

# Intersexuality and Trans-Identities within the Diversity Management Discourse

Thomas Köllen<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract** Within both the scientific discourse on workforce diversity, and diversity management practice, intersexuality and transgender issues have hitherto remained marginalized topics. This chapter gives an overview of the discourses on both phenomena, and proposes starting points for more inclusive organizational diversity management initiatives. It is shown that both topics represent different aspects of the category of “gender”. The common practice of conceptually lumping together intersexuality, transgenderism, and sexual orientation can be seen as one important reason that intersexuality and transgenderism are rarely considered in organizational diversity management programs in terms of concrete action. Against this background, a modified, and more integrated approach to structuring the workforce alongside the different dimensions of diversity is proposed. It is shown that the categories of “biological sex and gender”, “gender identity”, and “sexual orientation” cannot be regarded as being separate from each other. They represent, rather, an interrelated organizational field of action that should be considered as being one interrelated topic for organizational diversity practices. This chapter derives this claim theoretically and discusses the consequences for organizational diversity management practices. For most organizations, this would mean a fundamental rethinking of their goals, in terms of workforce diversity, and the shaping of their diversity management programs.

**Keywords:** Intersex, transgender, transsexuality, cisgender, LGBTI, gender identity

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## 1 Introduction<sup>2</sup>

By using the term *LGBTI* many organizations purport to explicitly consider intersexuality and trans-identities as part of their diversity management activities. *LGBTI*, then, is often defined as the name of the target group for organizational initiatives that focus on the dimensions of “sexual orientation/identity” and “gender identity”: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex persons. However, a closer examination of the concrete actions that are implemented on this issue by most organizations reveals that the target group in most cases is reduced to lesbian, gay, and (partially) bisexual employees. Only very rarely do organizations implement actions that explicitly address transgender employees, and intersexuality remains totally excluded from consideration when it comes to concrete organizational practices and initiatives. This shows that the usage of the term *LGBTI* in the context of organizational diversity management practices is predominantly motivated by being somehow “politically correct” and trying, at least on the level of semantics and language, to be all-inclusive. Because of this, how far the single elements of this term share any commonalities, and how this would potentially legitimize grouping them together (or not), has rarely, if ever been called into question.

In this context, this chapter provides a closer examination of those categories included in the term *LGBTI* that are infrequently, if at all, considered in the discourse on diversity and diversity management: Intersexuality and transgenderism. The different theoretical approaches to both phenomena will be outlined, along with a discussion of what both phenomena have in common with each other, and where they fundamentally differ from each other. As a result it will be shown that intersexuality and transgenderism are gender/biological sex categories that are, indeed, by definition related to different sexual orientations, as they are defined by the gender/sex of the desired and the desiring subjects. However, there are substantial ways in which both phenomena do not have anything in common with different sexual orientations, and actually, within the discourse of diversity and diversity management, they should be integrated into a more holistic concept of the category of gender. This, then, creates an opportunity to redefine and to rethink the present approach to “gender” as one dimension of diversity, and to question whether it is justifiable at all to separately treat gender and sexual orientation as two distinct categories. It will be argued, rather, that gender/biological sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation should be seen as one related dimension or category. This carries with it several implications for developing and modifying adequate diversity management approaches and initiatives that include transgenderism and intersexuality.

## 2 Sexuality, Sex, and Gender

Distinguishing between *sex* and *gender* has become a widespread standard in social

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sciences. It differentiates sex, as the biological bodily aspect, from gender, the socially constructed, cultural aspect (Oakley 1972; Gatens 1983) of being a man or a woman, or of being masculine and feminine respectively. In English, these two terms cover the whole spectrum of possibility in naming the sex and/or gender of an individual; in everyday speech, as well as in many scientific disciplines, “sex” and “gender” are often used interchangeably when referring to the categories of being a man or a woman, e.g. when labeling this category in a passport, or on a form listing personal information. Some other languages, especially Romance languages, have borrowed the concept of gender by using an equivalent for the Latin word “*genus*” in their language (such as “*genere*” in Italian or “*genre*” in French), or by adding the word “social” in the given language, to the word for “sex”. However, in many languages, the English term “gender” is today frequently used in its “original” English form, instead of being translated (e.g. in German, Hungarian, and Polish). The word is frequently used very inconsistently, especially in language areas that have introduced the English word “gender” as a technical term. In many cases this contributes significantly to confusion over precisely what, in concrete terms, is being talked about; moreover in English-speaking areas themselves, the inconsistent use of “sex” and “gender” sometimes causes confusion.

Up until the 1970s, women’s studies, and sex- or gender-studies were mainly shaped by trying to explain social aspects of the sexes biologically. This subsequent conceptual distinction between gender and sex, however, provided an opportunity to question the assumed predestinating and determinative impact that biological sex has on sex roles and sex-specific behavior. Henceforth, the social and cultural aspects of male and female bodies could be interpreted as phenomena that are produced on a daily basis, without solely having to refer to biological explanatory models. Gender-research could now focus on precisely these processes of socially producing men and women, or femininity and masculinity. As it is conceivable that these processes could work on a basis other than the “traditional” gender-related stereotypic images, the emergence of the concept of *gender* has broadened the scope of their potential individual self-conceptualizations for both men and women. Meanwhile, the term “gender” is often used in a political way, for example in the context of “gender mainstreaming” approaches. However, the political usage of the term gender often reveals its inconsistent usage. These approaches frequently assume different needs of men and women as a given, and they typically do not focus on the social production and construction of these need-differences, but on the goal of achieving equal opportunities and an equal allocation of resource between the biological sexes.

