Public Integrity

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How can an ethical-analytical framework focused on social equity help illuminate the challenges faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth of color, particularly those who are homeless? The purpose of this article is to engage in just such an analysis of the complex analytical and ethical challenges presented by homelessness among LGBTQ youth. The authors take as our point of departure the premise that trans youth who are also visible minorities may be among the most marginal and most likely to experience homelessness and other threats to well-being. The authors argue that society needs to be concerned with the lives of diverse LGBTQ youth, and particularly those navigating multiple, intersecting forms of marginalization, including homelessness, because they present us with a limit situation that demands an ethical response.

Keywords: ethics, LGBTQ, minorities, transgender, youth

During the mid- to late 1960s, when the civil rights movement began to include women's rights, "gay rights," and environmental advocacy, it would have been unthinkable that the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) movement could evolve to where it is today. Indeed, the general pathologization of gender variance (unsupported denigration of alternative expressions of gender identity), along with countless forms of oppression (unjust situation where an entire category of people experience inequality over a long period of time)—everything from targeted raids on gay bars and other social gatherings to exclusion from government employment, loss of employment, ridicule in stereotyped media portrayals, public shaming, harassment, the destruction of families due to "outing" (forced exposure), and many other forms of violence—was routine for the LGBTQ community throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Today, that community has much to celebrate, including much greater and much more positive exposure in popular culture and the media (Becker, 2006).

The most significant single achievement of the LGBTQ movement has been its successful struggle for marriage equality in the United States. A 2017 Gallop Poll found that 62% of Americans favored marriage equality for same-sex couples, as opposed to only 32% against it (Pew Research Center, 2017). But while the LGBTQ community has much to celebrate, there are still many appalling, morally fraught issues to be addressed. That of homeless LGBTQ

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youth, especially homeless transgender youth of color, is most daunting, and singularly pressing from the standpoint of public ethics (Castellanos, 2016; Choi, Wilson, Shelton, & Gates, 2015; Cochran, Stewart, Ginzler, & Cauce, 2002; Gattis, 2013; Walls, Hancock, & Wisneski, 2007). If one considers social exclusion on the basis of identity traits as a spectrum, LGBTQ homeless youth that are also visible minorities may be positioned at the most extreme end of that continuum, likely because they experience (and are perceived to combine) the simultaneity of oppression—racial and gender stigma and poverty.

The authors will consider intersectionality (Collins & Bilge, 2016) as an apt analytical construct in this context, in that it allows us to consider the additive and compounding (or combinatorial) function of personal identity traits in social marginalization, for this subpopulation in particular. However, it suffices to say at the outset that transgender (hereinafter *trans*) youth who are also visible minorities (on account of color and other physical characteristics, such as facial features or hair texture) are among the most marginalized populations in the United States and elsewhere, and among the most likely to experience serious threats to their lives and well-being. The authors argue that society needs to work toward a public ethics framework focused on our obligations to LGBTQ youth, particularly those navigating homelessness and poverty.

The authors begin this article with a discussion of the changes in the status of LGBTQ rights as civil and human rights, as a question of social equity and social justice. Next, the authors highlight the experiences of LGBTQ youth with racial discrimination and police-involved violence. Third, the authors provide an overview of intersectionality—defined, as just noted, as the simultaneity of race, gender, class, and sexual orientation, among other categories of difference embedded within systems of power, privilege, and disadvantage—as a tool for understanding the complex issues attending LGBTQ homeless youth. The authors hope to advance public ethics thereby, by bringing attention to the plight of racially stigmatized LGBTQ homeless youth in particular.

SOCIAL EQUITY FRAMEWORK

From the perspective of social equity (Feagin, 2013; Frederickson, 2010, 1990), the historical codification of both gender-variant bias and racism, and government's failure to correct these in the United States, constitute a form of state failure. Over several decades, public administration scholars, such as Rice, Wooldridge, Gooden and Borrego, and Norman-Major and Haynes, have come to address concerns connected with gender-variant and racial stereotyping through social equity, public accountability, and cultural competency analytical frames (Johnson, 2012). Building on George Frederickson's more narrowly focused but nonetheless foundational work, these researchers and others (including the authors of the present study) have broadened social equity constructs to the limits of social and political justice frames, to include every form of societal bias.

