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Krueger, Stephen G. and Adolpho, Keahi, "Decistifying Trans and Gender Diverse Inclusion in Library Work: A Literature Review" (2024). *Library Faculty and Staff Publications*. 334.

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Notes/Citation Information

Adolpho, K. & Krueger, S. (2024, April 24). "Decistifying trans and gender diverse inclusion in library work: A literature review." In the Library with the Lead Pipe. Available at: <https://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2024/decistifying/>



In The Library With The Lead Pipe

An open access, open peer reviewed journal

April 24, 2024

Decistifying Trans and Gender Diverse Inclusion in Library Work: A Literature Review

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Recommended Citation

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Available at: <https://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2024/decistifying/>

Decistifying trans and gender diverse inclusion in library work: A literature review

Keahi Adolpho and Stephen G. Krueger

Abstract

This comprehensive review illuminates the current state of scholarly literature on trans and gender diverse inclusion in libraries, with the intention to provide a foundation and identify gaps for further research. Covering 50 works published between 2002 and 2023 in the areas of general inclusion, public libraries, academic libraries, experiences of library workers, archives, information behavior, and cataloging, we found that, with the exception of works on archives and cataloging, little scholarly literature goes beyond introductory talking points on basic information about trans and gender diverse people. We conclude with a call for much more in-depth research on this essential topic.

Introduction

Trans and gender diverse people¹ are present in all areas of library work. We use libraries of all types, as members of the public, as students, as researchers. Though as of this writing the most recent public demographics from the American Library Association do not count us (Rosa & Henke, 2017), we are library workers and volunteers. We are library students and professors. Just as importantly, we are people who are not any of those things, often due to exclusionary practices on the part of library systems, spaces, or individual employees. The harm may not always be intentional; many library workers mean well and simply have not educated themselves on how to eliminate trans-exclusionary practices and institute gender inclusive ones.² This literature review is one tool for supporting that work.

Scope and Purpose

Through our engagement with gender inclusion work since we joined the library profession, we have observed that the majority of the literature consists of trans 101 talking points (e.g. definitions of gender terminology, explanations about the difference between gender identity and sexual or romantic orientation, basic information about pronouns, statistics about violence and other harm enacted upon trans and gender diverse people). While this kind of remedial content is necessary, it merely asks individuals to reduce or avoid harm, rather than imagine possibilities for truly gender inclusive library systems, practices, and spaces.

This article is an overview of the current state of scholarly literature on gender inclusion in libraries, in order to provide a foundation and identify gaps for further research. The material

¹ *Trans and gender diverse people* is an umbrella term that includes trans people, as well as anyone whose gender does not fall into the binaries of man or woman and trans or cis (meaning, those who identify with the gender they were assigned at birth)

² *Gender inclusion* means practices that result in equitable treatment for people of all genders. We do not specify trans and gender diverse inclusion because there is no such thing as gender inclusive behavior that applies only to cis people.

covered includes journal articles, proceedings from library conferences, book chapters, and full books. It is worth acknowledging that our scope leans more toward the types of literature that academic librarians are more likely to both publish and engage with, rather than public or school librarians. Many—though still not enough—blog posts, magazine articles, webinars, and other materials address the topic, so we do not present this article as an encapsulation of everything library workers have created about gender inclusion.

In order to focus on our topic, as well as to make the project feasible, we placed a number of other restrictions on what is included.

1. Library-centric: There are some works that address the central theme from external perspectives, such as articles about trans and gender diverse information behavior, without being tied back to the library context. Materials of this type were not included, as the intent was to focus on how library workers and scholars are addressing trans and gender diverse topics in the context of library work.
2. Trans and gender diverse-centric: There is a lot of library literature on LGBTQ+³ identities, including but not specific to trans and gender diverse people. While these materials may have some content relevant to the topic and are valuable in their own right, they were not included. The needs and experiences of trans and gender diverse people are not synonymous with those of others under the LGBTQ+ umbrella, though there may be some overlap, and the purpose of this project was to look at materials specifically about trans and gender diverse people in regards to library work. In addition, a great deal of work claiming to cover LGBTQ+ people omits trans and gender diverse people entirely. Pieces about gender that did not center trans and gender diverse people were likewise excluded.