For a long period the distinction between gender and sex adhered to a binary model of only two sexes, namely men and women. Though the concept or construct of “gender” sometimes has a broader approach in terms of potential manifestations of different genders, it often embodies the tendency to assume only two types of genders that oppose each other in a bipolar way: masculinity and femininity. To a certain degree trans-Identities might, conceivably, be able to be aligned with this world order, but for the phenomenon of intersexuality, at least, this is much more problematic.

In very basic terms, trans-identities, or transgenderism and transsexuality, represent an incongruence between one’s biological sex, and one’s gender identity. Trans-persons, then, can aim at resolving this incongruence to different degrees, in different ways, in order to adjust their body and their appearance to their gender identity.

For trans-persons, both their biological sex and their gender identity may, in many cases, fit into a model of only two sexes and two genders. Thus, transgender individuals often have a clearly male or female gender identity. However, it remains in question as to what extent this gender identity can be equated with the concept of a social “gender”. The latter was created primarily to make the processes of social construction, and their inherent interchangeability and mutability comprehensible; biological sexes are thereby frequently forced into tight corsets of characteristics, and to these biological sexes are ascribed certain gendered scripts, and related expectations about the behavior of each sex (Hanappi-Egger 2015). However, this gender perspective focuses on the level of societal ascriptions, attributions, and expectations. For trans-persons, on the other hand, their gender identity represents the level of an individual’s acquisition of gender identity. Thus, it is not about ascribing a bundle of preconceived role expectations to an individual, it is much more about breaking with these stereotypes, and acquiring another identity. It is not about the constrictions of society, and its methods of confining the individual, it is much more about that individual him-, her-, or \*self, and the individual’s way of expressing a societally non-conforming gender identity. Thus the gender focus moves from the level of being a social ascription, to the level of being an individual sensation and expression. Indeed, one could hold the opinion that that individual can only acquire and express what “society” made available as being acquirable. However, many concrete gender identity-concepts of trans-persons do not reflect this (see e.g. Engel 2002). The estimations about the number of trans-persons within society differ wildly, between 0.04% and 5% of the population, depending on how the term “trans” is applied, and what trans-identities are subsumed under it (Olyslager and Conway 2007).

Intersex or intersexuality questions the model of having only two sexes and two genders to a far greater degree than transgenderism does. Biologically and medically, intersex is often described as a sexual ambiguity. However, this “ambiguity” results solely from the fact that in biological and medical terms only two sexes are provided for, unambiguously classifying the sex of an individual. Intersex-persons are classified as persons who possess sexual characteristics from both sexes. The prefix “inter” describes exactly the *inter*mediate position between the “unambiguous” sexes, namely men and women. However, a system is eminently conceivable in which intersex persons can be taken as that which they are, without pressing them into a binary or dichotomizing sex system by attaching a (mostly negatively connoted) intermediate position to them. This would reflect much more accurately the self-image of many intersex people, and it would much more adequately serve the biological and medical spectrum of phenomena that are subsumed under the category of “intersex”. Just as with trans-persons, the estimations about the number of intersex-persons within society differ widely. The estimates range from 0.0002% to 1.7% of the population, depending on which medical diagnoses are subsumed under the term “intersex”, and which scientific sources are cited (Sax 2002).

In the English language it is nowadays very common to use the words “intersex” and “intersexuality” synonymously. However, the use of the latter is responsible for a certain confusion, in English, as well as in other languages. The second part of the word “-sexuality” is due to an inexpert transfer of the Latin term “sexus” into German, that was first applied by Goldschmidt in the formulation of the term “Intersexualität”. In his English publications he translated this term as “intersexuality”

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(Goldschmidt 1917, 1931). Thus, intersexuality is not related to the way the terms “*Sexualität*” in German and “sexuality” in English are used in everyday speech in their respective languages, as intersexuality does not include the aspect of “sexual desire” at all. The term “sex”, as the English equivalent of the Latin “*sexus*”, covers, more or less, the concept of the Latin term (which allows the distinction between sex and gender linguistically). Therefore, the English term “intersex” refers more precisely to a medical biological level, but the term “intersexuality” intuitively creates false associations, that are related more to the level of sexual desire. These ambiguous (and partly false) connotations that are related to the term “intersexuality” also exist in other languages. Sharing the same provenance in translation from Latin to German to English (Benjamin 1966), the same confusion can occur when using the term “transsexuality” (instead of “transgender”, “trans\*”, etc.). However, expressions such as “LGBTI” falsely appear to make sense in this context, as all parts of the acronym seem to represent different sexualities or sexual orientations.

In the next two sections the phenomena of trans-identities and intersexuality will be looked at more closely, and from different perspectives. From this will be derived those aspects that are relevant for workplace settings, and that serve as starting points for diversity management initiatives that aim to create a supportive work environment, and an appreciative and inclusive climate for transgender and intersex employees.