It was Frederickson who first took up the argument that the public policy and administration fields had insufficiently considered social equity as it pertains to race and gender (Frederickson, 2010). He and other researchers just noted progressively broadened the scope of analysis and action, characterizing the subjects of race, gender, and gender-variance as social and political, while stressing ways to implement remedial public policy. These authors have also grounded equity and justice in public and philosophical ethics. The authors find, for example, that

Wooldridge and Gooden (2009), Rivera, Johnson, and Ward (2010), and Norman-Major (2011) all draw on the work of Rawls (1971), in *A Theory of Justice,* with his definition of fairness as the maximally equitable extension of public goods consistent with the maximization of liberty (Johnson & Rivera, 2015; Rice, 2015). These authors would reposition the balance between liberty and justice according to the demands of public accountability and answerability (Dubnick, 2003; Mulgan, 2000). A guiding principle inherent in public ethics is that government officials are obliged to serve *all* members of the public, irrespective of who they are or where their lives have taken them, including in this case decisions pertaining to gender identity and gender expression (Hirsch, Homer, McDonnell, & Milstein, 2005).

Goodin (1985) argues that public ethics should elicit broad social and political commitments on policy questions such as state provision or protection of education, healthcare, economic opportunity, legal counsel, and access to public accommodations, since these are all essential public goods that determine access to other social goods—health, employment, freedom from arbitrary arrest, and so on. While they relate to social goods, state-sanctioned rights hinge as well on constitutional determinations, especially those concerning the legal equality of persons—that is, equality before the law.

A related consideration is the question of "where the line is drawn between us and them, between members … and outsiders" of our social, cultural, economic, and political communities—between *us* and *them*. Extending the boundaries of both moral and legal obligation requires breaking the "circular motion" of closed-group obligations and a "reconfiguration of our [moral] languages over time" (Stout, 1988, p. 151). It also means going beyond the attempt by contractarian theorists such as Rawls "to … resolve the obligation of allegiance into the obligation of fidelity" to narrowly drawn communities (Dunn, 1985, p. 63). Fidelity to arbitrarily closed communities (whether drawn around sexual, racial, or other forms of espoused identity) results in unsupportable forms of exclusion, along with inequities in interest protection. Gender and sexual orientation bias as well as racism involves an ultimately violent and arbitrary drawing of boundaries against the alien *other,* the gender-variant or racial "them."

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, REDUX

As it progressed in the late 1960s, the civil rights movement became linked to the LGBTQ (originally the "gay rights") movement, along with the women's movement, environmentalism, and other national and international advocacy efforts. However, while the civil rights movement has made substantial progress and become ever more encompassing, its progress has been incomplete, and faltering. For example, racialized (race-based) police violence against African American men is a serious problem in the United States (Robertson & Schwartz, 2012), and there are commonalities between racial and gender-variant bias in policing. Numerous scholars have explored the connections between the widely prevalent hyper-masculinization of police cultures and police-involved violence against victims of color and gays, as just noted. There is also growing evidence that police officers' hyper-identification with police institutional cultures may function as prompts for violent interactions with people of color, the poor, gay, lesbian, and trans individuals, and other disenfranchised groups (McLaughlin & Murji, 1997).

Today, the literature streams on racial and gender-variant profiling and abuse by police are tracking each other closely. Garofalo, Deleon, Osmer, Doll, and Harper (2006) report that in the

