

## Sociological Work on Transgender in Latin America: Some Considerations

Vek Lewis

University of Sydney

El poder de representar se refiere al poder de nombrar la realidad, de clasificarla, de adjetivarla y hacer valer esa representación en la mente (y en el corazón) de los individuos, construyendo de esta manera una estructura de posibilidades de acción, así como un sistema de diferenciación y distinción social.

– Guillermo Núñez Noriega.<sup>1</sup>

If queers, *afeminados*, and transgendered persons are understood by their cultures in certain ways, subjected to certain discursive treatments, and made abject by these designs, then how might such violence, at once personal and epistemic, be represented without reproducing and reiterating the violence of the mark?

– Roger Lancaster.<sup>2</sup>

Sociology concerns the study of the underlying rules and processes that organise social interaction and phenomena. It deals with the present-day social world. Sociology, like other fields, possesses different schools and traditions. The school or orientation to which a particular study belongs will be reflected in the kinds of approaches undertaken. Very broadly we can observe that some studies are allied to a more objectivist approach: they define their research problematic in terms of the typical questions or issues seen as important to the discipline. They begin with theoretical generalities and seek to test a hypothesis. Other studies may depart from a different point, and seek to generate perspectives inductively, based on extensive interviews with subjects about their day-to-day lives and experiences, defining a research problematic that seeks to understand how the subjects see the world and not simply how the researcher sees it. Steven Seidman makes a distinction between sociological theory and social theory.<sup>3</sup> The first has as its main audience other academics; the second is oriented in the interests of social change. The objectivist approach belongs, then, more to sociological theory. As Women's Studies Professor and sociologist Viviane Namaste observes, objectivist research programs risk objectifying the subjects they study.<sup>4</sup> She sees the importance of research that is relevant to the research population and their needs and reflects the diversity of the population studied.<sup>5</sup> Some sociological discourse might be understood as objectivist where it risks stereotyping, homogenising and/or exoticising the people studied.

This article compares two studies on Latin American male-to-female transgenders conducted by non-natives and two by natives: *Travesti: Sex, Gender, and Culture among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes*<sup>6</sup> (1998) by Don Kulick, *Mema's House, Mexico City: On Transvestites, Queens, and Machos*<sup>7</sup> (1998) by Annick Prieur, *Travestidos al desnudo: homosexualidad, identidades y luchas territoriales en Colima* (2003)<sup>8</sup> by César O. González Pérez and *Cuerpos desobedientes: travestismo e identidad de género*<sup>9</sup> (2004) by Josefina Fernández. Given the highly-charged nature of articulations on homosexuality, cross-dressing and other gender variant phenomena in Latin American contexts, researchers who do not adequately define their

problematic risk reproducing some of the abject ways of describing these subjects. Do the studies adequately give voice to their subjects and allow them to speak? Or do they evince an excessive curiosity in *travesti* 'natives'? Do they ask questions chiefly of importance to the school from which they proceed or does their research provide perspectives on the motivations and needs of those studied? These are all valid questions to ask in assessing both the ethnographic works done by residents of the countries in which the research subjects live as well as those conducted by foreigners. Moreover, the urgency of asking these questions arises from the fact that transgender people in Latin America comprise a segment of a set of sexually diverse populations, which includes gays and lesbians, whose place in culture is often imperilled socially, economically and politically.

The two high-profile studies by Swede Don Kulick and Norwegian Annick Prieur illustrate the possibilities and limitations of sociological research and both have disseminated into the public domain considerable data and knowledge about effeminate homosexuals and *travestis*, named *jotas* and *vestidas* in Prieur's work, *viados* and *bichas* in Kulick's. Given that they have been translated into many languages, these studies are perhaps the most influential. The title of Kulick's work, which contains the singular *travesti*, conceptually reinforces the idea of a type, something which will be touched on in profiling his and Prieur's work, as well as that of the others.