### 3 Intersexuality

Until the 1950s the term “intersex” was not in widespread use in the English-speaking world, and intersex-persons were frequently designated “hermaphrodite”, a term which continued to be used as synonymous with “intersex” even after that word had gained more currency. In present-day English, the term “hermaphrodite” is now used exclusively for plants and animals in the fields of botany and zoology, but in other languages, such as in Danish or German, it is partially still in usage as a synonym for “intersex”. The term derives from Hermaphroditos, the son of Aphrodite and Hermes in Greek mythology, who fused with the nymph Salamakis, and from then on possessed traits of both male and female sexes (Zajko 2009). Another term that is related to intersexuality is “androgyny”. Androgyny is composed of the ancient Greek word for man (“*andros*”) and woman (“*gyne*”) and is used for persons that express both male and female characteristics. However, there is no clear definition about the commonalities and differences of the concepts of intersex and androgyny, and different intersex people use androgyny in their self-images and self-concepts in different ways and intensities; many, too, do not use the concept at all (Rosselli 2015).

In his book *Symposium*, for example, Plato has Aristophanes tell the story of the three original types of people, who were spherical, each individual having two bodies that were attached back-to-back. There were those that had two male bodies fused together, those that had two female bodies fused together and, finally, those that had one male, and one female body fused together. These last beings were androgynous. Because of some infraction against divine will, so the story goes, the gods split each of these dual-beings into two halves, and, from then on, each half formed a sexual desire that

compelled it to search for its former second half. Not only did Plato, as an extrapolation of this story, expressly indicate that homosexuality was “normal”, he used, for the first time, the term “third sex” for the androgynous individuals, an expression that also nowadays is frequently used in the context of intersexuality (Groneberg 2008; Herdt 2003).

In 1917, the German geneticist Richard Goldschmidt came up with the term “intersexuality” for the first time in one of his publications in English language (Goldschmidt 1917). In the same period he also used the term “*Intersexualität*” in his publications in the German language (Goldschmidt 1931). His publications are seen as the reason that this expression became widely accepted, both in the English- and German-speaking worlds, especially in medical discourse (Stern 2010; Morland 2014). Goldschmidt combined the Latin word “*inter*” (“in between”) and “*sexus*” (“sex”), which, as already explained, is less ambiguous in the English language than it is in other languages, such as German. In public discourse, and also on the level of individuals’ self-declarations, “hermaphrodite” and other equivalent expressions are still sometimes used, especially in other languages than English (Zehnder 2010). In order to take account of the vast number of different individual self-concepts and related sex- and gender-identities, “inter\*” has become a more inclusive, and more frequently used term (Remus 2015). However, by using the prefix “inter”, the binary model of only having two sexes is still not called into question. In international medical discourse, the term “intersexuality” is increasingly being replaced by the pathologizing term “disorders of sex development” (DSD) (de Silva 2008), or in a less pathologizing way, the word “disorder” is replaced by “differences” or “divergences” (Klöppel 2010, p. 21; Diamond and Beh 2008; Reis 2007).

### 3.1 Social Constructivist Perspective

The scientific discourse on intersexuality is primarily shaped by medical perspectives (Klöppel 2010). However, there are perspectives in the sphere of social sciences that consider biological sex to be mutable, rather than stable, and less binary than it is frequently taken to be. Sex can be seen as a product of a Euro-American discourse (Yanagisako and Collier 1987), within which sexual characteristics are interpreted as visible signs that index humans as being either male or female as the only possible sexes (Errington 1990). Closely related to this binary division of sexes is the cultural interpretation of bodies and their sexual characteristics on the basis of their functional meaning for the reproductive process (Moore 1994). Although her work has been largely overlooked for some considerable time (Gildemeister 2005; Gildemeister and Wetterer 1992), as early as 1984 Hagemann-White (1984) considered “being-a-man” or “being-a-woman” not as a biological matters of fact, but rather as “symbols in a social system of meaning” (Hagemann-White 1984, p. 79) that through individuals’ interactions are permanently created anew. At the beginning of the 1990s, the works of Judith Butler contributed to a re-evaluation of the strict distinction between sex and gender, since the biological sexed body can also be seen as a discursively constructed cultural product (Butler 1990, 1993). The emergence of this perspective – often labelled as a *postmodern* (or *queer*) approach – was paralleled by a process of reducing and constraining bodies and sexes as phenomena that are solely constituted linguistically,

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as discourses can only proceed via language as vehicle.

Feminism had initially converted the established ideology that “biology is destiny” into “biological differences are shaped culturally”; postmodernism further changed this ideology to (Behrend 1994, p. 176) “culture is destiny; everything is culture, including biology” (Landweer and Rumpf 1993, p. 4, in Behrend 1994). Thus, biological determinism made way for a social or cultural determinism. In Western societies this sex-shaping discourse springs from the assumption of only two sexes. In order to make “sense” in cultural or social terms, a sexed body has either to represent a man or a woman. Thus, Western discourse normalizes the sexual possibilities of being (Wetterer 2004). For intersexual persons (as well as for their parents and physicians) this creates a cultural pressure to disambiguate their sex into one direction. This approach to sex as a product of cultural forming, that gets its content (or essence) only by permanently discursively performing it, expands individuals’ scope of action, and makes other performances or “stagings” of one’s sex thinkable. Butler introduced the term “performativity” in this context. This perspective liberates intersexual persons from their pathological status, as every sex is produced and constructed socially anyhow. It also follows, therefore, that its essence and meaning are changeable and modifiable, and there is no reason to declare certain constellations of sexual characteristics as deficient or deviating from any standard, as there cannot, perforce, be any legitimate standard from which something can deviate. For intersexual persons, taking this perspective can be a relief, psychologically speaking.