United States 53% of male-to-female (MTF) transgender youth of color report being frequently harassed by police (p. 231). Reck (2009) reports pervasive police intimidation and other abuse of homeless transgender youth of color in San Francisco. Singh (2013) documents the ways that transgender go about "negotiating oppression" by police in the United States. Spicer (2010) writes about the impact of life-long abuse on MTF transgender persons, and particularly how distrust of police and the criminal justice system consistently results in the underreporting of acts of violence and hate crimes. Other researchers chronicle dual race-gender profiling of trans youth of color, especially the homeless; see, for example, Noguera and Cannella (2006) on police brutality against LGBTQ youth; Heidenreich (2006) on transphobic racial subordination (another instance of intersectional oppression); Arkles, Gehi, and Redfield (2009) on the role of the legal profession in the face of police violence; Abramovich (2012) on the abuse of LGBTQ homeless youth in Canada; Gattis (2013) on a comparison between homeless sexual minority youth and homeless heterosexual youth; Billies (2015) on the struggles of low-income LGBTGNC (gender-nonconforming) youth; a study by Walls, Hancock, and Wisneski (2007) comparing the social service needs of abused homeless sexual minority youths from those of nonhomeless sexual minority youths; Brockenbrough (2016) on profiling and abuse of homeless and other youth of color, the prospects of a transformative pedagogy responsive to these common forms of oppression, and the need for a more accurately specified demographic data infrastructure; DeFillippis (2012) on police brutality against these youth across the lines of gender and class identity and social locations in systems of privilege, power and disadvantage; Castellanos (2016) on police brutality in the "homelessness pathways" of Latino LGBTQ youth in New York City; and Mountz (2016) on the prevalence of police-initiated, state-sanctioned violence among LGBTQ previously incarcerated girls and young women in New York State.

It is pertinent in these contexts that gender-variant (transgender and gender-nonconforming) individuals), particularly those of color, exhibit much higher rates of suicide irrespective of age than their majoritarian counterparts (O'Brien et al., 2016). Corresponding to high suicide and suicide-attempt rates (the latter estimated in recent studies at 40–50% of trans individuals) is the fact that, proportionately, trans women of color suffer one of the highest victimization and murder rates in the United States (Terry, 2015).

These studies and many others like them point to the comparability of too-often-fatal police encounters with Black men and other men of color and gender-variant youth of color, especially (among the latter) those who are homeless. As the paragraphs that follow indicate, these parallels strongly suggest that the simultaneity (intersection) of race and gender variance poses particular dangers to these minority communities.

Writing for the *Washington Post,* Erin Texeira (2006) addressed this topic with respect to Black (African American) men and the daily challenges they face. Texeira presents the story of Black attorney Keith Borders and the lengths to which he goes to appear innocuous—trying to shrink his 6-foot-7-inch frame, taking nonthreatening physical stances, dressing modestly and conservatively, and using deferential speech—in encounters with police. Of this sort of defensive posturing, Borders says: "It's all about surviving [police attention and potential abuse], and trying to thrive, in a nation where biased views of Black men stubbornly hang on decades after segregation and where statistics show a yawning gap between the lives of White men and Black men" (p. 1).

One of many causal triggers that has been explored in connection with abusive policing is that of "zero-tolerance policing" (the stop-and-frisk, profiling kind of policing). As Howell (2015), puts it, "what zero-tolerance policing does is make public spaces very, very dangerous for Black

people, Latino people, poor people, LGBTQ people, people with substance abuse problems, people with mental health problems, and homeless people" (p. 1060). As the authors have posited, it is evident from our research synthesis that those at the intersection of these marginalized identities suffer the greatest incidence of police harassment (Friedrich, 1980; McElvain & Kposowa, 2008).

The litany of wrongs suffered by LGBTQ and particularly trans youth of color is a particularly long one, and these wrongs are both manifestations and causes of their social and institutional victimization. Between 20% and 40% of American homeless youth identify as LGBTQ, more than four times the rate of White housed counterparts (Knauer, 2014). There are corresponding, and consistently disproportional, victimization and stigmatization rates for LGBTQ homeless youth, as well as an extraordinarily high incidence of family rejection (often following sexual and physical abuse), substance abuse, entry into street crime including "survival" sex work, and mental health crises (Badgett, Durso, & Schneebaum, 2013; Burwick, Oddo, Durso, Friend, & Gates, 2014; Center for American Progress, 2010; Choi et al., 2015; Corliss et al., 2010; Robinson, 2016).

Parallels in Justice and Imprisonment Disparities Among Racial and Sexual Minorities

Despite the gains of the civil rights movement, African Americans still constitute the largest population in the prison system in the United States. Grossly disproportional incarceration is also found among sexual minority homeless youth. The authors now consider these parallels, delineating them rather than treating them exhaustively.

