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COMMENTARY

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Troubling genderS and consumer well-being: Going across, between and beyond the binaries to gender/sex/ual and intersectional diversity

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Abstract

In this editorial we outline why a call for more inclusive, conscientious approaches to studying gender/sex/ual diversity and intersectional identities is needed, and how the articles in this special issue answered this call. We summarize key takeaways from a review of the literature, noting significant under-representation of gender/sex/ual diversity and intersectional social locations. We also explore the history of the gender/sex binaries (e.g., female/male; women/men; femininity/masculinity) to help illuminate the premises upon which the popular trend of studying gender/sex differences between men and women and the invisibilities of gender/sex/ual diverse people exist. We conclude with guidance on how scholars and practitioners might engage in thinking, doing, and connecting to move the conversation forward.

KEYWORDS

Gender, transgender, sex, sexuality, intersectionality, institutional activism

1 | INTRODUCTION: THE IMPORTANCE OF TROUBLING GENDERS

Our call for this special issue was one that encourages scholars to trouble genderS. Troubling genderS invites an expansion of the way we study gender so that our scholarship might reflect

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lived realities. It calls for critical scholarship that seeks to disrupt, as well as explorative scholarship that seeks to leverage and expand categorizations, going "across, between and beyond" the binaries—e.g., male/female, men/women, masculinities/femininities, hetero/homo (Hines & Sanger, 2010, p. 1). Troubling genderS encourages scholars to recognize the vast terrain of gender diversity, and how gender diversity crosses over with sex and sexual diversity and intersecting social locations of difference to shape consumers' experiences of marketplace inequities, interactions with other people, and perceptions of self. Troubling genderS asks scholars to rethink how they measure, use, or capture gender/sex/ual diversity. In short, troubling genderS takes us that next step in thinking through how gender matters.

The importance of our call—querying the ways genderS relate to consumer well-being—is evident from the tumultuous years surrounding it. Our special issue unfolded during the global pandemic. With hindsight, we know this pandemic amplified and heightened all existing inequities (Crockett & Grier, 2020; Maestripieri, 2021), affecting genders in different ways. Moreover, it illustrated how gender, sex and sexuality are bound up together in ways that cannot be readily separated. Men's lives, because of biological, physiological and psychological elements tied to sexed-bodies and gendered expectations (e.g., working in gender-stratified jobs of agriculture and construction with little protection from exposure, cumulative lifetime effects of stress and higher risk taking behaviors) were at heightened risk for comorbidities and mortality (Danielsen et al., 2022). Gender/sex diverse people, such as those who are transgender, nonbinary, and/or intersexed, struggled with accessing gender affirming care and support, were disproportionately affected by job losses, and experienced higher levels of mental distress (Salerno et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020). Women, particularly caregivers, faced—and continue to face—lasting economic and health consequences as many left the labor market or downsized their careers and faced increased levels of stress (Peck, 2021). Incidences of gender violence against women increased under lockdown restrictions (Dlamini, 2021), and Covid-19 put those who were pregnant at higher risks of severe illness (Smith et al., 2023). These experienced inequities were magnified and compounded for those whose intersecting social identities and resulting positionalities heightened disadvantages, vulnerabilities and unwellness (Maestripieri, 2021). Covid made evident and exacerbated the multifaceted nature of gender/sex/ual inequities and the ways they compound with other intersecting adversities.

Alongside this, our special issue is being published during times where moral panics and sex panics (Herdt, 2009) related to reproductive rights (Fanning, 2023) and transgender people (Miles, 2022; Nagourney & Peters, 2023) have become heightened and politicized in different ways and in different countries. As others scholars note, throughout history and across countries, these gender/sex/ual dynamics have, at times, been perceived as natural (Allen, 1992; Herdt, 1996; Stettner et al., 2017; Vincent & Manzano, 2017), and at other times, demonized and policed in various ways, with intersectional social identities and positionalities affecting experiences (Fausto-Sterling, 2008; Herdt, 1996, 2009; Stettner et al., 2017). Today, as reproductive rights and gender/sex/ual fluidity become increasingly acknowledged and accepted in some legal, medical, psychological, and media arenas, in large part due to the advocacy of affected groups (Berer & Hoggart, 2019; Stryker, 2006), backlash politics abound (Alter & Zürn, 2020; Elster, 2022; Pearce et al., 2020). The result has been repressive laws and bills (ACLU, 2023; Bhandari, 2023; ILGA-Europe, 2023), restrictions to accessing critical healthcare needs (e.g., reproductive care, gender affirming care) (Costa, 2023; Haines et al., 2023; HRC Foundation, 2023; Steinfield et al., 2023), bans and invasive requirements in athletics for trans people (Barry-Hinton, 2022), gender panics surrounding bathroom access (Schilt & Westbrook, 2015), misrepresentations (Abbott, 2022), policing of education that restricts how

teachers talk about gender (Burga, 2023; Mason & Hamilton, 2023), and the proliferation of unsafe spaces (Fischer, 2019; ILGA-Europe, 2023; in this special issue see Duncan-Shepherd & Hamilton, 2022; Hansman & Drenten, 2024, and the panel discussion with Bettany, Burchiellaro, & Venkatraman). These conditions have detrimental impacts on well-being, which are magnified for those who already face other disadvantages (e.g., lower socioeconomic power, racial and/or disability biases, lack of citizenship status).

All of these conditions touch elements of consumers' lives and their experiences of the marketplace. They reaffirm the importance of recognizing the complexities of how gender, sex, and sexuality interrelate and inform consumer well-being, intersecting with other markers of social locations. Our philosophy has always been to shed light on the degree to which progress, stagnation, or regression has occurred in efforts to resolve gender/sex/ual-related inequities, to recognize the ways that gender/sex/ual inequities can be normalized in unrecognized ways (e.g., familial practices), and to expand perceptions and correct misperception about the lives of people who are often overlooked and misunderstood. In line with this, our goal was—and is—to expand the discourse beyond the typical binary of White, Western, cisgendered, heterosexual women and men to recognize GenderS and intersectional injustices.

Our focus on genderS thus acknowledges that all too often, the term "gender" becomes a misnomer for "women" or the study of differences between men and women or masculinity and femininity, largely based on Western consumers and contexts. Plausible variances in gender and sex (e.g., agender, cis, genderqueer, gender nonconforming, intersex, non-binary, pangender, polygender, trans, two-spirited, questioning), along with sexuality (e.g., bisexual, heterosexual, homosexual, pansexual, polysexual, queer) and degrees of attraction (e.g., asexual, aromantic, demisexual, demiromantic, graysexual, grayromantic, allosexual, alloromantic) remain largely ignored as a cis-hetero-allo-normativity prevails. In short, cis-hetero-allo-normativity creates a hierarchy that is evident in how it makes cis-hetero-allo-people the unquestionable norm while denying or overlooking, vilifying, and/or casting as abnormal, deviant, immoral or threatening those who are not cisgendered (those whose do not ascribe to being trans, and whose self-identified gender identity aligns with that assigned at birth) (Lennon & Mistler, 2014; Radi, 2019), heterosexual/heteroromantic (those who are sexually/romantically attracted to people of an opposite/different gender or sex) (LGBTQ Center, 2021), and allosexual and allo-romantic [people who do not identify as asexual/aromantic, rather they regularly experience sexual and/or romantic attraction (Mollet, 2020), which often is presumed when discussing sexual orientation or consumption (Elkanova & Steinfield, 2024)]. By recognizing cis-hetero-allo-normativity, our genderS perspective encourages scholars to make obvious gender/sex/ual diversity (van Anders, 2022)—that is, how gender, sex, sexuality, and attraction are intersecting, complex and dynamic, invoking identities, expressions and experiences outside of, across and between the binaries.

This genderS perspective is largely missing despite the recent renaissance of gender-related scholarship in marketing and consumer behavior literature, such as edited volumes (Dobscha, 2019; Maclaran et al., 2022), and special issues in journals (*Journal of Marketing Management*: Arsel et al., 2015; Dobscha & Ostberg, 2021; Prothero & Tadajewski, 2021; *Consumption, Markets & Culture*: Tissier-Desbordes & Visconti, 2019; *Journal of Macromarketing*: Gurrieri et al., 2020; *Journal of Advertising Research*: Ford, 2020; and *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research*: Coleman et al., 2021). As we and others note, there is still a need to interrogate genderS and to shed light on more invisible groups — intersex, genderqueer, gender nonconforming, gender questioning, non-binary, trans, two-spirited, lesbians, bisexual, pansexuals, to name a few (Coffin et al., 2019; Steinfield, Littlefield, et al., 2019). There remains a need

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to clarify what this diversity means and how to study it—correcting for erroneous categorizations that fail to recognize gender/sex/ual diversity beyond a binary view (e.g., Eisend & Rößner, 2022)—so that we can move research forward in an inclusive manner. At the time of our call and leading up to this special issue, only a handful of articles exist that explore consumers going across, between or beyond the binary or that provide a deeper understanding of the ways gender/sex/uality intersect, for example, Aya Pastrana et al. (2022), Bettany et al. (2022), Camminga and Lubinsky (2022), Cheded and Liu (2022), Ciaralli and Vercel (2023), Eichert and Luedicke (2022), Goulding and Saren (2009), Kates (2003), Li (2022), McKeage et al. (2018), Peñaloza (1994), Seregina (2019), Venkatraman et al (2024), and Visconti (2008).

In short, there remains a need to properly recognize the intertwining dynamics of sex, gender, sexuality, and attraction in consumers' lives. Doing so can improve research validity and deepen understandings of gender. As Dozier (2005) notes, "Because transsexuals, transgender people, and others at the borders of gender and sex are fish out of water, they help illuminate strengths and weaknesses in common conceptions of gender" (p. 297). Importantly, recognizing gender/sex/ual diversity is one way scholars can start to disrupt a key source of inequities—the cis-hetero-allo-normative patriarchy. We caution that not doing so leaves the marketing and consumer literature complicit: allowing these groups and intertwining dynamics of consumers' lives to be overlooked further entrenches cis-hetero-allo-normativity and its corresponding hierarchy.

We also recognize that the cis-hetero-allo-normative patriarchy can vary from country to country in how it manifests, and, as intersectionality theory reminds us, it does not operate in isolation. It is held in place because it supports and is supported by other systems of oppression ((neo)imperialism, white supremacy, capitalism) and often acts in concert with other forms of domination (e.g., racism, ableism, bodyism, ageism, classism, colonialism, ethnocentrism) to sustain inequities (hooks, 2013; Puar, 2017). Despite work that recognizes the importance of an intersectionality perspective (e.g., Gopaldas & Siebert, 2018; Rinallo et al., 2023; Sobande et al., 2020; Steinfield & Holt, 2020; Steinfield, Sanghvi, et al., 2019; Veresiu & Parmentier, 2021) and a growth in work that explores non-Western experiences of gender/sex/uality (e.g., Das et al., 2023; Liu & Kozinets, 2022; Mady et al., 2023; Mitra et al., 2022; Ndichu & Rittenburg, 2021; Steinfield et al., 2020; Steinfield, Coleman, et al., 2019; Varman et al., 2018; Venugopal & Viswanathan, 2021; Walther & Schouten, 2016; Yalkin & Veer, 2018), a lacuna still exists, particularly when compared to the dominant approaches of gender/sex studies (Steinfield, Littlefield, et al., 2019). With this special issue we sought to address these under-researched areas and offer a wider, more inclusive and encompassing view of genderS.

2 | ANSWERING THE CALL TO TROUBLE GENDERS

The articles in this special issue and this editorial are a starting point for marketing and consumer behavior to trouble genderS. Collectively, they accomplish our multiple goals—goals which include: expanding views on genderS and gender/sex/ual diversity; illuminating (in)equities, their (re)production and effects on consumer well-being; and addressing under-researched areas, research errors and misperceptions. This is done in three main ways.

First, this special issue explores the multiple ways genderS are lived in physical trans and non-binary bodies and/or expressed due to intersectional dynamics and sexual orientations. Trans, in these articles, encompasses the idea of transitioning (temporarily or permanently) across or between genders, de-gendering or transcending the binaries (Ekins & King, 1999; see Davis & Paramanathan, 2024 in this special issue), as well as just being "expressly trans" (Hansman &

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Drenten, 2024). For example, expressly trans research is taken up by Duncan-Shepherd and Hamilton (2022)[1] who illuminate the multiple ways symbolic violence is encountered by and affects agender, genderqueer, non-binary and/or transgender consumers, uncovering the presence of symbolic violence in sociocultural systems/practices (media), interpersonal dynamics (family, marketplace/space interactions), and individual actions [self-policing and shapeshifting (presenting as more masculine or feminine or undetectable depending on perceived threats)]. Hansman and Drenten (2024) examine the double edge sword transgender consumers encounter in digital spaces by using the hashtag #TransCrowdFund to navigate inequities. While transgender consumers may achieve monetary, social and emotional support, transphobic marketplaces also leave them open to acts of threats and violence. Likewise, Rocha et al.'s (2024) study of transgender consumers' experiences of intimate apparel reveals that while clothing can be liberating, comforting, and support trans people's identity construction, the lack of having affordable and well-fitting options, and the transphobia of marketspaces, can result in experiences and sentiments of marginalizations, vulnerability and stigmatization. Davis and Paramanathan (2024) leverage an intersectionality lens and Collins' (1990) idea of the matrix of domination to explore transitions, transformations, and transcendences across gender and ethnic boundaries. Their study of trans-national trans people in Australia captures how consumers utilize a gender liminal, decolonizing thirdspace, becoming weekend women to temporarily escape and resist the expected, masculine gender performances/embodiments of the corporate world and their diasporic community. However, as they emphasize, escaping the matrix of domination is never complete. Although liminal spaces enable symbolic and expressive outlets, these spaces are still constraining and can create vulnerabilities, limit embracements of sexuality, and result in threats of violence. Collectively these articles enrich understandings of how genders and gender/sex/ual diversity relates to consumer (un)well-being. In addition, we feature two panelist conversations with scholars, including Shona Bettany, Olimpia Burchiellaro and Rohan Venkatraman, who provide critical viewpoints on why consumer and marketing research has struggled to move beyond the binary, and another with Abigail Nappier Cherup, Kevin Thomas, Wendy Hein and Jack Coffin, who expand on the importance of an intersectionality perspective.