However, as mentioned above, the medical perspective on intersexuality is still the dominant one in Western societies. It is therefore important to comprehend this perspective as well.

### 3.2 Biological-Medical Perspective

From a biological or medical perspective on intersexuality, there are three sex-characteristics that are indicative for different types of intersexuality: chromosomes, gonads and genitals. For most people all three of these indicators are corresponding and indicate the direction of being either male or female (Calvi 2012, p. 54):

1. The genetic/chromosomal sex is determined at the time at which the sperm cell fertilizes the egg cell and mostly leads to the development of a male (46, XY) or female chromosome complement (46, XX); these chromosomal complements then indicate an individual’s male or female sex development, respectively.
2. The gonadal sex is determined by the gonadal tissues present. Individuals with a male chromosome complement mostly have testes that produce testosterone as the principal male sex hormone, and individuals with a female chromosome complement usually develop ovaries that produce estrogens and progesterone as the principal female sex hormones.
3. The phenotypic sex is indicated by individuals’ reproductive organs/genitals, thus by having a vagina, labia, and clitoris in the case of a female, or by possessing a penis and scrotum in the case of a male (see Calvi 2012, p. 54).

Intersexuals can possess different constellations of these three types of sex-characteristics that do not have to point in the same sexual direction. They may also

have differing manifestations of each of these sex-characteristics. There are different medical approaches to categorize these controversially-labeled “disorders of sex development” (DSD). According to the *Chicago Consensus Statement* DSD “is proposed, as defined by congenital conditions in which development of chromosomal, gonadal, or anatomical sex is atypical” (Hughes et al. 2006b: 149). There is a proposed distinction to be made between 1) sex chromosome DSD, 2) 46,XY DSD, and 3) 46,XX DSD (Hughes et al. 2006b). Table 1 gives an overview about how DSDs can be classified.

**Table 1** Classification of DSDs according to the Chicago Consensus Statement (Hughes et al. 2006a, p. 2).

Sex chromosome DSD	46,XY DSD	46,XX DSD
(A) 45,X (Turner syndrome and variants)	(A) Disorders of gonadal (testicular) development 1. Complete gonadal dysgenesis (Swyer syndrome)	(A) Disorders of gonadal (ovarian) development 1. Ovotesticular DSD
(B) 47,XXY (Klinefelter syndrome and variants)	2. Partial gonadal dysgenesis	2. Testicular DSD (eg. SRY+, dup SOX9)
(C) 45,X/46,XY (mixed gonadal dysgenesis, ovotesticular DSD)	3. Gonadal regression	3. Gonadal dysgenesis
(D) 46,XX/46,XY (chimeric, ovotesticular DSD)	4. Ovotesticular DSD	(B) Androgen excess
	(B) Disorders in androgen synthesis or action 1. Androgen biosynthesis defect (eg, 17- hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase deficiency, 5 alpha reductase deficiency, StAR mutations)	1. Fetal (eg, 21-hydroxylase deficiency, 11-hydroxylase deficiency)
	2. Defect in androgen action (eg, CAIS, PAIS)	2. Fetoplacental (aromatase deficiency, POR)
	3. LH receptor defects (eg, Leydig cell hypoplasia, aplasia)	3. Maternal (luteoma, exogenous, etc)
	4. Disorders of AMH and AMH receptor (persistent Müllerian duct syndrome)	(C) Other
	(C) Other (eg, severe hypospadias, cloacal extrophy)	(eg, cloacal extrophy, vaginal atresia, MURCS, other syndromes)

The first group also includes persons with 45,X0 or 47,XXX karyotypes, who often do not show any bodily differences. There are also individuals with different chromosomes at different somatic cells, who then possess some kind of chromosomal mosaic. The second group comprises persons whose gonads are not fully developed or who have male and female (sometimes not fully developed) gonads and/or genitals (Reis 2007; Meyer-Bahlburg 1994). Until very recently it was the established medical

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practice for a newborn child with a DSD diagnosis to be “disambiguated” into one sexed direction, via an operation and, often, subsequent hormone therapy (Richter-Appelt 2004). In order to be socially and culturally viable, it was assumed that humans had to be either men or women. The doctor’s job was to maintain an illusion of unambiguousness as far as was possible through medicinal, operative, and psychological treatment. With the emergence of the voices of Intersex-associations decrying this coercive treatment, medical practice has, now, largely changed, though the former practices of “medical disambiguation” have not fully disappeared. The insight that it is quite possible to live a life as an intersex person, has gained in both prominence and importance over the past few years, and thus, more and more diagnoses of DSD do not coercively lead to a sexed “disambiguation”; the one major exception is where “medical disambiguation” is necessary to save a newborn’s life, but this is only very rarely the case. In not performing this sexed “disambiguation” on newborn babies, the individual is given the opportunity to decide by him- or her- or \*-self what way of life he/she/\* wants to live in terms of his/her/\* sex-identity (Voß 2012).

As outlined in table 1 there are many types of intersexuality with different medical designations. Without going more into detail here, it can be seen that there is a broad variety of sexed possibilities of being that question the dichotomous model of only two sexes as the only valid organizational system of ordering. The question then arises as to how organizations or companies can deal with this.