In *The Color of Justice,* Ashley Nellis of The Sentencing Project (2016) reports the following alarming statistics (p. 3):

- Blacks are incarcerated in state prisons at a rate that is 5.1 times the imprisonment of Whites. In five states (Iowa, Minnesota, New Jersey, Vermont, and Wisconsin), the disparity is more than 10 to 1.
- In 12 states, more than half of the prison population is Black: Alabama, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, New Jersey, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. Maryland, whose prison population is 72% Black, tops the nation.
- In 11 states, at least 1 in 20 adult Black males is in prison.
- In Oklahoma, the state with the highest overall Black incarceration rate, 1 in 15 Black males ages 18 and older is in prison.
- States exhibit substantial variation in the range of racial disparity, from a Black/White ratio of 12.2:1 in New Jersey to 2.4:1 in Hawaii.
- Latinos are imprisoned at a rate that is 1.4 times the rate of Whites. Hispanic/White ethnic disparities are particularly high in states such as Massachusetts (4.3:1), Connecticut (3.9:1), Pennsylvania (3.3:1), and New York (3.1:1).

But while these statistics and others like them are from unimpeachable sources, there are researchers who denigrate and try to debunk these claims, without corresponding empirical evidence, part of a defensive, formulaic, and reactionary response in denial of racial and ethnic disparities in profiling, harassment, arrests, and incarceration (Toldson, 2013).

By way of parallel, Garofalo et al. (2006) found a history of incarceration (at 37%) among a Chicago sample of ethnic minority MTF transgender youth in the sample, with homelessness at 18%, and "extreme risk" of acquiring HIV/AIDS, in large part due to selling sex out of necessity. Gwadz et al. (2009) found that in a representative sample of 80 such youth between the ages of 14 and 23 (screened, recruited, and interviewed at four community-based organizations that serve homeless youth in New York City), "over two-thirds (76.3%) had been picked up by the police, and about half (58.8%) had been in detention, jail, or prison" (p. 4). Of those, almost a third (29.8%) had been incarcerated for more than a year," and the mean age of first incarceration was 15.05 years old (p. 4). Snapp, Hoenig, Fields, and Russell (2015) similarly found that the school-to-prison pipeline disproportionately affects youth of color, specifically African American and Latino males and LGBTQ youth of color. And Snyder et al. (2016) note that New York City Covenant House has reported that 30% of the homeless youth it serves had been detained or incarcerated.

This is the profile of systemic abuse on the basis of gender variance that Stanley, Spade, and Justice (2012) characterize as the historical and contemporary connections amongst the justice system, police abuse, mass incarceration, and trans lives. The intersection of gender identity, sexual orientation, race, and class is doubtlessly at the core of these grossly disproportional incarceration rates for LGBTQ youth of color (Irazábal & Huerta, 2016; Zamantakis, 2016), which far exceed those for Black and Latino men. The victimization of gender-minority youth of color is stark, by any measure, and disconcerting. If there is reason for hope, it may be found in the rapid progress of the LGBTQ movement and changing attitudes toward (at least White) LGBTQ individuals.

It is true that the LGBTQ movement has made both rapid and significant gains, as previously noted in this article. Such gains include same-sex marriage rights across the United States and certain corresponding protections (such as those connected to pensions) depending on the state. However, gains are only partial, and uneven. Racism still prevails toward and within the LGBTQ community, as is especially evident in depictions of gays prevalent in popular culture. A general misperception seems to be that the majority of LGBTQ individuals are White, upper class, and well-educated and well-resourced men, possibly followed by White lesbians. Consider, for instance, the LGBTQ television shows and movies that have been popular in recent years: *Will and Grace* (1998 to 2006) was possibly the epitome of depictions of White, male, affluent, and therefore normalized gay culture as somehow representative of the LGBTQ community.

Seldom remarked but of pertinence here are conflicts among progressive advocacy groups around transgender issues. For over 40 years, small but vocal elements of the radical feminist movement have rejected transgenderism and particularly the claims of transgender women, arguing that efforts to include them in feminist advocacy amounts to attempts to "'colonize' women's space" (Terry, 2015, p. 34). These may be declining concerns among feminists, but those who espouse them have gone so far as to join those on the right who argue that "trans women are actually a danger to women [and girls] and allowing them access to women's locker rooms and bathrooms is introducing potential predators into those spaces, whether the person identifies as a trans woman or is a man masquerading as one" (Terry, 2015, p. 34).

