may call the *gender nonconforming sex-to-gender pathway*, or the social construction of an androgynous or otherwise in between the ends of the spectrum self. However, here note that many cisgender and transgender people will also conform and not conform to existing sex and gender norms in a wide variety of ways. Put simply, these pathways are not exhaustive, and there may be tremendous overlap as there exists with any other categorization system. The third option, nonconformity, is what we may call the *transgender sex-to-gender pathway*, or the social construction of a transgender self (see Table 2). Finally, as noted in Table 2, there is also *the ipso gender sex-to-gender pathway* intersex people may experience due to the absence of a non-binary sex-to-gender set of norms in society at present (Costello 2015). Especially since the pathways in this spectrum have almost entirely been unexplored in empirical analyses of sex and gender to date (but see Sumerau and Mathers 2019 for exceptions), recognition of the importance of examining sex-to-gender processes, as West and Zimmerman (1987) suggested long ago, opens up a wide variety of theoretical possibilities.



For example, what does it mean to move from sex-to-gender in conformist, nonconformist, and/or partial-conformist ways for survey research, and examinations of socialization, bio-psycho-social development, childhood, and families? How might scales capturing such processes, even in simple terms, expand what we can learn from such surveys about sex and gender deviance and norms? What does the ipso gender pathway look like and how varied might it be? How do people respond to learning of intersex characteristics, and in what ways do these responses impact their understanding of sex and gender for themselves or for others? Would it be deviant for a person who learned of their own intersex characteristics to identify with the sex they were assigned or another one? Would the answer to that question change depending on the people surveyed, interviewed, or otherwise studied? These are a few new lines of scholarship scholars of deviance could begin to unlock.

Further, what role do governments, media, religions, medical authorities, and schools play in the sex-to-gender spectrum and processes experienced by people from different backgrounds and locales? How do people explain, justify, or erase their conformity, nonconformity, or partial conformity to dominant sex-to-gender norms? Considering deviance scholars have long noted the power of these groups to create and enforce what is normal or deviant for large numbers of people, how will such groups react to more expansive notions of sex and gender? How do they enforce one path over others implicitly and/or explicitly in their own ongoing social endeavors? What happens when they are pressured to change their existing norms concerning sex and gender, and how do people who relied upon them for lessons about how to navigate social life react to such moments of confusion? Especially as more gender studies focus on the effects of such norms and narratives about what it means to be a member of a given sex or gender population amidst shifting norms (Lampe, Carter, and Sumerau 2019), these questions represent opportunities for deviance scholars to more fully enter and contribute to contemporary debates concerning normative and deviant sex and gender meanings.

Finally, especially as sociologists within and beyond deviance studies typically focus more attention on marginalized populations (Schwalbe et al. 2000), where do nonconformists, partial nonconformists, and intersex people on the ipso gender pathway find the strength, resources, and education to resist dominant scripts? What factors might predict whether people will adopt a given or multiple sex-to-gender pathways at times or over the life course? How do these groups go about forming and maintaining social movements? What do they do in response to major wins or losses in a given political or personal arena over time? How do they find the information necessary for deviating from dominant pathways while maintaining positive conceptions of their own selves, identities, and bodies? Once again, while these are only a few examples of examinations of the sex-to-gender spectrum scholars could pursue, they represent fundamental elements of sex and gender norms and deviance almost completely missing from our existing work (West and Zimmerman 1987).

## The gender identity spectrum

Unlike the sex spectrum and the sex-to-gender spectrum, the gender identity spectrum has received much attention in qualitative (and occasional quantitative) work since the 1980s. Put simply, most of this work examines how people define and present what it means to be x or y or z gender in their daily lives, within a given group, or in a given setting (Lucal 1999). However, this work is often limited due to (1) the quantitative work only being available in snowball and/or otherwise convenience samples that make substantive generalizability difficult in relation to current scientific norms; (2) the focus of qualitative work on analytical generalization (i.e., generalizing processes and patterns rather than to populations (Blumer 1969)), and, as is often important for analytic generalizability, the focus of these analyses on specific cases; and (3) the tendency for both forms to *almost entirely* focus on cisgender people (Sumerau, Cragun, and Mathers 2016) and endosex people (Davis 2015) to date.

Specifically, scholars have demonstrated this pattern of almost entirely cisgender and endosex focus throughout the social sciences (see, e.g., Schilt and Lagos 2017; Sumerau and Mathers 2019 for reviews). This article, for example, was requested for a special issue of the journal of *Deviant*



*Behavior*. With this in mind, I took the time to explore what, if anything, the multitude of scholarship published in *Deviant Behavior* had to say about transgender or intersex populations in the past forty years. I was able to locate less than a dozen articles that examined intersex or transgender populations in any way (see, for example, Gauthier and Chaudoir 2004; Guadalupe-Diaz and Anthony 2017; Sanders et al. 2019), and another dozen or so that mentioned the words “transgender,” “intersex,” or variations of these terms more common in past decades. Interestingly, one of these articles was in the very first issue of the journal (Levine and Kozak 1979), which suggests the absence of transgender and intersex scholarship in the journal was not due to a lack of awareness of these populations. As reviews continue to demonstrate, this is not a deviant pattern in social scientific journals. This is the norm.