### 3.3 Intersexuality and Diversity Management

The social constructivist perspective on sex would help to destigmatize intersex persons and to take away the pressure on them to conceal their intersexuality, or to assign themselves to one sex. However, very rarely does diversity management practice take this perspective. Most diversity approaches assume two sexes as a given, and diversity management then equals either the direct, and one-sided, support and promotion of women; or the attempt to create framework conditions that offer the same opportunities to both men and women. The starting points of such approaches are frequently either the recognition of the different (stereotypic) needs of men and women, or the organizational compensation of societally existing disadvantages for men and women, e.g. by implementing quotas and women-only networks or mentoring programs. From the perspective of assuming men and women to be nothing more than culturally- and socially-shaped sexed bodies both of these starting points would find little favor, since from this perspective one would not wish to be the means of perpetuation of the maintenance and performative construction of the dichotomous sex paradigm, any more than one would wish to be an active agent or conduit for its performative staging. In this context, it is misleading to label this dimension of diversity as “gender” and to allege that it is only about the social and cultural aspect of gender/sex and therefore also about the overcoming or dispersal of the stereotypic social ascriptions to the different sexes. The decomposition of certain stereotypic ascriptions to men or women (which lead to an unequal allocation of opportunities and resources) might be an intermediate goal or a valued side effect of some diversity management initiatives. However, ultimately this all promotes the inclusion, equal treatment, or selective empowerment of biological sexes. In no way does it dissolve sex-categories, since such

dissolution would then remove the starting point for balancing the framework conditions for men and women. To include intersexuality within the so-called diversity dimension of „gender“, it would seem, would carry with it the danger that, in terms of the respective sex (out of two sexes) that is contextually underprivileged, the point of origin for any political claim could get lost, since that point of origin would be, perforce, a seemingly unambiguous biological sex.

It seems that intersex persons cannot really expect a great deal of support or positive assistance from the current diversity management approach to the dimension of “sex/gender”. In fact, quite the contrary seems to be true. Although intersexuality is clearly a phenomenon that represents a manifestation of the category “sex/gender”, it is (on those occasions when it is mentioned at all), always grouped together with (or “disposed of” to) the diversity dimension of “sexual orientation”. This widespread practice occurs despite the fact that intersexuality really has little to do with diverse sexualities or sexual orientations, except in so far as all humans (can) have a sexuality or sexual orientation. However, this would connect all the other dimensions of diversity with “sexual orientation” in the same way, as every human also has, for example, an age or a skin color. Linguistically this grouping together of LGBTI is legitimized by the false assumption that – in the case of “T” being interpreted as transsexuality (instead of transgender or trans-identity) – all of these letters represent a broad spectrum of sexualities (homo-, bi-, trans-, and inter-sexuality) which can then be addressed and served conjointly by “adequate” diversity management practices. As already outlined, this misunderstanding is largely due to a questionable linguistic application of the Latin word “*sexus*” to an English-language term (via German). Nowadays, the meaning of the term “sexuality” is exclusively concerned with sexual desire, and erotic interest and practices. Therefore, by using this word in relation with “trans-” and “inter-”, the misunderstanding outlined here is already linguistically predetermined.

#### 4 Trans-Identities

By using the different terms “trans-identity”, “transgender”, and “transsexuality”, attempts are often made to emphasize different trans-facets. However, in everyday language, as well as on the level of trans-persons’ self-designation, these terms are sometimes used synonymously, and conversely sometimes assigned individually different meanings. In order to respect the plurality of trans-identities, and to avoid narrowing down the ways of interpreting and describing trans-identities available to individuals linguistically, a frequently used term employed to cover the whole spectrum of trans-identities without having to name them is “trans\*”. All of these terms have in common that they describe individuals who (in different ways) perceive their gender identity as being different from the way that their biological sex would, conventionally speaking, be socially determined. The usage of the term “transsexuality” would seem to originate with Magnus Hirschfeld (Pfäfflin 2008). He coined the term “transsexualism” in 1923 in his German article “The Intersexual Constitution” [“Die intersexuelle Konstitution”] (Hirschfeld 1923). In this article, he developed the concept of “psychic transsexualism” [“*seelischer Transsexualismus*”] (Cauldwell 2006) as a desire that exceeds transvestism in not only adapting one’s “vestiture” to that of the

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other sex, but also adapting one's body. Hirschfeld had already proposed the concept of the "transvestite" as a distinct category in 1910 (Hirschfeld 1910), to make the concept of transvestism distinct from that of homosexuality. His motivation for this was largely so as not to endanger his primary political goal of abolishing Paragraph 175 of the Imperial Penal Code in force in the German Empire at the time, which criminalized homosexual practices between men as "unnatural fornication"; a goal which he perceived as being jeopardized by the increased visibility of, and domestic "scandals" (*Eulenburg-Affair*) surrounding gay men in the entourage and cabinet of the then-Kaiser, Wilhelm II (Herrn 2005; Domeier 2014; Hekma 2015; Beachy 2010; Oosterhuis 1992). Amongst the trans-terms, "transsexuality" is the term most related to the physical body, and is often associated with actions that aim to adjust the individual's biological body to the individual's gender identity surgically and/or hormonally (Benjamin 1967; Reiche 1984).