Kulick's study is principally interested in gender and its (re)construction. This guides his hypothesis that *travestis*, in embodying their subjectivities, interpret and re-corporealise common mainstream gender beliefs about men and women in Brazil. Unlike many male-to-female transgender people in Australia, Europe and North America, Kulick's *travestis* – in the poor zones of Salvador, Bahía, Brazil's third largest city – do not see themselves as females or women. They make their bodily transformations – detailed in considerable depth in *Travesti* – to signal their desirability to men. They understand themselves as homosexuals and their feminisation as a way of occupying their homosexuality. *Travestis*, argues Kulick, share the commonly held views of their mother culture that sustain that one is male or female by virtue of one's anatomical sex – hence they do not see themselves as females.<sup>10</sup> However, this facticity of one's sex based on genitalia is different from gender. They understand gender as based on what one does with those genitalia.<sup>11</sup> Sex acts and practices underwrite who is a man and who is not. Men are those who penetrate: women or other biological males. *Travestis* express their gender aligned with the feminine in recognition of this. *Travestis* see themselves as being open and honest about their identities, which they consider truly homosexual (unlike those of gender normative gays), based, as they see it, on their desire for men and their favoured, i.e. passive, sex role.<sup>12</sup> Kulick relates that they see themselves as *viados* – effeminate and penetrated males. He argues that contrary to other popular claims (such as those of Helio Silva) they are not interested in challenging the gender binary, being transgressive or ambiguous or a Third Gender.<sup>13</sup> They differentiate themselves markedly from transsexuals who they imagine as deluded.<sup>14</sup> They do not desire Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS) at all, although they do engage in feminising body modifications using industrial silicone and incurring some danger in the process, pumping their breasts and hips and ingesting female hormones scored off the streets.

Kulick carefully includes transcripts from his recorded interviews and the voices of the *travestis* themselves are a principal focus of the study. We learn of their involvement in prostitution, their relationships with their masculine boyfriends who often depend on them economically and the earnings they accrue from sex work.

Kulick also endeavours to demystify the notion that *travestis* are somehow accepted by Brazilian culture and that they are celebrated as a symbol of country's diversity.<sup>15</sup> Living in a gender contrary to that assigned at birth on the day-to-day level differs markedly from the permission given to other citizens one day a year to cross-dress during *carnaval* and does not represent the much touted open-mindedness or 'anything goes' attitude around sexuality and gender which many are keen to project abroad.<sup>16</sup> His respondents in living their lives and desires are exposed to many risks, forms of violence and social marginalisation.

In spite of this intent to clarify realities from myth, Kulick's study offers no analysis of the institutional and social regulation of everyday *travesti* life in Salvador, and although we get a sense that the *travestis* are a subset of the homosexual community, there are no considerations as to how class mediates the difference in homosexualities in Brazil, wherein middle class gays tend to be the more gender normative and structure their relations with one another based more on the so-called 'egalitarian model' and do not differentiate themselves in terms of positionality and the related gender role styles to which *travestis* subscribe. Much research suggests that in many parts of Latin America these models of homosexuality exist side by side and that what is termed by Stephen O. Murray 'gender-differentiated' homosexuality is more aligned with the popular classes and based on the active/passive distinction. In the active/passive paradigm – called pejoratively by some commentators the 'antiquated model' of homoerotic relations – only the passive partner, whose gender style tends to the feminine, is understood as homosexual. The penetrating, active partner slips by the public radar that assigns gender atypicality thanks to his performance of establishment-aligned masculinity and is hence rarely labelled homosexual.<sup>17</sup> The *loca* or *travesti* who relates to this paradigm also understands her lover as non-homosexual.<sup>18</sup> Kulick's *travestis* valorise this paradigm and constantly seek out masculine *homens*. If an *homen* takes the passive role – even if only once – he loses his prestige among *travestis* and ceases to be considered a 'real man'. Hypermasculinity – a performance that fends off any hint of effeminacy – is seen as a desirable trait in boyfriends, but not necessarily in clients, who may or may not expect *travestis* to perform the active role with them. They are in a different category. *Travestis* disavow the meaning of the temporary assumption by them of the active insertor role in commercial contexts by insisting they gain little pleasure from it. The passive/active differentiation is symbolically very crucial to their sense of erotic pleasure, order of relationships and their gender identifications. In contrast, these differentiated axes of positionality and gender style do not pertain to those who fall under the so-called 'egalitarian' or 'modern' model of homosexuality. Men who engage in this style of homosexual relations tend to relate more to the (imported) term gay, proceed from the larger cities and are predominantly of professional/middle-class standing.<sup>19</sup> Kulick does not provide a thorough account of this contrast, but it is implicit in some of the comments that his respondents make.