The authors have therefore moved into an exceedingly complex and contentious "Age of Unsettled Identities" with respect to gender and race (Brubaker, 2016), beyond media depictions centered on a stilted White male gay culture. It is a time in which new intersectionality constructs are required to analyze the joining of transgender and racial identities and new forms

of conflict arising within and outside of corresponding movements. The section that follows attempts to address this critical challenge.

An "Intersectionality Lens" for Serving Diverse Transgender and LGBTQ Homeless Youth: An Ethical Imperative

What is an "intersectional lens?" How can intersectionality (the simultaneity of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, ethnicity, citizenship and other identity markers and social locations embedded within institutions, laws, and practices), serve as a tool to better serve LGBTQ youth, and particularly the homeless, suffering as they do multiple forms of stigmatization? Collins and Bilge provide some insights about the value added by an intersectional approach to social equity scholarship:

> Intersectionality is a way of understanding and analyzing complexity in the world, in people, and in human experiences. The events and conditions of social and political life and the self can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor … When it comes to social inequality, people's lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other (Collins & Bilge, 2016, p. 2).

An intersectional lens is vital for advancing social equity, because intersectionality corresponds to the complex dimensionality of social justice aims and claims (Berger & Guidroz, 2010; Falcón, 2016; Krizsán, Skjeie, & Squires, 2012).

In the following section the authors provide a case study of two LGBTQ homeless youth, Leci and Sammy, to illustrate how homelessness can be experienced very differently, depending on the unique constellation of sociodemographic characteristics involved (López & Gadsden, 2016). It is important to note that while both of these individuals experienced homelessness and shared a common transgender status, as well as similar ethnic, cultural, language and national origin backgrounds, the similarities ended there.

Case 1: Sammy: Transgender While AfroLatinx

Orphaned at an early age, Sammy was brought from the Dominican Republic to New York City in the 1970s to be raised by relatives. Like many other Hispanics who look Black, or what we call AfroLatinx, Sammy grew up in *de facto* segregated public housing projects in Harlem, New York City, in a low-income family.[1] Labeled a boy at birth but gender nonconforming at a very young age, Sammy, a Latino of visible African ancestry, navigated intersecting forms of stigmatization—transphobia, heterosexism, racism, sexism, classism, and other systems of oppression—throughout their life. Throughout their life Sammy donned clothing that marked them as transgender because it was considered "feminine." Due in large part to bullying while in school, Sammy never finished high school, and could not find stable employment. Sammy was regularly stopped, searched, and frisked by law enforcement in New York City and they spoke bitterly about these interactions. At times, Sammy was homeless. Over time, Sammy developed chronic liver disease and died before reaching the age of 40.

Case 2: Leci: Transgender While White Latinx

As the U.S.-born child of light-skinned middle-class college-educated Dominican immigrant parents with professional employment, Leci is a White Latinx, meaning a Hispanic who "looks White." Leci's sex on their birth certificate was listed as female; however, at a very young age Leci challenged traditional gender expressions, eschewing frilly feminine attire for so-called "masculine" clothing. While Leci's female cousins rarely cut their long and flowing hair, Leci's hair was always cropped short. Family members made their disapproval of Leci's hairstyle well known; they consistently harassed Leci for looking like a "macho." In an attempt to enforce discipline and proper feminine aesthetics, they sent Leci to one of the most prestigious all-girl Catholic high schools in midtown Manhattan, miles away from her apartment in the Dominican enclave of Washington Heights, Manhattan. Leci graduated from an elite college in upstate New York, where they had more freedom in terms of gender identity expression and sexual orientation, especially since Leci was olive-skinned and not automatically framed as a visible minority. Instead, Leci was most often assumed to be Italian, as she was racialized as White. Upon graduation from college, Leci's parents disapproved of their lifestyle as LGBTQ and gender nonconforming. Leci was eventually kicked out of their parent's house. Through a network of friends and acquaintances that spanned many states, Leci was quickly able to find a place to stay. After a few months of living with friends, Leci was able to find an apartment and secure gainful employment. A year later, Leci was partnered and looking forward to leaving New York City for a home in one of the suburban communities surrounding the metropolitan area.