Methodology

We have both been working on gender inclusion in libraries for several years, so we were familiar with a lot of the existing literature already. Long before deciding to write this article, Stephen created a Zotero group for anything on the topic that anyone can add items to. Many of the materials came from citation chasing. We performed a final search of LISTA (Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts) on December 1, 2023, using the search terms *(transgender OR transsexual OR transsexual OR gender diverse OR nonbinary OR non-binary) AND librar** to make sure we had everything we could find before plunging into analysis. An overall analytical methodology would have been difficult to apply given the variety of types, lengths, and focuses of the materials. For each piece we considered its context and objectives and assessed it accordingly. For example, a brief introductory article would not be expected to go

³ This may be a good place to note that this article does not intend to provide introductory information about queer identities. If you need this acronym spelled out or don't have a working understanding of gender identity basics, much of the following material won't make sense until you have filled that knowledge gap.

into as much depth as a chapter researching a specific topic. Reviews, newspapers, and works in languages other than English were filtered out. The resulting list had 324 items, most of which fell outside the scope outlined above; we looked through these to find ones that did not. With these search techniques and limitations, we ended up with a total of 50 works, dated from 2002 to 2023.

Literature Review

This review begins with general literature that addresses gender inclusion in libraries broadly. Then, we look at the literature in public libraries and academic libraries. Topically, these two sections cover representation, youth services, recommendations, misinformation, collection development, and task forces. The fourth section reviews literature by and about trans and gender diverse library workers on their experiences in the profession. The fifth section discusses archives, looking specifically at access barriers, description issues, and collections. The next section is on information behavior which includes studies on trans and gender diverse people in order to better understand how libraries can serve these communities. The last section is the most well developed area of gender inclusion work in libraries; it addresses cataloging and metadata, looking specifically at the history of trans and gender diverse subject access, the development of best practices, and Resource Description and Access (RDA) rule 9.7, which instructed catalogers to record gender information in name authority records.

General

A few pieces address gender inclusion in libraries broadly. An essay by Marquez (2014) provided basic definitions, followed by an overview of the current (at the time) literature on trans and gender diverse issues in libraries, discussion of restrooms, and a brief section on other elements of gender inclusion. A conference paper by Pun et al. (2017) profiled all gender restroom situations in different types of libraries, including contextual factors like local and state politics and institution type; the authors recommended that libraries collaborate with community and institutional partners such as gender studies programs or diversity centers.

In an article directed towards those in leadership positions, Keralis (2023) asked “how do libraries become gendered places, what harm might that cause - however unintentionally - to transgender and gender non-conforming patrons and staff, and how can library leadership ameliorate this harm if they choose to do so?” Keralis defines “gendered place” as a space that perpetuates the gender binary, further explaining that binary to functionally be male and not-male (p. 284). Suggested actions included growing and learning, modeling inclusive behavior, consistently enforcing policies, and—most importantly—actively and publicly *leading*.

So far, the only full book on gender inclusive practices in library work is *Supporting Trans People in Libraries*. The first few chapters covered trans 101 and pronouns; the next several offered practical guidance for the most common issues that come up in libraries, including how

to gather personal information, hiring practices, conferences/events, and, of course, restrooms. Interactions with patrons and with employees get a chapter each, as do library schools, academic libraries, access services, and collection development. Concluding material includes a glossary and recommended resources (Krueger, 2019).

Public Libraries

The two pieces on youth services in public libraries mainly address representation, information behavior, and how public librarians can better serve trans and gender diverse youth. Sokoll (2013) discussed the importance of representation in young adult literature for trans youth and the inadequacies of traditional collection development tools in locating relevant materials. The article included recommendations of specific titles to purchase and supplementary websites to consult for collection development purposes. Austin's (2019) chapter attempts to cover a lot of ground, which is perhaps an understandable desire given how little in library literature moves beyond basic information about gender identity. From trans 101 to broad issues (representation in mass media, legal recognition and medical care for trans and gender diverse youth, surveillance) to library-adjacent topics (information behavior of trans and gender diverse youth, how youth turn to zines and online spaces to share information and find community), the scope is extremely broad. The chapter included a number of suggestions that would significantly widen the scope of work of public librarians, which includes that librarians could perform outreach to trans-friendly medical providers to co-create resources, maintain lists of trans-friendly medical providers, and create resources on processes for youth seeking transition-related care (p. 177). Other suggestions fell within regular library job duties, such as providing critical information literacy support around misinformation and fake news, curating library guides of online resources and booklists, and creating racially diverse displays that link printed images to online projects such as the Digital Transgender Archive. Recommended general practices included hiring and respecting trans and gender diverse staff, and not expecting trans and gender diverse people to serve as information sources.

Byrne (2020) described the need for public library management to actively support gender inclusive practices in addition to expressing good intentions; after describing a committee's attempt to enact meaningful change in their library, the author concluded that they must rely on themselves rather than hoping for movement from managers and administrators.

