



**LEARNING FROM TRANSGENDER
PARTNERSHIPS AND FAMILIES:
MAJOR THEMES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

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THE PROJECT



Focuses on fifty cisgender women partners of transgender men.



“Academic research on transgender people and their family relationships is almost nonexistent.”

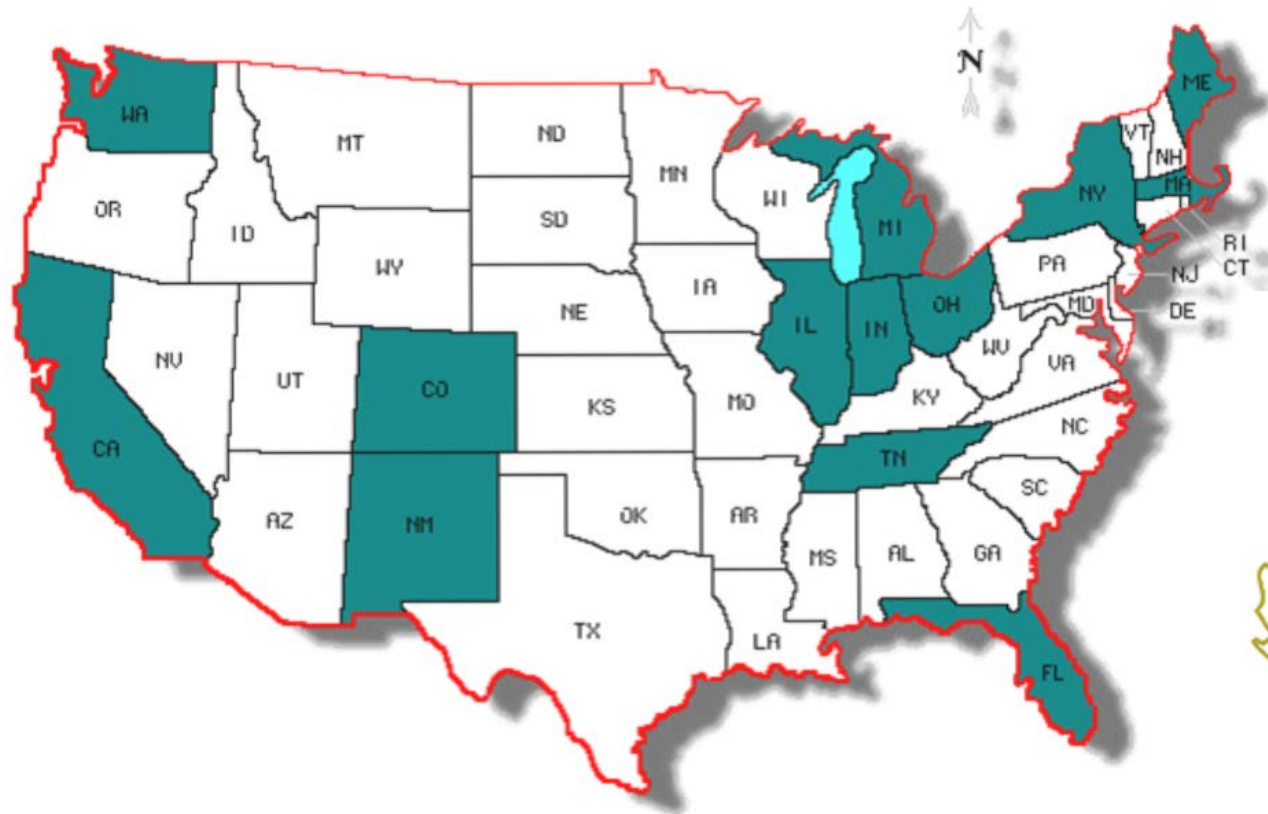
(Biblarz and Savci 2010:489)

THE PROJECT

- 50 qualitative interviews
- Digitally recorded, validated transcripts
- Qualitative data management software
- Grounded analysis
- Open and thematic coding, memos
- Exemplifiers and disconfirming evidence
- Axial coding



THE PROJECT



THE INTERVIEWEES

Participants (n=50)

- Age: range from 18-51 years; mean of 29 years
- Race: white (90%); multiracial (6%); Latina (2%); and Black (2%)
- Education: 96% “some college ” or more; 26% graduate degree

Participants' partnerships (n=61)

- Relationship length: 3 months - 11 years; mean > 2years
- Cohabiting: 62% (mean = 1.5 years)
- Relationship status: 10% legal or opposite “same-sex” marriage
- Parenting: 12% current or previous parenting responsibilities