Intersectional Data Collection for Making the Invisible Visible

Using Sammy and Leci's experiences, are there ethical principles can be applied to the challenges posed by the misclassification of identity traits for trans youth of color, clearly a contributor to their plight as outlined? The policy as well as ethical challenge is that of improving data collection, classification, and analysis along lines of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, disability, or other demographic characteristics, for the sake of accurate analysis, in scholarship and activism connected to social equity and ethics. The coincidence of imputed identity with misclassification for those at the intersection of multiple minority-identity traits clearly complicates the lives of trans homeless youth of color. Agencies need to be able to find and track them in official data sources, which at present tend to obscure and thus undercount them. Classificatory issues like these must be resolved if line public administration are to take an intersectionality approach to public policy, one equal to the demands of social equity, civil rights and, generally, public ethics (López, 2013a, 2014).

If our goal is to be responsible and accurate in our data collection and analysis, we need to embrace the idea of "ethical accuracy" for civil rights and social justice (López, 2016). Ethical accuracy connotes data collection, analysis, and dissemination efforts that are concerned with advancing social equity in ways that match the realities of victimized populations, as the authors consider them throughout this study. In contrast, the more commonly found, superficial, "aesthetic" accuracy is largely concerned with meeting bureaucratic and regulatory mandates, rather than accurately portraying the lives and experiences of diverse national populations in ways that are accessible to researchers, policy analysts, advocates, and the citizenry as such. The distinction

between ethical and aesthetic accuracy is key. As this article goes to press, the Office of Management and Budget and the Census Bureau are considering changing the current two-question format, which asks two separate questions, first about Hispanic origin and then race, into one question for the 2020 census (López, 2013b), which would either purposely or inadvertently make a muddle of sociodemographic data, exacerbating the current lack of accuracy and reductive quality of such data.

Regardless of intent, treating race (a social status that is ascribed by others according to looks, in terms of skin color, hair texture, facial features, and the like) and ethnicity (e.g., cultural background, national origin, ancestry, and sometimes language background) as analytically equivalent social constructs by asking both questions in one is problematic. Such a change may undermine our ability to discern if there are inequities among people who may speak the same language and even hail from the same culture, national origin, and ancestry, but nevertheless experience very different treatment based on what they look like. In addition, it is important to collect data on proxy measures of socioeconomic status, such as parental educational attainment and occupation, as well as individual-level educational attainment. We have an ethical responsibility to educate the scientific and lay publics about the civil rights goals of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and other social demographic data collection. We also need to inform education policy advocates and stakeholders about the promise of an intersectional lens for advancing social equity goals.

PROSPECTS FOR TRANS-ETHICAL APPROACHES TO ADVOCACY AND POLICY

Whether we are speaking of lexical and ethical accuracy, the adequacy of data collection, or the quality of germane public policy, every effort at systematization generates questions relating to contestations of identity. Federal government shifts toward recognition of same-sex marriage, changes toward open service in the military for LGBTQ and transgender persons, recently enacted and recently reversed federal accommodation policies for transgender students in public schools, and similar policy turns bring to the fore questions of gender identity. For instance, what does transgender mean (in theory and practice), who is due corresponding recognition, and what are the implications of fluid forms of gender identification? Who may be covered by hate crimes legislation, and how is it to be invoked or enforced? Even the most technical consideration of policy and law is bound to prompt these kinds of identity questions along with ones relating to the impact of governmental classification, both as to accuracy and transparency, all in the context of rapidly changing national politics.

The authors have proposed that the germane literature and our own streams of research establish the reality of all sorts of victimization of LGBTQ youth of color, especially transgender homeless youth—ostracism, abuse, poverty, and grossly disparate treatment by the "justice" and prison systems. The authors have relied on social theory constructs such as hyper-masculinization, hyper-identification, and intersectionality in collecting several case vignettes that illustrate larger trends and turns in the plight of these gender-minority, highly marginalized populations. The authors want to conclude by systematizing our preliminary analysis built on the social equity literature, to include contributions from queer theory and social movement literatures and a redirected ethics—*queer ethics* recast as a more inclusive *trans ethics,* connoting

a *transgender* but also *transformative* approach to public ethics that is inextricably involved with identity.