The chapter by Sancho-Brú, McIntyre, and Bermúdez Raventós (2019) discussed the Trans Identities and Gender project to build a collection of materials about and for the trans and gender diverse community in Catalonia, which (at the time, at least, and possibly still) "is the only collection centered on trans identity that exists in the public library network in Catalonia" (p. 252). The project, which was started by a trans activist who began their transition while working in libraries, included a photographic exhibition, a living library, and "ongoing activities using the library as a communal meeting point between the local and the trans community as well as a

means of promoting the collection and its use” (p. 244). The opening event had the highest public attendance of any event held by the library in its 20 year history.

Academic Libraries

In a conference paper on trans inclusion in libraries presented at an academic library conference, Smith-Borne (2017) provided nine recommendations. The only portions specific to the academic library context are recommendations to learn about and connect with campus resources such as LGBTQ+ centers. The other items vary between applicable to most libraries, such as “Remove gendered language on signage, library forms, web forms, or surveys” (p. 112), and the most basic elements of trans inclusion, such as not assuming gender. A few years later, Smith-Borne (2019) wrote about creating an inclusive environment for trans and gender diverse music library users; with a few exceptions (such as creating an exhibit featuring trans composers and encouraging music faculty to refer to choir parts by name rather than assumed gender), this guidance too was essentially about gender inclusion in libraries overall. Both pieces covered trans 101 level information. Krueger and Matteson (2017) suggested relationship building with campus and local LGBTQ+ centers, workshops and training to build a foundation of knowledge, as well as the importance of moving beyond education into practical support. This would include removing gendered language from written and oral communication, not guessing the pronouns or gender of patrons, all-gender restrooms, anonymous online chat, and self-checkout options.

Two articles discussed how anti-trans bias relates to misinformation, and what academic libraries can do to combat this. Lockmiller (2023) discussed the harm of anti-trans misinformation through a theory called the “Misinformation - Legislation Pipeline,” using Florida as a case study to show how stigmatization and misinformation can lead into legislation around healthcare (pp. 742-753). In conclusion, Lockmiller discussed the role of health science librarians in recognizing these pipelines, ensuring that collections do not feed into them, redirecting researchers away from misinformation, challenging the need for assignments and research to always address “both sides” of a debate, and creating curricula around understanding these pipelines (pp. 757-758). Krutkowski et al. (2019) discussed the global, UK legal and social, and institutional contexts around anti-trans discrimination and fake news before describing the aims, content, and overwhelmingly positive reception of a professional development session on these topics (pp. 115-118). They concluded by encouraging information literacy interventions against misinformation and bias towards marginalized groups (p. 124).

Occasionally, an academic library develops a working group or task force on gender inclusion. Marrall (2015) described one such effort at Western Washington University to develop best practices for serving trans and gender diverse patrons (p. 184), following a university resolution to implement gender neutral restrooms across campus and a preferred names policy. Marrall concluded that whether other libraries should implement best practices for gender inclusion depends on if there is administrative support, prior DEI work on this topic, patron need, collegial support, existing expertise, and more. Marrall reminded readers that committing to this work

requires ongoing learning and labor (pp. 187-189). Doherty and Coghill (2020) described the Virginia Commonwealth University Libraries' Gender-Inclusive Work Group, which started out by seeking direct feedback from student workers as well as conducting a literature review and environmental scan. The libraries had already implemented some practices including optional Safe Zone training, removal of gendered pronouns from job postings, and a few all gender restrooms. The group recommended immediate actions, such as wastebaskets in all restrooms, and long-term ones, such as hiring a diversity and inclusion librarian.

Leahy (2023) described the process of selecting a 20-item collection of "transgender life-writing" for an academic library. Noting that "the project recognizes that the category of 'life writing, autobiography, or memoir' does not reflect all transgender experiences," Leahy explained that items beyond this official scope were included in order to increase the racial diversity of the materials and represent a greater variety of trans experiences (p. 96). Difficulties included the often outdated and offensive cataloging terms the materials were tagged with, and the division of what had been envisioned as a cohesive collection into different areas of the library (some closed-access).

Wagner and Crowley (2020) used critical discourse analysis to examine library guides, article abstracts and author biographies of work produced by trans and gender diverse scholars, and shelving at academic libraries as examples of "continued systematic failures" that "alienate, ignore and exploit" trans and gender diverse people (p. 160). Their analysis of library guides revealed an overreliance on academic sources that largely focused on white gay men, and that only 50% of the guides addressed or mentioned trans and gender diverse students. Their analysis of article abstracts and author biographies found only one author referred to with the correct name and pronouns, six authors misgendered, and one author both deadnamed and misgendered. In their review of shelving at academic libraries, they found trans and gender diverse books near books about intersex studies, sex work, kinks, and fetishes. They argued that, while none of these topics should be viewed negatively, the proximity of the materials may lead to incorrect connections and connotations (pp. 168-175). Wagner and Crowley conclude by stating "valuing justice and equity will always be different from doing justice and equity" and by encouraging libraries to "also look inward to think about how they might never have been inclusive" (p. 178).

