Making Space for Trans and Non-binary Lives in the Workplace

Routledge

Editors

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Call for chapter contributions

This edited collection brings together academic research and personal experiences on trans and non-binary lives. The book aims to provide a space for trans and non-binary lives, and to foster critical and interdisciplinary engagement with the topic. In particular, we wish to explore the complexity and criticality of the trans and non-binary experience in organisations and ways of organising.

We invite the contributors to think about space and space-making on a wide continuum from literal/concrete to figurative/abstract.

In a more literal sense, one could consider the social production and reproduction of space conceived as physical milieu, or 'practico-sensory realm' (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974], p. 15), in which life transpires and all human activities happen. The roots of such approach run back to George Simmel's *Sociology of Space* (1903) and, more recently, to Henri Lefèbvre's *The Production of Space* (1974) and David Harvey's (1973) *Social Justice and the City*, which prompted the spatial turn in human geography, sociology (Fuller and Löw, 2017; Löw, 2008; Urry, 2001), and organisation studies (Beyes and Holt, 2020; van Marrewijk and Yanow, 2010). This socio-spatial tradition, and theory and research on gendered spaces in particular (Löw, 2006; Spain, 2014), could furnish support and inspiration, as would the studies of organisational/organising spaces and places, where trans bodies and identities are interrogated and policed by the nation-state security and surveillance apparatuses (e.g., airport border controls (Beauchamp, 2019; Currah and Mulqueen, 2011; Quinan and Bresser, 2020)) and by the local authorities, employers, professional associations, and/or citizen activist groups (e.g., toilets/washrooms/bathrooms and changing/locker rooms (Davies, Vipond and King, 2017; Herman, 2013; Human Rights Watch, 2016; Keegan, 2016; Rudin, Ruane, Ross, Farro and Billing, 2014; Rudin, Yang, Ruane, Ross, Farro and Billing, 2016; Sanders and Stryker, 2016; Schilt and Westbrook, 2015; Westbrook and Schilt, 2014)).

As well as fuelling further explorations of the 'tyranny of gendered spaces' (Doan, 2010), the socio-spatial imagination may inspire one to take on the 'mobilities' approach (Urry, 2007) and follow the journeys of 'displaced' trans nomads/migrants, in perpetual motion from rural to urban areas, one state to another, and one employer to the next in search of liveable lives (Gieseking, 2023; Mizock and Hopwood, 2018). It may also propel one to venture into digital/virtual/cyber spaces, as the boundaries between digital and social spaces become increasingly blurred (Auriemma, Iorio, Merico and Tavares Galindo Filho, 2024), and given

the importance of digital platforms for trans individuals and communities since the early days of WorldWideWeb (Cannon, Speedlin, Avera, Robertson, Ingram and Prado, 2017; Cavalcante, 2016; Steinbock, 2019).

In a more metaphorical sense, one may attend to ideational, symbolic, semiotic, discursive, emotional/affective, and other similar spaces, to ponder about making space for the following and other related issues

- trans and non-binary research and researchers in academia (beyond the 'diversity hires' and gender studies 'ghettoes') (Brice, 2023; Gill-Peterson, 2023; Nordmarken, 2014);

- non-binary in the LGBTQIA+ acronym;

- unrestrained depictions of gender diversity (say, as a constellation, rather than a continuum, as recently suggested (Suhomlinova, O'Shea and Boncori, 2024));

- trans and non-binary *self*-representations in traditional and social media;

Similarly, we welcome the unbounded interpretations of 'the workplace', beyond the typical inquiries into experiences of trans and non-binary employees and attitudes and behaviours towards them of their cis co-workers, managers, and/or clients (Law, Martinez, Ruggs, Hebl and Akers, 2011; Martinez, Sawyer, Thoroughgood, Ruggs and Smith, 2017; McFadden and Crowley-Henry, 2016; Mizock and Mueser, 2014; Mizock, Woodrum, Riley, Sotilleo, Yuen and Ormerod, 2017; Ozturk and Tatli, 2015; Phoenix and Ghul, 2016; Ruggs, Martinez, Hebl and Law, 2015; Schilt, 2006; Schilt and Connell, 2007; Schilt and Wiswall, 2008; Thoroughgood and Sawyer, 2017; Totaljobs, 2016; Yavorsky, 2016). Thus, we would invite investigations of the place/space accorded to real (or imaginary) trans and non-binary people in the organisations that make high-level decisions about their entire populations, such as (to illustrate with recent examples from the UK):

- the Supreme Court deciding whether trans women qualify women for the purposes of gender representation on public boards (Gibb, 2024);

- Office for National Statistics reclassifying its official Census 2021 statistics on trans population in England as 'experimental' (Booth, 2024);

- NHS closing the Tavistock Gender Identity Development Service;

- HM Prison Service redrawing the rules for (re)allocating trans prisoners to the estate of their gender (Suhomlinova and O'Shea, 2025);

- Advance HE failing to report 'trans status' of two thirds of university staff and students in the UK (Advance HE, 2022, p. 270)

Through the inclusion of personal stories and experiences from trans and non-binary people, the book will foster nuanced understandings of everyday experiences, and will provide a space for a community of belonging within and beyond academia.

To explore the nuances and complexities of the trans and non-binary experience, we particularly welcome critical approaches and chapters written 'differently'. 'Researching and Writing Differently' approaches (Boncori, 2022; Kostera, 2022; Pullen, Helin and Harding, 2022) are increasingly used in management and organizational studies to shed light on silenced topics; explore non-traditional ways of knowing; rethink the way we research and work together in academia; experiment with creative, personal, embodied and affective methods; reflect and engage with academic praxes of reading, writing, editing and reviewing differently. Autoethnographic works by one of the editors (O'Shea, 2018; O'Shea, 2019; O'Shea, 2020; O'Shea, 2021) may provide inspiration and encouragement in that direction.

Contributions

It is expected that the majority of contributions may come from business school-based academics/management and organisation scholars, but we welcome interdisciplinary approaches and chapters from other disciplines. While many of the chapters are likely to have a UK focus, we particularly welcome submissions from other geographic areas and cultural backgrounds outside the UK.

The book, therefore, aims to provide a space for nuanced expressions and understandings of trans and non-binary lives in the workplace by exploring the following areas/topics:

- Inclusion, assimilation and adjustments

- Visible and invisible exclusionary practices in the workplace

- Trans and non-binary lives: boundaries and liminalities

- Trans and non-binary lives in the arts

- Workplace experiences across professional contexts

- Trans and non-binary experiences

- Doing research methods differently to understand trans and non-binary lives

- Language, voice and communication

- The body, embodiment and the workplace

- Legal and ethical issues

- Personal testimonies and autoethnographic accounts of trans and non-binary lives at work

- Academia and academic careers for trans and non-binary people.

Publication information

We have a signed contract with Routledge for the book to be published in early 2027. We invite the initial submissions of a 500-word abstract, to be followed by full chapters of 5,000-7,000 words, inclusive of references (shorter contributions will also be considered, particularly for personal narratives).

Please submit expressions of interest in the form of a 500-word abstract to all editors at: Saoirse O'Shea saoirse.oshea@open.ac.uk; Ilaria Boncori iboncori@essex.ac.uk; Olga Suhomlinova o.suhomlinova@le.ac.uk

Deadlines

Abstract submission deadline: Monday 16 April 2025

Notifications of decisions on the abstracts: 31 May 2025

Full Chapters deadline: 18 November 2025

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