

MEN IN CONTEXT: TRANSMASCULINITIES AND TRANSGENDER
EXPERIENCES IN THREE US REGIONS

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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This dissertation addresses the central research question—How does context matter for men’s experiences of gender, sexuality, and race? —by analyzing interviews with 66 trans men, female to male transgender people, in the U.S. West, Midwest, and Southeast.

This project contributes to four areas in the sociology of gender and sexuality:

understandings of transgender people, regional variations in masculinity, inclusion of trans men in the study of men and masculinity, and understudied queer spaces. The first part of the analysis shows how being a man is a lifelong process of negotiating the expectations of different contexts in light of the gendered self and offers a conceptual framework for the subsequent analytic chapters, which focus on the different ways that context operates in the lives of trans men. The first of these chapters spotlights how emotional control, in this case appropriate emotion in particular contexts, is a hallmark of contemporary masculinities across spaces and a central way of marking distinctions between men and women and among men. The final two substantive chapters focus on how different spatial and institutional contexts affect trans men’s fears and experiences of violence. The first centers on exploring the spatial distribution of fears of transphobic violence. This illustrates another aspect of context, how the ideas about who and what inhabit particular contexts

shape men's actions in those settings. The second chapter shows how these fears and actual violence in particular institutional contexts act as powerful forms of social control that reproduce various forms of inequality. It illustrates how the structural arrangements of institutions are key contextual features that influence behavior and the reproduction of social inequality in ways that potentially reach outside of their institutional contexts. Finally, the dissertation concludes by returning to the research question and discussing the implications of this research on sociological understandings of inequality, the field of men and masculinities, and transgender politics.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There are just general things about, you know, “What does it mean to be a man?” And having the relationships with some men that I do who are older than me, it’s been eye-opening because it’s like we’re all trying to figure out what it means to be a man. Things that I thought were maybe more specific to me as a trans guy, it’s actually that some of these things are just what it is to be a man. So, I do fall into the stereotypes sometimes. Sometimes I like stereotypical male things. Sometimes I give in to the pressures of masculinity in America, and there are times where I feel more comfortable. –Seth

Seth, a multiracial (black and white) 23-year-old man living in a major midwestern city, had started living as a man about two years before I spoke with him. His was the final interview I conducted for a project that involved talking with over five dozen trans men¹ in 13 U.S. states. Seth’s narrative mirrored one of the most consistent themes that emerged across the other men’s stories: figuring out who he was as a man was an ongoing process, a process not unique to trans men. This process was complex and shifting for Seth, as it was for other interviewees. As the quote above illustrates, this is a process he undertakes with a sense of broader standards for himself and other men, standards that line up at times with how he sees himself and, at other times, conflict with that self-image. Why did Seth “fall into stereotypes sometimes”? When did he “give in to the pressures of masculinity in America?” Where was he more comfortable?

The answer for Seth and other men is that his expressions of masculinity and his experiences as a man depended on the context. By context, I mean the spatial and institutional settings in which individuals live and travel throughout their lives. Though

¹ I use the term trans men to refer to female to male transgender people or people whose bodies were assigned female at birth and who transitioned socially and perhaps medically and legally to live as men. Not all of the people who fit this description would identify with this term, but among my research participants I found this was less controversial than other options. See Vidal-Ortiz (2008) for an excellent discussion of debates around terminology.

he reported that being respectful and kind towards women was central to his identity, in sexual contexts he did not want to be seen as too much of a nice guy, because he thought women would not be attracted to him. He talked about how as a black man, he tried to not to dress too “thuggish” when in public so that he would not become a target of the police or an object of fear to unknown women. In the context of public sex-segregated bathrooms, he reported fearing violence against himself as a transgender person and, consequently, made sure to follow what he thought was typical behavior for men in that setting. Visiting his white sister in a rural area of another state, he asked her why people were giving him strange looks and she replied that they were not used to seeing people of color in that town. The increased attention made him uncomfortable. Through the stories of Seth and other men, I will show that men’s experience of gender, race, and sexuality are shaped by the various spatial and institutional contexts that they inhabit and move between throughout their lives.

Scholars in many fields have begun to investigate the lives of trans men and to critically study men and masculinity. In sociology, researchers such as Kristen Schilt (2010), Henry Rubin (2003), and Salvador Vidal-Ortiz (2002) have explored the lives of trans men in the workplace, their embodied experiences, and their sexualities.

Masculinities scholars such as Raewyn Connell (1995), James Messerschmidt (1993), and Michael Messner (2005) have explored the production of gender inequality and men’s power over the life course and in institutions such as schools, family, and sports. Both areas of research show that gender, sexuality, and race co-constitute transgender experiences and masculinities. This work all depends on an understanding of gender,

sexuality, and race as socially constructed, historically specific, and shifting due to situational context.

These works, however, have not adequately addressed the importance of context for shaping these experiences of sexuality, gender, and race. Despite much excellent recent work addressing the lives of trans men and the theoretical importance of context for understanding masculinities, this scholarship has been geographically limited and tends to focus on men in one particular setting. Without a more complex understanding of context, we are left with an inadequate analysis that ignores dynamic social structures and creates the conditions where the legal and social needs of some trans men are neglected. This project addresses this gap in the literature by examining the experiences of trans men in three different regions of the United States to more fully elucidate the relationship between masculinities, transgender experience, and context through an intersectional understanding of gender, sexuality, and race.

For this study I completed a comparative regional analysis of the experiences of trans men in the West, Southeast, and Midwest regions of the United States. I accomplished this through a detailed analysis of respondents' accounts of everyday interactions in a range of settings. The central research question was how context matters for men's experiences of gender, race, and sexuality. Specifically, how do varying institutional contexts and spatial contexts affect transgender experiences and trans masculinities? Regional difference and urban or rural location are the two key spatial contexts under investigation in this project, but with the understanding that individuals move between contexts in their daily lives (e.g., living in a rural area but travelling to a city for work or to meet various needs) and they may travel to and reside in different

locations throughout their life. In addition, individuals interact with others within a variety of institutional contexts in their daily lives. I focus on how individuals interact in and navigate their social identities moving between institutions such as work, family, and public space. At individual, institutional, and structural levels, mutually constituted social positions of gender, sexuality, and race are a central part of the contexts of social interaction.

In the last few decades, feminist scholars have turned to the critical study of men and masculinities to understand the operation of patriarchal power and the ways that men's behaviors and interactions constitute and support the systemic dominance of men over women. In the same period, transgender people have become more visible in U.S. society and transgender studies has virtually exploded. The masculinities literature has mostly ignored the experiences of transgender men and much of the research on transgender people has focused on the experiences of male to female transgender people in urban areas exclusively. Thus, it is crucial to move beyond these limitations to understand the full spectrum of transgender and masculine experiences.

The primary impact of this project is in showing the importance of spatial and institutional context in men's experiences of gender, race, and sexuality. This project contributes to four areas in the sociology of gender and sexuality: understandings of transgender people, regional variations in masculinity, inclusion of trans men in the study of men and masculinity, and understudied queer spaces. This study augments the formerly sparse, but rapidly expanding, arena of sociological research on trans men (Vidal-Ortiz 2008). It does so by adding previously under-explored U.S. regional sites and knowledge of how trans men manage transgender identities, gendered selves, and the

accomplishment of masculinity in varied contexts. This contributes to the study of the social construction of gender and specifically the notion of “doing gender” (West and Zimmerman 1987). The project adds to the critical study of men and masculinities by highlighting region as a category of analysis. This contribution furthers understanding of men’s lives, the changing nature of masculinities, and the spatial nature of gender practices and systems of power, as they are mutually constituted by race and sexuality. Finally, this study complements emerging queer studies that challenge the dominant narratives of queer lives in cities by exploring the lives of trans men in rural places and in regions that are often thought to be unlivable for them. In addition, this study builds on debates in transgender studies and politics about the role of violence and masculinities in shaping transgender lives.

Theory and Literature Review

In this section I situate the project theoretically and in existing scholarship on masculinities and space, queer spaces, and research on trans men. I begin with discussing the intersectional framework of the project, along with the understanding of gender, race, and sexuality I utilize throughout the analysis. Then, I move on to discuss key themes and debates in the masculinities literature and how masculinities relate to understandings of space and research on queer localities. I conclude by reviewing recent trends in sociological research on trans men and transgender issues.

Intersectionality and Multiplicity

Trans men are not solely gendered beings and they move through various contexts that are structured by race, class, ability, and other factors in addition to gender. Thus, to understand how transgender experiences and masculinities are influenced by context it is

necessary to engage in a more complex view of identity and social structure. Emerging out of black and other women of color feminist challenges, intersectional understandings of identity and social structure trouble the notion that gender alone is a sufficient category of analysis (Collins 2000; Crenshaw 1989). Approaches concerned with multiplicity and intersectionality generally see multiple social identities and positions as socially constructed, mutually constituted, interdependent and relational (in the sense that privilege and oppression are linked). Collins (2000) sees race, class, and gender as categories of analysis, which reflect the socially constructed yet very real consequences of these formations for individuals and groups. Overall, these approaches share a non-additive and complex understanding of power, identity, and social inequality (Dill and Zambrana 2009).

Michael Hames-Garcia (2011a) distinguishes between intersectionality and multiplicity. Intersectionality, especially in the sense that Crenshaw (1989) uses it, is a valuable theoretical tool to understand how, for example, anti-discrimination laws do not adequately protect women of color from gender or racial discrimination. This understanding characterizes these social categories as distinct but also intersecting. In addition, it is often used as an “umbrella for any and every theoretical contribution by a woman of color” (Hames-Garcia 2011a:12), or as a way to signal a feminist analysis that goes beyond analyzing gender alone. On the other hand, he defines multiplicity as, “the mutual constitution and overlapping of simultaneously experienced and politically significant categories such as ability, citizenship, class, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, and sexuality. Rather than existing as essentially separate axes that sometimes intersect, social identities blend, constantly and differently, expanding one another and mutually

constituting one another's meanings" (Hames-Garcia 2011a:13). I use this definition of multiplicity as my core understanding of the relationship between gender, sexuality, and race throughout this dissertation. This means that I see all three as constantly present, overlapping, and intermingling, even when one or another is more salient in a particular narrative or context. I am committed to keeping that simultaneity in the forefront of my analysis. Therefore, in the chapters that follow, though gender is often at the center of my analysis, I return regularly to the question of how sexuality and race impact the social interactions I describe. In some cases the participants themselves reflect on the role of race, class, or sexuality in their experiences. In other cases I rely on past research or reasoned theorizing to speculate about possible intersections. Though I use Hames-Garcia's distinction between intersectionality and multiplicity to frame my analysis of trans men's experiences, I still use intersectionality throughout the text in the broad sense to describe the approach, emergent from women of color feminisms, that gender or a single gender category is not sufficient to capture the complexity of social difference.

There is evidence that an intersectional theoretical approach is necessary to understand the particularities of institutions and the inequality regimes of organizations (Acker 2006), and how individuals move between institutional and spatial locations (Brekhus 2003). In addition, intersectionality is useful in grasping how the racial, gendered, and classed histories of particular regional contexts affect local processes of labor and citizenship (Glenn 2002). When discussing multiple hierarchically organized masculinities, scholars often implicitly signal something similar to an intersectional framework. This becomes particularly clear when researchers discuss masculinity and homophobia (Kimmel 1994) and race (Mac An Ghail 1994). In short, in order to

understand trans men's experiences of being men and expressions of masculinities I will engage an approach centered on multiplicity and intersectionality, by using the social constructionist understandings of gender, race, and sexuality as detailed in the next section.

Gender, Race, and Sexuality

In this study I draw on social constructionist perspectives of gender, particularly focusing on West and Zimmerman's (1987) theory of "doing gender." Gender as a social construction, as opposed to an expression of natural difference, has been extensively theorized by social scientists as a multilevel system, institution, or structure that operates at structural, institutional, and individual levels (P. Y. Martin 2004; Ridgeway 1997; Risman 2004). West and Zimmerman (1987) contend that gender is not something a person is, or a role that one takes on, but rather gender is something that people do and that is produced and reproduced at the level of interaction. "Doing gender" is a situated accomplishment or practice (P. Y. Martin 2004; Poggio 2006) where individuals manage their behaviors in relation to normative expectations based on others' assumptions of them as men and women, and local expectations of how men and women ought to behave. At every action, individuals are at risk of being held accountable by others for appropriately manly or womanly behavior even when their practice does not meet normative standards. Importantly, individuals anticipate this risk and this too shapes interaction. Interaction is relational and situated in particular historical and structural arrangements that are constituted and reconstituted constantly in interaction (West and Zimmerman 2009). In addition, institutions, often the sites of these interactions, are themselves gendered (Acker 1990). Thus, in order to understand the persistence of gender

inequality we must examine the specific contexts that produce particular patterns of practice.

Though there is understanding of the contextual nature of these interactions, little work has examined the process through which individuals might do gender differently based on different situated contexts and how that relates to the self. This seems crucial to understanding when practice reinforces patriarchal power and when it moves toward transforming social relations for the better. Some scholars have made attempts to use the doing gender perspective to understand race and other aspects of social location, such as West and Fenstermaker's analysis of "doing difference" (1995), but this approach has been arguably less accepted in understanding race (Collins et al. 1995).

I also rely on a social constructionist understanding of race. Following Omi and Winant (1994), I define race as "*a concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies*" (emphasis in original) (55), and understand that race, though formed on no essential biological base, is a major force in structuring the social world. Race too, in this definition, is constructed at individual, interactional, institutional, and structural levels, though Omi and Winant recognize the political arena as an especially important site of racial formation. Understandings of racialization are particularly connected to space in terms of urban segregation (Massey and Denton 1993). In the realm of everyday interaction, race acts as a system of meaning, masquerading as "common sense," that shapes the ways in which we categorize and then form ideas about and expectations of others. In other words, "we expect differences in skin color, or other racially coded characteristics, to explain social differences" (Omi and Howard Winant 1994:60).