Library Workers

The first book in the Series on Gender and Sexuality in Information Studies is *Out Behind the Desk: Workplace Issues for LGBTQ Librarians* (Nectoux, 2011). Four of its nearly 30 chapters make up the section "The Rest of the Rainbow," which seems to mean everything beyond lesbian and gay. Only one, "Passing Tips and Pronoun Police: A Guide to Transitioning at Your Local Library," fully centers trans identities, though others touch on them. The largely personal narrative includes the experience of coming out (and being outed, though not maliciously) during a job search, and of transitioning at work: "My coworkers didn't have much experience with a trans colleague, but I didn't have much experience *being* a trans colleague, so ultimately we were

well matched” (Roberto, 2011, p. 125). The chapter concludes with a section speaking directly to trans and gender diverse library workers, which is refreshing given how rarely LIS literature acknowledges our presence as anything other than patrons.

In contrast is the most recent (as of this writing) book in the same series, *Trans and Gender Diverse Voices in Libraries* (2023), whose three editors and almost 60 chapter authors are all trans or gender diverse people (Adolpho et al.). (Full disclosure: two of those editors are the authors of this article, so we may be a little biased about the book.) Consisting primarily of personal essays, with some professional thoughts and even a few poems, it showcases a range of experiences and identities of trans and gender diverse LIS students and library workers. The first section, Personal Experiences, consists of chapters that center the author’s identity more than a particular area of library work. LIS Education covers the experiences of trans and gender diverse LIS graduate students. It is worth noting that half of the 10 authors in this section opted for anonymity; the library field as a whole would do well to reflect on what it means that incoming members question whether they can share such experiences under their professional names, enough so to pass on the benefits of having a published chapter on their CVs. The sections Public Libraries, Academic Libraries, and Archives and Special Collections all, as one might expect, include chapters by people in these specialties. Professional Reflections consists of essays and one poem on a variety of topics related to the field. The final section, Leaving Libraries, is only two chapters; it demonstrates that the caution demonstrated by all those anonymous student authors is warranted. As a whole, the book is intended to show that trans and gender diverse people are not just patrons of libraries, but are also past, current, and future members of the library profession.

Ness (2023) conducted a study on bias towards trans and gender diverse people in the attitudes and behaviors of LIS workers in Illinois. Due to the nature of the survey consisting of fairly generic questions that a primarily cisgender group of respondents self-reported their attitudes and actions to, the results are of limited use without further research using different types of assessment. Ness identified a need for meaningful actions and training rather than relying on individual good intentions and broad professional standards.

Archives

Archival work is one of the areas where professional library literature moves beyond trans 101 and gets into what it does or would look like to incorporate gender inclusion into our work. Rawson (2009) discussed access barriers for trans researchers and (potentially) trans materials in archives. These barriers for patrons included environmental accessibility, such as the existence of gender neutral restrooms and what types of materials and images are on display (pp. 127-129). For materials, the largest barrier centered around description. How do we describe materials when the creator or subject did not explicitly identify as trans? How do we balance self-identification (especially for individuals who lived prior to the term “transgender” being coined) with the fact that not labeling materials relevant to the history of “people who

trans-gender” may render them invisible to researchers (p. 131)? Rawson (2018) later examined the metadata for objects held in various archives that depicted “transgressive gender presentations” to discuss the rhetorical power of archival description (p. 330). He stated that this power “stems from the ability of those records to persuade us to see historical materials as they are described, to share their orientation to the past,” and then described the tension between how “unqueer” archival description can be with the need to, as a scholar of rhetoric, “queer the archive” (p. 348). Also on the topic of archival description, Wagner (2021) wrestled with issues pertaining to visual media in archives, suggesting that catalogers and archivists “embrace ambiguity,” “describe gendered ways of being and not the gender,” take caution with pre-existing description, use alternative text description and thesauri, and develop case-specific rules, all of which would explore and expand inclusion for trans people and materials with the hopes that temporary solutions will be followed by new systems of organization (pp. 30-31, 36, 39).

The bulk of professional literature on trans and gender diverse topics in archives comes from the “Archives and Archiving” special issue of *Transgender Studies Quarterly*, edited by Rawson and Devor (2015). The first two sections explore themes and issues in emerging and established archives. The in-scope emerging archives described are trans and gender diverse resources in the Pittsburgh Queer History Project Archive (Apple, 2015); Gender DynamiX, a trans and gender diverse archive from sub-Saharan African countries (Theron & Kgositau, 2015); and a trans and gender diverse military archive (Barnett & Hill, 2015). The three established archives discussed in the second section include materials in the University of Toronto’s Sexual Representation Collection (Matte, 2015), University of Minnesota’s Tretter Collection (Vecoli, 2015), and Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America (Peimer, 2015). The remaining sections are largely out of scope.