Second, our special issue addresses some of the lacunas, providing examples of non-Western accounts of gender socialization and its effects. Lopes et al. (2024) and Rocha et al. (2024) shed light on the highly patriarchal Brazilian society. In particular, Lopes et al. (2024) explore a key mechanism that allows the naturalization and reproduction of the cis-hetero-patriarchy: familial use of repressive and productive power to structure children's play, which socializes children to achieve the 'ideal' norm. Their study furthers research on families, recognizing how cis-hetero-normativity shows up in a variety of caregiver behaviors, the added difficulty in deviating from gender norms for boys, and acts of resistance that a few caregivers take to counter the prevailing norms. Preston et al. (2024) take us to China. Their intersectionality analysis offers a nuanced view of the gender financial literacy gap, recognizing the ways gender norms and rurality cross over to explain differences. And the aforementioned Davis and Paramanathan (2024) article illuminates the cis-hetero-normativity within an Indian diaspora community, depicting how gender/sex/ual diversity is tied closely to ethnic norms and exoticized-racialized bodies. These articles demonstrate the pervasiveness but culturally nuanced enactments and consequences of cis-hetero-patriarchy.

Third, we revisit notions of what it means to study gender in consumer behavior and marketing. Jones et al. (2024) provide a systematic review of common measures of sex and gender in consumer research, and solutions for more inclusive research practices and measures. Their analysis delivers rich insights into the ways etic and emic and binary and non-binary views

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have informed gender/sex scholarship, the origins of many of these practices, and the resulting problems it creates for the validity of studies. It is a recommended read for anyone approaching the study of gender/sex that seeks to use categories or measurements. In this editorial we extend on their work, offering suggestions for thinking about and doing research on gender/sex/uality. Additional methodological and theoretical perspectives are also offered in articles that expand ideas on how we might study intersectionality aspects quantitatively (see Preston et al., 2024), and gender/sex/uality dynamics qualitatively. The latter includes poststructuralist feminist queer perspectives (Lopes et al., 2024), a crisscrossing of narrative and ethnography (Davis & Paramanathan, 2024), and trans (digital) geography (Hansman & Drenten, 2024).

Our two panel sessions also explore the challenges associated with studying genderS, and gender/sex/ual diversity with Bettany, Burchiellaro, and Venkatraman (Cheded et al., 2024) providing a contemplative view of the emancipatory and oppressive nature of categories, such as the LGBTQIA+ or trans labels. They also share honestly about their own experiences within academia, including institutional pressures and the sanitization of their research, while considering ways that all scholars can participate in institutional activism that pushes for change by just being in the space and making small, but meaningful, changes. The panel with Nappier Cherup, Thomas, Hein and Coffin (Steinfield, Hutton et al., 2024) discusses the struggles of doing impactful research that remains grounded in the voices and goals of those who are often marginalized and/or exploited for research purposes, while also working to bring the 'mainstream' along. As anti-oppressive and feminist methods recognize, studying systematically marginalized groups, to which many gender/sex/ual diverse people relate, requires that we adopt a critical praxis: using our research to critique and fix problematic practices (Potts & Brown, 2015; Steinfield, Sanghvi, et al., 2019). Taking an active role to bring about change—inside and outside of academia—requires additional time, effort and emotional and mental labor, and often falls on the shoulders of those from marginalized groups. In the panel and this editorial, we thus call for others to join as allies, advocates, and accomplices to work towards illuminating and addressing marketplace inequities.

To support the goals noted above and to position the contribution of these articles, the next sections of this editorial illuminate the trends of the literature on gender-related research, evidencing the aforementioned cis-hetero-allo-normativity and misnomer problems. Doing so sets up the proceeding sections in which we explore what it means to define (or not define and interrogate) gender, sex, and sexuality, and why the articles in this special issue are key to moving the discourse on gender forward. We conclude with suggestions on thinking, doing, and connecting that can help guide scholars and practitioners. Our hope is that this special issue opens up pathways for conversations about genderS and gender/sex/ual diversity to occur across the spectrum of journals—consumer, marketing, advertising, retail, among others—supporting those working to bring the conversations into the top tier journals of our field, as well as bring along those who are new to some of these ideas.

3 | THE HISTORICAL ARCH OF GENDER RESEARCH

What does it mean to study gender? As Jones et al. (2024) in this special issue note, consumer behavior scholars have explored this question for well over 30 years. Notably, 30 years ago, Fischer and Bristor (1994) advocated for marketing and consumer behavior scholars to recognize that gender was not about sex-based differences between men and women; gender was "a social concept referring to psychologically, sociologically, or culturally rooted traits, attitudes, beliefs, and behavioral tendencies" (p. 519).

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Over the course of time, this idea has been reinforced through numerous special issues in journals (*Journal of Marketing Management*: Arsel et al., 2015; Dobscha & Ostberg, 2021; Prothero & Tadajewski, 2021; *Journal of Macromarketing*: Gurrieri et al., 2020; *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research*: Coleman et al., 2021; and *Consumption, Markets & Culture*: Tissier-Desbordes & Visconti, 2019), books and chapters in edited volumes (Catterall et al., 2000; Dobscha, 2019; Maclaran et al., 2022; Maclaran & Chatzidakis, 2022; Maclaran & Kravets, 2018; Otnes & Zayer, 2012; Steinfield, Littlefield, et al., 2019; Zayer et al., 2017), and numerous articles, as scholars increasingly push for a recognition that gender structures interactions with markets, marketplaces/spaces and consumer behaviors for all consumers (for overviews see: Hearn & Hein, 2015; Zayer et al., 2017). However, although some scholars have called for research to go beyond the binary (Bettany et al., 2010; Maclaran et al., 2009; Steinfield, Littlefield, et al., 2019), with some venturing into this space, research on gender has continually struggled to do so. It remains predominantly cisgendered and hetero-allo-normative with studies focused on men and/or women and ideas of masculinity and femininity, and on (unnamed) White, Western, abled bodies. In short, we have not moved beyond the binaries and status quo.

Tracing the arch of gender research demonstrates this problem, as illustrated in Figure 1. Figure 1 is based on a search of marketing, advertising, retail, service and consumer behavior journals in Scopus for articles that had the title or keywords of "gender OR women OR men OR intersex OR transmen OR transwomen OR transgender OR transpeople OR transgender OR nonbinary OR non-binary," with no date preference set. While not claiming to be exhaustive, we searched journals that were ranked as an A or A+ on the 2022 Australian Business Dean's Council list (ABDC, 2023). Doing so allows us to capture an international collection of journals and articles that passed more rigorous peer review processes, indicating the wider academic trends of what is deemed and policed as acceptable gender content. We also, however, added journals that were not on this list because they were too new and/or were ranked lower (B level in the ABDC rankings) (*Consumption Markets & Culture, Journal of the Association for Consumer Research*), or were not ranked *(Advertising & Society Quarterly; Journal of Consumer Culture*), but that championed and featured gender-related or gender/sex/ual diversity research through special issues or editorial focus. Articles that studied the gender of brands or products, as well as book reviews, were excluded given our focus on consumer gender dynamics. In total, we included 46 journals, and 1006 articles, spanning the dates 1967 (the earliest publication, which was in this journal–*Journal of Consumer Affairs*) to January 2024. Because we wanted to highlight the trend of the marginalization of gender/sex diverse, intersexed, non-binary, trans men, trans women, and trans gender consumers and the disproportionate focus on women, we assessed the content of these articles for the gender or sex of focus, categorized by assessments noted in Table 1.

We also assessed these articles for intersectional identities, notably sexuality, race, ethnicity, age, body types, nationality, class, and dis/abilities. To ascertain the focus of the article, we read through all abstracts, followed by deeper dives on papers where things were not clearly demarcated (e.g., where LGBTQ labels were used, which did not always mean trans people were included). Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of the research.

Two key trends emerge from our analysis. First, as illustrated in Figure 1, despite the calls to the contrary (Bettany et al., 2010; Maclaran et al., 2009; Steinfield, Littlefield, et al., 2019), studying the effects of gender still means, for the majority of scholars, the study of sex-based differences between (presumed) cis-gendered men and women (for a more in-depth view see: Jones et al., 2024; Peñaloza et al., 2023). Gender typically represents a proxy for sex.

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Second, when gender is explored it often is done in an isolating manner, largely overlooking intersecting social identities that matter (Steinfield, Littlefield, et al., 2019), including the aforementioned elements that are tied closely to gender—sex, sexuality, and attraction. Gender-related work is often about exploring the impact of binary-gender roles (societally-imposed ideals of acceptable behavior governing how one acts, speaks, dresses, grooms and/or conducts oneself based on perceived sex) and how feminine versus masculine ideals influence women and men's behaviors, relating these to men's (e.g., Haase et al., 2016; Hein & O'Donohoe, 2014; Holt, 2004; Littlefield, 2010; Moisio et al., 2013; Moisio & Beruchashvili, 2016, 2023) or women's (e.g., Cheded & Liu, 2022; Dobscha & Ozanne, 2001; Drenten et al., 2023; Maciel &

TABLE 1 Categorizes assessed in review of articles.

GenderS	Articles that recognize gender/sex/uality in a way that goes beyond, across or between the binaries (e.g., cross dressers), often compares cisgendered men or women to those with more gender/sex/ually fluid, diverse, or trans expressions; includes conceptual papers calling for more non-binary, gender/sex/ual diverse scholarship
Gender binary	Articles that focus on differences between men or women, masculinities or femininities; often conflating sex with gender.
Gender diverse	Articles with a specific focus on people who identify as gender/sex/ually diverse, often using the LGBTQIIA+ label (or a version of it), which makes it difficult to ascertain trans or non-binary identities; focus is on their experience of gender/sex/ual norms or ideals, structures they faced, or their experiences at large, or their performativity of gender/sex/uality roles
Intersex	Articles with specific focus on people who identify as intersexed and their experiences with gender/sex/ual norms, ideals, structures, or their experiences at large, or performativity of gender/sex
Men	Articles with a specific focus on people who either identify as a man or are ascribed to being a man (by researchers); focus is on men or men's experiences with gender/sex/ual norms, ideals, structures, or their experiences at large, or men's performativity of gender roles or masculinities
Non-binary	Articles with a specific focus on people who identify as non-binary and their experiences with gender/sex/ual norms, ideals, structures, or their experiences at large, or their performativity of gender roles
Transgender or trans people	Articles with a specific focus on people who identify as transgender or as a trans person, and their experiences with gender/sex/ual norms, ideals, structures, or their experiences at large, or their performativity of gender roles; articles may compare trans women and trans men, or those who have and have not transitioned, or may not note these additional distinctions
Trans men	Articles with a specific focus on people who identify as trans men and their experiences with gender/sex/ual norms, ideals, structures, or their experiences at large, or their performativity of gender roles
Trans women	Articles with a specific focus on people who identify as trans women and their experiences with gender/sex/ual norms, ideals, structures, or their experiences at large, or their performativity of gender roles
Women	Articles with a specific focus on people who either identify as a woman or are ascribed to being a woman (by researchers); focus is on women or women's experiences with gender/sex/ual norms, ideals, structures, or their experiences at large, or women's performativity of gender roles or femininities

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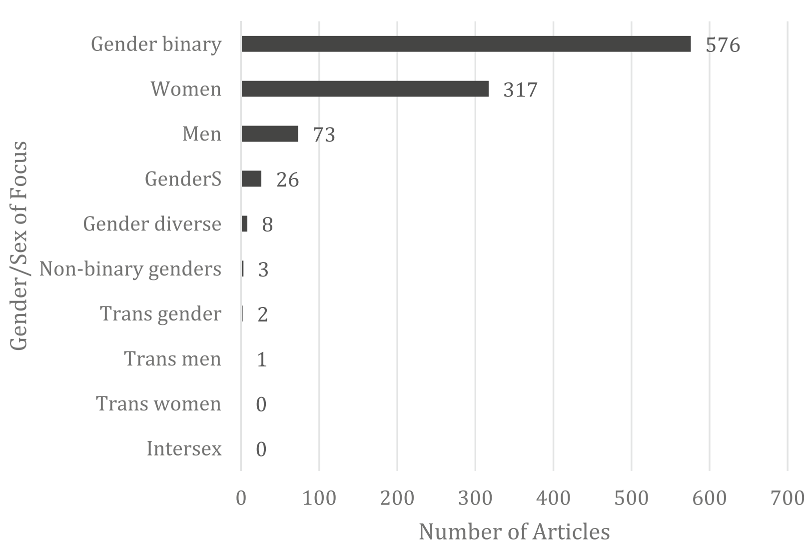

FIGURE 1 Categories of focus of gender/sex related scholarship, 1967–2024.

Wallendorf, 2017; Rome & Lambert, 2020; Sanghvi & Hodges, 2015; Thompson & Üstüner, 2015) consumption practices or experiences of or representations in marketplaces. The majority of these articles leave race, class, age, body types, dis/abilities unspecified, unless it is within a regional journal (e.g., Asia) or with non-Western consumers, in which case nationality or country context may feature (e.g., Arev, 2021; Godefroit-Winkel & Peñaloza, 2020; Liu & Kozinets, 2022; Ourahmoune & Özçağlar-Toulouse, 2012; Üstüner & Holt, 2007). It is within the articles on gender injustices (Hein et al., 2016)—in which women feature highly—that conversations take into account how intersectional identities, such as race, socioeconomic positions, age, and body types, connect to social positions and power dynamics that affect access, representations, and behaviors within marketplaces/spaces (e.g., Badejo et al., 2021; Cox et al., 2022; Gopaldas & Siebert, 2018; Gurrieri & Cherrier, 2013; Harrison et al., 2015; Hutton, 2015, 2019; Mitchell et al., 2023; Shinoda et al., 2021; Steinfield, Coleman, et al., 2019; Steinfield & Holt, 2020; Venugopal & Viswanathan, 2021; Veresiu & Parmentier, 2021). Taken as a whole, this body of gender-related research, while it advances understandings of the socialization and social construction of gender norms/roles, the effects of gender norms/roles, adherence to or contravention of gender norms/roles, and gender inequities, it also falls prey to reinforcing binaries (Sterling, 2022) and over-relying on sex to define gender (Delphy, 1993). That is, authors use sex as the initiator that determines the gender of focus. As the French feminist sociologist, Christine Delphy (1993), once described, "gender [becomes] the *content* with sex as the *container*" (p. 3).

