

# Transgender Identity

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## **Introduction**

The debate on the lives and livelihood of transgender people is one that has been around for a long time, a debate on whether transpeople have the right to existence in the identity they identify with. In more recent times we are witnessing a more aggressive and inhumane crack-down in gender identity policing, criminalizing the right to express oneself as who they feel they are. The rights and treatment of all people should be a concern to all, as no matter who you are or where you come from, as human beings we are entitled to basic human rights. The oppression of trans-rights and expression is a oppression of rights to everyone. Understanding what It means to be transgender is the key step in accepting trans-people in our society. To be “Transgender” is to identify with a gender identity or behaviors that does not typically represent the sex they were assigned at birth. Gender Identity on the other hand refers to ones internal sense of self and whether they appeal to male, female or another gender.

This study will initially break down the difference between gender and sex, and will discuss how these differences may manifest in creating a “trans” identity. Transgender people and their experiences in society will be discussed.

This study is aimed to help further the knowledge of transgender and the science behind gender and sex.

## **Gender**

Gender is a highly complex issue, that can have different meanings across different groups of people, and or societies. The first step needed to understand what gender means is to understand the different components that go into it. These components include gender identity,

gender expression, biological sex, and sexual orientation (Chang, A. R., & Wildman, S. M. (2017). Gender is often seen as a binary system, consisting only of male and female, however, as mentioned above there is more to this. Using this binary way of thinking, gender is often seen as sex and sex as gender, however, this isn't the case. Gender is a socially constructed identity that places humans into behavioral categories where certain norms and expectations are expected to be followed. This very binary view of gender doesn't offer a space for transgender people, as trans people don't identify with the sex they were assigned at birth, but rather with the identity that was crafted by their gender expression and sexual orientation. Understanding Gender is a complex topic that requires the acknowledgment of different aspects is a fundamental step in understanding it as a whole. Gender is not a set-in-stone law that isn't subject to change, the way we perceive gender has constantly been in motion and changing, and what society deems socially acceptable also changes. Gender is more than the genitalia you were born with, but rather an identity that is curated by many different factors on a personal level.

## Sex

Sex is described as the most binary, simply male or female solely based on the chromosomes and genitalia presented, which is based on biology. It's believed that when humans are born they are placed into another binary system of chromosomes, where XX chromosomes are viewed as female and those with XY as male. However the belief that this is a binary system is false, as even chromosomes don't simply conform to being only XX and XY, as 1 in 1666 births results in neither XX nor XY (Chang, A. R., & Wildman, S. M. (2017). In a case where a person's chromosomes are neither XY nor XX, what should that person identify as? This again shows the complexity behind both sex and gender and the impact of other factors on gender

identity. Another example is intersex people, who are people who are born with external and internal genitalia that are neither male nor female. If sex is grounded in the biology of humans where nothing is strictly binary than our definitions should reflect this and also not be strictly binary.

### **Trans-people In Society**

The debate over sex and gender is one that is fought to legitimize a binary way of thinking about both topics. This way of thinking has harmful effects on transgender people throughout society, as the government tries to regulate and legally determine what it means to be a man and woman and there is no room for anything in between. The act of policing a system as a binary that isn't truly binary is injustice, and those who are suffering are trans people. In the United States, transgender people lack the legal protection to live healthy, dignified, and happy life (Adam, 2020). Due to the different systems that are denied to trans people, they often fall victim to different violent crimes and acts. Studies show that between thirty and fifty percent of transgender people experience domestic and partner violence compared with twelve percent of cis-gendered people, People who identify as the gender they were assigned at sex (Adam, 2020). Trans people are also starting to see a steady rise in hate crimes against them, with 31 hate crimes reported in 2013, to the 137 hate crimes reported in 2017. There are now more recent laws popping up across the country preventing Trans-people from receiving gender-affirming care.

### **Gender Affirming Care**

Gender Affirming care is health care that is sought to align the person more to their desired gender. This care can range from hormone therapy, which may include a person who identifies as a male to taking testosterone shots that would stimulate the growth of more “masculine” presenting features such as thicker facial hair. Another type of gender-affirming care is gender reassignment surgery which is the surgical procedure of changing one genitalia to match that of their gender identity. In a time where proper health care is being denied to transgender people, let’s look at the effects of trans-people not receiving gender-affirming care. O’Handley, B., & Courtice break down the experiences of transgender people during the Covid-19 pandemic where they were not able to receive certain gender-affirming care, such as hormone therapy, scheduled surgery, or even a simple haircut. For instance, “For this participant and others, the delay of gender-affirming healthcare was not merely an inconvenience but could be considered "a life or death situation" (P2585, transgender man, 16). Indeed, access to timely gender-affirming care has been associated with reductions in suicide attempts and ideation (Almazan & Keuroghilan, 2021)” O’Handley, B., & Courtice, E. L. (2022). Transgender people who weren’t able to receive the care they so desperately needed and wanted, had severe effects on their mental health, leading to even suicide ideation as said above. This was due to the Covid-19 Lockdown, however, the reality of today is that it is now laws preventing this much-needed care.

## **Conclusion**

In order to understand transgender people and non-binary people, we must have a desire to understand aspects of their life and existence. It would be impossible to understand all aspects as there is still so much we don’t know about. However it is fundemanl in being able to respect

the existence of transgender people as human beings and not a scientific anomaly, because they are simply apart of nature. The rights of trans-people are under attack and are being stripped more and more every year. The education and research is needed to understand the trans-mind and to allow society to view them as normal.

## References

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