Information Behavior

Taylor (2002) conducted the first study on trans and gender diverse information needs geared toward library workers. From the 316 surveys sent out, 45 usable responses were received, and the sample population of respondents was 94% white (compared to 75.1% of the US in 2004) and largely well-educated (36% held graduate degrees, compared to 8% of the US population at the time) (p. 89-90). The majority of the survey questions asked what information sources respondents consulted (internet, peers, books, etc.), how they learned about trans identity, early versus current information needs (for example, interest in researching anti-trans hate crimes increased from 4.5% to 24.4%, p. 93), and most read and recommended books. Taylor concluded by stating that the study was meant to help libraries better understand trans and gender diverse information needs, but that “we cannot draw any sweeping conclusions from these results” given the nonrandom and small sample size (p. 95).

In 2007, Beiriger and Jackson published an article on a community information needs assessment project conducted in Portland, Oregon. The intent was to learn if there were information needs in trans and gender diverse communities that were not being addressed by libraries. The results

indicated that legal information and health information were the two top-ranked priorities for participants (p. 54). This study yielded 99 responses; 88% of respondents identified as white and 100% selected English as their primary language (pp. 50-51). Largely relying on the above studies to understand information needs for trans and gender diverse people, Jardine (2013) discussed access barriers and practical solutions for trans and gender diverse patrons meeting their information needs in libraries (pp. 240-241). Identified barriers include prejudice, censorship, and the inadequacy of controlled vocabularies for trans and gender diverse topics (pp. 253-258). Needs include restrooms, optional gender information on library card application forms, inclusive or gender neutral language in interactions, and inclusive policies (pp. 245-249).

Thompson (2012) observed that “attempts to promote effective library service to the LGBT community have by and large overlooked the ‘T,’ or the transgender members of their communities” (p. 12). The essay served as an overview of LIS literature on information needs (referencing Taylor, 2002, and Beiriger & Jackson’s 2007 studies) and access barriers for trans and gender diverse communities, as well as resources for LIS professionals to consult in order to better meet those needs.

Drake and Bielefield (2017) conducted a study to better understand how trans and gender diverse people use and perceive libraries. They described the demographics of the study as a “close match” to the population, with 74% of the respondents identifying as non-Latine white, 6% Latine, and 4% Black (compared to the following population demographics from the 2013 US census: 62% white, 17% Latine, and 12% Black). Ninety-one of the 102 respondents were under the age of 40, 78 were assigned female at birth (note: “gender assigned at birth” was the only gender-related information shared in the article), and 96 used English as their primary language (p. 162). Slightly over a quarter of respondents stated that they visited the library in the last year specifically for trans-related research, with some reports that libraries were inadequate in meeting their information needs. Most respondents stated they did not ask for reference assistance due to fear of discrimination, a fear others demonstrated was well-founded when they described the “clear distaste” and invasive questions from library staff they interacted with (p. 164). Ninety-seven percent of respondents indicated that libraries needed to make accommodations in order for them to feel safe. The top five accommodations included: current literature and information, single stall gender neutral restrooms (non-key access), non-discrimination policies, a remote name change process, and removing or creating open text fields for gendered information on library forms (pp. 165-166).

Lyttan and Laloo (2020) discussed information seeking patterns, gender neutral restrooms, collection development, reference interactions, centering patron privacy, the need for staff training, and the idea of the library as a safe space. Despite including “transgender” in the article title, the majority of the article discusses sexual orientation along with gender identity, perhaps due to the paucity of literature focused exclusively on trans and gender diverse people and resources. The article also contains outdated language for the time, such as a section titled

“Library collections related to transgenders,” and strangely classified transgender people as “the third gender” (pp. 51, 54). The article has since been retracted by the publisher due to the authors misrepresenting and altering direct quotations (“Statement of Retraction,” 2024).

Tenney et al. (2021) discussed erasure and discrimination that trans and gender diverse people experience in healthcare settings generally, and specifically in navigating breast cancer health information. They called on academic health librarians to curate content dedicated or inclusive to trans and gender diverse people, recommended culturally competent LIS education, and increased advocacy for trans and gender diverse people (pp. 138-140). Shen (2023) reviewed the Tenney, et al. article using the Evidence Based Librarianship Critical Appraisal Checklist. Shen found that the article's validity rating was below the accepted threshold of 75%, largely due to population and data collection issues and questions around how the literature search was conducted and articles were selected (p. 128). That being said, Shen believed the health information resource gap identified and the practical implications for the LIS profession were important (p. 129).