For sexuality, when it is considered, it is largely done in ways that perpetuate a double binary—hetero versus homo + (cisgender) men versus women. Studies focus on sexual consumption (e.g., of heterosexual women) or sexual orientation (e.g., gay men and/or lesbian women) (Elkanova & Steinfield, 2024). Gay men dominate the latter (Coffin et al., 2019; Elkanova & Steinfield, 2024). Variances in sexual attraction (e.g., asexual, graysexual, demisexual, allosexual) or romantic attraction (aromantic, grayromantic, demiromantic, alloromantic)[2] are not considered (Coffin et al., 2022; Elkanova & Steinfield, 2024). While the voices of those who practice gender *and* sexual fluidity appeared initially in 1994 (Peñaloza, 1994), these voices and perspectives remain marginalized despite recent advocacy efforts (Coffin et al., 2019; Montecchi et al., 2024).

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Those that study trans, non-binary or gender expansive people remain very limited, totaling 14 out of the 1006 articles. Some of these perpetuate homophobic and transphobic tendencies or seem opportunitistic. Articles that come from a place of meaningful engagement and recognition, and that are not editorials or based on speeches, include: Aya Pastrana et al. (2022), Brennan (2022), Camminga and Lubinsky (2022), Ciaralli and Vercel (2023), Goulding and Saren (2009), Li (2022), McKeage et al. (2018), Peñaloza (1994), and Tsai (2010). Although some of these articles included intersex people or trans women, this was done in grouping them with other gender/sex diverse people, with no articles specifically focusing on them. There was also little gender/sex/ual diversity explored outside of trans or genderqueer people.

Given that awareness within society has grown as it relates to sex, gender and sexual fluidities (Jones et al., 2024), these trends demonstrate that consumer behavior and marketing scholarship have yet to catch up. Rather than leading the way, the scholarship has remained stuck in outdated notions of what it means to study gender. While Fischer and Bristor (1994) offered us a starting point 30 years ago, it is time for marketing and consumer behavior scholars to reconceptualize what it means to study gender—or, as we note, genderS. We now turn to consider what this might mean.

4 | WHAT IS GENDERS AND HOW DOES IT RELATE TO SEX, SEXUALITIES, AND ATTRACTION?

Our goal in this editorial is not to define the variety of genderS, as we recognize that is a fluid narrative, personally defined, and may inadvertently perpetuate categorizations that erase consumer differences or perpetuate hierarchies and gentrification [as noted in this special issue's panel featuring Bettany, Burchiellaro, and Venkatraman (Cheded et al., 2024)]. Categorizations, while a fundamental aspect of human language and our capacity to make sense of the world and each other, are never neutral (Valentine, 2007). Rather, our goal is to describe what genderS entails to encourage a more realistic understanding of genderS, and to comprehend how our current operationalizations and understandings of gender, sex and sexuality perpetuate a historical cis-hetero-allo-normativity. For these proceeding sections, given the existing confusion and problems surrounding gender, sex, and sexuality, we start by centering our focus on explaining gender/sex/ual diversity, and will come back to the importance of how this crosses over with other intersecting identities and systems.

To summarize, the idea of genderS is to encourage scholars to recognize how sex, gender, sexualities and attraction are all bound up together, as illustrated in Figure 2. Sex is often equated with biological (e.g., chromosones) and/or bodily/physical differences. The latter may be innate or what you are born with (e.g., genitalia), or influenced or changed due to exogenous factors like external hormones that change voices or body shapes, chest binding, or surgeries. Sex is also equated to what you are assigned at birth, which in many of today's society is either male or female. Gender is typically viewed as distinct from sex and connected to cultural, socializing conditions (e.g., norms/ideals, gendered organizing of roles and division of labor, gendered symbolism, discourse and representations), related to one's gender expression, behaviors or 'doing' of gender (masculinities, femininities, and to a far lesser extent, gender varients), and/or it is positioned as an internal sense of one's gender identity (Hein et al., 2016; McCall, 1992; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Sexuality includes sexual behaviors, feelings, orientations (level and direction of romantic and/or sexual attraction, desires, interest, thoughts towards others), sexual status (number and gender mix of partners), bonding dynamics (passion, commitment, intimacy), and identity (labels, social positionings, communities of

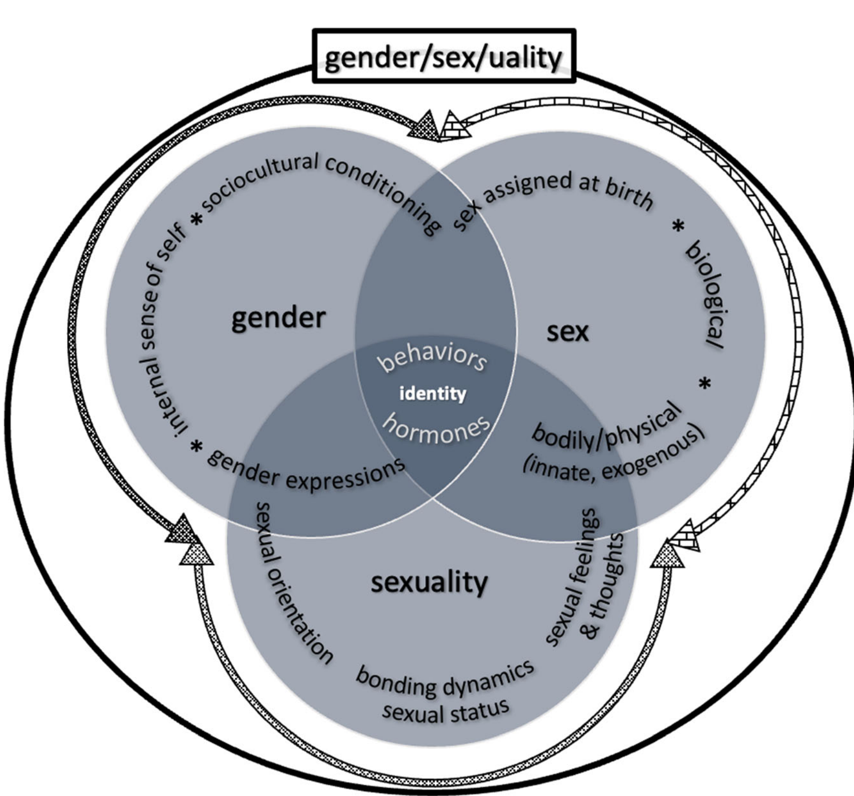

FIGURE 2 Gender/sex/uality recognizes that gender, sex, and sexuality are separate but interrelated. Adapted from van Anders (2022).

belonging, politics) (Valentova & Varella, 2016; van Anders, 2015). It is an aspect often separated into its own enclave of study: sexuality studies (Coffin et al., 2022).

We wish to draw out two points to advance these conversations. First, as the wider sociology, psychology and biology scholarship attests, although scholars might treat these elements as distinct, sex, gender, and sexuality cannot be easily—if at all—separated. There is a gender/sex/ual melding (van Anders, 2022). Although the venn diagram belies the complexities of how many of these cross over with each other, we can see their interrelated nature in how hormones, behaviors, and identities converge. Hormones are typically attributed to sex, but they are also influenced by and influence gender rearing and gender and sexual expressions or behaviors (van Anders, 2022). All of these aspects come together to inform identities. The second point we highlight is how the ideals as well as the very meanings of 'sex,' 'gender,' and 'sexuality' have changed over time depending on science and politics (Fausto-Sterling, 2008; Foucault, 1979; Lugones, 2007). We explore the implications of these two points for marketing and consumer scholarship in the next section.

4.1 | Moving from gender versus sex versus sexuality to gender/sex/ual diversity

Starting with the first point, as our review of the literature illustrates, the majority of marketing, advertising and consumer research has fallen into the cis-hetero assumption that sex and

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gender-related differences exist between men and women, and that sexuality differences exist between (allo) hetero- and homo-sexual people. Yet these binaries are deceiving and one we encourage scholars to challenge. Indeed, unlike Eisend and Rößner's (2022) article—which assumes there are two distinct sexes and biological gender elements that are binary (male versus female) and stable—we draw from work that demonstrates that this reductionist view hides the true reality of gender/sex/ual diversity (van Anders, 2022).

We encourage scholars to read the work in psychology and biology that challenges unfounded myths of brain and hormonal or neuroendocrinology differences (for overviews see: DuBois & Shattuck-Heidorn, 2021; Hyde et al., 2019), and problems with the sexing of cells, and improper extensions of binary, sex-based evolutionary theories and medical tests on animals to humans (e.g., female mice to female humans) (Richardson, 2022). In summary, as Hyde et al. (2019) emphasize, "sex differences in the human brain do not add up to create two types of brains," rather "most brains are gender/sex mosaics" with significant overlaps between genders/sexes (p. 174). In relation to hormones, although commonly used only as designators of sex, they are bound up and connected to gender and sexuality, and they cannot be readily used to mark sex/gender binary differences: All bodies produce testosterone, estradiol (the predominant form of estrogen) and progesterone, and these hormones change depending on life cycles (e.g., age, menstruation phase), environmental (e.g., time of day, season) and social behavioral contexts (e.g., mood, social relation dynamics, gender rearing) (DuBois & Shattuck-Heidorn, 2021; Hyde et al., 2019; van Anders et al., 2014). Using hormones—including testosterone—or testing for brain or cell differences in ways that create binaristic sex and/or gender findings (male/female or men/women), may be more a product of the methodology and ingrainess of sex stereotypes than a true reflection of reality (DuBois & Shattuck-Heidorn, 2021; Fine, 2012; Hyde et al., 2019; Jordan-Young, 2010; Richardson, 2022).

To comprehend gender/sex/ual diversity is to recognize that there are: (i) bodily; (ii) socializing gender/sex/ual dynamics; (iii) bio/logics; and (iv) a person's agency and own sense of self, definition, and expression at play. For example, a body's (in)visible sex attributes marks a person as a gendered and sexual being that they and others categorize and appraise, often based on dominating bio/logics and societal ideals, which can collectively affect a person's sense of self and behaviors (Butler, 1990; Hines & Sanger, 2010; Valentine, 2007). Bio/logics is the "implicit and/ or explicit reasoning that guides categorizations, which is informed by features thought to be natural, corporeal, evolved, and material," including ideas of race and sex (van Anders, 2014, p. 33). For example, medical professionals use multiple criteria to determine an individual's sex, including, as Greenberg (1999, p. 278) summarizes:

1. Genetic or chromosomal sex—XY or XX;
2. Gonadal sex (reproductive sex glands)- testes or ovaries;
3. Internal morphologic sex (determine after 3 months gestation)—seminal vesicles/prostrate or vagina/uterus/fallopian tubes;
4. External morphologic sex (genitalia)—penis/scrotum or clitoris/labia;
5. Hormonal sex—androgens or estrogens;
6. Phenotypic sex (secondary sexual features)—facial and chest hair or breasts;
7. Assigned sex and gender rearing; and
8. Sexual [Gender] identity

Cis-gendered men and women may be considered to be at opposite ends of a mosaic where these elements align in the ways that society deems them to be 'natural,' but there is a lot of

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diversity in between as these elements mix in a variety of ways. There may, for example, be chromosome ambiguity, with combinations of "XXX, XXY, XXXY, XYY, XYYY, XYYYY, and XO" instead of just XY or XX (Greenberg, 1999, p. 281). Some people may have incomplete or a mix of different gonads, internal sex organs, indecipherable genitalia, variances in phenotypic features or hormones, and a gender/sexual identity that does not align with how others see them or that is given to them at birth (Callahan, 2009; Greenberg, 1999). While bio/logics may, at times, recognize these variances, the current, dominant bio/logics is one that seeks to transform gender/sex diverse people into a cisgendered body under the misguided belief that there is a 'right' sex (Ibrahim et al., 2023). Bio/logics has significant implications for the way a person's body is treated and whether it is accepted or pathologized as a mistake to be corrected. Bio/logics can result in recognitions that embrace differences or misrecognitions that erase differences (DuBois & Shattuck-Heidorn, 2021). Bio/logics, however, are not static; they are open to change, context-specific, and are embraced (or not) by people in different ways (Eichert & Luedicke, 2022).

Bio/logics are important to consider for numerous reasons. For researchers, they make evident the categorizations, practices, and definitions used to make sense of gender/sex/uality, and the (in)visibilities these create. The dominant bio/logics governing marketing and consumer research, for example, erases interconnections and diversity. This is evident in the check-mark exercises that seek to capture demographics of respondents based on narrow questions that conflate gender and sex and that perpetuate binary ideals. It is evident in the way hormonal or evolutionary differences are analyzed and read to indicate binary sex/gender differences (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015), or the division of sexuality studies from gender/sex studies (Coffin et al., 2022). The prevalence and naturalization of these practices overshadows, and thus mutes, deeper understandings as to how a person's biological sex has significant implications for their sexuality and gender expressions and vice-a-versa. The articles featuring transgender consumers in this special issue troubles some of these bio/logics: As Davis and Paramanathan (2024), Duncan-Shepherd and Hamilton (2022) and Rocha et al. (2024) make evident, because of the "heterosexual matrix" (Butler, 1990, p. 45), a person's gender/sex/uality cannot be disentangled nor narrowly demarcated. Gender, sex, and sexuality mutually reinforce each other, affecting consumption practices as consumers navigate the cis-hetero-normative marketplace and spaces, or use consumption practices to find alignment in these tri-part yet interwoven components of identity.