The authors would enlist the work of Elizabeth Däumer (1992) as foundational for this task, involving identity as well as policy questions as it does. The authors start this section with Däumer not only because she broke new ground with regard to identity theory and politics but also because she linked movements and theories in the way the authors would here. Däumer famously cast bisexuality as the starting point for "questioning all notions of fixed, immutable identities and by articulating a plurality of differences among us in the hope of forging new bonds and allegiances": new alliances among every variant of queer activism, including trans activism (p. 103). Following Däumer, Halberstam (2005) extends queer theory and ethics and makes these more inclusive and connected, by considering how female and trans-masculinities exist within communities (even, the authors would note, street youth communities) and subcultures—the latter alternatively rejected and appropriated by mainstream culture as well as elements of radical feminism, as previously noted as well.

Alexander (2005) argues that North American feminism and queer studies and movements need to break out of their limited horizons to connect with transnational frameworks that stress issues of neocolonialism, political oppression, racial construction, and oppressive, heteronormative regulatory state practices of all sorts, from the standpoint of individual self-affirmation grounded in deep subjectivity. Alexander lays stress on the criminalization as well as economic exploitation of queer/trans people across the Western Hemisphere, along with corresponding political organizing in sometimes isolated and sometimes overlapping or merging social movements, all the while reflecting on the failures of contemporary liberal pluralism. For Alexander, another trans-modified term, namely, "memory," has shown itself to be liberating against histories of oppression in these contexts—what she calls the transgenerational memory of communities of color as well as queer communities.

A common thread among these queer theorists is an ethics that is anti-foundational and yet universal, based on both radical subjectivity and connection to multiple communities (racial, gender, class, sexual orientation) and cross-cutting movements and political activism. This is what Muñoz (2009) calls "being singular plural"—an ethical construction of queerness that is both anti-relational and relational across identity formations (pp. 10–11). In order to fashion responses to the plight of LGBTQ young people of color, we must similarly look for a multiplicity of cross-linked solutions—public policies but also institutional policies, for instance, and advocacy for both individual and community forms of liberation—whether identity-based, economic, political, or otherwise. For an example of comprehensive but institutionally based policy change on college campuses that connects to recent developments in federal accessibility policies for LGBTQ and especially transgender students, see Dirks (2016).

LGTBQ young people of color live amidst intersections of identity (gender, race, age, and class), which point in the direction of both divergent and convergent liberationist intersections. All-pervasive, omnidirectional oppression requires comprehensive, all-in liberation, whether through movements or public policy. Racial, gender, and class queerness attain ethical standing both by rejecting oppressive social strictures and structures and by engaging socially across kindred movements, insisting instead for universal obligation on the part of public officials, in particular to individuals and groups taken where they have come to find themselves.

As Kirsch (2006) argues, involvement in social movements and political advocacy is necessary to counter the exploitation entailed by the imposition (forced ascription) of identity—the obverse

being that the assertion of queer/trans identity against all efforts to diminish it is itself subversive. It is essential, Kirsch continues, to reject disengagement from coalition-building and social movements, and the renunciation of authentic identity. Identity categorization and normalization must be rejected as an instrument of regulatory control, through a contestation of identity in the political and policy spheres. Queer theory and ethics, the authors would argue in deliberate extension of this position, need to guard against ascriptions of identity that would undermine affectional communities and coalitional social movements. Queerness and especially transgender identity must not be reduced to the "affectable other" of socially "racialized subjects," as have Native Americans, for instance, in hackneyed media portrayals (Smith, 2010).

What Michael Warner (1993) has famously said is apt here, namely that "queer politics does not obey the member/nonmember logics of race and gender" (p. xvii). Rather than "wash out" transgender identities by subsuming them in larger queer-identity categories—as so often done in the past—these need to be foregrounded in current ethical and policy explorations or debates. That is what the authors have attempted to do here when focusing on the particular plight of transgender youth of color, on the premise that a mixed, in part ethnographic, analytical methodology is necessary to accurately characterize problems in this context, which in turn is a prerequisite to taking action, as an ethical and moral imperative.

NOTE

1. Throughout this article the authors use the more gender-inclusive term "Latinx" instead of Latino or Latina to denote individuals who are from the Spanish-origin and -speaking countries of North, Central, and South America and the Caribbean. This term includes the descendants of those people of Hispanic origin who resided in what is now the present-day United States long before the United States became a country. AfroLatinx specifically refers to those who are visibly identifiable Latinos of African ancestry (see Jimenez Roman & Flores, 2010).

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