The salience of both race and gender as central forms of categorization in everyday interaction is clearly evident through examples of how interaction is disrupted and cannot easily move forward based on one interactant's inability to sex categorize another person (West and Zimmerman 1987) or make a racial categorization (Omi and Howard Winant 1994). These processes of differentiation are absolutely bound up with the societal distribution of power and of social inequality. I do not solely think of race as a category that only inheres to and affects people who are racialized as black, Asian and Pacific Islander, Native American, or Latino, but also in the formation of white as a racialized category. Whiteness is an actively constructed racial identity (though it often remains unmarked) that inheres power and material resources to white people (Lipsitz 2006). Racial formation theory, especially in its original articulation, lacks an understanding of the co-constitutive nature of race and other categories of power and difference such as gender and sexuality. As Kandaswamy (2012) demonstrates, however, the theory is improved by a more intersectional understanding and can and should be incorporated into intersectional approaches.

I employ both symbolic interactionist and queer understandings of sexuality as socially constructed. Although with some differences, these perspectives see sexual identity and the meaning of sexual desires and behaviors as historically constructed. The parallel emergence of these perspectives in the second half of the 20th Century is best exemplified through early work in sociology such as McIntosh (1968) and Plummer (1975) and the foundational work of Foucault (1978) in queer approaches. I utilize these perspectives in particular to highlight how the construction of heterosexuality as the normative standard of sexuality rests on the perpetuation of a heterosexual/homosexual

binary as a diffuse and diverse normalizing practice and power (Cohen 1997; Sedgwick 1990), which alternatively can be understood as compulsory heterosexuality (Rich 1980). As Gayle Rubin (1993) shows, the full range of possible sexual identities and behaviors are hierarchically ranked and operate as a basis to distribute social power and privilege.

Queer theorists best incorporate the nexus of gender and sexuality to show how the repetition of gender practices is constitutive of the production of heterosexuality (Butler 1990) and how these practices constitute bodies (Butler 1993). According to the traditional narrative of the founding and development of queer theory, it emerged as an anti-identitarian project in response to the supposed failures of identity politics of all kinds (Jagose 1997). Coincidentally, this critique of identity and fixed subject positions came at the same time that women of color feminists were finding voice and articulating their social and political positions as women of color (Hames-Garcia 2011b). Though some queer theorists included race in their analysis, they have tended to leave the unmarked queer subject as white. One way this commonly happens is by only engaging in racial analysis when examining texts featuring people of color, whereas their analysis of just sexuality or gender focuses on racially unmarked white subjects. Scholarship broadly defined in the queer of color approach takes up the task of integrating queer and women of color approaches, along with materialist approaches and other theoretical perspectives.²

Masculinities

To critically analyze trans men's experience of masculinity in interaction I draw on theories of masculinity and power, particularly focusing on notions of multiple and

² See Michael Hames-Garcia's "Queer Theory Revisited" for a narrative of the development of queer theory that centers the contributions of women of color feminists and queer people of color from the beginning of its theoretical development.

hierarchically arranged masculinities (R. Connell 1995). Sharing an understanding of the socially constructed and relational nature of gender, Connell (1995) outlined the role of masculinities in the structural arrangements and the domination of men over women, which underlie gender in contemporary societies. Masculinities are patterns of practice that “refer to male bodies (sometimes directly, sometimes symbolically and indirectly), but are not *determined* by male biology” (emphasis in original) (R. Connell 2000:29). In other words, masculinities are practices that are associated with male bodies, but they are not reducible to just the actual behaviors of men. There is some conceptual confusion where patterns of practice associated with male bodies are conflated with what men or male-bodied people do (Schrock and Schwalbe 2009). This conflation loses the nuance of the definition and naturalizes these social practices. In the face of evidence of female bodied and self-identified women practicing masculinities (Brown 2005; Halberstam 1998; Messerschmidt 2012b) the field evidences a cisgender and essentialist bias.

I argue that men and masculinities should be thought of as distinct but connected analytic concepts. Masculinities, as patterns of practice, can be enacted by people with various gender and sex embodiments or other aspects of social location (e.g., race, class, sexuality, ability, etc.); however, particular patterns of practice adhere more easily to some kinds of people. Compare, for example, a hip-hop masculinity as done by a young black man to the same masculinity as done by a white man. The joke of the white rapper shows that this particular style never adheres to white men’s bodies as well as it does to black men’s; instead it slips off more easily. As in the work cited above, women and female bodied people can do masculinities, but those practices will always be evaluated and seen differently by others through their sex category, race category, and so on. It can

be difficult to define when women are practicing masculinities or when men are practicing femininities. This determination must be based on the social and historical context and ask whether the practices are associated in that setting with male or female bodies, or if this is contested and in flux. As I will show in the analysis, there are interactional and structural sources and consequences for the relations between particular patterns of practice and aspects of social location.

The key insights of the critical study of masculinity are that in a given time and place there are multiple masculinities, that there is a hierarchy of masculinities, and that at the top of that hierarchy is a hegemonic masculinity that serves to legitimate male dominance (Connell 2000). Hegemonic masculinity is “the culturally idealized form of masculinity in a given historical and social setting” and its most important feature is that it legitimates patriarchy (Messerschmidt 2000: 10). As theorized, hegemonic masculinity is open to contestation and is not a static type, though many researchers treat it as such (Martin 2001). Thus, rather than being associated with whatever form legitimates the dominance of men over women and some men over others in a particular time and place, it is often thought of as a fixed and admittedly toxic type centered on traits such as violence, a lack of emotional expression, and control. In contrast, research has found that hegemonic masculinity varies historically (Kimmel 1996) and can have local, regional, and global variants (R. Connell and Messerschmidt 2005).

In this way and others, the concept of hegemonic masculinity is so ubiquitous in scholarship on men and masculinities that it has many meanings, some of which stray considerably from Connell’s original ideas (Messerschmidt 2012a). However, Demetriou (2001) shows that in Connell’s understanding, hegemonic masculinity is always defined

against subordinated masculinities and femininities without the capacity to incorporate them in the process of change. This fixed notion of hegemonic masculinity has difficulty reconciling itself with observed changes to masculine ideals (Arxer 2011). Thus, in the sense that Connell's concept is usually used, there is a hegemonic masculinity that is strictly defined against subordinated masculinities in a given time and place, but it can be contested and changed. Demetriou (2001) instead proposes the concept of a hegemonic masculine bloc, which utilizes a more Gramscian meaning of hegemony, to think of hegemonic masculinity as incorporating or appropriating aspects of subordinated or marginalized masculinities in order to retain the gender order. This can be particularly insidious as a process of change as Demetriou (2001) explains: "the hegemonic bloc changes in a very deceptive and unrecognizable way. It changes through negotiation, appropriation, and translation, through the transformation of what appears counter-hegemonic and progressive into an instrument of backwardness and patriarchal reproduction." (355). In other words, these changes may look substantial, but could actually mask the perpetuation of the same inequality.

Bridges and Pascoe (2014) argue that the emergence of softer and gentler hegemonic ideals as described by Messner (2007) represent *hybrid masculinities*, where some subordinated or marginalized practices are taken up and incorporated into hegemonic ideals. They describe three different possible explanations for this: that hybrid masculinities reflect local variations but not widespread changes to the global gender order (R. Connell and Messerschmidt 2005), that they are a sign of decreasing homophobia (Anderson 2009), or, as Bridges and Pascoe argue, that they represent a change to the appearance of these masculinities but not the substantive effect of creating

gender inequality. In other words, the final explanation, following Demetriou (2001) and Arxer (2011), suggests that the incorporation of subordinated practices rather than the rejection of them may be a new way to produce gender inequality with a gentler face. I will return to a more lengthy discussion of this debate in the analysis. For now, a crucial question of this debate is where hybrid masculinities are emerging. Identifying when, where, and with whom trans men practice particular patterns of masculinity will add to the understanding of the contextual nature of these practices and changes to contemporary masculinities.

Space and Masculinities

Masculinities are constructed in relation to spatial location, and local through global levels are interconnected. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), in their reevaluation of the concept of hegemonic masculinity, conclude that locally specific constructions of hegemonic masculinity have been an emergent theme of research on men and masculinities since the introduction of the concept. They then distinguish between local, regional, and global levels of gender relations. They propose a framework for understanding the relationships between various spatial levels: the global level refers to the arena of transnational politics and business as well as globalization, the regional level refers to culture or the nation-state, and the local level refers to interaction, families, local communities and other institutions. They establish that there is interplay between these levels and that though they are not the same there is a resemblance between them. For example, the hegemonic masculinity of the nation-state provides a cultural framework that the local draws on but is not determined by. The region is an important geographic unit of analysis (Nelson and Seager 2005) and regions have particular features that may

shape local gender relations, though regions should not necessarily be thought of as discrete or isolated geographic units (Manalansan et al. 2014). Connell and Messerschmidt's use of region may be confusing since region is also commonly used to denote the geographic subdivisions within a nation-state that would fall within their definition of local. The U.S. Census defines region as "groupings of states and the District of Columbia that subdivide the United States for the presentation of census data" (U.S. Census Bureau n.d.). I use region in this sense rather than Connell and Messerschmidt's. Studies such as Bell and Braun's (2010) research with environmental activists in Appalachia demonstrate that the regional hegemonic masculinity, tied to coal mining, prevents men from joining in environmental activism. This is suggestive in seeing how regional industry shapes gender relations, but regions are not shaped by industry alone. For example, Crawley (2008) even suggests that regional weather patterns affect female-bodied people's ability to practice masculinities through masculine gender displays³. Scholars need to do more work to understand the other factors in the production of masculinities in different U.S. regions. Though there has been scholarship examining regional masculinities (e.g., Watts 2008) there has been little comparative work between U.S. regions.

As I describe below, rural and urban spatial distinctions are also important for locally situated practices of masculinities (Little 2002; Morris 2008), but individuals are not static. They are not fixed in one institution or spatial location throughout their life or even in the course of a typical day and we must also examine how gendered practices reflect moving between these locations (Messerschmidt 2000). The spatial nature of

³ In Southern Florida, the site of Crawley's work, the extremely warm weather would make it difficult for a female-bodied transmasculine person to bind their breasts or cover themselves with bulky clothes.

masculinities and the contextual influences on doing gender point to the need to explore place as an important influence in gender relations when examining the lives of trans men.

Queer Localities

Trans men inhabit space as men but also as trans people and these experiences vary based on social and spatial location. Gayle Rubin (1993) argues that sexual dissidents need the anonymity of urban centers to form communities and this thinking has shaped much research into sexual communities (e.g., D'Emilio 1983). More recent queer concerns with place have emerged as a challenge to a body of scholarship that tends to assume that gay, lesbian, and transgender people only flourish in urban centers (e.g., D. Bell and G. Valentine 1995; D. Bell 2000; Halberstam 2005; Herring 2010; C. R. Johnson 2013; E. P. Johnson 2008). Mary Gray's (2009) ethnographic research on rural queers in Eastern Kentucky attests to the value of examining lesbian, gay, transgender, and queer stories outside of urban centers. Gray documents the creative strategies rural queer youth engage in to carve out queer spaces in small towns, such as doing drag shows at Wal-Mart. The surprise over findings from the 2010 census that childrearing is more common for lesbian and gay people in the South than in other regions (Tavernise 2011) demonstrates that this spatial bias is not only related to an urban and rural divide but is also regional. Further, the population of gays and lesbians in the South are predominately people of color (according to the Census), which shows that the urban and regional bias is racialized. Thus, the urban gay and lesbian communities that stand as the central place of queer and transgender life do not necessarily include the realities of many gay and lesbian people of color.

Trans men may not identify as gay or lesbian and transgender concerns may not always line up with gay and lesbian concerns, but trans people are often included under the umbrella of queer studies. At the same time that trans people are at the center of theorizing in queer theory (Namaste 2000) they often face exclusion in the queer and lesbian and gay spaces that have been the primary focus of research in queer studies (Nash 2010). Overall, rural trans men and those outside of the West Coast and Northeast are often missing from the limited scholarship on trans people. Therefore, adding understanding of trans men in these places contributes to queer scholarship.

Understanding Trans Men

The representation of transgender and transsexual people in medical studies and media in Europe and the United States emerged in the early 20th Century (Meyerowitz 2002). The medical and psychiatric discourse of this time tended to pathologize transgender and transsexual people (Stryker 2006). Early feminist (e.g., Raymond 1979) and sociological (e.g., Billings and Urban 1982) characterizations painted trans people as either agents or dupes of the patriarchy in the former, and dupes of the medical-legal complex in the latter. Trans people's lives and experiences have also been central as objects for gender theory formation (Butler 2004; Garfinkel 1967; Kessler 1978; West and Zimmerman 1987)⁴. The term transgender and field of transgender studies did not emerge until the 1990s and this signaled a shift where transgender people themselves were engaging in scholarship about their lives and others began treating transgender people more as subjects than objects (Stryker 2006). In the past, there has been a disproportionate focus on male-to-female transgender people and Devor's (1997) work

⁴ See Connell (2012) and Bettcher (2014) for comprehensive overviews of this pattern in addition to Namaste's (2000) discussion of the use of transgender women as objects of both queer and sociological research.

was one of the first efforts at a large study of male-to-female experiences to address this dearth of research. In the last ten or so years this may have shifted to a disproportionate focus on female-to-male experiences in scholarship and transgender politics (Vidal-Ortiz 2008), though there are still many transgender people and experiences left out of this research overall.

Three themes emerge in a review of the most recent sociologically oriented research on trans men's experiences. First, trans men are highly aware of various discourses surrounding sex, gender, and sexuality (Cromwell 1999; Devor 1993; Dozier 2005; Green 2005; Vidal-Ortiz 2002). Second, trans men adopt both hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities (Green 2005; H. Rubin 2003; Schilt and C. Connell 2007; Vidal-Ortiz 2002), and that there is nothing inherent in trans men or a transgender identity that leads to adopting a particular masculine style. Finally, trans men see changes in social interaction after they begin transition, but the nature of these changes varies by differences in other identities or social positions (Dozier 2005; Green 2005; Schilt and C. Connell 2007; Schilt 2006; Vidal-Ortiz 2002). Overall, trans men are well versed in discussions of gender and sexuality, practice a variety of masculinities, and experience significant changes in interaction after transition.

