

What kind of science can and shall we do with transgender people?

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In recent years, a lot of attention has been brought to the “issue” of transgender people and their rights. It has a long and devastating psychiatric and psychological history, starting from the conception of a rare mental disorder or perversion and slowly coming out of it. Now the debate is shifting to the front of the scene, from households to schools and public administrations. What does this imply for our position in research? How do we contribute to both science and communities in a respectful, honest, and positive manner? How can we explore what is not known yet without taking part in the marginalization of an already vulnerable population? I’ll argue that we need strong ethical positionings, new epistemologies and a will to endorse an engaged theorizing that will inevitably have sociopolitical implications. The richness of works in fields such as gender studies, anthropology, sociology, or philosophy also encourage us to open our minds beyond traditional psychology and embrace interdisciplinarity. Drawing on my master’s thesis work and my engagement with the LGBTIQ+ community in Switzerland, I’ll propose some elements of reflection about how to do research with a marginalized population, in a globally “hot” and sensitive political climate.

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