It should be noted that there are a number of articles on general and health-specific information behavior by and about trans and gender diverse people that we considered out of scope for this literature review, as they did not focus explicitly on libraries (e.g., Adams & Peirce, 2006; Hawkins & Giesecking, 2017; Huttunen, 2023; Huttunen et al., 2019, 2020; Huttunen & Kortelainen, 2021; Ortiz-Myers & Costello, 2021; Pohjanen & Kortelainen, 2016). These pieces are frequently cited in library literature.

Cataloging

While a number of authors have addressed cataloging and classification of trans and gender diverse resources, only a few focused explicitly on the historical angle. Johnson (2010) discussed the history of subject access to trans and gender diverse materials and then compared Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) with three LGBT thesauri: Michel Thesaurus, Internationale Homo- en Lesbisch Informatiecentrumen Archief (IHLIA) Thesaurus, and LGBT Life (p. 665). Johnson found that some terms used by LGBT thesauri were eventually incorporated into LCSH, which, when combined with OCLC encouraging adherence to LCSH, unfortunately led to many LGBT collections no longer developing and maintaining specialized controlled vocabularies (p. 675). It is worth noting that Johnson's article predates Homosaurus, an international LGBTQ+ linked data vocabulary that grew out of IHLIA, by six years. While there are many articles discussing Homosaurus, they are out of scope for this literature review as they tend to focus on the entire LGBTQ+ umbrella. In 2014, *Transgender Studies Quarterly* published their inaugural issue containing articles focused on keywords or concepts central to transgender studies. Angell and Roberto (2014) contributed an article on the keyword “cataloging,” which discussed cataloging and controlled vocabularies, and specifically the history of the treatment of transgender topics in LCSH (pp. 53-55).

The harmful and inadequate nature of LCSH, Library of Congress Classification, and Dewey Classification when describing and classifying transgender and gender diverse resources has been discussed as well. Adler (2009) compared LCSH and user tags in LibraryThing for twenty books with trans themes (p. 319). Unsurprisingly, Adler found that the most popular tags with users were hardly represented or were non-existent on Worldcat (p. 323). In 2011, Roberto published “Inflexible Bodies: Metadata for Transgender Identities,” which argued that inaccurate and offensive description and classification creates a “passively hostile” environment for trans and gender diverse users, as well as a disconnect between the reality of our collections and their representation that “haunt library catalogs by being partially visible yet not fully manifest” (pp. 57, 63).

In recent years, there has been increased attention towards developing best practices for describing trans and gender diverse resources and how to approach describing (or not describing) gender in visual resources. After conducting a qualitative study on the gendering practices of thirteen North American catalogers, Wagner (2022) suggested a “body-oriented approach” to cataloging, stating, “the answer is not to identify the correct way a body is gendered within visual information but instead to imagine the ways gender is being communicated as an action and an idea through a body” (pp. 622, 641.) Also in 2022, the Trans Metadata Collective released “Metadata Best Practices for Trans and Gender Diverse Resources,” a set of best practices for classifying trans and gender diverse resources and individuals in cultural heritage institution settings. Meyer (2022) reviewed the guidelines, referring to them as a “timely alternative to vocabularies that misrepresent and pose harm to trans and gender diverse community members” (p. 1).

After RDA rule 9.7, which instructed catalogers to record gender information in name authority records (NARs), was adopted in 2013, there were a number of critiques published. Billey, Drabinski, and Roberto (2014) argued that RDA 9.7, which at the time required catalogers to assign authors as male, female, or “not known” with dates of transition for known trans creators, “denies the shifting and contextual nature of gender identities” fixing them into one of two binary genders and ignoring the many gender identities that fall outside of the binary (pp. 414, 417). The article also delved into examples of errors and other complications with recording gender in NARs that had, at the time of writing, already been found (pp. 418-419). Ultimately, the authors called for the rule to record gender to be rescinded (p. 420).

In 2016, Thompson reviewed 50 NARs for trans creators and found that 65% contained some form of outing information in the 375 or 670 field, including mentions of “sex change operation[s]” and other details about creators’ medical histories, identities, and changing pronouns (p. 149). Thompson demonstrated that recording gender in NARs frequently outs trans people and that fields beyond the 375 “warrant further scrutiny from the cataloging community” (p. 153).