Despite such limitations, studies of gender identity, within and beyond deviance subfields and outlets, are more common than any recognition or discussion of the sex spectrum (i.e., how people are assigned to a sex) or sex-to-gender spectrum (i.e., the background norms and processes that shape how a given sex becomes constructed as a given gender) at present. Researchers within and beyond deviance studies have outlined, for example, a multitude of ways (assumed or explicitly identified) cisgender and endosex people construct and maintain notions of femininity and identities as women. They also outline how such processes are related to other social norms, particularly in local, regional, national, and international contexts (Ridgeway 2011). Likewise, they have done the same in their investigations of cisgender and endosex people who negotiate masculinity and identities as men (Schrock and Schwalbe 2009).<sup>4</sup> Throughout this time, however, a smaller number of studies have outlined some ways transgender people of varied identities (Schilt and Lagos 2017), intersex people (Davis 2015), and other sex and/or gender nonconforming people (Darwin 2017) adopt and/or resist gender norms as they construct and present gender identities.

More gender-inclusive survey designs are also finding broad numbers of people who identify with gender identities throughout the spectrum and beyond the expectations of cisgender-based sex assignment and sex-to-gender norms (Magliozzi, Saperstein, and Westbrook 2016). One of the many things missing from such work, however, is attention to the myriad of gender identities constructed, maintained, and performed throughout societies (Schilt and Lagos 2017). As Darwin (2017) asks, what might all these other ways people define and present gender look like? What role might they play in challenging, affirming, or otherwise responding to gender and/or sex norms? How might they impact other systems of social inequality? How might such “work” (Goffman 1959, 1963, 1967) be similar and/or different among intersex people who identify in one or another way in terms of gender identity? What might analyses of the vast diversity of gender identities reveal, complicate, and otherwise say to our existing theories? These are some of the questions deviance scholars could explore through more diverse approaches to gender identity construction and via greater inclusion of intersex, transgender, and gender-nonconforming populations

## Concluding thoughts

Change is difficult. This facet of human and scientific development often preserves long standing norms (Kuhn 1962). Here, I join an emerging chorus of physical and social scientists by arguing that it is past time to transform our norms in relation to sex, gender, methodological, and theoretical practice. I won’t pretend the suggestions I make throughout this article are in any way exhaustive or

<sup>4</sup>Such research has demonstrated many ways binary notions of gender identity and performance are tied to broader patterns of racism (McQueeney 2009), classism (Padavic 1993), cissexism (Connell 2010), sexism (Martin 2001), heterosexism (Pascoe 2007), monosexism (Barringer et al. 2017), nationalism (Hochschild 2016), ableism (Gill 2015), religious privilege (Burke 2016), compulsory monogamy (Schippers 2016), reproductive privilege (McCabe and Sumerau 2018), agism (Rosenfeld 2009), scientific and medical sexism and cissexism (Davis, Dewey, and Murphy 2016), prejudice against intersex people (Roan 2008), ethnocentrism (Asencio 2011), marital inequalities (Heath 2012), sex-negativity (Fetner and Elafros 2015), conservative politics (Robinson and Spivey 2007), and many other systems of inequality. It has also shown cisgender-based norms embedded within every major social institution (Martin 2004), the vast majority of organizations (Ridgeway 2011), and the vast majority of interactional patterns (Schrock and Schwalbe 2009) within and between societies.

as nuanced as future expansions of and engagements with it might be. Rather, I follow West and Zimmerman (1987) suggestion that we embrace the empirical complexity and nuances of sex and gender construction, presentation, and maintenance processes.

As such, I do not propose anything in this article that has not been *at least implied* in the 1960s (Garfinkel 1967), 1970s (Goffman 1977), 1980s (West and Zimmerman 1987), and more recently (see Sumerau and Mathers 2019 for a review). I did this intentionally to (1) focus on providing suggestions that could be readily applied to deviance studies and other subfields; and (2) demonstrate that existing theoretical work already shows the potential for meeting current empirical and theoretical challenges. Like many other emerging transgender scholars, I turned away from deviance studies (and many other subfields) in graduate school because I had little interest in studying only the cisgender aspects of society. At the same time, I recognized throughout my training that (1) lesser utilized aspects of prior theories have been far ahead of their time, and (2) scholars would have a better view of society as a whole by incorporating such insights more thoroughly in our work even if meant being a bit deviant in relation to existing academic norms within and beyond deviance studies.

As part of such an endeavor, we need to do three things already suggested by our forbearers. First, we must better recognize long-held articulations of the fluid, complex, and interrelated relationships between norms and violations of such norms (Goffman 1963). Second, we must reclaim (and finally institute) insights from past theorizing about the separate, but interconnected concepts of sex and gender as well as the multitude of ways sex may be turned into gender (West and Zimmerman 1987). Third, we must remember our disciplinary claims to provide the most empirically-driven examinations of societal norms (Mills 1940), and other times we have had to deviate from long standing norms to continue to better accomplish this goal (Collins 1990). In so doing, we may create a far more comprehensive understanding of sex and gender norms and deviance within and beyond science and society.

To this end, this article has revisited past theorizing while synthesizing such work with emerging studies by and about intersex, transgender, and otherwise gender-nonconforming populations to suggest methods for expanding deviance studies. By exploring the diversity of the sex spectrum and assignments within it, we may dramatically expand analyses of sex and gender norms. Likewise, through systematic examination of the sex-to-gender spectrum, we can push toward the more diverse understandings of the social, biological, and psychological world that West and Zimmerman (1987) challenged us to explore decades ago. Further, via more inclusive analyses of the gender identity spectrum, we can speak to emerging social groups, political and religious debates, and questions about the nature and role of gender deviance in society. Finally, the combination of such analyses will allow us to expand our work to better capture and explain the diversity of our empirical bio-social world and systemic patterns of normativity and deviance within and between varied populations and locations over time.

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