Trans-identities do not, by and large, challenge the binary model of only two sexes, neither on the level of social genders, nor on the level of biological sexes. Transsexual persons are mostly biological men or women with a gender identity in the other sex respectively, who wish to adjust their body into this direction, often ideally in such a way that they are perceived publicly and societally as having a sexed body that totally corresponds with their gender identity.

The term "transgender" is often used or adopted if one's individual self-concept does not exactly fit into a binary gender model. This term is often noted as being coined by Virginia Prince in 1969. Prince uses "transgender" to designate persons, who express their gender identity "solely" through their dress and their appearance, *without* having the wish to adjust their biological bodies according to their gender identity that does not conform their biological sex (Papoulias 2006). She herself, however, refused to be seen as the initiator of this concept, as her primary intention was to draw a line of distinction between gay men and male transvestites (Ekins and King 2006). As a relatively new term "trans-identity" covers a much broader spectrum of possible self-concepts. One's trans-identity, then may contain a bodily adjustment, but, equally, it may not; it may also be a potentially "new" or very individual and unique self-concept or gender identity that results from a perceived incongruence between one's biological sex and the rejection of the related, socially-expected gender identity. Trans-identities can also oppose the societal pressure of having to assign oneself to a clearly-delineated, distinct sex or gender at all; one might, instead, perceive oneself as being "somewhere in between" (e.g. as genderqueer, intergendered, multigendered, or gender fluid), or one might deliberately opt to elude gender or sex classification at all (Kuper et al. 2012; Dargie et al. 2014).

### 4.1 Medical Perspective

In 1980 the American Psychiatric Association recognized transsexuality as a "mental disorder", revising this designation more specifically in 1994 as a "gender identity disorder". In 2013 the the term for diagnosis was changed to "gender dysphoria" in order to make it sound less pathological (Zucker 2015). Another term that has been used in order to de-pathologize the diagnosis of trans-identities is "gender incongruence" (Drescher et al. 2012) . The WHO defines transsexualism as:

“... a desire to live and be accepted as a member of the opposite sex, usually accompanied by a sense of discomfort with, or inappropriateness of, one's anatomic sex, and a wish to have surgery and hormonal treatment to make one's body as congruent as possible with one's preferred sex“ (WHO 2015).

Once an individual has been given a medical diagnosis of gender incongruence, gender dysphoria, or gender identity disorder, the public health care systems of many countries, as well as many health insurances, will cover the costs for necessary medical treatment, such as sex reassignment surgeries, or hormonal treatments. In most countries operations pertaining to gender reassignments are legally regulated. In Germany, a person is obliged to prove that it is very unlikely that he or she will ever change his or her gender identity through psychological assessment, before he or she can officially request a change of civil status (Franzen and Sauer 2010). Since 2011 proof of one's infertility is no longer a precondition for requesting this change in Germany; however, in many other countries this still remains a necessary precondition (Rauchfleisch 2014).

#### **4.2 Societal Perspective**

As already outlined above, instead of challenging the binary model of only two sexes, trans-identities often rather oppose the coercive assignment of a certain gender identity to the respective biological sex. Whether one adheres to the binary model on the level of one's gender identity is something that differs from person to person, and is expressed in individually diverse self-concepts and identities. Many trans persons clearly assign themselves to one gender, whilst others see themselves more as being somewhere in between or outside these gender categories. These “new” constellations or alignments of sex and gender identity categories within one individual are still not fully accepted within many societies, and this non-acceptance is frequently an enormous obstacle for trans-persons' desire to live a “normal” life within their gender identity. As soon as an individual is perceived as being trans, they often have to face incomprehension, animosities, and vilifications in their everyday live. The direct perceptibility of their trans-status often differs strongly between trans-women and trans-men. While trans-men (female-to-male trans persons) can initiate some of the changes of male puberty to a certain degree by taking male hormones, trans-women (male-to-female trans persons) are largely unable to undo the effects of the male puberty that they have already undergone. Thus, the bodily frame, the height and the pitch of the voice of trans-women frequently make them identifiable as such, whereas trans-men are often more able to pass as cisgender men. “Going stealth” is much more a possibility for trans-men than it is for trans-women, and it “enables” them to live a life within their gender identity, without being permanently identified as a trans-person. Therefore, on average, trans-women experience much more non-acceptance in their everyday life than trans-men. Closely linked to this is the fact that the public image, and the public perception, of transgender-issues has been, and continues to be, much more shaped by trans-women than by trans-men.