The most recent research on trans men is especially promising. Schilt's (2010) study of trans men at work in Southern California and Texas is an excellent example of how to understand the particular challenges of trans people in the institutional frame of the workplace. Schilt deftly analyzes trans people's experiences to better understand general processes of gender inequality, masculinities, and the maintenance of heteronormativity (Schilt and Westbrook 2009) while maintaining that trans men are not

more or less likely than other men to engage in complicit practices. The trouble trans men encounter in the workplace when they try to resist normative gender practices is especially relevant for understanding the difficulties of alternative masculinities. In addition, there has been growing research on partners and other people close to transgender people who are cisgender (Pfeffer 2010; Ward 2010; e.g., Whitley 2013) that demonstrate that the family is a particularly important context to understand how gender transitions are relational.

Like much queer research, this field has tended to be geographically limited. Vidal-Ortiz (2008) notes that much of this research has focused on the lives of trans people in a few large cities on the East and West Coasts and on the experiences of white trans people. Schilt's regional comparison and inclusion of trans men in Texas expands the geographic scope but, as she notes, more regional research on trans men is necessary. In addition, de Vries (2012) shows the utility of a racially and geographically diverse sample in understanding the mutual constitution of gender, race, sexuality and class.

Overall, the critical study of men and masculinities and transgender studies have emerged as solid intellectual forces in recent years, yet there is much work left to do in both fields. They are both in need of additional comparative research to understand the potential influences of context on transgender experiences and masculinities. Transgender studies, like queer studies, suffer from an urban/coastal bias. In this study, an intersectional approach to research and analysis, centered on understanding social identities through multiplicity, provides a framework to understand how these geographic contexts and other social identities affect the lives of trans men. Research within particular institutions has been fruitful for understanding trans men's experiences in

specific institutional spaces. But since gendered practices are shifting and contextual, it is also necessary to look at how individuals practice gender in a variety of contexts and always do so in relation to their own political commitments and sense of self.

The Current Study

In this dissertation I address the central research question—How does context matter for men’s experiences of gender, sexuality, and race? —by analyzing the experiences of trans men in three U.S. regions. I start by explaining the research methods employed in the study and then present my results and analysis in four substantive chapters. The first chapter shows how being a man is a lifelong process of negotiating the expectations of different contexts in light of the gendered self. This chapter centrally illustrates the role of context and individual level characteristics for interactional understandings of gender and offers a framework for the following substantive chapters.

The subsequent analytic chapters represent the most salient themes that emerged in trans men’s accounts context, and gender, race, and sexuality. These chapters also serve as examples of the different ways that context operates in the lives of trans men. The first of these chapters focuses on how emotional control, in this case appropriate emotion in particular contexts, is a hallmark of contemporary masculinities across spaces and a central way of marking distinctions between men and women and among men. The masculine ideal of control is central to this analysis and I show how embodied feelings and emotional expressions, things so close to the individual, relate to the particulars of different contexts.

The final two substantive chapters focus on how different spatial and institutional contexts affect trans men’s fears and experiences of violence. The first centers on

exploring the spatial distribution of fears of transphobic violence. This illustrates another aspect of context, how the ideas about who and what inhabit particular contexts shape men's actions in those settings. The second chapter shows how these fears and actual violence in particular institutional contexts act as powerful forms of social control that reproduce various forms of inequality. It illustrates how the structural arrangements of institutions are key contextual features that influence behavior and the reproduction of social inequality, in ways that potentially reach outside of their institutional contexts. Finally, I conclude the dissertation by returning to the research question and discussing the implications of this research on sociological understandings of inequality, the field of men and masculinities, and transgender politics.

CHAPTER II

METHODS

I rely on qualitative interview data from three regional sites to understand trans men's experiences of gender, race, and sexuality in relation to context. In this chapter, I describe the suitability of this population for addressing this topic, research design, sampling, data collection in each site, and data analysis. I finish with a discussion of questions of researcher positionality and ethics.

Why Trans Men?

Trans men are an ideal population to study masculinity and gender inequality because they are well suited to articulate their gender experiences. Due to the process of transition, gender is likely salient to trans men and they are likely to be able to articulate their experiences of masculinity. The connection between men and masculinity is often naturalized; thus, masculinity becomes more apparent when performed through female assigned bodies (Halberstam 1998). Therefore, if trans men presented themselves as masculine while living as women, their masculinity would have marked them as different than other women. It is not that men do not have to achieve masculinity; appropriate masculinity is highly contested and always at risk (Pascoe 2007). Rather, masculinity done by women in some sense is always marked. In addition, mental health therapy is often required for transgender people to access medical and legal transition. Thus, trans men are likely to have practice talking about gender. Certainly even trans men who avoid therapy have spent a significant amount of time thinking about gender in order to decide to transition. I found all of these things to be true for the majority of interview participants.

This potential facility with talking about gender did not necessarily translate to an ability to discuss issues of sexuality and race in depth. For example, nearly all men of color (particularly Latino and black trans men) reported that race or ethnicity was a salient factor in their experience of gender and sexuality, whereas white trans men, who made up a majority of the sample, often had difficulty talking about how race may or may not have affected these experiences. This is unsurprising given that privileged aspects of social location tend to be unnoticed by those that inhabit them (Frankenberg 1993; P. McIntosh 2007; Tatum 1992), though some white men exhibited a white racial consciousness that allowed them to relay an awareness of how race shaped their experiences of being a man, particularly in comparison to particular groups of men of color. Sexuality, in terms of marginalized sexual identities, was easier for most of the respondents to talk about, likely because many of them have at one point in their lives inhabited these identities.

Trans men can offer insight into masculinity in general and their experiences as men are missing in men and masculinity studies. In their everyday interactions trans men are likely sex categorized by others solely as men and thus are treated similarly to cisgender men. Even trans men who openly transition at work are often incorporated as men even if they would prefer some sort of presentation that does not fit a binary gender order (Schilt 2010). Though they may receive treatment similar to other men, trans men's accounts of their interactions might vary from cisgender men due to their experience of being transgender. Comparative work analyzing the accounts of transgender men and cisgender men might clarify this, but it is beyond the scope of this project.

The first chapter of the analysis takes up the question of what exactly it means to be a man, but in studying trans men for understandings of men and masculinity, I must engage the query of whether this is a legitimate approach. That is, are trans men men? I would argue that trans men are men because I believe it is politically important to respect individual's gender identities, though I understand that others may be unconvinced that this political commitment offers trans men real incumbency in the category of men. This leads to the more complicated question of who, exactly, is a man. Is manhood defined by the presence or absence of a penis? Some trans men elect to undergo surgery to construct a phallus, a procedure originally developed for cisgender men whose penis had been destroyed in war (Green 2004). Are those cisgender men no longer men when they lose their penis? I doubt anyone would suggest this, though the men themselves may feel some diminished sense of their masculinity. Does a particular chromosomal configuration make one a man? There is evidence that there are people who have lived their whole lives as men yet doctors would not be able to evaluate their sex based on their chromosomes (Reis 2009). What about legal classifications? Many trans men legally transition to male and their identity documents such as driver's licenses and passports reflect this⁵. Suffice it to say that the "man" is difficult to define in an absolute sense and, as such, it does not make sense to arbitrarily exclude trans men from the category because they spent time living as women. In my estimation it makes more sense to expand the category of man and detail all of the variations of men that currently exist.

As men, trans men's accounts are a valid contribution to the critical study of men and masculinity. Their experiences and accounts might differ from cisgender men but

⁵ Attaining legal male status is a spatially and institutionally specific process that I plan to return to in a later analysis.

that does not invalidate them as men's experiences. I would not exclude any particular group of men (e.g., disabled men, white men) because their experiences are not exactly the same as other men. Additionally, the accounts of marginalized people may give us particular insights into the general workings of power and inequality (Collins 2000). In sum, it is an open question whether and when trans men's experiences diverge from cisgender men's, but there is no question that trans men's experiences are men's experiences and give insight about men, masculinity, and gender inequality.

Research Design

This project developed through an inductive process with three different interview projects in the U.S. West, Southeast, and Midwest over approximately four years. In this section I start by describing the rationale for each of the three sites as well as the process through which the project developed. I go on to explain the sampling procedure and describe the sample in each region.

Research Sites

This research started with an interview project with trans men in the West (California and Oregon), with most interviewees living in the San Francisco Bay Area. The Bay Area is known for its diverse population and progressive politics. It is both a place where men are more free to practice non-traditional masculinities and a place where there is an active transgender community, greater acceptance of transgender people, and a number of legal protections for transgender people at local and state levels. For these reasons, as well as my familiarity with the area and contacts in transgender communities, this was a fruitful initial site for research on masculinity with trans men. The most notable finding from this site was that context mattered in shaping trans men's lives. In

particular, that in contexts where trans men felt their safety was threatened they were more likely to conform to local gender expectations and when they felt safer they were more likely to engage in transformative practices if they were interested in doing so (Abelson 2014a).

To further understand the importance of context, my next step was to examine a context that the men in the first site posed as the opposite of the tolerance and openness of the Bay Area. Thus I conducted a second interview project in the U.S. Southeast. Glenn's (2002) research on labor and citizenship attests to the value of regional comparisons. This approach is especially useful for identifying structural processes at work, by seeing how racialization and gendering operate differently between spatial locations while having similar effects. The San Francisco Bay Area and the Southeast provided ideal initial sites for a regional comparison of masculinities and transgender experiences. In contrast to the Bay Area, the South was perceived by trans men in the West as brimming with all sorts of intolerance and a bastion for conservative masculinities. It is certainly generally viewed as a hostile environment for transgender people and overall there are fewer legal protections for transgender people at state and local levels (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force 2013). In addition, this second project allowed for the recruitment of rural trans men in order to further the potential to understand urban and rural differences. In my initial interviews in the Bay Area and the Southeast, it was clear that there were regional differences in masculinity and transgender experience but the extreme qualities that made for a compelling comparison also begged the question as to whether these findings about context only reflected the extremes of these particular regions.

The Midwest presented a useful third regional site for the final interview project as it sits at the literal and figurative middle of the country (Manalansan et al. 2014). It shares a similar agricultural emphasis with the South, but is generally characterized as not as politically or socially liberal as the Bay Area and not quite as politically and socially conservative as the Southeast. This is evident by looking at a map of the results of the 2008 presidential election—the West Coast went solidly for Obama, the South mostly for McCain, and the Midwest was fairly split, with the states around the Great Lakes and Iowa for Obama and the Plains States (Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri) for McCain. Though all states on the West Coast offer statewide bans on employment discrimination based on gender identity, no states offer such protections in the South (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force 2013). In the Midwest, only Iowa, Minnesota, and Illinois offer such protections.

Sampling

In each region I gathered a snowball sample with multiple starts. I found interview subjects through personal contacts with friends and acquaintances, postings to online communities or email lists, and fliers posted at community centers and medical clinics. Based on the suggestion of another researcher studying rural gays and lesbians in the Midwest, I also used the online classifieds website Craigslist to find participants. For each of the midwestern states I planned to visit, I posted calls for participants in the volunteer section of the site. The respondents from this recruitment method came from a range of backgrounds—from stealth⁶ trans men to open transgender activists. This recruitment method was useful in finding hidden members of the population; such as one

⁶ For trans men, stealth refers to living as a man without other people knowing their transgender status. Trans people can live nearly completely stealth, where few if any people know or can be stealth in some arenas of their life, such as at work, but not be stealth in other settings.

interviewee that reported he had never met another transgender person, to those that managed local transgender email lists and were quite active in their communities. Though this recruitment method was useful in finding additional participants, the men recruited through Craigslist showed no obvious differences from other participants. I asked initial respondents to recommend other potential participants within their own and other regions. Trans men are often difficult to find since many blend into society after transition and maintain little contact with transgender communities, but I found that the snowball sampling method was effective in finding stealth trans men through their acquaintances who were more visible.

The sample was limited to female to male trans people age 18 and over who were living, or were in the process of transition to live, socially as men. This included a range of people with various gender identities (e.g., genderqueer or transmasculine), but the dissertation is focused on those that were or would have liked to be socially recognized as men in most settings. My aim was to form a sample that was diverse in terms of race, class, sexuality, urban/rural location, and other characteristics. I continued recruitment until I reached theoretical saturation and no new data, in regard to the topics of this analysis, were emerging from further interviews (Charmaz 2006).

The final sample consisted of 66 participants across the three regions. Fifty-five percent lived in urban, 24% in suburban, and 21% in rural or other non-metropolitan settings at the time of interview—though some urban participants had lived in rural places at some point in their lives and the other way around. Seventy-nine percent of the sample identified primarily as white, 9% black, 7% Latino, and 5% Asian. They ranged

in age from 18 to 55 and went from just beginning their transition to having started 22 years before.

In the West I conducted 21 in-depth interviews in the summer of 2009. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 45 with a mean age of 35. The median household income was \$20-29,000 per year. In the Southeast I conducted 17 interviews in Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky Florida, and North Carolina, mostly in the summer of 2010 with one additional interview in fall 2013. Participants ranged in age from 21 to 49 with a mean age of 33. The median household income was \$20-29,000 per year. Finally, in the Midwest I conducted 28 interviews in the fall of 2012 with trans men in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 55 with a mean age of 30. The median household income was \$10-19,000 per year⁷. (See Appendix A for additional sample details)

Interviews and Qualitative Analysis

In all three sites I completed in-depth, semi-structured interviews in which I elicited participants' stories of their transition from living as women to living as men and how this transition changed their lives, particularly their interactions with women and men in varied settings. I also asked questions about how they defined themselves as men, how they viewed manhood and gender in their region, and what social factors influenced their performance of masculinity. During the interviews I probed for concrete examples of interactions in various contexts, not just for how they felt about what happened, but also for accounts of their actions and those of others. The majority of the interviews were conducted face-to-face, with two being done by phone. Intermittent follow-up

⁷ The income range was similar for each region. There were a few more full-time students in the Midwest sample with little or no income, which likely explains the difference in median income between regions.

communications with respondents helped to clarify or add to the interview data. I kept field notes to record additional details about interview settings and recorded observations during my travels in each region. I used memos to flesh out emergent analytic themes and methodological notes throughout the project.