In *Mema's House* Prieur makes this very explicit. She sees her *jotas* as a kind of subculture within a subculture, that is, of a homoerotic scene which is dominated by middle class gender-same gays, and the *jotas* are hence triply marginalised: for being homosexual, effeminate and poor.<sup>20</sup> The *jotas* are most clearly from the lower classes. They do not have access to the privileges enjoyed by the gays within their own setting and in the larger culture in general. Gays often turn them away from their bars – since their *actitud escandalosa* may attract ill repute, as it is said to do in mainstream culture as well. According to Prieur:

Among urban popular classes the biological differences between the sexes are underlined and exaggerated, in line with a whole ideology about what the sexes are supposed to be: different and complementary [...] The *jotas*, with their overtly sexualized appearance and their emphasis on being different from their partners, fit in with this scheme of things. This same link between class and homosexual men's effeminacy seems evident in other Latin American countries as well.<sup>21</sup>

Prieur did her field work with a group of teenage *jotas* and *vestidas* sporadically over several years, after establishing contact first with homosexual activist and HIV/AIDS educator, Gerardo Ortega, also known as Mema. Mema oversees the daily goings-on at his house in an impoverished municipality in the eastern metropolitan area of Mexico City known as Nezahualcóyotl. His place functions as a sanctuary for a collection of young gender variant homosexuals and cross-living *vestidas* who would otherwise be unable to exercise the freedom to smoke marijuana, drink, bring home men as either boyfriends or clients and generally be themselves. Many of their families cannot cope with them or accept them only begrudgingly. Mema is a kind of mother/father figure to them.

Prieur lived with them, observing and interviewing her subjects. Her orientation – to observe how gender is constructed and reconstructed in the pressure cooker of *machista* Mexican sex/gender norms – has obvious parallels to that of Kulick. She starts with theory – social constructivist ideas of gender – and aims to come to some conclusions based on her field work to these theories, especially as seen in the work of Bourdieu and his ideas on masculine domination. Prieur constructs a locally-based set of definitions for sexual practices, positions and identities which also work along the active/passive axes, but in quite intricate ways.<sup>22</sup> She studies her subjects in order to understand how they conceive their sexuality and their gender identities. *Vestidas*, for instance, see themselves as women and as homosexuals simultaneously. They do not see themselves as transsexuals and only one, Marta, desires SRS.<sup>23</sup> Prieur uses her time in the house to witness how her subjects adapt their bodies, and how they reinscribe masculinity and femininity. Her central research question is how is it that in a *machista* society like Mexico, especially the kind found among the working class which often subscribes to the most traditional notions of men and women, *jotas* and *vestidas* exist? Her subjects relate to themselves as 'like women' and seek masculine partners whom they term *mayates*. They construct their genders by bricolage, basing them, Prieur claims, on soap opera star images and ideals from popular culture.<sup>24</sup> They present a version of femininity which Prieur claims is meant to signify their 'fuckability'.<sup>25</sup> Prieur relates that she finds their bawdiness and overt sexuality quite excessive at times, but contextualises this reaction referring to her Norwegian upbringing and the very different expectations of behaviour with which she has been inculcated.

However, she does not provide much analysis on the connection between their work lives (however informal) as prostitutes and the need to present a sexual image of availability, which may lead her to generalise and stereotype on this point. She relies quite heavily on the literature about childhood gender variance, notably, effeminacy in young boys, in a chapter called 'Little Boys in Mother's Wardrobe'.<sup>26</sup> She attempts to draw etiologies with this theoretical work (effeminacy and homosexuality as biological, as hormonal or as learnt) and intersplices it with her own respondents' versions on how they came to be *jotas* or *vestidas*, what they were like as children and when they first realised their femininity and attraction to other males. Their femininity

was obvious to themselves and others due to their fondness for toys and play scenarios culturally particular to girls, as well as in their marked interest in girls' clothes and their softness. Most of her respondents claim they were born that way – that they were always *jotas* but sometimes their interest in men was the result of early childhood seduction at the hands of an adult male.<sup>27</sup> Prieur at this point prioritises her view as researcher and casts doubt on her respondents' accounts, challenging their believability.<sup>28</sup> She posits that any explanation as to why they became *jotas* or *vestidas* is complex and interwoven with different factors, but opts more for the learning of the identity, the social placement in the role due to cultural pressures and expectations. And she suggests that her subjects do not really know themselves.<sup>29</sup>