Billey and Drabinski (2019) provided an overview of the history of name authority control and updates about RDA 9.7. The article discussed a 2015 proposal to add the term “transgender” to the list of possible gender options, before a new proposal was submitted to the RDA Steering Committee meeting to record gender in NARs without predefined terms. The Program for Cooperative Cataloging’s (PCC) Ad Hoc Task Group on Gender in Name Authority Records produced a best practices report on how to carry out this work in 2016 (pp. 121-122).

Ethical Questions in Name Authority Control, edited by Sandberg (2019), contains several chapters addressing RDA 9.7 and the 2016 Report of the PCC Ad Hoc Task Group on Gender in Name Authority Records. Adolpho’s (2019) chapter stated that the Report’s “proposed best practices are still rooted in Western-centric, cisnormative understandings of gender that deny gender diverse people both agency over our own identities and decision making power over the frameworks that seek to include us” (p. 113). Polebaum-Freeman (2019) argued that “authority record catalogers consider transgender authors puzzles that need solving,” and that they “made purposeful, transphobic decisions about the nature of the metadata selected for inclusion” in NARs for trans and gender diverse people (pp. 171, 156). Shiraishi’s (2019) chapter used a philosophy of language approach to NARs, discussing how self-identification and publicly disclosed information may contradict one another alongside issues with assigning dates to gender, emphasizing the potential social impact and harm in recording gender. Wagner’s (2019) chapter discussed issues around “naming and unnamings queerness” for historical figures when it may not be clear how they self-identified, as well as issues with anachronistic language (p. 197). Overall, while it seemed possible for the proposed best practices to be revised to do less harm, the only way to do no harm would be to rescind the rule, which ultimately occurred in 2022 (Billey et al., 2022).

Conclusion

Clearly, we have work to do as a profession. Aside from examples in archives and cataloging, library literature has seldom strayed beyond trans 101 content. Some of us—those who are already well aware of how few libraries have implemented basic gender inclusion practices—may find this unsurprising. It can be difficult to imagine future possibilities when so many library workers cannot even go to the restroom or fill out human resources paperwork without being forced to misgender ourselves, and when we must use systems that out and misgender patrons at every step. And so, gaps in library practices go hand in hand with gaps in the literature.

And the gaps are enormous. Some topics have been covered in the past, but need updating, while others have received only little attention. Other topics, such as restrooms, are barely covered at all outside of magazine articles and blog posts. The literature we found focuses largely on academic libraries (we suggest that this is related to who is permitted and encouraged to research and publish as part of their jobs). There have been no U.S.-based case studies on gender inclusion in public libraries, and the ways in which they can best support and serve trans and

gender diverse patrons has been little explored in the scholarly literature (though it is certainly a topic of discussion through other avenues).

Even in academic libraries, writing on gender inclusion occasionally delves deeper than surface-level from one angle or another, but it largely reiterates the basics. This is not a critique on the authors of these works; on the contrary, it demonstrates that the field as a whole has made little progress, and reminding academic library workers that trans and gender diverse people exist at all is still necessary. Wagner and Crowley's (2020) point that holding a value does not equate to doing the work to uphold it is one that academic libraries—and others—need to pay attention to. There is a fair bit of talk about being inclusive, and sometimes even discussion of what that looks like in practice. But it seems that the actual work remains limited or nonexistent in most places.

There has been very little in the literature acknowledging the fact that trans and gender diverse people are library workers in addition to being library patrons, and our experiences in the profession have hardly been discussed until recently. Personal accounts from trans and gender diverse people of color, people with disabilities, and people who work outside of academic and public libraries are still underrepresented. As stated previously, the fact that there is so little literature by trans and gender diverse people on our experiences in the profession stems at least partially from safety issues around very publicly and irrevocably coming out as trans or gender diverse. Even anonymous accounts may be recognizable, especially for individuals who are multiply marginalized. Other trans and gender diverse library workers may simply not feel like writing publicly about their personal experiences, and should not be expected to do so.

The few studies on information behavior that are tied to libraries (instead of information behavior more broadly) focus on how trans and gender diverse people discover our identities and learn about issues. While literature on information behavior and barriers has shifted somewhat over time to focus more on perceptions of libraries and what librarians can actively do to remove these barriers, there is still much work to be done. For starters, the demographics of respondents from the three studies we found were overwhelmingly white trans and gender diverse people with graduate degrees who spoke English as their primary language. Moreover, the studies all had fairly small and/or non-representative sample sizes, which makes it difficult to generalize the results and leaves out many patron communities.

As stated previously, description in cataloging and archives is the most developed area in the literature. While earlier literature on gender inclusion in cataloging largely focused on history and examples of exclusions and harm, in recent years we have seen a shift in focus towards developing and implementing best practices. Outside of the *Transgender Studies Quarterly* issue, most professional literature on archives addresses description and other access barriers. While there is still room for growth in these areas, they have received the most consideration thus far.