Additionally, as work in the wider field of social sciences and queer studies make evident, bio/logics that delineate sex are important to consider because they produce gender/sex/ual demarcations and interpersonal biases that structure consumers' lives and (un)well-being. This is evident in laws or policies stipulating what sex might be denoted on birth certificates, social security identities, passports or drivers licenses and requirements to change sex denotations, which can contribute to persistent misalignments between felt and expressed gender/sex identities and 'legal' sex identities (Ibrahim et al., 2023; Spade, 2007; Valentine, 2007). The medical bio/logics can affect a person's capacity to participate in sports (Barry-Hinton, 2022), to be legally married (Currah, 2022; Greenberg, 2000), or receive gender-affirming or reproductive-related care (Besse et al., 2020; Bhatt et al., 2022). Sex, gender, and sexuality collide in many legal, policy, and marketplace arenas (Currah, 2022; Gossett et al., 2017).

A person's gender/sex/uality, is, as noted, also affected by their own agency. People may define, feel and express gender/sex/uality in ways that align/fall within or misalign/fall outside of bio/logic definitions and social expectations. At times consumers' lives may align on one dimension (e.g., sex) but differ on others (e.g., gender and/or sexuality) (Bogaert, 2015;

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Chen, 2021; Davidmann, 2010; Dozier, 2005; Frohard-Dourlent et al., 2020; Nagoshi et al., 2012). A person that looks like a female due to a lack of facial hair, presence of breast and vagina may be categorized as a lesbian when seen in a relationship with another female even though they may have a gender identity of a man and have decided to not transition (Dozier, 2005). People may describe their gender/sex/uality in ways beyond, across or between the binaries, with fluidity of experiences and differences depending on life moments, time and context (e.g., Cheded & Liu, 2022; Dembroff, 2020; Ekins & King, 1999; Hart et al., 2019; Stryker, 2022; Suen et al., 2020; Visconti, 2008; in this special issue Davis & Paramanathan, 2024; Duncan-Shepherd & Hamilton, 2022). There is a broad diversity in how people define, feel and live gender, sex, and sexuality and what aspects are included in relating these ideas. In short, gender/sex/uality is multifaceted and varied.

4.2 | Why should we trouble the binaries? A historical reckoning

Going to our second point, we draw to the fore the significant body of scholarship that reveals how the binaries became the dominant way of thinking. We tell this history in a bit more detail than is normally given because doing so may help scholars to trouble their views of sex, gender and sexuality, and see the truth behind a practice that has become so naturalized we take it for granted.

The globalization and reinforcement of binary categories is one tied to colonialism, medical and scholarly demarcations, and political and legal battles. Prior to colonialism, many tribal and Indigenous cultures recognized intersexed people, gender fluidity, and varied sexualities and sexual practices (e.g., Allen, 1992; Herdt, 1994). Other societies recognized yet policed gender/sex/ual diversity (Fausto-Sterling, 2008; Foucault, 1979). These complex notions of gender, sex, sexuality and attraction, as Lugones (2007, 2008, 2010) relates, were reduced to binary categorizations under colonialism's project of establishing a global hierarchy of humanity based on dualistic thinking and biological terms of gender and race. People were framed and judged as being superior versus inferior, rational versus irrational, civilized versus primitive, modern versus traditional. The hierarchy served the goals of White, European, bourgeois men, allowing them to justify domination over others. Steeped in cis-hetero-sexist and racist ideals, the fictional reconception of human relations placed the White man above all—he was viewed as perfection, representing superiority, rationality, civilization and modernity. White women, Colored/Indigenous men, Colored/Indigenous women, and gender/sex/ually diverse people were viewed as lesser. Although Whiteness gave White women a coveted privileged position in society and the capacity to dominate those who were not White—which ensured their complicitness—they were often described as irrational, positioned as dependent on men and incapable of leading (Lugones, 2008; Oyěwùmí, 1997). In line with Western antiquity ideas (Laqueur, 1992), women were viewed as an "inversion and deformation of the male" (Lugones, 2010, p. 743). This sex/gender hierarchy gave White men control over White women's reproductive capacities and homebound labor—elements central to securing the success of the modernity, colonial, capitalist project (McClintock, 1995). Those who were not male or female, not heterosexual, and/or not White—the "hermaphrodites [intersexed], sodomites [homosexuals], viragos [females of masculine strength normally associated with colonized women], and the colonized" (Lugones, 2010, p. 743)—were cast far below in the hierarchy. Viewed as "aberrations of male perfection," they were deemed to be primitive, "promiscuous, grotesquely sexual," and treated with such inferiority that they were categorized as nonhuman, and treated

as monsters or beasts that could be exploited productively and reproductively, worked until death, sexually violated, and terrorized, (Lugones, 2010, p. 743).

The effects of this era still shape modern society. Take for example the persistence of laws that criminalize homosexuality in prior colonial countries (Human Dignity Trust, 2024), or racial biases in societies and marketplaces (Francis, 2023; Henderson et al., 2016), or the marking of gender dysphoria (when people experience a mismatch between their sex and gender) as a mental disorder (Currah, 2022), or the aforementioned backlash politics, or the common practice of doctors trying to fit people into binarity embodiments of sex, gender and sexuality. As Greenberg (2000, 114) describes:

> XY infants with "inadequate" penises must be turned into girls because society believes the essence of manhood is the ability to penetrate a vagina and urinate while standing. XX infants with "adequate" penises, however, are assigned the female sex because society and many in the medical community believe that the essence of womanhood is the ability to bear children rather than the ability to engage in satisfactory sexual intercourse.

Colonial ideals including binaristic and hierarchical thinking have likewise shaped bio/logical demarcations and academic answers to questions as to whether it is sex or gender that determines a person's identity. For example, until the mid 1900s, the majority view held that sex, such as genitals and reproductive organs, was synonymous with, and thus determined, gender. Sex ruled over gender (Laqueur, 1992). In the mid to late 1900s, scholars such as John Money and feminist changed the equation. They separated sex from gender and advocated that gender ruled over sex (Gonsalves, 2020; Haig, 2004). This separation and hierarchy allowed Money to advance his proposition that it was the environment—nurture—over biology—nature—that determined gender. Although Money recognized that a gender binary view of the world was wrong, he also saw it as inevitable and perpetuated colonial ideals, with detrimental consequences for intersexed and trans people (Goldie, 2014). He advocated that surgical interventions of intersexed infants were necessary. This view became widely taken up. To leave an infant as intersexed, he believed, would result in lifelong suffering of being stigmatized and deemed as "a freak" (Money et al., 1969, p. 213)—a demarcation that has clear alignments with colonial ideas. His ideas continue to shape bio/logics governing intersexed newborns and trans people (van Anders, 2014).

For feminist, although ideas developed differently between White and Colored feminist—with the latter having to contend against the additional racialized hierarchies (Collins, 1990)—the separation of sex from gender and the prioritization of gender over sex allowed them to challenge a fundamental idea of (racialized) patriarchy: "That women were subordinate because of their bodies" (Gonsalves, 2020, p. 453). It was not their bodies but the gendered and racialized values, ideals, and judgments societies imposed on those bodies that resulted in subordination (Collins, 1990; Combahee River Collective, 1986; Gonsalves, 2020). West and Zimmerman's (1987) influential article marks another shift in which gender and sex or the nurture–nature distinctions were collapsed so that sex would eventually be seen to be "gender all along" (Butler, 1990, p. 14). Gender, at last, ruled fully over sex. Yet as aforementioned, the reality was that sex was still used to define gender along binary lines (Delphy, 1993).

The binaries surrounding gender, sex, and sexualities remained largely in place until the efforts of transgender scholars and advocates in the late 1980s and early 1990s (e.g., Stone, 1991; Stryker, 1994). Their writings critiqued essentializing, dualistic, and separatist

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ideas of gender, sex and sexuality, sought to disrupt the colonial-based, pejorative judgments of intersexed and gender varient people as 'freaks' and 'monsters', and called for a focus on bodies and how they inhabit a variety and melding of sex, gender and sexualities (Stryker, 2006).

Transgender activists and scholars have, over time, profoundly impacted medical and legal understandings and classifications of gender/sex/ualities (e.g., bio/logics), resulting in depathologizing transgenderness from its classification as a mental disorder to a recognition that gender identity is something innate that is not a disorder but a way of being human (Stryker, 2006). Their work has resulted in recent medical forays and legal rulings in Western societies bringing about another change in how we thinking about sex and gender: conceptualizations of sex have expanded from solely residing in the genitals and reproductive organs to including more visible (hair, breasts, body shape), and invisible (chromosomes) parts (Barry-Hinton, 2022; Gonsalves, 2020), while the existence of gender identity variance is, in some contexts, translating to more inclusive bio/logical practices in governmental ID protocols (Ibrahim et al., 2023). While the aforementioned backlash politics have ensued, there has been a fundamental shift in how many people view the relationship between, and definitions of, gender, sex and sexuality.

We relate this brief history to bring scholars less familiar with gender/sex/uality along so that they might understand what underlies the categorizes and gender/sex/ual and racial binaries they might unconsciously adopt, and why confusion exists regarding what is being studied (given the changing nature of definitions and focus). The variances scholars document in changing conceptualizations of gender, sex and sexuality over time (Fausto-Sterling, 2008; Fee, 2010; Gonsalves, 2020; Hines & Sanger, 2010; Stryker, 2006) and the colonial-roots of the binaries and hierarchies (Lugones, 2007, 2008, 2010; McClintock, 1995), disrupts notions that sex, gender, and sexuality—like race—can be readily categorized despite the 'natural' or truth-like appearance that categories and labels hold (Foucault, 1979). Gender, sex, and sexuality are, in short, a product of the meaning making of science, medicine, and laws, are entangled with political and sociocultural dynamics and personal decision, yet have profound impacts on the ways we recognize and treat ourselves and others, and thus consumers' well-being.

Society seems to be in a time of unraveling essentialist understandings and embracing gender/sex/ual diversity. However, the question is whether marketing and consumer scholarship is going to join in unraveling views of gender/sex/ual diversity or reinforce the colonial, racial, cis-hetero-normative binaries. Achieving the former requires scholars and practitioners to rethink many practices, to which we now turn.

4.3 | Practices that reinforce the colonial, cis-hetero-normative and racialized binaries

The vestiges of the colonial gender/sex/uality and racial hierarchies, are evident in many practices, bio/logics and ideas in marketing and consumer scholarship. This includes work that studies and categorizes consumers based on White, Western, masculine or feminine attributes (e.g., the etic, binary scales such as the Bem Sex Role Inventory) (Jones et al., 2024), often ignoring intersectional differences, including race (Burton, 2009; Steinfield, Littlefield, et al., 2019; Zayer et al., 2017). The vestiges are apparent in practices that create brand personalities according to Western masculine and feminine ideals, with gender biases making masculine brands appear more favorable (Spielmann et al., 2020). And the vestiges are evident in the aforementioned bio/logics that cause scholars to grapple with whether they are studying binary

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sex- or gender-based differences, or to struggle to think, use words, and study things in ways that do not equate back to 'the binary' even when attempting to consider gender/sex/ual diverity—our own writing and the positioning of this special issue is a case in point.

We also see remnants of the coloniality hierarchies in the bio/logics that separate gender/sex studies from sexuality studies and race studies, and the marking of this scholarship and consumers as non-normative (Burton, 2009; Coffin et al., 2022). Take for example gender/sex and sexuality studies. They typically assume White bodies. If race is made explicit, they are commonly labeled as offering an 'intersectionality' perspective and put into the category of race-scholarship (Burton, 2009). Our own need to make an explicit call for 'intersectionality' perspectives is a case in point. While these studies are marked, the naturalization of Whiteness, cisgender/sex, or heterosexuality is rarely called into question. This practice is one that extends to other areas of inquiry that are treated more as niche or abnormal, such as dis/ability studies (Kearney et al., 2019) or subsistence consumers (e.g., Steinfield & Holt, 2020; Venugopal & Viswanathan, 2021). In short, practices within marketing and consumer research maintain the colonial hierarchy by allowing White, Western, middle-class, cisgendered, heterosexual, male, abled bodies to be the unlabeled norm, while anything else is labeled as aberrations.

Notably, when 'niche' market consumers are recognized, it is often done in ways that do not challenge the colonial order but rather support the colonial-capitalistic project. For example, as scholars note (Chambers, 2006; Landrum, 2021; Rosa-Salas & Sobande, 2022; Russell & Malhotra, 2002), Black and Hispanic consumers, sexually-diverse consumers, subsistence consumers, and people living with disabilities, were marked as marketplace aberrations worth studying and appealing to only once they had proven their economic viability. Yet these recognitions do not fundamentally challenge the coloniality of gender and race and invisibilities it casts on other markers of difference. For those who are sexually diverse, a "cycle of recognition" (Elkanova & Steinfield, 2024) means that those who are typically recognized by scholarship begets attention from marketing practitioners, and vice versa, resulting in the dominance of those who fit into White, middle/upper class, cisgendered male, gay bodies and ideals. Black, Hispanic, and subsistence consumers—typically denoted along cisgendered male/female lines—face a situation where their participation in consumer society is based on terms set by White male elites, which often leave them separated from the main market with poorer quality products and facing discrimination and misrepresentations, and left with growing socioeconomic chasms between the haves and have nots (Davis, 2018; Francis & Robertson, 2021; Landrum, 2021; Rosa-Salas, 2019). People living with disabilities are typically overlooked. When recognized, they are often cast in White, male, cisgendered bodies, portrayed in super-human ways that renders them to be "less diminished" and thereby "requiring less transfiguration to achieve marketplace inclusion than those possessing several anomalous characteristics" (Kearney et al., 2019, pp. 552–553). Notably, there is a significant absence of anyone that does not fit into the gender/sex binary.

The coloniality of gender is further evident in scholarly debates that advocate for gender over sex (e.g., Bristor & Fischer, 1993; Peñaloza et al., 2023). While this work may start to illuminate patriarchal practices and norms, the binaries are rarely challenged. Separating gender from sex merely flips the binary and creates a new binary—nature/nurture. There is a vying for superiority between those who are in the biological-sex or nature-deterministic and evolutionary tent versus those who advocate for socio-cultural gender dynamics or nurture-social constructivism perspective (Sterling, 2022), instead of an understanding of how these elements are all interrelated and mutually reinforcing.

