

**Title:** Swatting a Fly with a Hammer: A Study in Transgender Roles and Discrimination  
**Presenter:** W.L. Cruz, Fullerton College  
**Mentor:** Kelly Nelson-Wright

In October of 2019, the Supreme Court of the United States heard arguments in a landmark case that could change the way the transgender and gender diverse (TGD) population is viewed. At issue is whether an employer can require a TGD individual to wear clothes the employer deems appropriate to match the birth gender of the individual. While the case will not be decided until after 2020, the question is raised about how TGD adults carry themselves and what role they play in society. Are TGD persons afforded more rights and more latitude with their gender identity in other cultures? With India granting protected status to their third gender and Pacific Islands embracing traditional “in the middle” identities, it would seem so (Diehl 2017; Esnier and Alexeyeff, 2014). Therefore, if a person is transgender in the Western World, including the United States and the UK, then there is a higher probability that person will be pathologized and treated with discrimination as compared to the TGD population residing in a non-Western culture. An interactionist approach will be used to discuss what it means to be a member of the TGD population, and the difficulties faced therein. Focusing on discrimination, violence, and pathology in various countries, an examination of this marginalized group will be outlined. Alternatives will be presented as to possible steps for improvement in the treatment of TGD individuals, based upon data available from multiple cultures. This may provide insights into more equitable treatment for the American TGD population.

## Works Cited

- Doan, Long, Natasha Quadlin, and Brian Powell. 2019. "Americans' Perceptions of Transgender People's Sex: Evidence from a National Survey Experiment." *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World* 5:237802311985201
- Hossain, Adnan. 2017. "The Paradox of Recognition: Hijra, Third Gender and Sexual Rights in Bangladesh." *Culture, Health and Sexuality* 19(12):1418–31.
- McCauley, Erin, Kristen Eckstrand, Bethlehem Desta, Ben Bouvier, Brad Brockmann, and Lauren Brinkley-Rubinstein. 2018. "Exploring Healthcare Experiences for Incarcerated Individuals Who Identify as Transgender in a Southern Jail." *Transgender Health* 3(1):34–41.
- Sumerau, J. E., Ryan T. Cragun, and Lain A. B. Mathers. 2016. "Contemporary Religion and the Cisgendering of Reality." *Social Currents* 3(3):293–311
- Whitley, Cameron T. 2013. "Trans-Kin Undoing and Redoing Gender: Negotiating Relational Identity among Friends and Family of Transgender Persons." *Sociological Perspectives* 56(4):597–621