

Introduction

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As we continue to mourn the senseless loss of life due to gun violence, we stand with the many students and young people yearning for real action on an issue quite steeped in gender. Much talk, especially surrounding gun violence in schools, discusses hyper-masculinity, “toxic” masculinity, and “troubled boys.” This linkage to gender, is at times, a bit uncomfortable for gender scholars. How do current events impact the understanding of our past work? How does it guide our future work? How do we call out a real issue, while recognizing and working to change a damaged culture that has too often reified aggression, violent behavior, and equated compassion with the feminine? Obviously, we must see perpetrators of violence in context, while stopping short of excusing their behavior. In *Adolescent rampage school shootings: Responses to failing masculinities by already-troubled boys*, Farr helps us to better understand how traditional “normative” masculine behaviors are on a continuum with more violent behavior.

What can we learn from survivors of sexual violence? Too often, victims of sexual commercialization are talked about, rather than talked to; their own human agency diminished in pity. In *On the continuum of exit: Understanding the stages of change among women in commercial sexual exploitation*, Wilson and Nochajski show that people we consider “victims” possess and use agency. The Transtheoretical Model, especially components of denial, hopeful, actively working, and perseverance, have important associations with exiting sex work.

Gender inequality pervades beyond violence to the common everyday “preferences” of career. Much international attention has focused on expanding the participation of girls and women in science, technology, and mathematics (STEM). After decades of programming intended to attract girls to and encourage young

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women in STEM careers; we still have significant occupational segregation in many fields of science and technology. As Beutel, Burge, and Borden argue in *Femininity and choice of college major*, specific values traditionally associated with femininity continue to impact a student's choice of college major. Should it? Why or why not?

So what is the link between gendered identity and occupation? Grönlund and Magnusson (*Do atypical individuals make atypical choices? Examining how gender differences in personality relate to occupational choice and wages among five professions in Sweden*) explore the influence of personality types and gender on a large sample of engineers, lawyers, police officers, social workers, and psychologists. They find that personality is closely associated with the composition of the job and individuals who have chosen a gender-atypical occupation tend to display gender atypical personality traits.

We know that there is tension between honoring what young people “want” and realizing that the longing reflects greater sociological desires that arise in a very gendered and inequitable context. Young people live in a social world where technology is still rendered male. In *Gendered representations and portrayals in technology advertisements: Exploring variations by age, race and ethnicity*, Persuad, Grauerholz, and Anthony find pervasive underrepresentation and stereotyping of women, particularly women of color, in advertisements for technology. Do these advertisements reflect the reality of technology consumerism, limit technology consumerism, or both?

What would our world look like if we finally fully recognized the importance of gender perceptions? What could we be as humans if we universally valued emotionality, care, strength, and capacity in equal measure for all children? Yes, understanding the gendered context of many of our pressing world issues can help us better understand and advocate for a more equitable world.

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