

My interest in research is to understand and leverage community strengths to improve social work practice, policy, and scholarship, with the overall goal of ameliorating the effects of systemic oppression. Specifically, I use my expertise and embeddedness in the transgender community to conduct strength-based research through a trans equity lens. Trans individuals experience discrimination in formal help-seeking contexts, such as in healthcare and social services.^{1,2} Multidimensionally marginalized trans individuals often face discrimination on multiple axes (e.g., race/gender, disability/gender). Like other communities, trans communities often utilize social relationships to navigate these systems or cope with their experiences. The positive impact of such social relationships has been demonstrated in studies amongst other marginalized populations (e.g., people of color, older adults, disabled).^{1,3} Though there is an emerging body of scholarship on the role and impact of social media in trans communities,^{2,4,5} there is a dearth of research on the impact of social relationships on well-being and the role relationships play more widely within trans communities.

Research and Scholarship

Broadly, my scholarship focuses on the experiences of LGBTQ communities and the impact of oppression on their well-being and coping. My current work centers transgender communities and our unique experiences. Trans individuals continue to face stigma and discrimination in many aspects of daily life, resulting in disparate rates of poverty, trauma, and mental health needs. To this end, my research seeks to understand trans individuals' lived experiences in a variety of sociocultural domains, preferences for healthcare and social service utilization, and the impact of intracommunity support (i.e., interpersonal connections) and community belonging on trans well-being.

Recently, I authored a book chapter describing experiences and needs of individuals who are both trans and disabled. I also co-authored two published articles utilizing quantitative methods this past year; the first using the US Trans Study (N=27,715) dataset to examine the distance trans individuals traveled to access healthcare (published in *Annals of LGBTQ Public and Population Health*) and the second analyzing the consequences of sexual minority women's alcohol use on their relationships (published in *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*). I am now co-leading a qualitative study to understand trans individual's preferences around personal data collection in healthcare spaces. This interdisciplinary project was developed from initial findings in the NIH funded study (R21MD013486; PIs Moore and Rowhani-Rahbar) focused on increasing health equity in our national trauma healthcare system.

I have also contributed to research aimed at understanding the experiences of trans older adults (manuscript currently under review), increasing the LGBTQ cultural attunement of SAMHSA's strategic prevention framework (currently under revision with *Social Work Research*), identity development in

¹ Ferraro KF, Farmer MM, Wybraniec JA. (1997). Health trajectories: long-term dynamics among black and white adults. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. 38(1): 38-54

² Gauthier, D. & Chaudoir, N. (2004). Tranny boyz: Cyber community support in negotiating sex and gender mobility among female to male transsexuals. *Deviant Behavior*, 25(4), 375- 398

³ Jackson, S., Bailey, M., & Foucault, B. (2018). #GirlsLikeUs: Trans advocacy and community building online. *New Media & Society*, 20(5), 1868-1888

⁴ Psihopaidas, D. & Parreñas, R.S. (2017). "Intimate Standards: Medical Knowledge and SelfMaking in Digital Transgender Groups." *Sexualities*, vol. 20, no. 4, pp. 412-427

⁵ Wilcox VL, Kasl SV, & Idler EL. (1996). Self-rated health and physical disability in elderly survivors of a major medical event. *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*, 51(2): S96-104

bisexual men, and the role of stress and perfectionism in trans individuals. I have partnered with community organizations to provide community needs assessments regarding the economic experiences of trans adults in King County, Washington and service needs among LGBTQ young adults in Phoenix (a first-authored manuscript is under review).

For my doctoral general exam, I conducted a scoping literature review of intracommunity knowledge-sharing in trans communities. The review found that trans individuals are utilizing both online and in-person methods to navigate identity development, learn about medical/social transitions, build emotional support, survive stigma, and organize with others to combat societal oppression. This sole-authored manuscript is under revision with *Health and Social Care in the Community* and will be presented at the 2020 CSWE APM.

To further investigate trans intracommunity support and knowledge sharing, my dissertation examines how and why trans communities are leveraging intracommunity strengths, assets, and resiliencies and how support and knowledge are being used to fill gaps in social services. My first dissertation paper is a grounded theory study exploring trans intracommunity knowledge and the ways it affects trans development and well-being. Preliminary findings indicate that trans individuals create networks *through* the identity navigation process, experiencing many positive impacts of connecting with other trans individuals (e.g., crowdsourcing care, learning about transition possibilities, how to navigate oppressive systems). For the second paper, I argue for methodological shifts in social and health science scholarship in order to minimize the harms of research on trans communities. In the third paper, I will report the findings of a survey I developed and disseminated. It describes intracommunity support among trans individuals by illuminating the processes trans people employ to fill gaps in access to competent service provision.

Research Trajectory

Building on my studies of trans intracommunity support, I plan to design and utilize measures that explore shared identity, community belonging, and support within trans communities. I plan to develop interventions for trans and queer social work practitioners to strengthen these mechanisms within their clients and communities and to strengthen ongoing efforts within LGBTQ-serving organizations. I will also more closely examine the impact of these mechanisms (i.e., shared identity, community belonging, intracommunity support)--or the lack thereof--on trans individuals with and without access to formal social services. Within the next four years, I plan to seek funding from the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (i.e., R21, K99), the National Science Foundation Science of Organizations Grant, the American Psychological Foundation's Wayne F. Placek Grants, the Roddenberry Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and through partnership with local and national centers that serve trans and LGBTQ communities.

Oppression faced by trans communities results in higher rates of discrimination, violence, and lack of access to services. Oppression disproportionately harms trans people who are people of color, disabled, and/or who are targeted by transmisogyny. As such, formal and informal support for trans communities constitute a pressing social justice issue--requiring not only competent social work practitioners, but also research aimed at understanding existing support mechanisms and their impact. My research examining intracommunity support and coping strategies contributes to this critical work. My ultimate goal is to bolster and propagate ongoing efforts (i.e., interpersonal care, crowdfunding, assistance navigating systems) within trans communities as we pursue our collective ability to survive and thrive while disrupting structural oppression.