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Moving beyond, across and between the binaries calls for changes. We recognize that many of these practices and perspectives are engrained in minds and practices. Yet our hope is by encouraging a gender/sex/ual diversity perspective, academics and practitioners can start to appreciate the multifaceted nature of humanity and recognize people as living in ways that may challenge categories and categorization.

5 | HOW CAN WE CONTINUE TO MOVE THE CONVERSATION FORWARD?

We end this editorial with a consideration as to ways that we might trouble genderS to move the conversation forward. As the suggestions noted in Table 2 describe, there is 'thinking,' 'doing,' and 'connecting'. Some are small actions with potential ripple effects, others require more radical re-conceptualizations. We offer a variety of suggestions, aware that people are at different points in their journey in researching gender/sex/uality.

5.1 | Thinking

Progressing conversations calls for a more meaningful engagement with gender/sex/uality. Such an engagement is one that does not conflate gender, sex, and sexuality but understands how they are distinct (Coffin et al., 2022; Jones et al., 2024), and, as we emphasize, how they are interrelated and entangled. Scholars might do this by first thinking through why concepts might be important to their areas of interest, for example, asking: *What are gender, sex, or sexuality dynamics that might influence the outcomes and why might this be?*

To go further, scholars should ask '*the other question*' (Matsuda, 1991; Steinfield & Holt, 2020), querying: *How do other identities that might not initially be obvious show up?* This might be sex, gender, sexualities, as well as other identities that shape marketplace experiences, such as class, race, age, abilities, body type, nationality, religious beliefs, locality, among others. Preston et al.'s (2024) article in this special issue is a case in point. What first started out as a paper that demonstrated financial literacy differences between men and women, based on sex identities denoted on a survey, grew to become one that explored gender/sex and the importance of localities by recognizing how urban versus rural gendered social structures and practices shaped the gender/sex-based (men versus women) outcomes.

Asking '*the other question*' encourages scholars to open up considerations of casual links. For researchers studying biological sex differences (e.g., hormones) or neuroscience, this practice can help deepen studies and prevent methodological problems (Fine, 2012; Hyde et al., 2019; Jordan-Young, 2010; Richardson, 2022) since researchers should be grappling with the outcomes and thinking through their answers. For those who focus primarily on gender, it is also important to recognize how sex, sexuality, and attraction come to matter. Although gender norms, roles, expressions, representations, expressions, and felt identities are part of the story, consumers' well-being, lived experiences and the marketing practices that structure these also involve the sexed and sexual body. Bodies are central to the ways we navigate the world, how we feel about ourselves, are marked by others, and our relations with others (Lennon, 2019; Venkatraman et al, 2024). Although sexualities and levels/forms of attraction are often overlooked—naturalized as unimportant and given a lower status in marketing and consumer inquiries (Coffin et al., 2022)—they are there, entangled in gender/sex/uality. Sredl

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TABLE 2 Thinking, doing, and connection to move gender/sex/uality scholarship forward.

		Scholars	Practitioners
Thinking	Query your focus, thinking through how gender, sex, and/or sexuality and other intersecting social identities/locations show up	Ask: How is sex, gender, and sexuality relevant to my study? Ask the other question: If studying sex, ask, how does gender and/or sexuality show up; if studying gender, ask, how does sex and/or sexuality show up; if studying sexuality, ask how does sex and/or gender show up. Consider if there are other social identities/locations that matter. Flatten knowledge hierarchies that privilege certain elements (e.g., gender or sex) over others (e.g., sexuality) (Coffin et al., 2022).	Ask: Are we representing gender/sex/ual diversity in meaningful, accurate ways?
	Reconceptualize gender/sex/uality	Explore across, between and beyond the binaries to capture expressions of gender/sex/ual diversity. To go beyond the binary: Create new wording that reflects lived realities (e.g., being expressively trans) versus connecting things back to the two poles of masculinities and femininities.	
	Reconceptualize respondents	Rather than being viewed as objects of study, view respondents as people worthy of recognition and care; adopt an ethics of care, respectful curiosity, and do research in ways relevant to and equitable for the community.	
	Address hierarchies	Center considerations regarding benefits to respondents (versus benefits to researchers), asking (per Tebbe & Budge, 2016, p. 1004): "Who benefits in this situation?" Consider how your positionality might affect respondents and knowledge perspectives, asking: "How do power and privilege shape what we see and the decisions we make?" (Tebbe & Budge, 2016, p. 1004).	
	Expand lens	Use appropriate theoretical lens to capture lived realities (e.g., trans epistemologies when studying trans people). Move beyond the sanctioned theorists (e.g., Bourdieu, Butler) to explore the other theories that can help widen insights on gender/sex/uality; read widely; work with others, crossing disciplines.	Know your theory of change, thinking through unintended consequences and proactively planning how to deal with possible backlash.

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TABLE 2 (Continued)

		Scholars	Practitioners
	Adopt a re-radicalized intersectionality perspective	Move beyond identities to illuminating the structures, practices, norms, and interactions that cause these identity markers to be linked to experiences of oppression and/or privilege.	Move from a focus on equality to equity.
Doing	Expand/adopt care(ful) methodological practices	Learn about care(ful) practices by reading work related to research with communities of interest (in and outside of disciplinary boundaries); consult scholars working in the space. Ensure methodologies adopt care(ful) practices in recruitment, communication with participants, and questions asked. Reduce power dynamics between researchers and participants through: - language that indicates participants have linguistic power; - research methods such as community-based participatory or action research and deliberative inclusive processes; - adopting a collaborative, conversational approach in interviews; - adopting re-coding practices for survey data that maintain linguistic power of respondents. In quantitative data analysis, when studying genders/sex/ual differences: - report all results, including null (e.g., when similarities are found); - describe all distributions and means; - when differences are found test reliability and provide sensitivity analysis (Rippon et al., 2014). In qualitative analysis: - center the voices of respondents, using words respondents provide when describing their identities (emic approach); - check coding with respondents; - center the lived realities of respondents, telling their story instead of your own story; - recognize and keep in mind gender/sex/ual diversity even if not thematic focus. In all research: - recognize socio-historical context prior to data collection and in write-up of findings; - use strength or asset-based wording instead of deficit-based wording. Plan for 'safety work' in research protocols to reduce physical, emotional, and mental risks to researchers and participants.	
	Recognize gender/sex/ual variences but adopt best practices when asking respondents to indicate gender/sex/ual identities	Recognize gender/sex/ual variences but allow for self-identification of respondents/participants. • Carefully consider words: use man/woman vs. male/female; avoid use of words that communicate an 'othering' and excluding third variable. • Carefully structure options: opt for open-ended and/or multiple-step instead of three options; offer 'check all that apply' instead of forcing a choice of one identity.	

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TABLE 2 (Continued)

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Scholars</th><th>Practitioners</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2">• Carefully frame options: list alphabetically; provide definitions or example.

• Carefully select options: choose questions and formats that align with research; ask what you need to know.

Option 1: Consider wording/structure/framing, such as that adapted from Beischel et al.'s (2023) tested questions (p. 365) and Suen et al. (2020), including questions if they pertain to the research at hand (e.g., the binary question may not be relevant):
1. What is your current gender? (e.g., agender, woman) _____
2. When we describe who participated in our study, which of these categories would you like us to include you in?
a. A trans/transgender category (usually refers to people who were given a gender and/or sex label at birth that does not accurately represent them)
b. A cisgender category (refers to people who are the same gender and/or sex they were assigned at birth)
c. Neither cisgender nor trans/transgender describe me because:_______
d. Unsure because: ________
e. Prefer not to state because: _____________
3. And, which of these categories would you like us to include you in?
a. Binary (someone who identifies as exclusively a man/male or woman/female)
b. Non-binary (someone who has an identity other than exclusively woman/female or man/male)
c. Neither binary nor non-binary describe me because: _____
d. Unsure because: _____
e. Prefer not to state because:_________________
4. Regardless of your sexual experience, what is your sexual orientation? (e.g., asexual, heterosexual)______________

Option 2: If adopting one question to capture gender and sex, consider wording/structure/framing, as follows [adapted from Dillon-Mansfield, 2023; GenIUSS Group, 2014; Puckett et al., 2020 Tate et al., 2013]:
1. Which of the following best describes your current gender/sex? (Recognizing that they are limited options, please select all that apply and/or provide your own description):
a. Genderqueer
b. Intersex
c. Man/male
d. Trans gender
e. Woman/female
f. Let me describe:______________
g. Unsure because: _____________
h. Prefer not to state because:_____________</td></tr>
</table>

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TABLE 2 (Continued)

	Scholars	Practitioners
Examine the existence of, and adopt and normalize, an inclusive, conscientious, intersectionality perspective	Recognize the ways gender/sex/ual binaries and the devaluation of intersecting identities (do not) show up in research and/or the stakeholders engaged; challenge resulting biases.	Recognize the ways gender/sex/ual binaries (diversity) and the devaluation of intersecting identities (do not) show up in common practices (e.g., segmentation, branding and designs); challenge resulting biases.
	Recognize the sources of inequities rather than just concentrating on intersecting identities.	
Normalize gender/sex diversity through the strategic use of pronouns	Use pronouns when listing respondents; allow respondents to self-identify pronouns, recognizing that some may chose not to give them. If asking about or indicating pronouns in research questions cannot be done in an open-ended, inclusive manner, rephase questions to avoid pronouns; avoid the use of exclusionary lists/descriptions in questions (e.g., he/she).	Encourage the use of pronouns in signature lines and bios, recognizing that some people may choose to do not so.
	Note your own pronouns in your signature line if you are in a position of safety to do so.	
Use labels/Break apart labels (e.g., LGBTQ+)	Use labels carefully, providing explanations to readers/colleagues for their usages; Be specific about the sexual identities provided by respondents to prevent labels from hiding the additional marginalized state of groups within the label.	
Expand/disrupt words; use words to name the invisible	Expand patriarchy to recognize cis-hetero-patriarchy; Name other interlocking systems of oppression that come to the fore to make the often invisible, visible.	Disrupt the use of 'gender' as a misnomer for women by using words that reflect what genderS are being considered, working towards meaningful inclusion of genderS beyond the binary; Carefully employ words such as "empower" and "empowerment" so that they are not used in ways that imply deficit framings or a savior complex of empowering others.

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TABLE 2 (Continued)

<table>
<tr><th></th><th></th><th>Scholars</th><th>Practitioners</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Explore issues that are often sidelined and treated as unimportant</td><td colspan="2">Challenge the knowledge hierarchies that marginalize topics, connecting with respondents in care(ful) ways to improve representation and centering of ideas/voices; seek support from others/leverage teams as needed.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Address citations</td><td colspan="2">Stop citational violence.
Engage in citational politics.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Recognize your own positionality</td><td colspan="2">Include positionality statements in articles if you are safely able to do so.
Recognize how your positionality may affect research including:
- How your assumptions and (un)awareness impact the work you are doing;
- How respondents perceive you and how that impacts responses given.
Ask: Should you be doing this work or should others? Make room for, champion, and recognize others who should be/are doing the work</td></tr>
<tr><td>Connecting</td><td>Leverage teams</td><td>Seek intra and inter-disciplinary colleagues, connect with groups like GENMAC & RIM, and build meaningful and mutually respectful relationships to enable methodological progress, expansion into under-researched marketspaces, geographical areas, and communities.</td><td>Leverage and compensate the expertise of those from under-represented communities and academics working in the space; connect with groups like GENMAC, RIM, etc.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Become an ally, advocate and/or accomplice</td><td colspan="2">Understand where you are in your allyship-advocacy-accomplice journey;
Pursue cultural humility, self-education, learning and working with others in mutually respectful and beneficial ways;
Treat gender/sex/uality research and practices as a legitimate area of inquiry and champion work in this area;
Work with others to create more representational and inclusive spaces.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Seek out opportunities to translate work</td><td colspan="2">Leverage working with those who are experts in the space of translation;
Interprete and disseminate research to maximize the benefits to communities who have been under-researched and/or experienced epistemic violence.</td></tr>
</table>

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et al.'s (2024) call for a recognition of sexual well-being is a case in point, as well as the many articles in this special issue that explore transgender consumers experiences of the marketplace (Davis & Paramanathan, 2024; Duncan-Shepherd & Hamilton, 2022; Hansman & Drenten, 2024; Rocha et al., 2024). 'Flattening' hierarchies of inquiry (Coffin et al., 2022) to recognize how gender/sex/uality intersect and inform each other, is a key step towards exploring across, between, and beyond the binaries, and overcoming divides (e.g., nature versus nurture) within academia.

Extending on this further, we encourage all scholars to think through how and why other identity markers and social locations also come to matter. However, we also caution that '*asking the other question*' and exploring gender/sex/uality must always be balanced with whether collecting this information will cause harm because of the ways we ask about these questions (as elaborated upon in '*Doing*'), or because the data points will be misconstrued (Richardson, 2022), or merely become reported demographic identities void of any deeper consideration. As we subsequently extend upon, in line with Dobscha and Ostberg (2021), connecting with and leveraging researchers working in this space is needed to prevent researchers from continuing to "get gender," sex, and sexuality "wrong" (p. 182).

Going deeper may require, for some scholars, thinking in ways that reconceptualize gender/sex/uality. While some scholars may believe that a complete disruption of the binaries is required, we caution that this may not reflect the lived realities of all consumers, including trans people (Bettcher, 2014). In such cases, we propose scholars recognize the pluralities of masculinities and femininities, the multiplicity and fluidity in the experience of and identification with gender/sex/uality, how consumers go across and between ideals, and the societal dynamics that give rise to the entrenchment or change of ideals. The articles by Lopes et al. (2024) and Davis and Paramanathan (2024) in this special issue offer such an example.