In-depth interviews coupled with inductive analysis have been found by others to be fruitful methods for understanding the social construction of gender inequality in interaction (Poggio 2006; West and Zimmerman 2009). Due to the fact that life histories are a particularly useful method for understanding the practice of masculinities (R. Connell 2000), I took a life history approach but began with respondents' process of living socially as men. Narratives of childhood experience and discovery of a transgender self are important, but have already been the focus of a great deal of research (Vidal-Ortiz 2008).

I used a constantly evolving interview protocol (See Appendix B) that I added to based on earlier interviews and emerging themes. It consisted of a list of questions that represented topics that I expected to be relevant based on theoretical considerations and previous research, but the format was open so that participants could focus on the aspects of their experience that they thought were important. I started most interviews with, "tell me about your transition" and from there allowed the participants considerable latitude to tell their stories. I found this approach worked well because the conversations that followed usually touched on most of the topics in the interview guide. I centered additional questions and follow-ups to clarify concepts, elicit narratives from the interviewees, and explore multiple contexts. In addition, I asked each participant to

complete a demographic questionnaire (See appendix C) at the conclusion of the interview.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed and I analyzed them inductively using a modified grounded theory approach. Initially I started with line-by-line coding of several interview transcripts in order to identify emergent themes and then moved to focused coding to refine those themes and develop the analysis (Charmaz 2006). The three major themes that developed from this were: being a man, emotion, and violence. I developed a coding scheme for each of these major themes based on themes and patterns that emerged from the data as well as existing theoretical concepts. Using Atlas.ti, I completed three rounds of focused coding on all 66 interviews, so that each interview was coded for each of the three major themes. I discuss more specifics of the codes used for each theme in the corresponding substantive chapters.

Throughout data collection and analysis I stayed close to participants' stories, constantly comparing data across interviews (Berg 2007). I paid close attention to both the content of interviewees' stories and the ways in which they made sense of their lives by constructing their narratives (Chase 1995). The analysis developed for each substantive chapter emerged from a series of analytic memos. All names used here are pseudonyms and minor identifying details have been changed to protect confidentiality.

Rapport and Researcher Positionality

My initial interest in conducting research with trans men stemmed from contact with transgender communities and individuals in the San Francisco Bay Area and elsewhere on the West Coast. In reviewing scholarship on men and masculinities I found that the lives of trans men, as a group of men, were mostly missing from this field. I was

interested in addressing this gap in the literature and joining in the new field of transgender studies that rejected medicalization and other problematic discourses of transgender experience. I found that when I explained these goals during recruitment of interview participants and during interviews the men were supportive and eager to share their stories. When seeking to post my call for participants on various email groups or through other kinds of organizations, I engaged in long phone conversations or email exchanges with group leaders or list moderators who wanted to vet me and my intentions. I was granted access in each of these cases.

I have tried to be ever conscious of the historical and current problematic relationship between researchers and trans people while recruiting, conducting interviews, and during analysis and writing. Overall, I have done this by being up front about my motivations and by privileging the individual's meanings and understandings of their own lives and actions. I acknowledge, however, that as the researcher I have final say and interpretive voice in the product of this research.

The relationship between my social location and that of the men I interview is always complex and changing depending on the particular interviewee. Though I am a cisgender person researching transgender people, this does not wholly define myself or the interviewees and the relations between us because I am also a woman interviewing men. My whiteness, middle class background, status as a US citizen, and status as currently able bodied all contribute to a complex relationship in the interview setting. Most notably, because of my non-normative gender presentation I have had interviewees assume that I was also a trans man and have both gained rapport because they assume I am queer (that we are part of the same communities) and become an object of suspicion

to men who for various reasons do not trust lesbians. Since I do identify as queer and a lesbian or dyke, I at times shared what seemed to be a common understanding of particular cultural aspects of LGBT experience with interviewees, which helped build rapport. In fact, especially in the San Francisco Bay Area, some interviewees recognized me “from around” as I recognized them, meaning from around the LGBT communities of the area. On the other hand, I became uncomfortable when respondents occasionally said denigrating things about women and queer people, as well as about marginalized identities that I do not hold. On the whole, the greatest commonality between participants and myself was our shared commitment to increase knowledge of a wide range of trans men’s experiences and a desire to better the lives of trans people in a general sense. Amid all of this complexity, I constantly try to sensitize myself to issues of power by following Jacob Hale’s (n.d.) suggestions to approach the topic with a sense of humility and interrogate my own subject position. Rather than identify as an ally to transgender people, I instead see that as a designation that I hope transgender people will give me based on my actions. Thus, I see this as an ongoing negotiation and evolving conversation on how best to show my commitment to transgender issues that extends beyond this project.

The major goal of this research project has always been to include trans men, as an under-studied group of men, in the field of men and masculinities. In the following chapters I build theoretical insights about men in regard to gender, race, and sexuality using the narratives of trans men. This is not because I believe trans men are some kind of special case, but because they are men who have experiences of gender, race, and sexuality. In regard to building knowledge about transgender people, like Namaste

(2000), I am most concerned with documenting the everyday lives of transgender people, rather than focusing on the etiology of transgender or highlighting the discovery of transgender selves. Thus, the second major goal of this project has always been to focus on the variety of experiences of a range of trans men rather than how transgender shows this or that about gender in general. I turn to this work in the following chapters on masculinity, emotion, and violence.

CHAPTER III

ONE IS NOT BORN A MAN:

SELF, IDENTITY, AND SITUATED EXPECTATIONS IN BEING A MAN

I mean I had to learn how to be a man. I don't think that that came [on its own]. And again I feel like that's because you're not, you can't really be a man in society until you are perceived as one. And that's where all those little lessons came along, of like, "Wow, if you're a man you have to change your own tire." Nobody's going to help you. So you know, I definitely, I had to learn. -Ken

Who is a man and how does one become a man? For many people the answer is deceptively simple: a male child is born, spends time as a boy, goes through the physical changes of puberty, and eventually becomes an adult man. In some cultural or religious traditions there are even ceremonies or other markings of a boy's transition to a man in the community, such as a Jewish bar mitzvah. Yet, this status of being a man may not be as secure as it appears on the surface. Instead, being a man is something that must be affirmed and protected if it is to appear legitimate. Why else would one need to "man up" or discuss the "arrested development" of men who live with their parents and do not have meaningful employment well into their late 20s and 30s? In fact, the category of man, as a generic term for an adult male, is culturally specific, as are the meanings attached to the category. As Ken's quote suggests, to be a man has to do with being recognized as such and learning to manage the different ways that one is treated by others because of that recognition.

In this chapter, I explore the meaning of the category of man in the contemporary United States and how the process of inhabiting or embodying the category is based on a relationship between the self and social recognition. Being a man is an ongoing process

of negotiating between the self, social identity, and the situated social expectations of particular contexts. Trans men, like any group of men, have to manage a unique set of factors in this negotiation, but the process itself that I delineate in this chapter is connected to the category rather than specific individuals or groups of men that inhabit it.

In this chapter I generally rely on an interactionist account of identity that views it as socially constructed and negotiated (Goffman 1973; McCall and Simmons 1978) and “created through interactions, with social and material consequences” (Howard 2000:371) that are shaped by social hierarchies. Identities can change over time based on socio-historical factors (Cote 1996; Helson R 1995), shifts over the life course (Ashforth 2000; Karp and Holmstrom 1998), and geographic contexts (Howard 2000). Though the self and identity are intermingled in some senses and often used interchangeably, I follow Michael Hames-Garcia (2011a) in distinguishing between the self and social identity. By *social identity* I mean membership in various social groups and categories (Howard 2000), particularly those related to sexuality, race, gender, class, ability, religion, citizenship, and other aspects of social location. Social identities can be ascribed, as in processes of race and sex categorization, where an individual is assigned group category membership by others, or are taken on by individuals. Based on Mead’s (1934) understanding of the ability for people to reflect on themselves as an object and develop a self concept, I use Howard and Hollander’s definition of *self* that combines this process of self reflexivity with “our convictions, values, motives, and experiential history, carried in the spatial and temporal boundaries of our physical bodies” (1997:94). Thus, the self, which could also be thought of as personal identity, is made up of the unique experiences, values, and other characteristics that make up who we are as individuals—at least who

we see ourselves to be. Although they do influence each other, the best way to distinguish social identity and self is to think of the former as group membership in broad social categories and the latter as all the complexities that make up who we are as individuals. Multiplicity (Hames-Garcia 2011a) best characterizes how social identities operate at the level of the self. Social identities are not experienced separately at the individual level, but shade each other with meaning and experience.

To signal that gender works at both the level of social identity and the level of the self, I further distinguish between gender identity and gendered self. *Gender identity* is the social identity related to gender. It is typically thought of as one's sense of oneself as a man or woman (Howard and Hollander 1997) or as an ascribed group membership in a gender category. Though individuals certainly identify outside of this binary, as people in this sample do, it is most often viewed as dichotomous (Kessler and McKenna 1978). As I demonstrate in this chapter, transgender and other gender identities can exist and be recognized by others in particular local contexts. Since gender extends beyond these simple categories, whether binary or with the addition of other categories such as transgender, I use gendered self for this more complex gender self-concept. *Gendered self* refers to the more complicated aspects of gender as experienced as part of the self. One is not just a man, but based on aspects of the self he might see himself as a good man, a tough guy, a queen, or other nuanced understands of his own gender. In other words, gender identity is the larger gender category oneself or others see a person as inhabiting, and gendered self is what kind of man or woman (or neither) one sees oneself as.

Social recognition refers to having gender identity, aspects of the gendered self, or other social identities recognized by others. This is not the generalized other, but rather

concrete experiences of recognition in interaction. For example, in the opening quote, Ken gets recognition of his gender identity when others see him as a man. If he views himself as the kind of guy that knows how to fix things, then this part of his gendered self was recognized by others when no one stopped to help. Notably, there could have been numerous other reasons why people did not stop to help, but the effect of their actions would have been the same. Recognition itself is fairly straightforward; if one sees oneself as a man and others agree, then recognition has occurred. Misrecognition occurs when, for example, one recognizes oneself as a man and others see the person as a woman or otherwise not a man. We can identify recognition in a number of ways. For instance, recognition can be accomplished linguistically, such as an individual using a gendered pronoun to signal recognition of another's gender identity, or through other kinds of actions and behavior as shown in Ken's experience. In this study I rely on trans men's interpretations of whether they have been recognized or not, though it is not always clear if recognition has occurred without talking to both parties.

Lastly, *situated expectations* (West and Zimmerman 1987) refer to both the kinds of behavior, talk, and other social action that individuals expect and usually know are expected of them in a given situation, whether they follow them or not. These expectations are what individuals risk being accountable to when they do gender. Norms, meaning formal and informal rules of social contexts, are one form of expectation and I use norms and expectations interchangeably here. We can also see expectations in action in Ken's story—others likely did not offer help with his flat tire because, in the situational context of having a flat tire by the side of the road, men are expected to change a tire by themselves due to ideals of masculine independence and competence.

The central questions guiding the analysis presented in this chapter are: How does one become a man? How do spatial and institutional contexts shape this process and the masculinities that trans men identify, enact, and evaluate? To address these questions, I coded all interviews for mentions of masculine practices, whether respondents were talking about themselves, other people, or generalized patterns or ideals. I looked for instances where interviewees discussed practices that they associated specifically with men or talked about different “kinds” of men. For example, during a discussion of fear of violence an interviewee talked about fearing using the men’s bathroom because he thought the rural men he expected to find there were likely to be violent. I coded this as a type of men, rural in this case. I developed sub codes for when interviewees’ narratives related masculinities and types of men to particular spatial and institutional contexts, in addition to a code for when they described their masculine practices shifting between contexts. I also coded for how particular practices were evaluated by interviewees or for their reports of how others evaluated particular practices under a series of sub codes grouped under “appropriate masculinities.” Finally, I also coded for when they reported being recognized by others as men and as other social identities.

The analysis draws on and speaks to the debates regarding contemporary changes in masculinities discussed in the literature review and builds on interactional accounts of the production of gender, race, and sexuality. The key question of these debates are, what do the appearance of hybrid masculinities, such as men showing greater tolerance for gay men or taking up practices associated with gay men, mean for the reproduction of gender inequality? Do they signal real change? Are they merely local variations? Or, do they reflect incorporation of subordinated or marginalized masculinities without real change in

gender relations. My analysis here of spatially specific hyper masculinities shows how these are racial projects, with the effect of marginalizing poor racialized men in both urban and rural contexts. Hondagneu-Sotelo and Messner (1994) suggest that the creation of images of racialized hypermasculinities can be used as a way for relatively privileged men to distance themselves from gender inequality, even as they continue to benefit from it. The central contribution of this chapter is an understanding of the elements involved in inhabiting the category of man and how the self, social identity, and situated expectations are negotiated in the process of interacting in different contexts. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of these contributions.

Analysis

This analysis begins by examining the masculine ideals that emerged from interviewees' accounts and the ways in which they relate to various spatial contexts. Next, I turn to an analysis of the relationship between authenticity and recognition, which contexts are key sites of recognition, and the importance of recognition for shaping social interaction. Then, I show how authenticity figures into the process of expressing the gendered self. Last, I use a few men's narratives as exemplars to illustrate how men negotiate their gendered selves as they encounter the situated expectations of different contexts.

