Transgender information

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Dimensions of gender

What most societies traditionally think of as male or female gender conflates many different aspects of **personal identity**, including dimensions such as

- *chromosomal sex:* XY vs. XX (but also XXY, etc.)
- *biological sex:* gonads and genitalia, testes/penis vs. ovaries/uterus (but many other combinations possible)
- *anatomical sex:* beard, deeper voice, taller/heavier vs. breasts, higher voice, wider hips (but this is really a continuous scale in multiple sub−dimensions)
- *gender identity:* whether one identifies as *male* or *female* (or neither, both, gender−fluid, etc.)
- *social gender:* whether one has the social role and is assigned to the group of *men* or *women* (or neither group)
- *gender expression:* masculine vs. feminine presentation, including aspects such as fashion, make−up/hairstyle, gestures and facial expression, body posture, gait, manner of speaking, etc. (again, this is obviously a multi−dimensional continuum)
- *sexual orientation:* whether one prefers to have sex with men, women, both, neither, or something else (which doesn't relate to a person's gender at all except for their classification as *homosexual* or *heterosexual*)
- *hobbies and interests:* toy cars vs. dolls, engineering/computers vs. fashion/social work, etc. (all of which are outdated stereotypes that have nothing to do with sex or gender, but are sadly tenacious in society and even in some psychological questionnaires)

A society with a **binary gender system** expects all these dimensions to align: either you are a man (with male genitalia and anatomy, male gender identity, masculine presentation and stereotypical âboyâ interests) or you are a woman (with female genitalia and anatomy, female gender identity, feminine presentation and stereotypical âgirlâ interests). Julia Serano refers to this as *oppositional sexism* and points out that gender is assigned purely based on the presence or absence of a penis at birth (without even checking chromosomes).

However, a person's **true identity** can be any combination of positions on these dimensions. A person is **cis** if their combination is close enough to the man/woman stereotypes to live comfortably within a binary gender system. A person is **trans** if their biological sex is opposite to their gender identity (which is otherwise close enough to the stereotype). People whose identity is a more complicated mix often identify as **non−binary** because they feel they do not fit into any traditional gender category.

About Stephanie

I usually describe myself as a âstraightforwardâ **trans woman** because my gender identity is unambiguously female and I prefer a feminine gender expression (in fashion, make−up, hairstyle, manners, gait, etc.), while my chromosomal, biological and anatomical sex is male (but I'm working on that!). I thus fit very well into the media trope of a âwoman trapped in a male body <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminine_essence_concept_of_transsexuality>", which many people can relate to more readily than to other transgender or non−binary identities.

It is important to understand that many transgender people do not match the media trope as well as I do, and it is perfectly valid for a trans woman (or a cis woman, for that matter) to prefer a masculine presentation and for a trans man (or cis man) to prefer a feminine presentation.

In case you've been wondering **how to cite my papers**, please use my name as specified in the original paper (as well as in my publications list). I do not want to hide my personal history and the fact that I spent 50 years trying to live as a man. You also might consider switching to a citation style such as APA that only uses initials for given names!

Transphobia

For no good reason at all â except that they apparently can't stand to see other people happy â some people are strongly opposed to transgenderism: they **deny the validity of our experience**, aim to **take away our transgender rights** and financial support, and sometimes resort to **hate speech** and **physical violence**. I am glad to live in a country, society and professional environment that has shown an amazing degree of open−mindedness, acceptance and support so far. But many transgender people across the world have had a very different experience.

One common misunderstanding is due to the outdated medical diagnosis of **transsexualism**, which seems to connect transgenderism with sexuality. This has led both mainstream media <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Rocky_Horror_Picture_Show> and some psychiatrists <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blanchard%27s_transsexualism_typology> to confuse transgender identity (especially of trans women) with transvestic fetishism or autogynephilia <https://doi.org/10.1080/15532739.2010.514223>.

I believe that everybody should be allowed to **live their personal identity** just as it is, in order to be happy, develop into the âbest version of themselvesâ and enrich our society and the lives of the people around them. This is captured perfectly by Rotary International's Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion <https://www.rotary.org/en/about-rotary/diversity-equity-and-inclusion>: *We value diversity and celebrate the contributions of people of all backgrounds, across age, ethnicity, race, color, disability, learning style, religion, faith, socioeconomic status, culture, marital status, languages spoken, sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity as well as differences in ideas, thoughts, values, and beliefs.*

Further reading

- Recommended reading: anything by Julia Serano <https://juliaserano.com/> (including her *Whipping Girl* blog <http://juliaserano.blogspot.com/>), *Transgender History* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transgender_History_(book)> by Susan Stryker
- Well−researched facts against anti−transgender narratives: juliaserano.medium.com <https://juliaserano.medium.com/>
- Transgender genocide is already in progress in the USA <https://www.lemkininstitute.com/red-flag-alerts/red-flag-alert-for-genocide---usa> and the UK <https://www.lemkininstitute.com/red-flag-alerts/red-flag-alert-on-anti-trans-and-intersex-rights-in-the-uk>, and the Trans Holocaust History <https://elierlick.com/transholocaust/> shows you where it will end.
- Some online life stories that have a very familiar ring to me: Caragh Donley <https://www.huffpost.com/entry/coming-out-trans-63_n_6508dc11e4b0fe763ab6a646> (warning: commercial web sites with lots of advertising)
- Transgender members of parliament in Germany: Tessa Ganserer <https://www.tessa-ganserer.de/> (`@GansGruen` <https://twitter.com/gansgruen>) and Nyke Slawik <https://nyke-slawik.de/> (`@nyke_slawik` <https://twitter.com/nyke_slawik>)
- Some German trans* organisations: dgti e.V. <https://www.dgti.org/>, Trans−Ident e.V. <https://www.trans-ident.de/> (more links to follow)
- Other countries: TransActual UK <https://transactual.org.uk/> (more links to follow)
- And just in case you've been asking yourself: Am I transgender? <https://amitransgender.net/>