However, we also strongly encourage for more scholarship to go beyond the binaries and omit the binaries altogether. Such an approach aligns with what Hansman and Drenten (2024) elude to in their article: Rather than trying to place consumers into buckets of masculine or feminine, or men and women, it necessitates research that can capture how people live their gender/sex/ual diversity, for instance, in being "expressly trans." It encourages scholars to ask: *What would the world look like if instead of treating gender/sex/uality as two poles that people either stood at or fluctuated between, people could just be where they were at, who they are, and the definition of gender/sex/uality expanded to include them?* Instead of masculinities and femininities or males and females or men and women or hetero and nonhetero/homo, a richer picture of genderS and gender/sex/ual diversity would emerge if we recognized gender-, sex- and sexually-varient people as they are and appreciate their expressions as they are. It may be hard for many to imagine this reality, despite evidence that points to its existence at one time (Allen, 1992; Herdt, 1994; Vincent & Manzano, 2017), because of the colonial binary constructions that pervades society. Accomplishing this goal will likely require new concepts, words, and ideas. We encourage scholars and practitioners to do this process of disruption and creation of concepts in partnership with those whose lives are inspiring or initiating the changes, with recognition given to them. As disability and trans scholars remind us, it should be: "Nothing about us without us" (Charlton, 1998; Radi, 2019).

Building on this is the idea of shifting how we think about respondents and addressing hierarchies. Rather than viewing respondents as objects, it calls for a recognition of them as subjects (Radi, 2019) and as deserving of *care(ful) engagements*. Care(ful) engagements address concerns of epistemic violence, such as "epistemic extractivism" (Radi, 2019, p. 49) or "epistemic injustices" (Hutton & Cappellini, 2022, p. 156) that occur when researchers delve into people's lives

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without consideration of the effects of their research and research practices on the lives of those being researched. Epistemic extractivism is evident in the "looting, appropriation, and commoditization of knowledge produced by underprivileged communities, for the benefit of the most privileged ones" (Radi, 2019, p. 49)—a practice that can be perpetuated by publish or perish pressures in academic institutions. Epistemic injustice is apparent in practices of "othering" whereby a group is defined based on the author's perspective, and writings result in dis-identification by marking researchers/readers as "us" and the researched as "them"; "dequalifying and dis-approving," silencing, de-basing or framing in deficit-terms, and "misreading" the experiences of those researched; and "canceling epistemic authority" (Radi, 2019, p. 52; Hutton & Cappellini, 2022). Thus, while we advocate for more research with under-researched groups such as gender/sex/ually diverse people, we implore that this be done in the right way. Researchers should pause and consider ethical questions as to whether or not they should be the ones doing the research, and, if moving forward, doing so in ways that demonstrate "respectful curiosity" (Raun, 2014, p. 13; Hale, 1997), an ethics of care (Groot et al., 2019; Tronto, 1998), and an emancipatory praxis (Hutton & Heath, 2020). Researchers need to reflect on who benefits from the research and how researchers' power and privilege come into play, and ensure research is relevant to, and equitable for, research participants (Hutton & Heath, 2020; Namaste, 2009; Tebbe & Budge, 2016).

Expanding theoretical tool boxes is likewise necessary. As the trans (digital) geography approach employed by Hansman and Drenten (2024) in this special issue reminds us, exploring gender/sex/ual diversity calls for research approaches that reflect the ways of knowing and experiences of those who have typically been marginalized. Their stories should not be co-opted to advance theoretical or academic positions. We thus advocate, as others have (Hearn & Hein, 2015; Maclaran et al., 2009), for scholars to expand upon the typical theoretical toolboxes used, and for reviewers to encourage theories versus pushing sanctioned theorists (e.g., Bourdieu, Butler) and theories (e.g., practice, assemblage or institutional theory) on others. This may include looking to transgender studies (Hines & Sanger, 2010; Stryker & Blackston, 2022), critical race theory (Poole et al., 2021), disability or dis/crit studies (Annamma et al., 2013; Puar, 2017), queer and quare scholarship (Johnson, 2016; Pirani & Daskalopoulou, 2022), missing feminisms (Hearn & Hein, 2015), including a re-radicalized intersectionality perspective (Rosa-Salas & Sobande, 2022; Steinfield, Sanghvi, et al., 2019), to name a few. By the latter we mean expanding intersectionality perspectives from a focus on intersecting identities to understandings that illuminate experiences of intersecting oppressions or privileges and the underlying, interlocking systems that give rise to identities being tied to such experiences. As Stryker (2006) summarizes, it calls for research to:

> Investigate questions of embodied difference, and analyze how such differences are transformed into social hierarchies—without ever losing sight of the fact that "difference" and "hierarchy" are never mere abstractions; they are systems of power that operate on actual bodies, capable of producing pain and pleasure, health and sickness, punishment and reward, life and death (p. 3).

For practitioners, we likewise encourage the adoption of the aforementioned care(ful) research practices when engaging with consumers and respondents, as well as ensuring gender/sex/ual diversity is represented in meaningful and accurate ways [for recommendations see AEF, 2024].

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We call for a change in mindset from one that typically centers on *equality* when talking about gender, to one of *equity*. Equality does little to change the status quo. Given that the historical emergence of capitalism and business was premised on colonial gender/racial hierarchies (Folbre, 2010; Francis, 2023; McClintock, 1995), a goal of equality means that people are expected to fit into a system built by and for White men. Equity, on the other hand, seeks to change the system. Race-based scholarship and activism has long recognized the need for equity (Poole et al., 2021). It is time that gender/sex/uality based work does likewise.

Additionally, we propose practitioners, if not doing so already, take the time to think through their theory of change to avoid unintended consequences, particularly consequences that can increase the vulnerable position of, or pathologize or misrecognize, marginalized groups (Steinfield, 2021; Tuck, 2009). As the backlash politics attests, working in the space of exploring and recognizing gender/sex/ual diversity may open one up to criticisms. For companies, planning how to deal with backlash—and doing so in ways that consider those traditionally marginalized groups with whom you are working and not just legacy groups or those perceived to be the loudest critics—will be key to ensuring care(ful) and meaningful engagements.

5.2 | Doing: Care(ful) methodological considerations

Doing should build from (re)thinking. Shifting perspectives regarding participants (as subjects versus objects), acknowledging hierarchies, and adjusting focus of research to intersectional and gender/sex/ual diversity, should naturally necessitate methodological changes, regardless of whether the research is qualitative or quantitative in nature. In short, *doing* methodology care(fully) focuses on actions that prioritizes the avoidance of harms and mistakes, and involves actions that can progress marketing and consumer studies to be more inclusive and to challenge the naturalization of White, ableist, cis-hetero-patriarchy. These can be done by academics and practitioner researchers alike.

For example, reading widely and familiarizing oneself with care(ful) research practices and methodologies, and asking those working in the space for assistance prior to doing research, can help avoid unintended consequences and harms. *Doing* may also entail significant shifts towards decolonial (Namaste, 2009; Smith, 2012), and/or emancipatory, community-based participatory or action research and/or deliberative inclusive processes to flatten power dynamics between researchers and participants (Corus & Ozanne, 2012; Hutton & Heath, 2020; Ozanne & Anderson, 2010; Ozanne & Saatçioğlu, 2008), particularly when working with gender/sex/ual diverse respondents who have often been treated as objects of inquiry, experiencing epistemic violence (Radi, 2019).

For all research, *doing* entails important changes to:

- Who is invited to participate;
- How respondents are invited to participate;
- How respondents can convey their identities and share about their lives;
- What questions are asked;
- How data is analyzed and framed; and
- How researchers can ensure their own safety.

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5.2.1 | Inviting respondents: Who & How

Expanding who is invited to participate recognizes the skewness of data towards White, able-bodied/minded, middle-class, cis-hetero populations (Burton, 2009; Coffin et al., 2019; Kearney et al., 2019; Reed, 2023), despite evidence that shows that gender/sex/uality crosses over with racialization and class to have significant effects on people's access to marketplaces/spaces and their well-being (binaohan, 2014; Krell, 2017; Taylor et al., 2016). Correcting for this calls for inclusive and meaningful intersectional approaches, and care(ful) recruitment practices, such as working with gatekeepers, taking time to build trust and relationships (Reed, 2023; Steinfield, Holt, et al., 2024; Tebbe & Budge, 2016) or strategically utilizing social media (as Hansman & Drenten, 2024 have done in this special issue).

Particularly for respondents who may be hard to reach because they are nonapparent, are hesitant to share about experiences, and/or because revealing their gender/sex/ual diverse and intersecting identities may put them at heighten risk of violence, precarity, and negative social ramifications (e.g., being outed to parents who may deny support, resulting in homelessness), researchers need to adopt care(ful) methodologies. Such methodologies guarantee respondents' privacy and anonymity, are thoughtful with the language used in recruitment materials (see Tebbe & Budge, 2016 for examples), respect participants' silences and decisions to not share (versus making answers to survey questions mandatory or continued probing in interviews), and provide avenues for support to ensure participants physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing is prioritized. *Cuts of harm* from research questions and engagements may be invisible to researchers but nonetheless felt by participants.

5.2.2 | Conveying/asking about identities and stories in quantitative research

We recognize that predefined, categorical approaches to asking about gender/sex/uality is a debated and developing practice fraught with complexities. Lists of pre-populated, demographic variables that respondents 'check,' can be criticized as being reductionist, discriminatory, harmful, and resulting in invalid data as measures often fail to capture the fluidity and multiplicity of gender/sex/uality (Hyde et al., 2019; Lindqvist et al., 2021; Suen et al., 2020).

However, we also acknowledge that strategically using and counting categories can enable once invisible groups to have their lives, experiences of injustices, and effects on well-being made visible (Doan, 2016; Harrison et al., 2012). Thus, while we note researchers need to be very mindful when attributing significance to binary gender/sex-based differences and to think twice before doing so to not perpetuate sex/gender stereotypes (Hyde et al., 2019; Richardson, 2022; Rippon et al., 2014), we do not advocate that researchers stop collecting and reporting gender, sex, or sexuality. Continuing to name cis, hetero and binary gender/sex/ual identities ensures we de-naturalize their taken-for-grantedness, and creates visibilities where invisibilities currently exist.

To aid with this, Table 1 offers wording that might be used to ask about gender/sex/ual identities. The preferred method, when asking respondents to convey their identities, is to provide respondents the opportunity to self-identify versus policing identity markers (e.g., forcing narrow, select-one option choices or researchers' guessing based on observations). This method reduces harm and allows respondents to share their gender/sex/ual diversity and other identity markers/social locations that matter and shape their lives (Bowleg, 2008; Suen et al., 2020; Westbrook & Saperstein, 2015). Accordingly, we propose researchers replace ad hoc

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demographic questions and limiting categories with open-ended questions, giving respondents linguistic power to voice their identities (e.g., the emic perspective proposed by Jones et al., 2024 in this special issue).

When dealing with significantly large respondent numbers (e.g., 10,000 respondents) that might make coding of responses unwieldy, researchers should offer choice and categories options that reflect gender/sex/ual diversity. Going beyond the binaries is key here as otherwise research will cause harm—discriminating against those who do not relate to the binaries—and incur measurement errors, reduced validity and accuracy of research, and result in misrecognitions and erasures due to missing and miscategorized gender/sex/ually diverse people (Hyde et al., 2019; Lindqvist et al., 2021).

Regardless of respondent numbers, when asking about gender/sex/ual identities, we build on the recommendations by Jones et al. (2024), by exploring four key elements researchers and practitioners should consider: (1) *words*; (2) *structure of options* (open-ended and/or multiple-step instead of three options; check all that apply instead of forcing a choice of one identity); (3) *framing options* (list alphabetically; provide definitions or examples); and (4) *selection of options* (choose questions and formats that align with research).

1. *Words*: Words are key in questions and write-up of findings. *Female* and *male* refers to biological sex. *Woman* and *man* capture the interplay of gender/sex (Tseng, 2008), and is thus more appropriate to use when asking categorical demographic questions or describing people's gender/sex. These terms are more open and can help avoid misgendering, as they can allow respondents to indicate their self-identified gender regardless of their sex (male/female) attributes (Ansara & Hegarty, 2014; Lindqvist et al., 2021). These terms can be adjusted to reflect age variances (e.g., woman/girl; man/boy).

As critically underscored, these terms need to be expanded beyond the binary. One way to do this is to ensure that questions are written to avoid the use of pronouns altogether to prevent noninclusive lists, or, if pronouns are required, the words used should have a more inclusive list of pronouns (e.g., he/she/they)—although given the expansion of possible pronouns (Barker & Richards, 2015), we caution that this will inevitably result in exclusions and misrecognitions and should thus be avoided if possible.

Another common practice is to add a third variable, such as transgender, non-binary or the option of 'other'. However, this can be extremely problematic. Trans and non-binary may be considered by some to be umbrella terms that are reductionist and may still not reflect their identities. Not all trans people identify as transgender, but rather as women or men. Some feel that they are both trans and a woman or man, thus if they have to choose only one option, their real identity will not be reflected and part of their identity will remain oppressed (Lindqvist et al., 2021). Trans also does not equate to non-binary nor genderqueer, gender-varient or gender-expansive identities (Harrison et al., 2012). Using non-binary as an option gives primacy to the colonial gender order, maintaining a semblance that to be of the binary is the norm, while to not be of the binary is an unnatural (non) state of being. To provide the option of 'other' results in a similar outcome—those who do not fall within the binaries are considered 'othered' and unnatural. These practices have significant effects on people's self-perception and mental and emotional health (Vanoppen, 2022) and perpetuates the colonial gender/sex/ual hierarchy. For those who have not experienced this, we encourage you to imagine what it would feel like to be constantly misrecognized, having to choose the option of 'other.'

In short, using words that indicate an added third variable or an 'othering' status is not advised. Rather, researchers should explore different structures of options, to which we now turn to describe.

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2. *Structure of options*: Instead of using a third category, if categories are required, researchers could use multiple questions that allow respondents the greatest capacity to indicate their gender/sex/ual diversity. This may include a mix of open-ended and categorizing survey questions as posed in Beischel et al. (2023, table 4, p. 365), or in Beischel et al.'s (2021, supplementary materials). (The wording/structure of questions in Table 1, Option 1 are based on Beischel et al.'s (2023) recommended questions given that they re-tested questions to achieve an optimal version).