Masculine Ideal Types

The identity and category of being a man goes beyond simply either being a man or not; it is also about what kind of man one is. In this section I present interviewees' descriptions of types of men that they commonly identified in and across various spatial contexts. These ideal types, as I call them, come from interviewees' discussion of both

how men are expected to be in particular spaces and what respondents see as common patterns of practice for men in different contexts. They refer to a shared image of a type of man; a type that signals a particular gendered self.

An ideal type can be normative, in both the sense that it is seen as the most common way for men to be and to what men should aspire, but it need not be. As I will show below, faggy men are an identifiable type, but this is not reportedly the most desirable type of man or the most common, even in gay men's communities. At the same time, faggy masculinity (the patterns of practice associated with faggy men) is associated with gay men and can shape expectations about gay men's behavior. Thus, these types contribute to the situated expectations for particular spatial settings and for particular men. These ideals can have particular and identifiable looks that include a variety of aesthetic practices (Bridges 2014) related to gender display. Therefore, these ideal types are groupings of men's practices and aesthetic displays into identifiable categories to describe what particular men do and who they are. The groupings occur and operate as everyday forms of "common-sense" knowledge about men. As such, men's behavioral and aesthetic practices signal something about a gendered self. Though this is a broad definition, the flexibility in the concept of ideal type, as defined here, allows a discussion of the broad expectations that emerged in interviewees' narratives and how they incorporated and discarded parts of these types in describing and enacting gendered selves.

I start with describing a broad continuum of ideal types that emerged across interviews and their relation to region as a spatial context. Then, I examine how race and class shape rural and urban variants of hypermasculinity. I conclude this section on

masculine ideal types with a discussion on the relative flexibility and profusion of ideal types in urban places compared to the rigidity of rural ideals. Overall, this section lays out the masculine ideal types that interviewees identified, especially as related to spatial contexts.

CONTINUUM OF IDEALS

In this section I describe the continuum of masculinities that emerged from interviewees' descriptions of masculine ideal types and how they are connected to spatial contexts. The four central patterns interviewees commonly discussed were hypermasculine men, regular guys, progressive men, and faggy men. Overall, respondents described regional masculinities, with the West being most open and flexible and connected to the progressive man, the South being most restrictive and connected to hypermasculine men, and the Midwest as being in-between and connected to regular guys. I refer to the relationships between these types as being on a continuum, as illustrated in Figure 1, with masculine on one end and feminine on the other; however, this does flatten the characteristics of each type. It is also not meant to say that particular men are more masculine and others more feminine, though they may conceive of themselves or others in that way. Though men can see their gendered self more reflected in one type or another, they can also engage in practices associated with other types or actions that do not fit neatly on this spectrum. Rather, this spectrum is meant to reflect that masculinity and femininity are *constructed* in opposition to each other and to be a simple illustration of normative pressures for most men to fall somewhere in the middle or what I later call Goldilocks masculinity. This also signals that, for the most part, their relations to women and other men are key to defining these types of men.

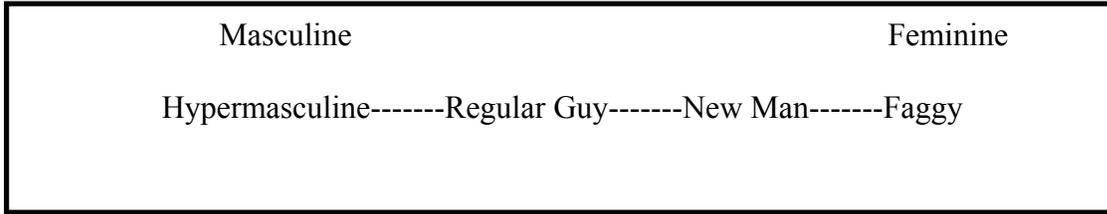


Figure 1: Continuum of Masculine Ideal Types

Hypermasculine Men

The ideal of the hypermasculine man is defined by aggression, violence, rigid heterosexuality, conservatism (both politically and being “old-fashioned” in general) and a strictly controlled masculinity that does not allow any expression of femininity.

Descriptors⁸ for hypermasculinity were consistent across interviewees’ discussions of particular regions and are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Hypermasculine Men
Descriptors
Loud, aggressive, violent, apolitical or very conservative, misogynist, homophobic, short hair and beard, macho, engages in crude sexual talk about women, likes guns, controlling, swaggering

A small portion of the men openly identified as hypermasculine, but others were more likely to take up only certain aspects of the type or describe others as hypermasculine. Overall, the hypermasculine man served as an extreme example of what not to be and provided definition to the regular guy and progressive man.

⁸ I generated these descriptors for each ideal type by taking the passages coded with the type and listing the words interviewees used to describe them. I consolidated the list to combine similar terms (e.g., heterosexual and straight) and eliminated a few outliers that were only used by one respondent and did not seem to fit with the overall type.

It was common for respondents to describe themselves or other trans men as being hypermasculine early in transition. Chris (Urban, West, 48, white, heterosexual, 13 years)⁹ described how some other trans men he knew behaved early in transition:

Swearing a lot or walking in a certain way and sort of swaggering – they're all sort of physical things. I think trying to emulate. There was some people that were over the top and starting to talk about women in a certain way. That sort of less-than-nice way. As if that makes you more male. Becoming sort of an asshole. Sort of like a truck driver or a stereotypical, what we like to think of some truck driver that's all rough, but I think pretty ugly. Like putting your feet on the coffee table. I saw guys doing that.

As these descriptions show, interviewees saw the hypermasculine man as inauthentic for trans men and a form of overcompensation for all men, which I analyze in more depth below. I will return to the hypermasculine man in my discussion of urban and rural masculinities at the end of this section.

Regular Guys

Regular guys are most defined by what they are not rather than what they are. Being a regular guy is about not being hypermasculine and not being overly feminine. It represents a balance between being solidly and authentically masculine and not needing to defend oneself against any appearance of femininity. The common descriptors for each region, shown in Table 2, paint a picture of the regular guy that is heterosexual, cares for and provides for his family, likes sports, is handy and knows how to fix things, and fairly “laid back” in general. The regional descriptors were drawn from across interviewees’ discussions of particular regions, not necessarily where they lived at the time of the interview.

⁹ I use this format throughout the text to quickly describe some demographic characteristics when I mention participants by name. This information was all self-reported and current to the time of the interview. The information is arranged as follows: (Residential density, Region, Age, Race, Sexual identity, Time since beginning transition).

Region	Descriptors
Midwest	Educated, reserved, kind to women, likes sports, laid back, heterosexual, not hypermasculine, breadwinner, not concerned about appearance, not too soft, handy and knows how to fix things
West	Easygoing, mellow, average, blends in, not macho, heterosexual, conservative dress, warm, likes sports, supports family, handy, some culture and education
South	Provider, breadwinner, likes fishing, hiking and sports, fixes things, makes a decent living, respectful and protective of women

There was some variation between how these ideals were described between regions, with the South being associated with more traditional descriptors of masculinity and the West associated with a more open style. Overall, the regular guy was associated most closely with Midwestern and suburban ideals of normalcy, though there were variations in each region and in urban and rural places.

A regular guy is characterized by not being at either of the extremes of the continuum and, like most of the other ideal types, is defined through his relations with women and other men. Seth (Urban, Midwest, 23, black/white, 2 years) describes this:

I don't want to be a guy that people are afraid of. I want to be a good guy. I want to be a nice guy, but not too nice that you're always the friend, you know. I want to be respectful of women. If there's anything about being a man that's number one, it's being respectful of women, is treating women well. It's not being a douche bag. It's not treating other guys like shit because it's gonna make me feel better.

The regular guy does not want to provoke fear in others and treat other people badly, especially women. At the same time, he does not want to be so kind that he becomes unattractive to women because he's "too nice."

Being a husband or father is central, though not required, for the regular guy. Interviewees' narratives show that the regular guy defines himself as a husband and

father against a hypermasculine and domineering man while maintaining a fairly traditional gender division of labor with his partner. Rather than forcing these roles in the family, the regular guy is in a fairly traditional relationship because his and his partner's preferences happen to line up that way. Tom's (Suburban, West, 28, white, Straight, 6 months) vision of himself as a husband and father exemplifies this balance. I asked how he wants to be as a husband and father and he replied:

I know exactly what I don't wanna be...I've seen so many relationships that my female friends have gone through with really lousy guys...I wanna be supportive ... I do wanna be the breadwinner in my family...I think it's important to me because it's important for my wife, 'cause she wants to stay home and she wants to be there with the kids, and I want her to, too. I don't want my kids to grow up where we're not home. I think that sucks...And if that's what she wants, I wanna give that to her ... I'm not a stay-at-home with the kids person at all. I have no maternal instincts... I share in taking care of him, but it's not for me to stay home and be a mom... Mostly I think just being what my wife wants me to be as far as contributing to the family and feeling a sense of worth...I think for guys that's important to feel like you're taking care of your family and that's what I want. That's what I've always wanted. And she allows me to be in that role and pursue that role and that's how I feel good. I don't wanna be supported. I don't like that feeling.

Thus, traditional elements of masculinity are incorporated into this style, but consent and partnership are symbolically important in separating the regular guy from hypermasculinity. At the same time, men like Tom establish themselves as fathers and husbands against femininity. Their narratives do not necessarily devalue traditional feminine tasks in the family, such as being a stay-at-home parent; instead they are characterized as a personal preference or matter of personality. Thus, this is a separate spheres ideology with a kinder and gentler face.

Heterosexuality is central to the regular guy though homophobia is more the reserve of hypermasculinity. That is not to say that men that engage in sex with other

men or identify as gay cannot be regular guys. It is primarily being read by others as heterosexual rather than exclusive heterosexuality that makes one a regular guy.

Tom's description of his role in the family is representative of narratives of the regular guy in the West. The regular guy in the Midwest or Southeast is more likely to take on a stricter role as the decision maker and true head of the household. He still distinguishes himself from hypermasculinity with his respect for his wife and her opinions and needs, even if he has the final say in most matters. Respondents who portrayed themselves as regular guys were not afraid of femininity and most mentioned a few feminine coded tasks that they like to perform such as cooking or sewing. At the same time, like Seth, they were not "too feminine," in contrast to progressive men and faggy men.

Progressive Men

The active rejection of hypermasculinity and many aspects of the regular guy best characterize progressive men. Like the regular guy, he is defined by the kinds of interactions he wants to have with women and other men, but more than the regular guy, the progressive man takes on explicit projects of equity and justice related to gender, race, and sexuality. The progressive man is also distinguished by his expression of masculinity as being a project of self-improvement. In other words, the progressive man sees his masculinity as a constant quest to be better. Though individual enactments of being a progressive man varied quite a bit among the sample, they held a commonality of an overall project to consciously work to undermine inequality. Though the progressive man varied individually, the descriptors were fairly consistent across regions as shown in

Table 3.

Table 3: Progressive Men
Descriptors
Open, aware of privilege, works against gender, sexual, and racial inequality, not interested in sports, egalitarian and/or queer relationships, sensitive, politically active (progressive or liberal), okay with being seen as gay, vulnerable, educated, worldly

The progressive man very much resembles aspects of the much derided among interviewees “sensitive new age guy,” but whose sharp political edge and project of constant self transformation tries to avoid the stereotypic style that is sensitive but may not actually make any substantive social change. Bert (Southeast, university town, 49, white, Sexy/Flexible, 3 years) described the two men who were close friends that exemplified particular aspects of the progressive man:

They both very beautifully modeled a kind of masculinity that I admired. There was a softness to it, an openness. They were both really opinionated and really strong flavors, but very sweet...I have a couple men that I still sort of look to as ...the kind of masculinity that I admire and I think pretty unilaterally, they're just really open to people, and they're sensitive. They're aware of their place in a world amongst others. And I think that's really beautiful.

Interviewees often admired qualities of the progressive man and held them up as model men.

The project of transformation is especially important for progressive men. Malcolm (Urban Southeast, 22, white, Queer, 2 years) describes his friend, another young trans man, who he admires:

He's really conscious of how privilege works and how he gains it and what it means to him; also what it means for him to transition and being Latino and how that works for him, that that's really complicated, too. And I think he works through that in a really good way. He just thinks about everything. And I think that's, in a lot of ways, like I look to him for like how I wanna construct my masculinity. You always have to be looking at what you're doing and aware of how you could be sexist. I

think like that's something really critical for me, too, like being a white man in the South. That has so many, so many terrible connotations and so many things that I don't want to be.

Taking on the transformative project of the progressive man was especially important for a man like Malcolm, whose political commitments meant a consciousness of his place as a white man in the systems of racial and gender inequality in the U.S. South.

Like the regular guy, his relations with others, especially his intimate partnerships, define the progressive man. The progressive man's relationships are demarcated by flexibility and openness. For example, Alec (Urban, West, 25, white, Queer, 4 years) describes some aspects of his relationship with his woman partner:

She opens the doors for me sometimes. I'm not always the perfect gentleman because our relationship isn't built on that. I'm not the breadwinner. We both bring in the same amount of money. We both do the same amount of housework. Actually, I do all the cooking in our relationship. So there are a lot of things that just when you look at your standard heterosexual couple, where you think of the men as the breadwinners and the women as the housewives, taking care of the house and the man being really like (manly voice) strong, and loving, and caring and taking care of the woman and carrying her around, and opening doors and being kind of aggressive and I'm just not any of those things. I want a Piña Colada with an umbrella in the pool with all the women (laugh). I mean, that's the other thing, I like girly drinks. I like beer, but if I'm in Vegas in a pool I want something like girly and ridiculous.

As Alec's narrative shows, the progressive man rejects aggression and hypermasculinity in addition to the gendered roles in relationships typical of the regular guy. Where the regular guy is masculine but is not afraid of femininity, the progressive man actively embraces aspects of femininity. Another notable way that the progressive man embraces femininity is in not being afraid to be seen as gay regardless of his sexual practices or identities.