THE INTERVIEWEES' TRANSGENDER PARTNERS

Participants' partner(s) (n=61) demographics

Trans partner reportedly:

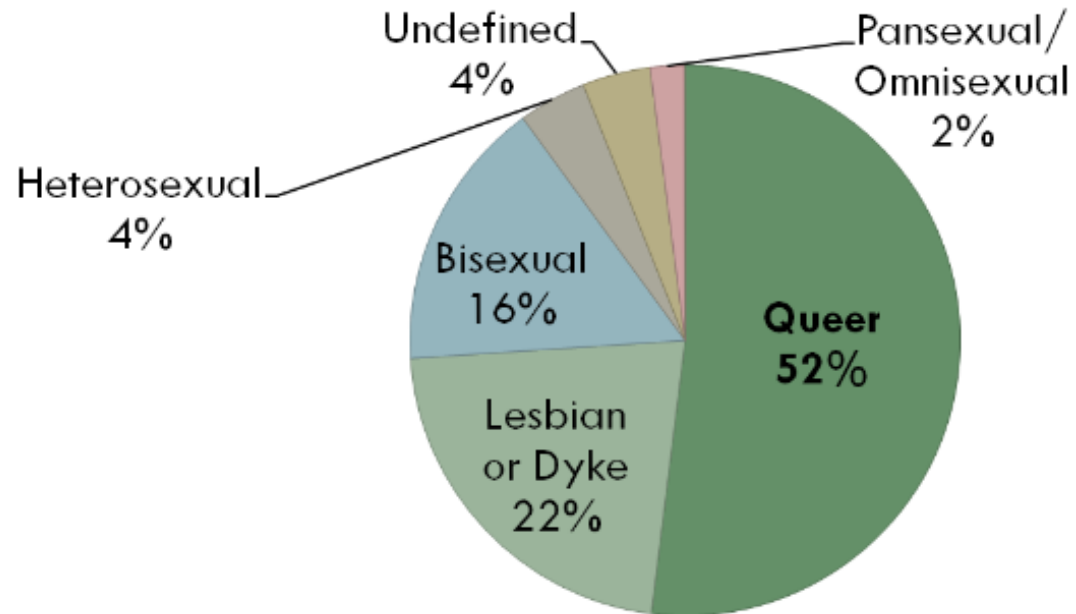
- on testosterone: 69%
- planning to go on testosterone: 23%
- has had “top surgery”: 38%
- planning to have “top surgery”: 59%
- perceived socially as male “always” or “almost always”: 63%

MAJOR THEMES

- 1) Importance of queer self identification
- 2) Experiences of normativity and counter-normativity
- 3) Heterosexual “passing” and (in/ex)clusion

MAJOR THEMES: QUEER SELF IDENTIFICATION

- “Queer” frequently used to describe oneself and relationships
- “Queer” offers identity possibilities other categories do not
- “Queer” proposed as more consciously-political and radical than other identities



MAJOR THEMES: (COUNTER)NORMATIVITY

- monogamy
- marriage
- parenthood
- household labor
- transition-related kin work and care work



MAJOR THEMES: HETERO “PASSING” & (IN/EX)CLUSION

“Passing” as heterosexual means that trans people and their partners may...

INCLUSION

- feel safer from anti-LGBT discrimination and harassment
- gain approval within informally-regulated social institutions and structures (e.g., families, churches, schools)
- gain access to formally-regulated social institutions and structures (e.g., marriage, parenthood)

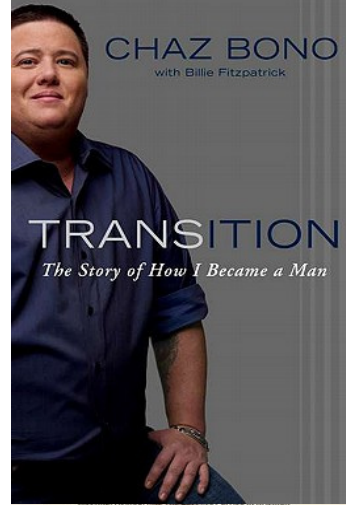
EXCLUSION

- become socially invisible and disconnected from communities of identity
- face explicit social exclusion
- experience heightened intragroup violence



FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Offer “queer” as a category of self-identification
- Reflect the diversity of trans families
- Longitudinally explore trans partnering and parenting practices
- Determine impacts of legislation affecting trans families





THANK YOU!

I look forward to your questions and comments.

Feel free to contact me at pfefferc@mailbox.sc.edu

PUBLICATIONS

- Pfeffer, Carla A. forthcoming 2016. *Queering Families: The Postmodern Partnerships of Cisgender Women and Transgender Men*. New York: Oxford University Press.
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