There are too many gaps in the literature for us to list them all. Even the most detailed of the topics covered here have all sorts of work left to do; most of the others have yet to move past trans 101. Many areas of library work do not appear in this review at all because nothing has been published on them in the scholarly literature. As a summary, here are some of the many possible areas of future research, some of which are new and some of which build on the literature covered above.

- General: restroom options and usage in all types of libraries and the impact on trans and gender diverse people; intersectional studies on trans and gender diverse information behavior, access barriers, and needs in libraries; gender inclusion in library work that goes beyond the colonial gender system (which attempts to map everyone along the binaries of man/woman, cis/trans, and binary/non-binary, excluding Indigenous gender systems and other ways of being); gender inclusion (or the lack of it) in LIS education.
- Public libraries: meeting room issues related to anti-trans speakers, youth services, book bans
- Academic libraries: gender inclusive instruction and research support, collection development of materials on trans and gender diverse people, campus-wide limitations and opportunities around gender inclusion in the library
- Library workers: gender demographics of the library profession, surveys on the experiences of trans and gender diverse library workers (including student workers), institutional efforts around gender inclusion, anti-trans bias and transantagonistic behavior by library workers, career tracking of trans and gender diverse library workers
- Archives: collection development, relationship building, practical workflows and policies for gender inclusion
- Cataloging: how to discuss (or not discuss) gender information in the 670 field of NARs (an issue raised by Thompson in 2016 and acknowledged in the 2022 PCC report as an area for future work), the history of subject analysis for materials on Indigenous and non-colonial genders
- Types of libraries and areas of library work not mentioned in the review: literally anything.

The most effective approach to making libraries safer and more welcoming for trans and gender diverse people is fairly simple in concept, largely because the bar is currently so low as to be nonexistent. Essentially, the library profession needs to start behaving as though it knows that trans and gender diverse people exist. All library workers must learn the basics of gender inclusion, and to apply those practices to their work. That goes for trans and gender diverse library workers too—being of an identity does not automatically transfer expertise on workplace practices, and the wide variety of trans and gender diverse people means that any two of us may or may not have many common experiences.

Filling the gaps in the scholarly literature is more difficult. Every library worker needs to learn the basics in order to be considered competent at their work, otherwise they end up harming and excluding trans and gender diverse patrons and coworkers. But the level of self-education needed to conduct research on or about trans and gender diverse people is significantly higher—it is insufficient to know that gender has no place on a library card application, or how to give instructions to the restroom without misgendering a patron. We don't need more trans 101 articles (well, we do, probably—see that low, low bar—but our hope in writing this literature review is that we *also* get to move on to more interesting and impactful issues). The past and present of gender diversity is too huge and complicated a subject for knowing everything to be a realistic expectation for future researchers; transgender studies is an entire field in its own right. At the very least, though, one should be aware of the scale of the topic and the relevant specifics before deciding to conduct original research.

Library workers are not in a position of neutrality regarding gender inclusion; in most cases, they are enacting exclusion and harm, intentionally or not. This article is partly intended as a call to action, but it is not enough to mean well. We need people to fill the many enormous gaps in the literature; in order to do that, we need people to do the work of extensive self-education first. Perhaps then we can move beyond an endless series of trans 101 articles pleading for harm reduction, and into a future where libraries truly welcome and support trans and gender diverse people.

We envision a library profession in which nobody needs to write another trans 101 article for their specialty because that knowledge is assumed to be the norm, a baseline for anyone working in libraries. In which people can instead pursue whatever gloriously niche aspect of gender inclusion brings them joy. In which trans and gender diverse library students and workers can choose whether or not to be out based on personal preference, not concerns for safety and job security. We hope that the next time someone attempts to do a literature review on this topic, they find that they cannot possibly fit all the new material into one article. We ask for your help in making that future come true.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our sincere thanks to our article's external peer reviewer, nicholae cline, internal peer reviewer, Jessica Schomberg, and Lead Pipe Publishing Editors Brittany Paloma Fiedler and Ryan Randall. We would also like to thank Anastasia Chiu and Adrian Williams for offering feedback on our draft before submission. This literature review benefited greatly from all their labor. Additionally, we'd like to share our gratitude to K.J. Rawson for writing or editing the bulk of the existing literature on trans and gender diverse inclusion in archives, K.R. Roberto for writing the first scholarly piece (that we could find) by a trans or gender diverse person on our experiences in the profession, the Trans Metadata Collective and Travis Wagner for their work on creating practical guidance on gender inclusive metadata and cataloging, and everyone who helped end RDA 9.7.

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