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BOOK REVIEW

Nuttbrock, L. (Ed.). (2018). *Transgender Sex Work and Society*. New York, NY: Harrington Park Press. 474 pages, ISBN: 978-1-93959-422-8 (hbk), USD \$75.00; e-book USD \$45.99

As a researcher in the field of transgender sexual health for several years, I view transgender sex work as a current and timely topic that frequently emerges and should not be ignored. Always having been somewhat critical towards the present literature regarding transgender sexual health, I was very interested to read this book, entitled “*Transgender Sex Work and Society*.” Originally being schooled in sociology, I was naturally especially curious regarding the addition of the word “society” to the title, as I felt that a broader, societal perspective was lacking substantially in the vast majority of current research on this topic.

The book consists of 25 chapters that are divided in nine sections. Chapters written by the editor, Larry Nuttbrock, are complemented with contributions of other researchers and experts from a variety of disciplines. Chapters include literature reviews as well as empirical work and expert opinions regarding several aspects related to transgender sex work. The book starts with a short introduction regarding the topics of being transgender as well as sex work, which makes it easy to understand for a reader not familiar with one of these topics, or both. The first section provides the reader with a description of sex work among transgender women in the U.S.A., while the second section gives an overview of the literature regarding survival sex among young transgender persons. The third section focuses on the personal relationships of transgender sex workers, an aspect that is frequently overlooked: sex workers can also have relationships other than paid for ones, which may influence their health. The intertwining of different health problems, such as mental health problems, substance use, and sexual risk among transgender sex workers is discussed throughout sections four and five. Section six especially caught my attention, as it contains a variety of contributions on sex work in different cultural settings: historical and sociocultural descriptions of transgender sex work in Turkey, Brazil, Malaysia, Thailand, the Andean Region (Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, and Bolivia), Spain, and China are included. This section is crucial in understanding the way sex work is organized and how gender identities are conceptualized and vary significantly globally; and that such conceptualizations greatly influence the position of transgender sex workers in society, their social situation, and their health. The inclusion of a reprint of Kulicks’ “*The Gender of Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes*,” originally published in 1997 and here accompanied by a new introduction by

the author, serves as a refreshing view that makes one challenge existing conceptualizations of gender, sexuality, and identity, and their relationship with culture. The book concludes with a section providing basic principles for the care and treatment of transgender sex workers and a section on the importance of a public health perspective instead of a criminal justice perspective on transgender sex work. Throughout the book, it becomes clear how a judicial framework that is focused on decriminalization and human rights is essential for the health and well-being of transgender sex workers all over the world.

As for limitations, I think diversity in transgender sex work could have been taken further, regarding sex work as well as transgender identities: most contributions focus on transgender women engaging in street- or venue-based sex work (what about non-binary persons? do transgender men not engage in sex work? (as is suggested in chapter 3); and what about online sex work or escort work?). The lack of European and African perspectives is a pity, but given the lack of European and African research on transgender sexual health in general, this is to be expected. Apart from the section about transgender sex work in different cultural settings, almost all contributions are US-based, largely drawing from the same dataset, which were located in the large urban contexts of New York and San Francisco.

Although of course largely based on current literature on transgender sexual health and sex work, which have limitations that have been described extensively elsewhere (MacCarthy et al., 2017; Poteat, Scheim, Xavier, Reisner, & Baral, 2016; Van Schuylenbergh, Motmans, & Coene, 2018), this book takes the academic literature on transgender sex work to a higher level by incorporating the societal perspective throughout its chapters. For researchers, this book is particularly interesting, because it provides a wide range of all aspects related to transgender sex work, and as such, serves as an excellent state of the art tome, while also adding a broader, societal perspective. Because of the numerous implications for policy and care mentioned throughout the chapters, and the section about care and treatment for transgender sex workers, I also strongly recommend this book to everyone working with transgender women and/or sex workers. Overall, “*Transgender Sex Work and Society*” simply does what it promises: offering a comprehensive overview of all aspects related to transgender sex work and society.

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