Another option is to use an inclusive list developed in conjunction with organizations working with these consumers/participants, akin to Mills et al.'s (2019) questionnaire (see pages 63–66, appendix 1), although, we emphasize that even lists that appear to be inclusive are always incomplete, and thus may be exclusionary and incorrect. Ideas, identities and words surrounding gender/sex/uality are in flux and constantly changing. Always giving respondents the power of voice by having an option worded to reflect this—for example, giving the option of "*Let me type*" or "*Let me describe*" instead of using "Other:______"—is important to reducing harm (Beischel et al., 2023; Dillon-Mansfield, 2023; Mills et al., 2019).

If researchers are interested in exploring the fluidity and multiplicity of gender/sex/uality, they might consider using Likert scales.[3] Those proposed by Magliozzi et al. (2016), for example, enable respondents to indicate their self-perceptions and how they think others view them in regards to being feminine versus masculine, while Galupo et al. (2017, 2018) propose a set of questions to ascertain sexual-romantic attraction.[4] Scale development that does not reinforce binary gender and sexual thinking is an area of ongoing development and one researchers should continue to monitor.

One last option, for surveys that have significantly large volumes of respondents (e.g., 10,000 +), which can make coding open-ended responses unwieldy, is something akin to Tate et al.'s (2013) two-part question. Tate et al. (2013) ask two separate questions—gender identity (genderqueer, intersex, man, transgender, and woman), and sex assigned at birth (female, intersex, male)—with the genderqueer option opening up to include a list of 17 descriptors (e.g., genderblender, two-spirit), and gender identity variables adjusted to reflect the language and words of the local context (see Tate et al., 2013 for more details). Questions regarding sexual orientation and identity are not included—which is typical of many gender/sex question formats. We caution in using Tate et al. (2013) and others like it (e.g., Bauer et al., 2017; Cahill et al., 2014; GenIUSS Group, 2014). While demonstrated to reduce nonresponses, these two-part gender-sex questions may still do harm because of its limiting choices and because asking about sex assigned at birth can be distressing for some (Ansara & Hegarty, 2014; Reed, 2023). Emphasizing what has already been stated, using narrowly defined categories risks misrecognizing and harming respondents, and thus researchers need to carefully consider and balance research efforts (e.g., time and resources needed to code open-ended responses) with giving respondents' linguistic power. In line with best practice, (Beischel et al., 2023; Cahill et al., 2014; Fraser, 2018; Lindqvist et al., 2021; Puckett et al., 2020; Reed, 2023; Suen et al., 2020), we advise all surveys, regardless of respondent numbers, give respondents an option to self-define. When two-part questions are included, they should simultaneously be visible to respondents so respondents understand how gender versus sex is being operationalized (Bauer et al., 2017).

In all cases, participants should not have to choose or rank between identities but be given the opportunity to relate the "interdependence and mutuality of identities" by checking all that

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apply (Bowleg, 2008, p. 316; Ansara & Hegarty, 2014). Participants should also be given the option to skip categorical questions, or select 'Prefer not to state,' with an optional space to explain why they chose to do so (Cahill et al., 2014; Puckett et al., 2020). To avoid priming, demographic questions should be put at the end of surveys (GenIUSS Group, 2014). Failure to adopt these additional practices can increase nonresponse, biased, or incomplete responses, particularly for gender/sex/ual variant people, resulting in unreliable and inaccurate data (Bowleg, 2008; GenIUSS Group, 2014; Hyde et al., 2019).

3. *Framing options*: Researchers should place pre-populated, categorical answers in alphabetical order instead of placing them in order of normative dominance. Normative dominance is evident when man/male is listed first despite being later in alphabetical consonant order. Providing respondents with helpful definitions and notes to clarify what is being asked (see Beischel et al., 2021 for an example), can help clarify confusions that can result in nonanswers. When providing definitions, a recommended practice adopted by Beischel et al. (2023) is to give an example of a majority and minority gender/sex/uality, making it clear to majorities what is being asked while also signaling that not everyone is expected to identify along binary gender/sex/ual lines. Providing two examples also avoids longer lists that can result in people feeling excluded and their identities relegated to an 'etc'. Wording, thus, might be: *What is your current gender?* (e.g., *agender, woman):*_____________.

4. *Selection of options*: When trying to determine what to ask and how to ask about gender/sex/uality, researchers need to align questions with research goals. In short:

- Ask what you really want to know;
- Word questions in ways that reduce unintended harms and misrecognitions;
- Consider whether information is relevant and if *not* collecting the information will cause problems and data invalidity

For example, if scholars are investigating bodily/physiological elements (e.g., menstruation, pregnancy), researchers should ask about these specific aspects instead of assuming sex/gender categories can stand-in as markers of these experiences (i.e., not all women menstruate or are able to become pregnant, and not all people who menstruate or who are pregnant consider themselves to be women) (Lindqvist et al., 2021; Moseson et al., 2020).

When considering the relevance of questions, a balancing act is needed. There are data invalidities and misrecognitions that can come with not asking the aforementioned 'other question' or not disrupting the naturalizations of cis, hetero, binary identities, but questions may also result in discomforts. For example, as aforesaid, asking people to indicate sex assigned at birth or sex desginated on their birth or medical certificates, or their legal names, may be distressing and uncomfortable for some transgender people (Ansara & Hegarty, 2014; Reed, 2023). Thus, although this tends to be the typical approach used to try to ascertain cis versus trans or non-binary identities (e.g., Cahill et al., 2014; Fraser, 2018; GenIUSS Group, 2014; Tate et al., 2013), this framing can cause harm. Asking these questions should be used only if this sort of information matters to the research at hand (e.g., you are studying the impact of legal gender/sex designations), and should not be assumed to align with, or be proxies for, respondents gender/sex (Ansara & Hegarty, 2014; Fraser, 2018; Moseson et al., 2020). The purpose of collecting this information and how it will be used should be clearly stated so respondents understand how the provision of this information matters to the research at hand, along with a statement explaining how respondents' needs for privacy and protection of data will be addressed (Ansara, 2016).

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To '*ask the other question*'—asking whether a person has a cis, trans, non-binary, genderqueer, diverse or expansive identity—current best practice indicates that questions should be separated (Beischel et al., 2023). For instance, instead of asking: 'What is your gender and/or sex,' use multiple-part questions (see Table 1 for option 1). This can avoid confusion and concerns by gender/sex diverse people who may find the question invasive, compelling them to provide information about their sex that they do not want to share (Beischel et al., 2023). Trying to ascertain gender/sex in a single question—for example, '*What is your current gender/sex?*'—may work better for partially pre-populated, multiple selection, categorical questions versus complete open-ended questions as the prompts can reduce confusion while giving respondents the power to share or explain their identities as far as they feel comfortable, although this option is still not as preferred as a full open-ended option (see Table 1, option 2 for suggestions).

We also acknowledge that missing data is a typical concern that pushes researchers towards using pre-populated, categorical lists and two-part, closed-worded questions. However, unlike Fraser's (2018) suggestion that these approaches should be used to minimize missing data, we advocate, in line with others (Beischel et al., 2023; Lindqvist et al., 2021; Suen et al., 2020; van Anders et al., 2022), that open-ended be the default option. While research demonstrates that this may cause an increase in nonresponses or disruptive and ridiculing responses by gender/sex/ual majorities who may feel threatened, uncomfortable and/or overempowered (van Anders et al., 2022), we also note that failure to do so will cause an increase in nonresponse rates by gender/sex/ually expansive respondent resulting in similar levels of missing data (Lindqvist et al., 2021). Given that under-reporting and data inaccuracies of gender/sex/ual expansive people is a critical problem the field needs to rectify (moreso than publishing more binary gender/sex research), we advocate that researchers prioritize practices that can enable gender/sex/ual expansive people to feel recognized, comfortable, and included.

5.2.3 | Conveying/asking about identities and stories in qualitative research

For qualitative work, asking participants to describe the intersecting identities of focus in ways that best resonate with them, and asking questions in ways that open up opportunities for participants to discuss other identity dimensions of focus, are ways to progress research on gender/sex/uality while keeping open the capacity for participants to share about other identities and experiences of (in)justices that the researchers may have overlooked (Bowleg, 2008). When delving into personal stories, in some contexts "adopting a collaborative, conversational interview approach" in which researchers share about their own lives (Duncan-Shepherd & Hamilton, 2022, p. 1603) can help to reduce power imbalances between researchers and participants, shift the relationship from one of researchers studying 'objects' to engaging with 'subjects', and result in more meaningful discoveries and conversations. Starting introductions off by providing your own pronouns can help encourage respondents to do likewise. We recognize these practices, however, should be adapted pending context of study and cultural dynamics (e.g., Global North versus Global South) (Porter, 2010).

5.2.4 | Analyzing and framing data

In quantitative data analysis, re-coding gender/sex/ual data is a necessity when surveys allow respondents to provide self-definitions or provide multiple gender/sex/ual diverse categories.

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However, re-coding can also result in "analytic microaggressions," erasing differences and the self-determination and linguistic power of respondents (Glick et al., 2018, p. 1373). Overcoming this is not a straightforward solution. Some alternative methods that work towards maintaining linguistic power of respondents may include allowing respondents to re-code their responses (Vivienne et al., 2023) and/or providing full lists of responses in an appendix under the re-coded labels (e.g., Beischel et al., 2021, 2023).

When reporting results, researchers that conduct experiments testing for sex/gender based differences should note all results—particularly null results or findings that show similarities—and test sensitives and reliabilities for any observed differences (see Rippon et al., 2014 for an excellent description of this). We continue to caution against research that sets out to prove there are sex/gender differences given its tendency to play into sex/gender stereotypes versus recognizing other differences within genderS or other attributes that matter (Fine, 2012; Hyde et al., 2019; Richardson, 2022).

In qualitative research, when working with gender/sex/ual diverse respondents, centering their voices is key to undoing and preventing epistemic violence. Using the emic descriptions and pronouns provided by participants when describing their identities, checking coding with them to ensure codes do not misread or mistake participants' intent but represent participants' meaning, and centering their voices and experiences versus using stereotyped narratives or excluding/including data to fit the researcher's story, are all steps towards more inclusive data analysis and writings (Hale, 1997; Hutton & Lystor, 2021; Radi, 2019; Tebbe & Budge, 2016). Moreover, even when gender/sex/ually diverse respondents are not a researcher's central focus, strive to remember and recognize their existence and what this says about the (in)visible norms that affect how one might code, analyze, and write about gender/sex/uality, for example, in how cis- and hetero-normativity show up in patriarchal dynamics, gender/sex performances, embodiments, behaviors, and experiences.

For data analysis, regardless of whether one is doing quantitative or qualitative work, the ways historical, social, and cultural contexts and power dynamics matter is critical for researchers to take into account, and, if possible, to know even prior to collecting data. The articles in this special issue demonstrate examples of this [for quantitative see Preston et al., 2024; qualitative see Davis & Paramanathan, 2024]. Broadening analytical scopes beyond identity-based data is what an intersectionality (Bowleg, 2008) and gender/sex/ual diversity approach are about (van Anders, 2022), otherwise the research merely reflects diversity of respondents' identities with no meaningful comprehension as to why those identities and social locations matter. [For examples of how to recognize intersectionality and gender/sex/ual diversity in quantitative data analysis, see Bowleg, 2008; Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016, Rippon et al., 2014, and Warner, 2008.]

A recognition of sociohistorical context, however, needs to be balanced in write-ups with strength- or asset-based framing instead of deficit framing (Steinfield, Holt, et al., 2024). Deficit framing measures and positions under-represented, marginalized or discriminated groups in terms of deficits or as lacking something, being victims or problems, instead of recognizing the assets, strengths, and agentic actions they take to combat and navigate inequities (Davis & Museus, 2019; Tuck, 2009). As Robinson and Hunter (2020) note, deficits are "how we both justify research that highlights the inequity of the status quo and reify the status quo to continue to justify our research" (p. 166). This is why we called for scholarship that recognizes the ways progress has been made in gender/sex/ual-related well-being, and feature scholarship that acknowledges the agentic actions consumers take in navigating cis-hetero-patriarchy

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(e.g., Davis & Paramanathan, 2024; Hansman & Drenten, 2024; Lopes et al., 2024; Rocha et al., 2024).

5.2.5 | Researchers safety: The importance of 'safety work'

We acknowledge that work with under-represented groups, particularly those swept up in back-lash politics, as well as dominant, privileged groups who may feel overempowered or uncomfortable with queries regarding gender/sex/uality or privileges, can result in physical, emotional and mental well-being concerns for researchers (Steinfield, Holt, et al., 2024; van Anders et al., 2022; Vera-Gray, 2017). Adopting practices of "safety work" (Vera-Gray, 2017, p. 62), such as conducting interviews in public, safe spaces, notifying others about your interview schedules, ensuring support systems are in place, and creating research guides that anticipate and work to reduce overempower actions (e.g., sexist, racists comments) of privileged respondents, should be proactively built into methodologies (Garner, 2016; Steinfield, Holt, et al., 2024; van Anders et al., 2022). Voices of under-researched groups are needed, but this needs to be done in ways that take into account the risks involved for all.

Doing: Institutional activism through small changes but meaningful practices

The panel discussion with Bettany, Burchiellaro and Venkatraman (see Cheded, 2024) illuminates how *doing* should involve acts of institutional activism—practices and actions that change or challenge (in)visible, naturalized ways of thinking and doing. This may entail small but meaningful practices that can have ripple effects. Venkatraman suggests including emic pronouns provided by consumers (not etic consumer pronouns imposed by researchers) when detailing respondents demographics in tables and writings, and providing them for all consumers—including cis man/cis woman, not just trans or gender diverse people (for examples see Venkatraman et al, 2024 or in this special issue, Duncan-Shepherd & Hamilton, 2022). Researchers can likewise ensure anonymized names reflect respondents gender/sex diversity and ethnic/nationality. Institutional activism may also entail providing your own pronouns on signature lines if you can safely do so, and encouraging the practice among others in your organization while respecting the choice of those who chose not to do so. While some may refuse because of backlash politics, for others there are significant safety concerns. Prioritizing reduction of harm entails not questioning these choices, while doing what one can to encourage the normalization of pronouns. Providing visual cues of various pronouns is one way to disrupt taken-for-granted assumptions about gender/sex binaries.