Faggy Men

Faggy men are on the opposite end of the spectrum from hypermasculine men and are most connected to femininity, though this is a femininity specifically related to gay men. It represents femininity, but since it is a pattern of practice associated with male bodies, I refer to it as masculinity. Where the progressive man is not afraid to be seen as gay, the faggy man is primarily read as gay. Respondents described themselves or their practices as faggy as well as used it to describe others. Various respondents equally saw the faggy man as positive and the object of derision and humor. Faggy masculinity lines up with stereotypical ideas about how gay men do masculinity and thus its central feature is being read as gay as a result of these practices. It was most frequently described as effeminate, flamboyant, and expressive, as well as other common descriptors in Table 4.

Table 4: Faggy Men
Descriptors
Flamboyant, effeminate, high voice, expressive, smiles a lot, wears tight fitting clothes and interested in fashion, nellie, boisterous, singing and dancing, not hypermasculine, talks about gay sex openly, fey, silly

Men described a wide range of faggy practices that they incorporated into their everyday lives. There is some overlap between the more feminine practices of the progressive man and faggy masculinity. For example, Alec above described his general demeanor as faggy because of his personal style and his tight girly clothes. The central difference is that faggy masculinity incorporates femininity and camp attributes of singing show tunes and other pursuits, though not necessarily incorporating the political aspects and personal transformation at the heart of the progressive man. In other words, there are men that do a faggy masculinity without being a progressive man and vice versa.

In the same sense that hypermasculinity was described as excessive, some men described particular forms of faggy masculinity in rural places as being equally exaggerated. Michael (Urban, West, 40, white, Queer, 2 years) explains this when talking about gay men in the rural Southeast where he grew up:

There is this limp-wristed expectation of what a gay man looks like in the South that I've never been fond of and it's still there, which amazes me...but it's still alive and well in bars throughout the South. Lisps, oh my god, even down to the lisp. It's crazy. I like a dandy, but, you know.

Though faggy masculinity is associated with urban spaces, as are gay communities, interviewees described a particularly rigid faggy masculinity in rural places. Thus, this was presented as the other possible option for men in rural places next to hypermasculinity, though in practice rural men could be regular guys or progressive men, too; however, these were not how rural ideal types were thought of, as I describe in the next section at more length.

URBAN AND RURAL MASCULINITIES

Urban, suburban, and rural distinctions mirrored regional ideals to some extent, with urban and West more closely connected, suburban associated with Midwest, and rural and South being associated in respondents' narratives. Interviewees had difficulty describing one particular set of expectations for men in urban spaces, but instead described multiple types without one that predominates. Both men that lived in rural places and those that did not described a fairly narrow set of expectations for men in rural spaces. Discussions of suburban ideals were not as frequent in interviewees' accounts, but when they did appear they were described as in-between the rigidity of rural ideals and the flexibility of urban ideals. Urban and rural difference were centrally organized around more restrictive notions of masculinity in rural places, which were easily defined

and fairly consistent, versus urban places as more difficult to define and more based on subcultural differences, racial difference, and gayness. Urban spaces allowed for multiple division and varieties of gay men than the caricature described above of the faggy rural man. I center the discussion here on how race, class, and hypermasculinity shaped particular ideals in rural versus urban places by focusing on the ideals of the redneck and the thug. I show how these ideal types are racial projects that serve to marginalize poor black and white men.

Redneck Men

Though men in any spatial location might not adhere to practices that line up with these ideals, they still shape the expectations a man encounters in those places. Redneck and rigid faggy masculinity were the two ideal types interviewees described as predominating in rural places. In general, interviewees living in rural places described themselves as somewhere between a redneck and the more conservative end of a regular guy, though the redneck was the most consistent ideal type used to describe rural men across interviewees.

Redneck is a form of hypermasculinity associated with rural white men who are usually poor or working class. It is connected most strongly with the South but was used to describe a particular ideal type of rural white hypermasculinity in other regions as well. Alan (Urban, Southeast, 32, white, gay male, 5 years) describes redneck masculinity as synonymous with expectations for men where he grew up in the rural Southeast:

Where I grew up, being a man was very much being a cardboard stereotype. It was, you have to grab yourself and spit and be bad to women and [be] domineering and macho pretty much. If you weren't anything like that then you were automatically a limp-wristed fag. You're gonna go mud bogging¹⁰ on the weekends, cow tipping, all that kind of

¹⁰ Here he is referring to driving trucks and other four-wheel-drive vehicles off road in mud and dirt.

stuff, chew ‘bacca, you know. That’s, that’s the rural South for you... Yeah, if you think redneck, that’s pretty much what it means to be a man where I come from.

Descriptions of redneck men, shown in Table 5, were remarkably consistent across interviews and directly associated with rural places and these lined up with popular understandings of the redneck (Morris 2008). Interviewees described redneck masculinity with ease and, regardless of where they lived, marked it as the predominant pattern of practices for men in rural places.

Table 5: Redneck Men
Descriptors
Rural, white, closed-minded and backwards, macho, violent, racist, anti-Semitic, homophobic, sexist, likes fishing and hunting, toughness, thick country accents, stupid and uneducated, driving trucks, wearing cammo, religious, drinking beer, chewing tobacco, politically conservative, self-reliant

Certainly a man of color could identify as a redneck, but none in this sample did and it would be somewhat unlikely due to the consistent association of redneck and racism. In the Southeast these racist attitudes were associated with closed-mindedness and display of the Confederate flag, as well as sexism and homophobia. Mason (Urban, Southeast, 21, white, Queer/Mostly Straight, 5 years) described his brother:

He likes rebel flags and trucks and stuff... There’s been some incidences where he’s called me out for a bunch of stuff. Just being really rude and disrespectful, and called me a dyke... He’s a redneck, basically kind of like Republican and just kind of closed-minded... I think that the rebel flag is really disrespectful.

Mason went on to describe how he believed the Confederate flag was disrespectful because it is a symbol of racism and bigotry in general. With or without this particular symbol, racism was at the core of the redneck and solidified the whiteness of redneck masculinity and thus, distinguished the redneck as a white racial project. Racism,

homophobia, and sexism, along with a propensity to violence were closely tied to the redneck and the redneck to rural spaces. Thus, as I will discuss in a subsequent chapter, rural spaces were viewed as particularly unsafe for anyone who was not like the redneck.

Two or three men in the sample identified as rednecks and, though not even these men disputed the connection between bigotry and the redneck, they did also describe some potentially positive attributes. For example, Bobby (Suburban, Southeast, 31, white, Straight, 1.5 years) described being a redneck as being about self-sufficiency:

Redneck, to me is, your truck breaks down, you fix it. If the electricity and everything, we just got wiped off the grid, you know, all these city folks would either starve to death or be eating rotten food or wouldn't know how to get anything, but we'll survive. You know, you go kill something, you bring it home, you skin it, you cook it, you eat it. It's simple. But they'd starve to death 'cause they wouldn't have running water or anything like that. We don't care. We'll make it. To me, that's redneck.

Again, Bobby did not necessarily disagree with other characterizations of the redneck, but showed why one might take on that signifier as a point of pride and as a symbol of rural independence and self-sufficiency. For most of the men in this sample, the redneck was an extreme form of hypermasculinity to define themselves against. It exemplifies understandings of more restrictive ideals of masculinity in rural places and the South.

Thug Men

When asked to describe typical or ideal men or masculinities in urban spaces, most respondents had difficulty describing one or two and instead attempted to describe a multitude of masculine styles and groupings. When comparing typical urban and rural masculinities men said things like, "it's more broad," "the entire spectrum," or "at least five kinds" when asked to describe urban masculinities. In trying to explain this, Sebastian (Urban, Midwest, 40, white, Pansexual, 4.5 months) said:

I think naturally in larger cities you get a greater diversity of expression and you get a lot more sub groups in communities that develop in a larger city than you do in a small town where everything is pretty homogenous.

The varieties of masculinity mostly follow subcultural, racial, and sexual lines in major cities.

For example, when I asked Ben (Urban Midwest, 28, Asian, Heterosexual, 4 years) to describe his major midwestern city to me he talked about riding a bus that went across the town. He described moving through the downtown business district and seeing mostly white middle class professional men, through a white gay men's neighborhood, to Chinatown populated by working class Asian men, and as the bus continued, to a predominately black neighborhood. Ben explained that one would not want to travel beyond Chinatown at night because it was dangerous. Who, exactly, did Ben fear?

Hypermasculinity in urban spaces was connected by respondents to being a thug, which was the general ideal type for poor young black men, as opposed to the redneck of poor rural whites. Discussions of the thug were less overt than discussions of the redneck among interviewees. Several white men said that there was a black urban masculinity, but that they could not presume to even describe it. As I described in the methods chapter, white respondents had particular difficulty when asked about their experiences of race, though men of color in general found race to be a central part of their experiences as men. Though many white men acknowledged racialized ideals in urban spaces, they seemed reluctant to describe them. On the other hand, the same men talked about rednecks with ease, and frequently in a derisive manner. Though it is always difficult to define absences and interpret silence, it seems that the whiteness of the redneck allowed for more openness for all respondents in talking about poor men, whereas white respondents

seemed to not want to represent themselves as racist by presuming to talk about thugs. Stereotypes about rednecks have been shown to be socially acceptable, whereas “racetalk” necessitates impression management on the part of white speakers so that they avoid being viewed by others as racist (Mallinson and Brewster 2005). It is also possible that some white men did not have ideas about urban racialized ideals or about men of color due to the separation of hyper-segregated cities, though the discomfort evident when I tried to probe white interviewees on this belies an underlying tension.

Each black respondent described particular expectations they found that others applied to them. These expectations construed them as dangerous, hence Ethan’s treatment at work described below, and other men’s interactions with the police. Though I do not have enough descriptors to produce a table for the thug, the image of the thug as a threat has been well established, from fears of “wilding” of New York in the 1980s to the more recent murder of Trayvon Martin. The thug is difficult for black men in general to escape, but could also be seen as a style and set of practices that middle class black men or other men could adopt. Ben (Urban Midwest, 28, Asian, Heterosexual, 4 years) talked about a friend who took on this thug masculinity even though he came from a privileged background:

He looks like he would be a thug, but he’s a radio personality, and so like he just dresses according to the attire of the radio show of the people he interviews, ‘cause he’s interviewed Lupe, Eminem, and Wiz Khalifa, all these big rappers in the hip-hop scene. So, the way he dresses is kind of in that genre but he’s never had a speeding ticket, never been to jail, you know what I mean? Has always lived on the good side of town; his parents are still married. So, it’s kind of like looks can be deceiving when you’re trying to, I guess, portray yourself in a certain, you know, a certain venue, or get certain street credibility.

In Ben's estimation, his friend adopts the aesthetics and practices of the thug for work even though his biography does not line up with the poverty and broken homes connected to the ideal type of the thug. The thug is the racialized hypermasculinity of urban spaces and a black racial project, just as the redneck is the racialized hypermasculinity of rural spaces.

Interviewees described alternatives to the thug masculinity and talked about efforts to push against this ideal. For example, Ethan (Suburban Midwest, 38, African American, heterosexual, 10 years) talked about his brother, whose masculinity he admired:

He's honest. He goes to work every day. He provides for his sons. He's not the typical black male that you would think. He doesn't drink. He doesn't smoke weed and all that kind of stuff. He goes to work every day. He's in the house with his children, because most black males, you know, they're not in the house with their children. He has one baby momma and he's been with this same woman for like thirteen years.

This portrait of his brother, very much a regular guy, is held against the hypermasculinity of the thug. Ethan himself seems to share a belief in the range of stereotypes that make up the typical black man. Like most descriptions of the thug, Ethan's narrative suggests that the thug's poverty is a matter of personal failing rather than employing a more critical understanding that sees both the image of the thug as a controlling stereotype and the material conditions of black men in the United States as the product of systematic processes and structural power relations. Though none of the black men in the sample identified as a thug, they did find that people treated them as if they were thugs, no matter how they presented themselves. All of this attests the power of this particular racial project.

Urban Flexibility and Rural Rigidity

Interviewees reported that urban spaces allowed more flexibility in ideals and practices whereas rural spaces were more rigid, as reported above. This urban flexibility though, was not consistent over time. Men who had started their transitions in urban places many years before the interview reported that they received rigid instructions on how to behave as a man early in transition. This likely reflects a greater emphasis on living as stealth in that era, but also increased urban flexibility. For example, Joel (Urban, West, 49, white, primarily attracted to women, 22 years) described the advice that was common when he transitioned in the late 1980s in a major city in the West:

Have a traditional short haircut, do a close shave everyday, wear only a white shirt seven days a week. Wear a white undershirt underneath, because back then that was very masculine. Wear nice dark wool slacks, with masculine lace up shoes, wing tips are best, because back then only men wore them. A black leather belt, and expensive watch to help offset the fact that you look so young, because before the T sets in you know with the chubby cheeks, and without the beard you have that kind of butchy, that type of gentle look, so you offset it because you don't want people to think you're 16 years old. So you wear very expensive adult male watch to set that off, if you can afford it you wear a blazer or a suit... Because they can tell by the way that you are dressed, unequivocally, that you are trying to be male. So you made it easy for people. Now that we have this nexus, it's not always easy to tell, even from within the trans community, or the gay and lesbian community. It's not always easy to tell how people identify, unless they come out and tell you. But back then it was a lot easier. It was very, very cut and dried.

Though men who transition today might tend toward hypermasculinity when they first transition, as discussed below, there is not the same sense of rigid and hierarchical masculinity as in Joel's narrative. Respondents reported that, especially in major cities, there was far more flexibility in how they could express their gendered self and that advice on gaining recognition as men from others reflected that flexibility. This suggests that there is some kind of process of change over time, at least in urban places.

This process of change may be most evident when that process begins. Julian and other respondents, reported feeling hopeful that trans men were getting a wider range of advice on how to be a man than Joel and most men who transitioned in earlier eras received. In addition, Julian (Urban, Midwest, 28, white, Queer/pansexual, 7 years) noticed changes in the conservative city where he had grown up. He said:

I do think that there's more flexibility than there used to be, if nothing else because hipsters have allowed there to be more androgyny in masculinity, which is fascinating, you know. It's still a very specific community. I mean like middle to upper middle class white kids with the occasional like person of color. So, your average bro in this city is not gonna dress like that, and he's gonna consider you to be like, a fag if you dress like that. So you're not gonna see that on average anywhere other than downtown and the hip neighborhood.