Something of a disjunction exists in the seeming compatibility of, on the one

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hand, the political trans\*-claim for a higher degree of societal acceptance for individuals living their lives in their gender identity, and, on the other hand, certain feminist claims. Interpreted restrictively, transsexuality (and also transgender and trans-identity) is a clear gender identity that differs from a clear biological sex within a binary model of two sexes and two genders. This seems to confirm the feminist standpoint and line of argumentation based on a model that allows the separation of the phenomena of biological sexes from the phenomena of social genders. Transsexuals or transgender-persons seem to be ideal examples to support the claim that biological women are not (and do not have to be) *per se* feminine (or female), and consequently they do not have, *per se*, to be restricted by the corset of “appropriate” gender stereotypes that produces and legitimizes their societal secondariness (Elliot 2012, 2009; Snyder 2008). The big difference between the trans-claim for recognition (and appreciation) and feminist striving for equality is that trans-identities address (sometimes stereotypic) *self*-ascriptions, whilst the demand for gender-equality addresses stereotypic ascriptions that are ascribed by *others* (or, indeed, by society as a whole). To put this in its most exaggerated and least nuanced form, this means that, for example, trans-women may (possibly) wish to adopt an idea of femininity, and a possibly ultra-feminine lifestyle that, from a feminist perspective, is often perceived as highly problematic. Taking into account the fact that transgender persons may not necessarily wish, need, or be able to adjust their bodies to their gender identity (neither as far as possible, nor gradually) in order to live within their gender identity, this causes the notion of “solidarity” with feminist claims to falter, since here the very categories of sex and gender themselves are called into question. This might be welcomed from a queer-theoretical, postmodern perspective (Halberstam 2005; Bendl et al. 2008). However, politically, this involves the danger of blurring the important starting point for all political claims for equality and redistribution, namely the dichotomy of being-a-man or being-a-woman.

### 4.3 Trans-Identities and Diversity Management

Until very recently, trans\* has been a marginalized issue in diversity management (Ozturk and Tatli 2016). If it has been mentioned at all, it has largely only been as one element of the acronym LGBT (or LGBTI). Within employee resource groups that use this acronym, then, trans-persons are officially included verbally, but, when it comes to concrete network activities, they are largely unacknowledged. Equalization guidelines or corporate code of conducts do not, by and large, include one of the trans-terms in their written versions; furthermore, to the terms “sex” or “gender” (or their equivalents in other languages) is only rarely added the word “identity”. The self-evidently and seemingly consensually perpetuated non-integration and non-consideration of transsexuality and trans-identity as one facet of the diversity dimension of “gender” would seem to reveal that the societal normalization of appropriate gender identities is widespread, even within the field of diversity management.

The shunting of the “T” (as well as the “I”) here into a miscellaneous category that nebulously groups it together with diverse sexual orientations highlights that little weight is given to trans-identities. Furthermore, it indicates the way that diversity initiatives monopolize the dimension of gender (or sex) for cisgender men and women, i.e. for biological men or women, whose gender identity corresponds to their biological

sex, and how those initiatives can actually work to exclude, rather than include, some dimensions. That said, there are indeed several organizations that do explicitly recognize trans\* by having implemented very clear guidelines on how to handle transitionings within the organization. These guidelines have, of necessity, to cover formal and bureaucratic aspects, and they also have to clarify how a change of a civil status is handled within the organization, in order to minimize the danger of the trans employee having to running the gauntlet of potential everyday embarrassments and incomprehension. Furthermore these guidelines must state how the organization handles potential emerging uncertainty within the workforce in the case that someone decides to initiate transitioning, and how the trans person is supported during this phase. It should be noted that besides helping the trans-person, organizations that implement such guidelines do themselves benefit from them. Were an employee to decide to start his or her transitioning during employment in a specific organization, one without specific guidelines in place, the employer or manager, or superior of that individual may find themselves uncertain of how to handle such a situation, which they may have previously never encountered. Out of ignorance, misapprehension, fear, or, indeed, in trying to overcompensate from a fear of doing or saying something wrong, the employer or manager may inadvertently behave in a hurtful, unsupportive or disrespectful way, and, as a consequence, the transitioning individual might leave the organization. Guidelines can establish clarity, can provide space and opportunities to address insecurities, and to search for solution possibilities together. In the long term, therefore, they can help the individual, the employer, the co-workers and the company itself form a more reciprocally supportive and nurturing framework, which can only strengthen and benefit the organization as a whole, and all of the individuals within it.

In summation, an outline will follow of a potential diversity management approach, which considers trans-identities and intersexuality to be an integral and equal component for the goal of creating an integrative and inclusive work environment and organizational climate. The key to this reconceptualization lies in a more integrative approach to the dimensions of gender/sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation, which no longer treats these dimensions as if they are phenomena that are separable from each other.

## **5 Conceptualizing an Integrative Diversity Management Approach on Gender/Sex, Gender Identity, and Sexual Orientation**

As already mentioned above, if trans-identity and intersexuality are mentioned in the context of diversity management at all, they are usually grouped together with “sexual orientation” into one very heterogeneous residual dimension of diversity. This grouping together in, for example, the acronym LGBT(I) follows the questionable but common practice of defining the individuals that are represented by these letters as one “community”, although their social recognition goals are quite heterogeneous. On the level of language this aggregation gains legitimacy, as (in the case of the “T” being interpreted as transsexuality) all of these letters seem to represent different “sexualities”, namely homo-, bi-, trans-, and inter-sexuality. As has already been outlined, this “commonality” is based solely on the specious (and for many languages outright

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fallacious) use of the term “sexuality” within the terms “intersexuality” and “transsexuality”, where “sexuality” derives from the Latin term “*sexus*” which designates the biological sex. Within the terms “homosexuality” and “bisexuality”, on the other hand, “sexuality” stands instead for a sexual desire or sexual interest. Whilst in English this ambiguous usage of the term sexuality is merely confusing, in other languages, such as in German or Polish, it is outright incorrect. Trans- and intersexuality represent sex- or gender categories. However, the diversity dimension of gender/sex is related to the dimension of “sexual orientation”, insofar as the manifestations of the different sexual orientations are defined by the desiring and the desired gender/sex, for example as a same sex/same gender or as opposite sex/opposite gender sexual desire.