This disjuncture between the priorities of the researcher's theories and the worldviews of her subjects illustrate the problematics of objectivist accounts, which were referred to at the beginning of this article. Prieur risks imposing her own frameworks on the world she studies, and although she mostly takes care to separate out her own impressions when they are distinct from those of her subjects, her choice of language and her emphasis do indeed objectify her research population in certain ways. The title of the chapter on effeminacy and homosexuality, it will be observed, remits to tabloid or pop psychology portrayals of gender variants: a deviant infantilised type. The following chapter entitled 'Stealing Femininity: On Bodily and Symbolic Constructions' unwittingly uses terminology that repeats the mass cultural and medico-legal framing of her subjects, that is, as criminal.<sup>30</sup> Further, Prieur characterises *vestidas* as paradoxical and is extremely uncomfortable with what she sees as their 'artificiality'.<sup>31</sup> Some of her own gender polar notions go unanalysed and are used to judge her subjects, whose personality characteristics she describes as much more like those of a male.<sup>32</sup> Biologist Joan Roughgarden cites Prieur as an example of sociologists who 'violate the primary narratives they record'.<sup>33</sup>

Her commitment to social constructivism and sociological theory (as defined by Seidman) inhibits her from sustaining a view from within the subculture and the idea that one is born and innately predisposed to be gender variant, transgender or transsexual is rejected. She instead emphasises in several parts of the text that being *jota* or *vestida* is to some degree a choice – just like being transsexual, something which Roughgarden and others very much dispute. For Prieur, their bricolage identities are a cultivation of excess and exaggerated ideals of femininity. She never posits her own female identity as a choice in these kinds of terms; her own status as female and feminine is not the focus of scrutiny; that of *jotas* and *vestidas* – subjected to the gaze of the objectivist researcher – is called into account. She understands their materialisation of the feminine as the only way that they, as poor working class males, can attract and create a space to enjoy eroticism with other males, according to the gender schema that apply. Their identities she interprets via Bourdieu as constituting a resistance to symbolic violence.<sup>34</sup>

This notion of the articulation of femininity as a resistance to symbolic violence is problematic as it shows a tendency to explain being *jota* or *travesti* as the result of submission, to explain these identities away as highly contingent phenomena which in a different set of variables would not and need not exist. Prieur develops some admiration for the drive of her subjects, but her study, while it seeks to place her *jotas* and *vestidas* in their local neighbourhood and the larger society, does not provide any sense of how they experience that world beyond their sexual relationships and social activities. Their own narrativisation of the emergence of their sense of gendered self and sexuality is important to understanding the way they structure their world and

their position in it. Prieur, however, largely discounts the value of a full subject-based appraisal of the narrativisation of self.

Perhaps even more than Kulick's study, which exhaustively places on display *travesti* bodies in order to muse on gender and its reproduction, in *Mema's House* Prieur's subjects are objects to look at and from which the sociologist extracts certain information that can be generalised. This leads to still more generalisation and the reification of certain ideas about effeminate homosexuals and *travestis*. That this indeed occurs with sociological discourse is confirmed by an experience I observed while presenting work from the initial drafts of a chapter of my doctoral thesis, which reads the representation of *travestismo* in cultural production. An academic in the audience, on hearing me remark on the character Sandra, a *travesti* character in a Cuban novel, who identifies as a woman, questioned whether this was accurate, as *travestis* do not claim to be women, authoritatively basing her perspective on Kulick's work. As intimated earlier, Kulick's use of the singular in his book's title hints at this prototypical image – that there is only one type of *travesti*, the 'kind' contained in his Brazilian study. But not all *travestis* – particularly in zones whose cultural history and linguistic heritage differs – are the same. Some *do* identify as women. This diversity requires emphasis in sociological work, especially when texts circulate and are drawn upon as forms of 'expert' knowledge about subjects.

Two more recent and lesser known studies, the Mexican César O. González Pérez's *Travestidos al desnudo: homosexualidad, identidades y luchas territoriales en Colima* and Argentinian Josefina Fernández's *Cuerpos desobedientes: travestismo e identidad de género*, manage to avoid the tendency to locate *locas* and *travestis* as mere objects or curiosities of the sociological gaze. In spite of its racy title which translates to '*Travestis* stripped bare', the first book avoids framing its subjects in simply reiterative ways. It explores the world of what the author terms *travesties gays* in Colima, Mexico. It incorporates snippets of narrative given by the subjects and investigates how they form their own community which is part of a larger community and how as *travestis* they are a segment of the extended gay one. It follows their shows, the *antros* they frequent and other events, looking always at power relationships, socio-spatial practices within the broader gay community and in straight society.