This shows how the overall process of hybridity and change might begin to happen. There are sites of resistance and incorporation of masculinities that are attached to subordinated men—such as the androgyny and elements of femininity of the hipster in Julian's narrative—as an effort to distinguish oneself from the seemingly old-fashioned and outdated “bro.” If this is the beginning of the process in Julian's city, the question at the heart of it and under great debate in masculinities scholarship is, are these changes a sign of real substantive change to gender, sexual, and racial inequality? Or, are these changes that do not significantly affect the structured inequality at the base of it? In addition, what are the potential effects of urban and rural hypermasculinities as racial projects? I will return to a more lengthy discussion of these questions in the conclusion.

This continuum of ideal types offers widely agreed upon images of what men are like and what they should be like in particular spatial contexts. In addition, these ideals translate into particular patterns of practice in institutions such as the family, especially in regard to intimate partners. As the rest of the chapter will illustrate, these ideals are part

of the process of respondents becoming authentic, and influence their practices as they encounter particular spatial and institutional contexts. These ideals offer material to describe the self, whether incorporating elements or defining oneself against them, as well as recognizable patterns of practice that men can enact. These relate to authenticity and how men interact in various contexts.

Self, Identity, Recognition, and Authenticity

Transition is reentry into the historical dynamic of gender, an event in time that launches an interactive social process. A great deal, then, rests on the responses of others, in public arenas as well as private...In the positive case, recognition as a woman need not involve passing. Recognition can equally be a matter of pragmatic acceptance by those with whom one lives and works. (R. Connell 2012:870)

Though she focuses on trans women, Connell's words ring true for the experiences of trans men. To transition means to reenter gender relations from a different position through an inherently social and interactive process. Transition is not just a personal change involving bodily transformations, but it is a social process that begins with recognition of a gender identity, which is tied up with notions of authenticity. That recognition as a man is facilitated by particular organizational contexts and, as Connell implies, it can happen with or without knowledge of a transgender past; however, that recognition from strangers and in sexual contexts appeared to confer a particular authenticity on interviewees' gender identity. This was especially notable as they reported experiencing significant changes in the way others treated them as men, in comparison to how women are treated by others. As men, they were afforded more respect, treated as competent, and were included in backstage talk, though these experiences varied by race and class. This change in treatment evidences the continuing reproduction of gender, class, and racial inequality in interaction. Recognition is crucial

to inhabiting the social category of man, but it also involves developing knowledge of and deploying aspects of a gendered self in interaction. To be recognized as a man might be a central goal at the beginning of transition, but recognition of what kind of men respondents authentically feel themselves to be becomes more important as they become confident in being seen in line with their gender identity. I explore these findings in depth in the following sections where I show that the process of becoming a man is centered on a negotiation between social identity, gendered self, social recognition, and authenticity.

RECOGNITION AND AUTHENTICITY

The first part of becoming a man centers on the relationship between social identity and social recognition. Authenticity is essential to this relationship. I use *authenticity* to refer to the idea that what an individual is doing, saying, or how they are presenting themselves is a true reflection of the self, rather than sincerity, which refers to an alignment between what one is feeling and what one is expressing (Erickson 1995). My use of authenticity does not assume a conception of a unified and easily identifiable self that can be “truly” expressed; the definition reflects instead commonly held beliefs about the self and the preferable deployment of authenticity. In regard to authenticity as a man this relates to the deployment of gender identity and the gendered self and how this is experienced as an authentic aspect of the self. Social recognition, or others affirming the authenticity of that aspect of the self and identity, is an integral part of this for most people. This recognition as the incumbent of the category of man is an important part of what makes this social identity social. Recognition from strangers of gender identity is often based on the process of sex categorization (West and Zimmerman 1987), but, as I argue, one can be recognized as a man even when their body is not recognized as male.

Social recognition is certainly not necessary to maintain the self, as many trans people maintain a gender identity in contrast to how they are recognized, but it can further legitimize that internal sense or open up social action in line with being recognized in that category.

Though nearly all the men in the sample wanted to be consistently seen by others as a man, their gendered self was more complicated than this one category. About one third of the sample reported feeling neither exclusively male nor female, or that their gendered selves were not adequately captured by binary categories. Very few men actively disdained the idea of themselves as a “man” but accepted a mix of other categories such as male, genderqueer, transgender man, and masculine. Regardless of the nuance of their gendered self, for almost all of the respondents it was preferable that in most settings others thought of them as men and used masculine pronouns to refer to them. For most, this was a direct affirmation of their gender identity as men and, for others, the best alternative amidst a poor set of binary options. Most importantly for this analysis, recognition, whether it lined up perfectly with the self, opened them to the social expectations of the social category and these were based on binary understandings of gender, with some exceptions as I explain below.

Contexts of Recognition

Organizations. Both early in transition and in settings where people knew of their transgender status, gaining social recognition was an active process where respondents and people around them confirmed their gender identity. Various organizational contexts could offer recognition through policy and through acts of recognition by individuals. Transgender support groups were one key place where others authenticated respondents’

gender identity, regardless of their outward appearance. Andrew (Suburban, Southeast, 43, white, Straight, part-time¹¹) explained this acceptance in the organizations he knew, “If you tell me you're a guy, then you're a guy. ‘What do you want to be called?’ And that's it.” While these kinds of support groups varied in other requirements or pressures to transition in particular ways and enact particular masculinities, they were consistent with affirming that a person is a man if they identified as such.

Homosocial spaces were important sources of recognition when both organizational policy and individual actions allowed for recognition even when respondents were not read reliably as men in other contexts. Alec (Urban, West, 25, white, Queer, 4 years) worked in a men’s sex club in a large western city. He described the club’s policy regarding the inclusion of trans men:

Our club is trans-friendly and we welcome trans guys at any state of transition. If you show up at the door and say you want to come in, we let you in. That being said, it's not always the perfect situation because we can't control the clientele. So some of them are real trans-friendly, while some of them are hit or miss.

I asked for an example of a time where the clients had been less trans-friendly and he described an incident with a customer’s reaction to one of his coworkers who was also a trans man:

He (coworker) had just started taking T a few months before. I don't really like to use the word passing, but this person didn't pass enough for the men who were coming in the club to go, "Oh yes. This person is a man." So one day it was me, this person, and then another trans guy who was the manager working. So it was all 3 trans guys staff and this customer came up to me and the manager and said, "What is that dyke doing sitting at the front counter?" (Laugh) And we both just looked at each other because we're both trans guys and we're like, “This is so fucked up,” and we were

¹¹ Andrew used this terminology to describe himself. It is more frequently used by trans women, and is meant to refer to him living as a man part of the time. This means that in some parts of his life, such as work or with family, he lives as a masculine woman. Outside of these contexts he lives as a man, using a masculine name and pronouns.

just like, “We don't see any dyke here. There is no dyke in the building. This is a men's space. There's only men in here.”

Alec and the manager were “giving gender,” a form of gender labor (Ward 2010), to their coworker. The policy of the club to accept all self-identified men as workers and customers gave the coworker one form of authenticity and through their intervention with the customer they affirmed the link between their coworker’s gender identity and social recognition.

Other homosocial organizations, such as fraternities, were a place of recognition for trans men, even when their bodies did not have typical male characteristics. For example, Ian (Urban, Midwest, 27, white, Gay, 6.5 years) described a trip with his fraternity brothers:

I haven't had top surgery, but this summer we had a retreat at one of the guys' cabins up at this little lake in the middle of nowhere, really secluded, and I was really self-conscious. I love to swim. I love swimming... And I hate, I just feel so uncomfortable. But the guys were like, “Dude, we don't care. No one's gonna judge you. No one's gonna stare at you.” And so I spent the entire weekend in the lake [without a shirt on]. That was extremely validating.

The fraternity, as an organization, granted Ian recognition through their policy that allowed all self-identified men to join. In addition, his brothers further recognized him by accepting his body through normalizing his chest and promising not to give it undo attention through staring. Any man with larger than typical breasts might feel uncomfortable with his chest uncovered (Longhurst 2005), but through knowing his transgender status and encouraging him to swim without a shirt, Ian's brothers recognized his chest as a man's chest. These various forms of recognition gave Ian authenticity in the organizational context of the fraternity.

Family. When parents, siblings, children, and other family members recognized respondents as men it was particularly meaningful, because family often had difficulty using new names and pronouns. Depending on their relationship, family members had known the respondent for most of his life, which made their acceptance through recognition important. Tom (Suburban West, 28, white, Straight, 6 months) talked about his relationship to his six-year-old stepson, who lived with him and his partner half of the time:

My son's rad. I think he always thought I was a guy anyway 'cause kids are so black and white. When they see short hair and men's clothes, you are a male then. That's how our society is. I think explaining to him that I was a girl in the beginning was harder than telling him I was gonna be his dad now...He jumped into that right away...'cause he would already call me "Dad," by accident.

His son's response affirmed the authenticity of Tom's deeply held gender identity as a man, even before transition.

When people knew they were transgender, such as family members, it could be disquieting when they were misrecognized. In such cases, strangers could provide the recognition that they were not getting with family. Oscar (Suburban West, 19, Asian/white, bisexual, 7 months) was early in his transition and reported that his family and friends would switch pronouns and names:

It still bothers me when people still call me Octavia because I feel like they're disrespecting me...when they want to call me he and Oscar I feel really respected. It's nice of them to do that. That's why I'm actually more comfortable talking to strangers who just met me, because they treat me how I want to be treated, which is as a guy. They don't think of me as Octavia still and they don't slip into Octavia mode.

Oscar illustrates the sense of respect he connects to people using his masculine name and pronouns. His ability to be read as a man and strangers' lack of knowledge of his

transgender status provided recognition his family could not. Interestingly, in public contexts family members who were not using correct pronouns or other terms of address for the interviewee created conflict when strangers recognized them as men. Rather than discrediting the interviewee and their authenticity, this recognition created embarrassment for the family member because they seemed to be the one who was getting it wrong. Family members often then started giving recognition, at least in public. Whether this caused a total shift or just a shift in public, this recognition from strangers was instrumental in shifting family members' recognition. In other words, the strangers gave trans men gender that affected their families' recognition and in some cases affected recognition in other contexts—from public moments to private family contexts. This illustrates the very social nature of gender, as it is likely that this recognition from strangers made trans men's gender identities more legitimate to family members. At the very least, in public it forced the family member to make a choice between disrupting the interaction, and marking themselves as an incompetent actor, or going along with it.

Over time, a masculine presentation could seemingly erase more distant family members' knowledge of who they were prior to transition. Mark (Rural, Southeast, 43, white, Straight, 10 years) and his partner had been together for 15 years and he had met most of her family when he lived as a woman. He attended a funeral for someone in his partner's family and though they did not see them regularly, his transition had been open.

He explained:

Her great aunt down here in Jefferson County...she says to Sally (his partner), "Honey, I'm so glad you found a man." [Laughter]. "It's just the right thing to do." But, she had met me before. And I don't think she put two and two together.

Mark said that he looked about the same as when he lived as a woman, but had a thick mustache now. His gender-ambiguous name had also not changed. He got recognition through the family and his appearance seemed to overcome their prior knowledge of him, as he explained that other family members similarly did not see him as the same person. This illustrates how routinized categorization becomes over time. Even though the family knew him before, they seemed to assume he was a different person based on his more typically male presentation. These reports from organizational and family contexts show that trans men can gain recognition as men, even when others knew that the men had once been recognized as women, though there are likely some differences in being recognized as a trans man versus just a man.

Strangers. Being recognized as a man by strangers was a vital sign of authenticity. This was different than getting recognition, as in the examples above, from people that knew they were transgender and also recognized them as men. In other words, recognition as men by strangers provided more authenticity, because family and partners might be doing it out of an effort to make them feel good about themselves. Levi (Urban, West, 40, white, Queer, 2 years) talked about the importance to him of being read as a man:

The biggest affirmation was people assuming my maleness and not questioning it. If anyone went out of their way to say, "Wow, I think if you as just like a guy," that's a back-handed thing because if it comes out then there's somewhere where you're not like a guy. So I don't trust it when anyone says that. It makes me suspicious... I have friends that swear to me that, "Oh, we've only ever seen you as a guy," and I'm like, "You wouldn't tell your brother that would you?"

Thus, people who knew him might not be sincere in recognizing him as a man; however, getting social recognition from strangers affirmed his authenticity without a doubt.

Respondents consistently reported that they were more easily seen solely as men when they were outside major cities that had large LGBT populations. For example, Raphael (Urban, Midwest, 38, Mexican, Queer, 1.5 years) had these experiences when travelling from his neighborhood in a major city to Kansas for a wedding:

I live in Robertstown, which is very openly gay and queer friendly. It's funny, 'cause I still get called "ma'am" in certain situations, which I'm totally fine with. And sometimes, I'm called "sir."...Outside of my city—as an example—I went to a wedding in Kansas City and no one questioned whether I was male or not, it was just automatically "sir" everywhere. I notice in different areas, I mean, it's not even a question, but because this [area] is so openly gay-friendly and queer-friendly, I think people try to be, I don't know, politically correct or they just don't assume.

It seems that greater knowledge of gender nonconforming or butch women and also actual knowledge of transgender people gave more people in these cities a broader set of gender categories with which to understand trans men's gender presentations. With a more limited general understanding of gender possibilities, trans men are likely to be categorized as either men or women. If they are clearly presenting as a man, then they are more likely to be read as one in these spaces. Women with masculine presentations in line with rural gender expectations may not be read as lesbians, as they would in cities (Kazyak 2012), but this nuanced understanding of female masculinity leaves binary understandings of gender intact, in the sense that there are only men and women. In Mark's example above, knowledge of one transgender person in people's lives may not be enough for them to have more than two categories to understand another person's gender if they have had little previous experience with this gender diversity.