When considering the integration of intersexuality and trans-identity into diversity management programs, one should possibly pre-empt this consideration by asking oneself why one should follow, or should want to follow, a diversity management strategy at all. One fundamental idea of diversity management is that management practice should break away from stereotypic images of the different manifestations of the different dimensions of diversity. Management practice should rather work towards an ideality where these manifestations are no longer criteria for organizational allocations of resources and opportunities. For employees' career development, and the intra-organizational allocation of tasks and responsibilities, it should ideally not matter at all whether an employee is intersexual or a trans-man. The only considerations that should be valid are the individual's capabilities and the individual's potential contribution in accomplishing the organizational goals, and these should be based on parameters such as experience or talent, rather than founded in stereotypic dimension-related pre-assumptions about his or her capabilities and contributions. In order to come close to this ideality in terms of intersexuality and trans-identity, the dimension of “gender/sex” has to be understood in a much broader and much more integrative way. The dimension should lose its characteristic of only being understood in a binary way, as being represented solely by cisgender men and women, i.e. by men and women who have a gender identity that corresponds to their unambiguous biological sex. The goal of this integrative approach has to be that the concrete manifestations of one's sex or gender become less important, as with it an individual's self-pigeonholing into a fixed template of legitimate manifestations would become less important. If an organization could succeed in creating such a climate of inclusion, or at least if an organization come close to this ideal, intersex and trans employees would not be forced anymore to permanently legitimate, defend, or categorize themselves, and they would no longer have to develop and to apply any debilitating coping strategies. It is true that such a goal of diversity management might smack of an unrealizable utopian construct, but this is precisely because of the declining, but still prevalent, societal pressure to unambiguously self-categorize oneself within a binary model of only two sexes, and to live a gender identity that mostly corresponds to one's biological sex. Nevertheless, this seems to be the right overall objective, as it helps to avoid mistakes on the level of concrete actions and initiatives that might prejudice the related objective of achieving a higher degree of inclusion for intersex and trans\* employees. A working climate that has rid itself of the pressure to categorize oneself as belonging to a certain sex and gender, and therefore of attaching to oneself a certain sex- or gender-value, would automatically make the diversity-dimension of

gender/sex pointless and irrelevant, as it would need an unambiguous gender/sex assignment by definition (see e.g. Lewandowski and Koppetsch 2015).

In terms of designing organizational diversity management initiatives this necessitates the consideration of the dimensions of sex/gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation as being one common and conjoint field of action, or one conjoint dimension of diversity. Care must be taken, when addressing the three layers of this dimension, to address the whole spectrum of potential manifestations in a value-neutral and unweighted way. Special care should be taken in allowing space for individually differing identities, self-concepts, and self-designations. A rough scheme of different manifestations is as follows:

**Table 2** Manifestations of sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation

<b>dimension of diversity</b>	<b>manifestations</b>
sex	woman – intersex/inter* – man
gender identity	transgender/transsexual/trans* – cisgender/cis*
sexual orientation	homosexual – bisexual/*sexual – heterosexual

Analogous to the concept of trans\*, cissexuality or cisgender stands for the congruence of one’s biological sex and gender identity (Taylor 2010; Sigusch 1991). One’s sexual orientation then can be defined by one’s biological sex or by one’s gender identity. Whether, for example, a trans-women who is sexually more interested in women defines herself as being lesbian, or whether she defines her sexual orientation in another way is individually different.

Having the diversity goal of unshackling individuals’ developmental possibilities and scopes within the organization from their sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation, must go hand in hand with an approach which keeps in mind and integrates all of its manifestations, in the case where one of these levels is addressed. Employee networks that are established around the dimension of sexual orientation, for example, should also invite, and be open to, heterosexual employees. The term LGBT(I) should be avoided, as it might have a negative impact on two accounts: for one thing, it mixes up different dimensions and with it different claims; for another thing, it includes only selected manifestations of these dimensions, which might effectively stabilize the polarization and hierarchization amongst the manifestations. It is entirely conceivable that initiatives could be developed that conjointly address the three dimensions, but these initiatives must then address the *whole* spectrum of manifestations of *all* these dimensions. In this context one must be critical of initiatives that aim at the advancement or promotion of exclusively women (or exclusively men) as well as of one-sided mentoring programs, or quota systems. Furthermore, one should approach the question of applying a gender-neutral language with care. One should at least be aware that, if linguistically men *and* women are included in address, this is anything but gender neutral, as it of course reproduces and stabilizes the binary model of only two sexes and genders; this is an issue that is especially relevant in, for example

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Romance, Slavic, and Germanic languages.

The integration of intersexuality and trans-identity into diversity management programs opens up a new perspective on approaches to diversity management, and to the dimensions of diversity management in general. This reframing can be used to refresh or enlarge one's interpretation of the term of "inclusion". In terms of trans\* and intersexuality, inclusion has to mean giving intersex and trans employees the scope and opportunity to develop individually. Organizations should aim at creating an organizational diversity climate (Köllen 2015) that considers every sex and every gender identity to be equal, a climate which removes and forestalls any pressure to demonstrate legitimacy, and any pressure on intersex and transgender employees to justify themselves within the workplace.

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