The study commences with an examination of Mexico's Judeo-Christian heritage and the condemnation of sexual diversity. It also profiles the emergence of *travestismo* in relation to medico-legal discourses of deviance. It then moves to reveal how *travestis* manage and articulate their identities in various social spaces, generating within them forms of expression (corporeal, behavioural, linguistic) with different nuances.

González Pérez uses Erving Goffman's notion of revindication of the 'I', which relates to the marking of territories and the assertion/insertion of oneself in space in order to announce one's difference from another. *Travestis* are always aware of being observed – sometimes in threatening ways. This assertion in space allows them to claim space that is often denied them and hence also vindicate an identity – the right to occupy a space and to exist, in the face of violence, discrimination and social censure. By foregrounding these mechanisms, the author demystifies the common perception of *travestis* as affronting and aggressive; he situates their attributed fierceness of attitude as a tactic of redressing power imbalances and defusing adverse situations. Aggressiveness is hence seen not as an inexplicable and innate facet, but in all its witty sarcasm and microsocial complexity.

Language plays a fundamental role in this, ranging from the camp comeback of the *joteada* to the art of the elaborate put-down or *perreo* (105). González Pérez's analysis of this *jerga* also reveals the great variety of definitions within the group of *gays travestidos*: in any setting of the *ambiente* those who mingle might be *cuinas operadas* or transsexuals, *vestidas* or *travestis*, *buchonas* or effeminate but not cross-living gays.<sup>35</sup> All are *jotas*. The men they pursue – and those that pursue them – are, as in Prieur's study of Neza, *mayates*. The terminology relates to gender styles of feminine or masculine and the associated concept of sexual role, that is, passive or active. However there are also categories for those who cross these roles: *mayate volteado* – the masculine man who goes passive; *hacer tortilla*, if a *vestida* does it with a *chancla* – a lesbian – and so on. If a *jota* dresses straight, she's *choleado*.

*Travestismo* is more socially accepted when it is confined to the stage, in other words, for performance and entertainment purposes.<sup>36</sup> Outside this context it is subject to much opprobrium. Colima's *travestis* also experience ostracism in the context of commercial gay clubs and have few places to go; the proprietors of many gay venues associate *vestidas* and *jotas* with prostitution and illegality, even as they allow many *chichifos* or masculine rent boys to go about their business in gay spaces.<sup>37</sup> Private parties are frequently organised to compensate, where *mayates* are the object of the competitive designs of the *travestis*. As we are taken into these spaces, the author's objective is to follow his subjects as they move and change according to different sites. He sees their identities as fluid and adaptive.

Though not all his *jotas* and *gays travestidos* are involved in prostitution, some are and both the brothel and the streets of Colima's *zona de tolerancia* are hence significant sites. They experience considerable abuse from the local police, including arbitrary arrests for the 'crime' of 'dressing' in public, torture, sexual assault and abuse by constables, jailers and judges. They exist on the edges of institutional life in Colima. The author includes revealing data on incidences of *travestis* requiring medical assistance and being refused.

Although they are *gays travestidos*, many consider themselves *muchachas* and mould their bodies in creative and often risky ways – using hormones and injecting vegetable oil to round out their figures. Like Kulick's *travestis*, their gender expressions are based to some extent on the (self-identified) notion that homosexual = feminine, and yet at the same time the *travestis* in González Pérez's work acknowledge that this is but one possible elaboration. As *travestis*, their keen sense of difference also proceeds from a young age – as we see in Prieur's study – and their sense of gender difference is inseparable from their budding erotic interest in other males. They also suffer rejection from their families, exclusion from the formal labour market and low rates of retention at school due to discrimination. The style of one's gender presentation and the intensity of its display may be the result of certain choices, influences, show life and prostitution-specific settings, however as the *travestis* testify, performing as male is a lot harder than simply embracing who and what they really feel they are. As the work of Kulick and Fernández (to be examined next) also shows, many begin in 'the life' as early as age fourteen. This study seeks to transmit the idea that *travestidos* are more than simply 'men dressed as women' and resists the temptation to impose theories on its subjects.