Doing may also include strategically using or breaking apart labels, such as LGBTQIA+. While the label can help draw attention to under-researched groups or be used as a source of signaling and activism (as Hansman & Drenten, 2024 demonstrate), maintaining the label can hide inequities within the label, as transgender, intersexed, asexual advocates, Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and research attests (binaohan, 2014; Harrison et al., 2012). Labels should be used in thoughtful ways, with explanations provided if they are shortened. For example, if the label LGBQ is used, specify that it reflects the nature of respondents, otherwise it may be misread to be a purposeful exclusion of trans people given the trans-exclusionary climate (Pearce et al., 2020).

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Other doings include disrupting/using words. The aforementioned practice of using "equity" instead of "equality" is one such example, as well as disrupting the common practice of equating gender to women. We see this in words such as "gender empowerment" or "gender lens investment", which really means women empowerment or investments in women. When using "gender" to refer to systematically marginalized groups, we strongly encourage practices that name and recognize other genderS, beyond the binary. Moreover, words such as "empower" or "empowerment"—often linked to gender or women—need to be carefully employed. "Empower" and "empowerment" can personify a paternalistic and savior complex that centers those 'empowering' others, while perpetuating deficit framing of those being empowered. People are capable of empowering themselves, which is rarely recognized in empowerment framings (McLaughlin, 2016).

Expanding words can likewise have similar ripple effects, such as explicitly using the word cis-hetero-patriarchy instead of just patriarchy to reflect the multi-dimensional way it relates to and affects gender/sex/uality and maintains the colonial-structuring binaries (Lugones, 2007, 2008). In tandem with this is explicitly naming other interlocking systems of oppression that inform the historical and current socioeconomic context and maintain cultures of domination. Making visible interlocking systems, such as the imperialist white supremacist capitalist cis-hetero-patriarchy—which are so often invisible, viewed in isolation, and/or silenced by being framed as "ridiculous, too strident, too harsh"—are key steps towards disrupting the culture of domination (hooks, 2013, p. 37). We will struggle to change things we refuse to name.

Putting into practice an inclusive, conscientious intersectionality approach has implications for research, education, as well as marketing thoughts and practices. For example, it entails grappling with and changing status quo practices, such as demographic segmentation (Rosa-Salas, 2019), gendered branding and advertising tactics (Gurrieri & Finn, 2023), or design practices (Costanza-Chock, 2020) that normalize the White, able-bodied, hetero-cisgender man or woman as consumers or as embodying brand ideals. Indeed, while some companies and agencies are working towards adopting more progressive views of gender in ads (Zayer et al., 2023), struggles remain when extending this in ways that recognize intersectional identities and people of color (Kearney et al., 2019; Sobande, 2020). There is a need for scholars, educators, and practitioners to recognize who is being overlooked, testing for inclusions/exclusions by, for instance, visualizing the stakeholders/respondents being engaged (see MITRE, 2021 for an example), asking '*the other question*' to recognize how and why intersectional identities matter, expanding areas of focus to include issues that are often sidelined or siloed into lower knowledge hierarchies (e.g., sexuality studies), and then taking steps to undo these biases and exclusions by adopting the aforementioned care(ful) practices.

Institutional activism can also include engaging in citational politics—consciously and carefully engaging with and using citations (Mott & Cockayne, 2017)—to correct for citational violence, knowledge erasures, and the censoring of dissenting or "unpleasant" analysis (Puar, 2015, p. 324, footnote 23). Citational violence is evident in the devaluation, misappropriation, and failure to acknowledge the origins of ideas [e.g., flat ontologies' origin within Indigenous knowledge (Steinfield, 2022)] or failure to cite or recognize the intellectual work and labor of under-represented groups, such as queer, trans, or feminists of color (Nash, 2020; Smith et al., 2021) and gender/sex/uality scholars (Coffin et al., 2022; Prothero & McDonagh, 2021). It is evident in the uneven reproduction of knowledge as scholars cite a narrow list of (White, often male, English) theorists (Mott & Cockayne, 2017), and often reject or overlook non-English scholarship and non-US based marketing and consumer journals (Hutton & Cappellini, 2022). It results in reproducing knowledge hierarchies and contributes to epistemic

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ignorance by erasing differences that matter. We have fought to avoid these practices in this special issue, and ask that readers recognize this if they chose to critically assess the articles.

Challenging citational violence is something that editors and all researchers can undertake. It may take on the form of citing expansively (Poole et al., 2021; Puar, 2015), citing carefully to prioritize and give recognition to intellectual work that is often overlooked (Mott & Cockayne, 2017), and/or refusing to engage with the established cannon to create room for other ways of seeing and living in the world (Nash, 2020). It involves reading from under-cited and represented groups [the reading list provided at the end of the panel discussion with Nappier Cherup, Thomas, Hein and Coffin is an example (see Steinfield, Hutton, et al., 2024)] and adding their intellectual works to class readings lists, inviting under-represented intellects to speak (and compensating them for doing so) (Smith et al., 2021), and acknowledging and championing their work through awards, special issues, and promotional features (Gurrieri et al., 2020; Prothero & McDonagh, 2021). Citational politics is key to expanding our recognition of and views on gender/sex/ual diversity and intersectional experiences of the world.

Doing also involves recognizing how positionalities matter. As Kevin Thomas explains in the panel discussion (Steinfield, Hutton, et al., 2024), positionalities affect your assumptions, how you see and experience the world, what you decide to focus upon, how others see you and the types of responses you get. Reflexive practices that recognize positionalities are needed. This may entail asking and reflecting on certain questions (Bettany & Woodruffe-Burton, 2009; Steinfield & Holt, 2020), and providing positionality statements to normalize an awareness of how researchers' positionalities matter. It may also entail, as Jack Coffin relates in the panel discussion (Steinfield, Hutton, et al., 2024), stepping back from having your voice and work centered and advocating for and supporting others, taking on the role of a reviewer instead of an author.

We recognize that these actions, such as noting your own and respondents' pronouns, addressing issues that are often sidelined, engaging in citational politics, writing positionalities statements or making room for others are not actions everyone can do because of their positionalities and the current structures, norms, and practices of academia and society. Backlash politics and academia dynamics—such as narrow and up-and-out tenure-track requirements, journal reluctances and constraints, and knowledge and citational hierarchies—can make these practices seem too risky for some people to take, and can silence efforts that offer a more inclusive, intersectional view of consumers' gender/sex/ual diversity and their well-being. The panel discussion with Bettany, Burchiellaro, and Venkatraman make this obvious. However, our hope is that by providing researchers—scholars and practitioners—with examples of actions they can take to do methodologies care(fully) and undertake institutional activism, that these will have ripple effects that result in a greater awareness and understanding as to how we might do things differently to prevent the perpetuation of inaccurate and exclusionary views of consumers and well-being. As Shona Bettany states, "Do what you can" and recognize that a difference can be made "just by being there…by being places, being a subject in the world" (Cheded et al., 2024). Small actions can have ripple effects.

5.3 | Connecting

The varying positionalities and capacities of people to accomplish *doings*, make evident the necessity for connecting to others. Connecting thus recognizes that there is a sensitivity to this

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work. Working in teams, with representatives crossing intra- and inter-disciplinary approaches, or gaining insights from scholars in other disciplines—as Wendy Hein articulates in the panel (Steinfield, Hutton, et al., 2024)—is one way that researchers can embrace appropriate care(ful) methodologies, do and support institutional activism, and expand understandings of gender/sex/ual diversity and how intersectional social locations matter.

To the end, we recognize that work that is being done by groups such as GENMAC (Gender, Markets, Consumers–https://genmac.co/) (for an overview see Gurrieri et al., 2022) and RIM (Race in the Marketplace–https://www.rimnetwork.net/), in the many Employee Research Groups found within organizations, and nonprofit organizations working in this space. We also, however, caution that people working in this space often do so with little compensation. When working with these groups we encourage that people strive to undo hierarchies and the under-appreciation of the value of this work and expectations that it will be done pro-bono or without adequate compensation. Provide fair compensation. Relational engagements (Ozanne et al., 2022) are needed between scholars, practitioners, and respondents, but these need to bring about social benefits in a more equitable way.

We also note that care(ful) methodologies and institutional activism should not be placed solely on the shoulders of those who represent marginalized voices. The panel featuring the thoughts of Nappier Cherup, Thomas, Hein, and Coffin acknowledges the importance of allies, advocates, and accomplices, and the variety of ways people can participate. In the preamble to their panel discussion (Steinfield, Hutton, et al., 2024), we provide a visual representation so scholars and practitioners can understand what it means to be an ally, advocate, and accomplice. This journey entails one of:

- cultural humility, which involves lifelong reflexivity about one's own taken-for-granted ways of life/beliefs and learning and listening about others' lives/beliefs, shifts in perspectives that flatten power inequities between people;
- self-learning versus relying on under-represented groups to constantly provide the information; and
- a willingness to learn and work with others in mutually respectful and beneficial ways.

We encourage people to explore where they are on this journey, and how they might move forward.

For some who are already in the gender/sex/uality space but who claim to be otherwise, this may involve strategically using words to undo knowledge hierarchies and the relegation of this work as 'different' [often positioned in a subpar way, which keeps it relegated to the epistemic margins (Cappellini & Hutton, 2022)] by taking on the label of a gender/sex/uality scholar. That is, make clear your allyship—not for self-promotion but to build up and support the movement. Yet we also note this needs to be tempered by Dobscha and Ostberg's (2021) caution that just because a person has a gender, sex, and sexual orientation, does not mean they are sufficiently theoretically grounded and thus versed to speak on gender/sex/uality dynamics related to marketing and consumerism. Treating gender/sex/ual research as a topic anyone can speak about "implies that [gender/sex/uality] is not an accepted, applicable, or legitimate theoretical lens", and keeps it on the margins (Dobshca & Ostberg, 2021, p. 182). We do not wish to create exclusive boundaries but rather encourage scholars to reflect on how they can meaningfully engage with and elevate gender/sex/ual scholarship.

For those in more senior and powerful positions, championing and advocating for those working in this space and nominating them and their work for awards, special issues, and promotional features (Gurrieri et al., 2020; Prothero & McDonagh, 2021) can help undo epistemic

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and citational violences. Work with others to create more representational and inclusive spaces, such as in adjusting the androcentric nature of named awards (Prothero & McDonagh, 2021), or acknowledging the gender/sex/ual lives of fellow academics and practitioners through ensuring conference and seminar set-ups provide for these (e.g., articulated harassment and discrimination policies that attendees must acknowledge, representational support groups or people who can be consulted if people experience harassment and discrimination, gender neutral bathrooms, lodging situations that do not assume people can be grouped along perceived gender binary divisions, places where mothers can privately breastfeed, inclusion of childcare support options, to name a few). Changing the gender/sex/ual binaries that are evident in academia is a collective task (Gurrieri et al., 2022).

Lastly, in line with the recommendations featured in the panel with Nappier Cherup, Thomas, Hein, and Coffin (Steinfield, Hutton et al., 2024), we acknowledge that little will change if gender/sex/uality researchers and their work stay outside of the mainstream. Efforts are needed to bring the mainstream along—both within academia and society. Translating work is key here, and doing so in ways that leverages and compensates experts working in these spaces, such as those who know how to do podcasts, videos or documentaries, infographics, and public-facing articles. In line with care(ful) methodologies, translating and dissemination work within these communities and more broadly is one way to bring about positive impact for these communities and centering their voices (Hutton & Heath, 2020; Tebbe & Budge, 2016). Connecting with others is what will enable the thinking and doings to create their ripple effects.

6 | CONCLUSION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In conclusion, we recognize that this special issue would not have been possible without connecting with others, such as our fellow authors and panelists featured in the special issue, and the scholars and many reviewers who encouraged and explored what it means to think and do gender/sex/uality scholarship, in ways that recognize diversity and intersectionalities. We thank the authors for their progressive work, the panelists for sharing openly and honestly, scholars such as Dr. Sari van Anders who gave advice, and the reviewers for their care and attention. Last but certinaly not least, we acknowledge that this special issues would not have been possible without the *Journal of Consumer Affairs* being so receptive and supporting this work, and the editor at that time, Ron Hill, whose passion and vision for gender and intersectionality-related scholarship, translates into actions that are helping to create a more inclusive and supportive space in academia.

We put this editorial into the world, hoping it can have ripple effects, providing clarity on how to do more inclusive, care(ful), and meaningful work, and why this work is needed. Improving well-being for all consumers and undoing problematic practices is a collective effort. We encourage everyone to ask: *What thinking, doing, and connecting can I do to create a positive ripple effect?*

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Laurel Steinfield: Conceptualization; data curation; formal analysis; writing – original draft; writing – review and editing. **Mohammed Cheded:** Conceptualization; writing – review and editing. **Martina Hutton:** Conceptualization; writing – review and editing.

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ENDNOTES

[1] Although printed prior to this special issue, this article was submitted to answer the call for our special issue, and was a part of the reviewing process guided by the special issue's editors.

[2] For information on what these terms mean, consult Chen (2021) or visit websites such as Stonewall (www.stonewall.org.uk/list-lgbtq-terms). We recognize that these terms may change, and thus use them as naming devices to signal the under-representation of sexual and romantic diversity.

[3] A popularly cited approach by Joel et al's (2014) uses Likert scales to capture the fluidity and multiplicity of gender/sex/uality. However, if parts of these scale—as well as any others asking about gender—are used, we strongly suggest questions be added to move beyond the binary by capture experiences of genderqueerness and agenderness, and questions on sexuality adjusted to recognize degrees of sexuality and attraction (e.g. asexual/romantic, graysexual/romantic, demisexual/romantic), with the latter, more invasive questions asked if research focus aligns. While the Likert scales do provide insights into variabilities, similar to risks associated with lists and noninclusive wording, they risk being exclusionary and creating misrecognitions and harm.

[4] We do not advocate taking all the survey questions of these studies wholesale since components of them are problematic, particularly how they ask about gender and sex, as aforementioned.

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