Similarly, Josefina Fernández's study does not content itself with merely talking about *travestis* but rather, in the words of *travesti* activist Lohana Berkins with whom she collaborated, she has endeavoured in her research to talk with them.<sup>38</sup> The book is divided into two broad parts: 'Lo que se dice de ellas' which includes a historical summary of the concept of *travestismo* and outlines the three main hypotheses about

the phenomenon: *travestismo* as expression of a third type, as a reinforcement of ideas of gender and then *travestismo* as performed gender. The second part is entitled 'La voz de las travestis' and includes testimony and reflection on the family, the departure, often at a young age, from its setting and the entry into prostitution as key moments in the development of a public *travesti* identity; it then examines the links between the elaboration of *travestismo* and public space and its forthwith entry into the political zone of the construction of the body.

As such, Fernández is interested not simply in *travesti* identity as a personal and subjective one, but rather also as a political one: its fraught emergence in the context of extensive knowledges of deviance, control, surveillance and juridical interpellation, specifically here in the context of the derogation of the Police Edicts in Buenos Aires which had regulated *travesti* movements, identities and involvement in prostitution and the newly proposed (and harsher) *Código de Convivencia*. A major debate erupted over this in the early 1990s in which *travestis* achieved a hitherto unprecedented public visibility as political actors, calling on the authorities, on feminists, on jurists, on neighbour decency groups and so on. Fernández views *travestis* in their multiple personal, social and political dimensions and not simply as a confirmation of any single theory as outlined in her first section. In the second part she investigates their childhood selves, their trajectories into adolescence, their relationships with the body, with the concept of 'sexes' and with models of femininity. Her study maps their fight for space in the wider GLBT movement in Argentina and advocates for a recognition of sexual diversity and *travesti* identity by the State, the source of so many *travesti* woes.

*Travestis* in Argentina – as in many other Latin American jurisdictions – know what it is to be subject to the State's gaze and the brunt of police abuse, but they do not merely exist to play to a gallery or as victims; their political emergence challenges the basic looking relations which disempower and subjugate their members; they have begun to look at themselves and cast their gaze outward, becoming conscious of their status as *travestis* and their oppression. *Travestis* do not dress as spectacular divas at all hours and many of the activists taking part in protests march alongside other people dressed in simple urban activist gear. Fernández illustrates these distinctions in some depth. Never privileging theory over the voices of its participants, her study is possibly the most detailed, self-reflexive and grounded text of all the contemporary sociological discourse being generated around gender variant homosexual and trans lives. As such, it forms a useful guide to nuance some of the generalisations found in other studies. Where other studies are quick to assume that *travesti* manifestations of femininity are based on a stereotyped idealisation of woman or an excessive and male view of sexual difference – Priour's, for instance – Fernández emphasises the connections between *travesti* femininity and prostitution and the lack of traditional maternal models for constructing themselves as feminine. Her study provides the kind of context enabled by intensive interviewing, lengthy fieldwork observation and involvement in ongoing solidarity efforts allied to the very community that allowed her entry into its domain.

The two scholars quoted at the beginning of this article, Roger Lancaster and Guillermo Núñez Noriega, raise points which are pertinent to anthropologists and sociologists and how they write about their subjects, points which this article has pursued in making a distinction between sociological theory, which asks questions of interest mainly to the discipline, and social theory, which attempts to arrive at conclusions from the subject's context, constructing theory that is relevant to the population, reflecting its varied nature and working for social change. Often

objectivist approaches impose the researcher's point of view, prioritising abstract theory over subjective knowledge, utilising subjects as exemplar of currently fashionable intellectual paradigms or positioning them as curiosities meant to intrigue. The work of Prieur is most susceptible to this danger; that of Kulick less so but still possessing of the tendency to type. How can queers, *afeminados*, and transgendered persons be represented without reproducing and reiterating the violence of their culture's productions which inscribe them in sometimes abject, othering and generalising ways? The work of Latin American scholars Fernández and González Pérez provides some vital indications as to how research can be designed to emphasise diversity and the particularity of everyday life. Moreover, they advance agendas of considerable import to the communities in focus: to contest and re-envision conceptualisations of *travesti* lives from the subject's point-of-view, and understand their social worlds from within.

## Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> Guillermo Núñez Noriega, *Sexo entre varones: poder y resistencia en el campo sexual*, México, Miguel Angel Porrúa, 1999, p. 48.
- <sup>2</sup> Roger Lancaster, 'Transgenderism in Latin America: Some Critical Introductory Remarks on Identities and Practices', *Transgender in Latin America: Persons, Practices and Meanings*, Spec. issue of *Sexualities* 1.3, 1998, p. 269.
- <sup>3</sup> Steven Seidman, *Difference Troubles: Queering Social Theory and Sexual Politics*, Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. 44-45.
- <sup>4</sup> Viviane K. Namaste, *Invisible Lives: The Erasure of Transsexual and Transgendered People*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2000, 29.
- <sup>5</sup> Namaste, *Invisible Lives*, pp. 27-28.
- <sup>6</sup> Don Kulick, *Travesti: Sex, Gender and Culture among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- <sup>7</sup> Annick Prieur, *Mema's House, Mexico City: On Transvestites, Queens, and Machos*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- <sup>8</sup> César O. González Pérez, *Travestidos al desnudo: homosexualidad, identidades y luchas territoriales en Colima*, México, Miguel Angel Porrúa, 2003.
- <sup>9</sup> Josefina Fernández, *Cuerpos desobedientes: travestismo e identidad de género*, Buenos Aires, Edhasa, 2004.
- <sup>10</sup> Kulick, *Travesti*, p. 5.
- <sup>11</sup> Kulick, *Travesti*, pp. 219, 227.
- <sup>12</sup> Kulick, *Travesti*, p. 225.
- <sup>13</sup> Kulick, *Travesti*, pp. 224, 226.
- <sup>14</sup> Kulick, *Travesti*, pp. 229-230.
- <sup>15</sup> Kulick, *Travesti*, p. 9.
- <sup>16</sup> Kulick, *Travesti*, p. 9.
- <sup>17</sup> Stephen O. Murray, *Latin American Male Homosexualities*, Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1995.
- <sup>18</sup> See also the work of Joseph Carrier, *De los Otros: Intimacy and Homosexuality Among Mexican Men*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1995 and Ian Lumsden, *Homosexuality, Society and the State in Mexico*, Toronto, Canadian Gay Archives, 1991.
- <sup>19</sup> See Murray 1991, Lumsden 1991, Carrier 1995.
- <sup>20</sup> Prieur, *Mema's House*, p. 28.
- <sup>21</sup> Prieur, *Mema's House*, p. 150.
- <sup>22</sup> Prieur, *Mema's House*, pp. 24-31.
- <sup>23</sup> Prieur, *Mema's House*, p. 107.
- <sup>24</sup> Prieur, *Mema's House*, p. 148.
- <sup>25</sup> Prieur, *Mema's House*, p. 146.
- <sup>26</sup> Prieur, *Mema's House*, pp. 104-140.
- <sup>27</sup> Prieur, *Mema's House*, p. 116.

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- <sup>28</sup> Prieur, *Mema's House*, p. 109.
- <sup>29</sup> Prieur, *Mema's House*, p. 109.
- <sup>30</sup> Prieur, *Mema's House*, pp. 140-179.
- <sup>31</sup> Prieur, *Mema's House*, p. 161.
- <sup>32</sup> Prieur, *Mema's House*, p. 171.
- <sup>33</sup> Joan Roughgarden, *Evolution's Rainbow: Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and People*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2004, p. 382.
- <sup>34</sup> Prieur, *Mema's House*, p. 129.
- <sup>35</sup> González Pérez, *Travestidos al desnudo*, p. 95.
- <sup>36</sup> González Pérez, *Travestidos al desnudo*, p. 91.
- <sup>37</sup> González Pérez, *Travestidos al desnudo*, pp. 77, 79.
- <sup>38</sup> Transcript of a radio broadcast featured in 'Presentación del libro: Cuerpos desobedientes', *Ciudadanía sexual*, Date of access: 14 November 2006, [http://www.ciudadaniasexual.org/publicaciones/Doc\\_Libro\\_Cuerpos\\_desobedientes.pdf](http://www.ciudadaniasexual.org/publicaciones/Doc_Libro_Cuerpos_desobedientes.pdf).