Wesley (Urban, Southeast, 44, white, Pansexual, 20 years) moved from a large city in the West to a mid sized southern city partly to avoid being recognized by most people as anything other than a man. He had very large breasts before getting chest

reconstruction surgery, but was comfortable without a shirt on, especially outside at home in a rural area. Similar to Ian's story of having his fraternity brothers accept his uncovered chest while swimming, Wesley's neighbor did not see his large breasts as a conflict with reading Wesley as a man:

Went out, he saw me, huge breasts, couple of times. I was out one day mowing the lawn and he came over and he was, was speaking to my chest. He'd look at my eyes, look at my chest, and he says, "You know, dude, I've gotta apologize." And I'm like, "For what?" ... He goes, "You know, man, that's some nasty glandular problem you have. You mean no one's helped you fix that?"

The neighbor, who Wesley described as a redneck, had limited options through which to understand Wesley's body and he chose an option that made the most sense – that Wesley must be a man that has some kind of glandular problem. Wesley got exactly what he wanted from moving to the Southeast, the recognition as a man that he was sometimes denied by people that were knowledgeable about transgender possibilities.

Some men desired to and did live as stealth for a variety of reasons, including safety, but also as a way to maintain a particular sense of authenticity as a man. Wyatt (Urban, Southeast, 20, white, Homosexual, 2 years) explained why he planned to be stealth once he completed his transition:

There are no back stories. You are who you are and no one questions it. As far as anyone was concerned you were born just the way you are right now...I'd rather live that life where no one questions anything, just assume. As much as I hate assuming, I'd rather be assumed as male.

On one hand, Wyatt and men like him distance themselves from being transgender because it is a stigmatized identity and, on the other, they do so because being seen as transgender means that they are being treated differently than other men and this interferes with their sense of authenticity. At the same time, many interviewees reported

that the idea of being stealth or even just solely being recognized as a man presented a limited view of who they were. As Aaron (Urban, Midwest, 24, white, I wouldn't, 5 years) explained:

Sometimes I think the most problematic part of really passing as much as I do is that I start to feel like my whole history is invisible...and that's isolating. Because people make a lot of false assumptions about, not just who you are, but where you've been and your entire life.

Thus, there is a tension for some men between gaining authenticity to their gender identity as a man through being stealth and not being seen as transgender. Yet there is a sense among a number of interviewees that the cost of authenticity as a man conflicts with authenticity to non-binary gendered selves as well as other aspects of self related to their time living as women.

Some men appreciated that others saw them as both transgender and a man, though other respondents found it highly insulting. As respondents lived in and moved between different geographic locations and institutional settings, they encountered different sets of knowledge about gender. There was an interactive effect between that knowledge and how they were recognized. While trans men's impressions of how others perceive them was necessarily partial, Schilt and Westbrook (2009) show that cisgender people seem to accept open trans men as being like cisgender men, except in sexual situations. Thus, recognition as men and as transgender people has varying affects on how others see and treat them.

Treatment

For an individual male to enjoy the benefits that derive from membership in the dominant gender group, he must present himself to others as a particular kind of social being: a man. (Schrock and Schwalbe 2009:279)

In both Oscar and Levi's descriptions in the above section, there was a difference in treatment from others when respondents were read as a man, as a transgender person, or both. All but a few respondents reported marked differences in their treatment by strangers once they were read as men. The few who did not report this believed they had always been treated as a man. Every respondent reported marked differences in the general treatment of men and women that focused on being listened to and given space, given respect and treated as competent, and being included in men's backstage talk and behavior, similar to Dozier's (2005) findings. Several respondents said that this different treatment distinguished them from trans men who were not frequently read as men. As Mario explained, "You can't even begin to know or prepare yourself for how things change once everyone views you as male and the way that your outlook on life changes because of that." Thus, this new set of interactions resulting from the recognition of being a man changed trans men both by confirming their gender identity and shifting their own interactions based on these new expectations and others' behaviors towards them.

Backstage. Being included in men's backstage talk and behavior was the most commonly reported difference when being read as a man; over one third of the sample mentioned this. I am using "backstage" in the dramaturgical sense to refer to men's talk with other men that they engage in when there are no women present. For example, Dominic (Suburban Midwest, 27, white, Pansexual, 2 years) described this experience:

With the men you hear a lot of interesting—I don't know [laugh] it's just very different, because they don't presume that you're trans. They presume that you're biological, and so they'll just say a lot of things about women...nasty things about women, in a very sexual way that I would never hear if I was a female, because they would never say that in front of me. So them presuming me as male, I think they feel more comfortable saying these things to me.

The most commonly reported topic of backstage talk was open discussions of sex and talk about women. Discussions of women ranged from sexualizing women around them to discussing heterosexual relationship problems. In general, respondents reported more “crude” or “rough” talk, whether about sexual situations or not. As Colton (Suburban Midwest, 38, white, Attracted to Men, 3.5 years) said, “Mostly I noticed in the way that guys react – they seemed a little more relaxed and not as much like they’re trying to be on their best behavior...more like they’re in their own element kind of.” Thus, according to respondents’ accounts, backstage talk and behavior allowed men a release from the expectation of more constrained behavior that some men feel around women. Topics of backstage talk included misogynistic comments but also less controversial subjects such as discussions of men’s bodies, and talk about sports and heavy machinery. Inclusion in this talk was often surprising for respondents at first and whether they were comfortable with the content of the talk or not, it gave them a sense of recognition as men.

As they were recognized more frequently as men, respondents reported censoring themselves around women and better understanding the nature of backstage talk. Woody (Urban, West, 32, white, Queer, 7 years), like several other men, reported that others now saw some of the things he had said as a woman as problematic when he was seen as a man:

(There are) times when women who don’t know my trans history, will react to something that I’ve done or said, um be like, “That was really sexist.” And it’s like, “Oh, fuck, I totally forgot that your [pause] perception of me changes the meaning of my words.” Because it’s something that I could say around friends of mine that have known me for a long time and know my history, where it wouldn’t be perceived as sexist; it would be like something that you would say as a joke.

Mario (Urban West, 31, white, Bisexual, 4.5 years) told of a new understanding of this backstage talk:

It's not surprising the way that guys will talk about sex without a girl there... because when you're a girl and hear that kind of talk it seems like a guy's being an asshole but you're a guy and you hear that kind of talk, it's like your perspective is different. Girls don't talk that way because they see it as disrespectful, when it's not that they're always being disrespectful. It's just that they're talking in the way that guys do and so it's not.

Mario affirms his authenticity by distinguishing himself from women through his inclusion and understanding of backstage talk. He further authenticates his status as a man through learning how to evaluate men's talk as a man.

Respect. Getting increased respect from others was the next most common experience reported by interviewees and was mentioned almost as often as backstage talk. As Josh said, "If people perceive you as male, you're treated differently. You're treated with more respect." This respect appeared in interviews most frequently as being treated as competent, being listened to, and given space by others.

Respect potentially varies based on race and class. Casey (Urban West, 36, Asian/white, Bisexual, 2 years) reported that he was treated better in stores when recognized as a man, that workers would be more polite and give him a higher level of service. On the other hand, Holden (Suburban Midwest, 25, white, Queer, 5 years), who worked in a retail clothing store, believed that the better treatment he received in stores was due to not only being seen as a man but as a white man. He said:

Being looked at as like, a white male...getting some of the privileges that go along with [that]. Being helped in a grocery store or even at work there's been...some loss prevention, so people are being looked at more closely. I feel like some people are prejudiced, racist, the people that I work with. So, being treated differently by them.

For Holden, the better treatment he receives in stores and being perceived as automatically innocent are the results of white male privilege. His experience at work illustrates that he is less scrutinized as a potential thief not only as an employee but he sees how men of color customers are treated as more suspect by his co-workers. Comparing Casey's and Holden's accounts suggests that gender, race, and class are all implicated in this different treatment. Holden talked about black and Latino men as being targets of scrutiny as potential thieves because they are simultaneously viewed as poor and thus, likely to steal. This shows the effect of the ideal type of the thug in action. The better treatment that Holden and Casey report is then perhaps partially due to images of white and Asian men that are connected to higher class standings. Of course, these might vary due to racial composition and understanding in a particular area where a store is located.

Trans men reported being newly seen as competent and knowledgeable when others saw them as men. As men they were presumed to be able to fix things and have knowledge about objects such as cars. Several men reported very different experiences in places like auto parts stores when being seen as a woman and then as a man. Luke (Rural Midwest, 47, white, Pansexual, 5 years) explained:

I've had really bad experiences at automotive places, really bad experiences. If you don't know what you're talking about and you're a woman, they will screw you over in a second... And I walk in there and they're like, "Hello, sir," and they're totally different. I can be standing next to a woman and they're treating her differently than they're treating me... and they're really serious with me, and they're getting down to the nitty-gritty and they're getting real detailed with me and then, "Oh, I can knock this off," and, "I can take that off," but they're not doing the same for her.

Thus, Luke would get more respect as a man in these contexts and the presumption of competency and knowledge meant better service and lower prices. Henry (Suburban Midwest, 49, white, attracted to women, 7 years) had a striking experience when he worked for a trans woman with extensive construction experience:

We would go into Lowe's and apparently we were both passing quite well, because they would always run, "Can I help you, sir?" "Talk to her, she's the boss." "Oh." We'd go to bid a job, and they'd talk to me. "I'm the flunky here." [Laughter] "Here's your contractor. I'm the flunky." I'm here to fetch and carry... what I've found is, as a male, is people assume that you know what you're talking about. And, as a female, they assume that probably you don't.

This general sense of competency was especially apparent in contexts that were associated with men and masculinity and mirrors Schilt's (2010) finding about men at work. It was striking to respondents that as the same person they would get treated very differently.

This competency also varies for men based on race and other aspects of social location. Most men reported being seen as more competent at work and able to accomplish mechanical and technical tasks. Brandon (Suburban, Midwest, 20, white, Straight, 1.5 years) somewhat sarcastically described his experience at his internship at a non-profit organization, "I'm apparently good at setting up Internet, which I had to do twice now, and setting up phones, because I'm a dude, and, apparently, I'm technologically literate." Ethan's (Suburban Midwest, 38, African American, heterosexual, 10 years) experience shows that ideals of black men as violent affected his interactions with the patients he worked with and their families. He said that he experienced quite a shift from nursing jobs when he was seen as a woman to being read as a man:

[Before] It was easier for me to get a job, interact with my residents, interact with family members, but since I am transitioning, it's difficult, a little harder. The patients are standoffish, and so are the family members. I'm trying to explain to 'em that, you know, "I have your family's best interests in mind. Because what you see does not necessarily mean I'm gonna hurt your family."

As a man and particularly as a black man he is seen as no longer competent doing the same work and beyond that, the image of a dangerous black man is in direct conflict with the type of care work he does on the job. As Wingfield (2009) demonstrates in her work on black men who are nurses, black men in professions traditionally dominated by women may not receive the benefits of the glass escalator. Schilt (2010) too, finds that black, Asian, and Latino men do not get the increased respect at work overall that white men report.

Part of getting respect was being listened to and getting more space when interacting with others. Saul (Urban, West, 47, white, Queer/Apparently heterosexual, 14 years) explained this notable change in how people treated him:

You get more physical space. People are less inclined to step into my space, as a guy. I also feel that people attend to my voice. It's deeper and so people pay attention more readily. Those are the big things...being seen, being heard. Getting space.

Holden (Suburban Midwest, 25, white, Queer, 5 years) reiterated, "When I would talk, speak up, people would listen to me more, I feel, than before transition." More than one quarter of respondents mentioned that they thought people listened to them more and gave them more physical space when they were recognized as men and only a few reported that they did not. Both being listened to and the freedom of movement allowed when given more space were forms of recognition from others as well as making them feel more empowered in a range of spaces.

Interviewees responded in a number of ways to the different treatment they encountered when strangers recognized them as men. Some respondents embraced this recognition and authenticity though others rejected aspects of the expectations placed on their own behavior and that of others. Overall these accounts were filled with ambivalence: moments of pride and self-worth as their authenticity as men was confirmed by others, instances of discomfort when they felt like their whole self was not recognized, whether as a man or a transgender person or other aspects of self, as well as discomfort when this treatment did not line up with their social and political ideals. The differing treatment itself indicates the continuing salience of gender and race, and how difference and inequality are perpetuated in everyday interactions. The ambivalence in their reactions evidences an awareness that moving from being socially recognized as a woman to a man confers a great deal of privilege, though that privilege is mutually constituted by other social identities and not all changes are positive (See Abelson 2014a).

Sexual Contexts. Sexual spaces were a central arena where trans men reported changes in how others treated them and as key contexts of recognition and authenticity. Being recognized as men changed who expressed sexual interest in them and how they could go about those interactions. Recognition in sexual spaces could be particularly affirming of their self when it occurred and especially painful when it did not.

Being recognized as a man made trans men the new objects of heterosexual attraction from women. A majority of the men had sexual interest and relationships with women prior to transition, but transition shifted interactions with women, especially

women who did not know they were transgender. Bert (University town, Southeast, 49, white, Sexy/Flexible, 3 years) described a common surprising experience:

One of the things that was really shocking to me when I began transitioning was how women would hit on me. Particularly older women. Who never would talk to me before, really. I was working in a store down the street and these older women would be incredibly flirtatious. It was a shock to me...I didn't know that women were like that. I'd never had like quite that attention.

Though he primarily had relationships with women throughout his life, these interactions were striking. A general presumption of heterosexuality meant that Bert and other men were seen as a worthy object of flirting by more women. By the same token, others found that it was more difficult to have friendships with women, because the pressures and presumptions of heterosexuality gave new meaning to interactions. Actions in the past that would have been unremarkable became fraught with possible significance.

Conversely, the more they were recognized as men, they found that they were often less noticeable to queer women as potential sexual partners as they had been before transition. Alec (Urban, West, 25, white, Queer, 4 years) explained his difficulty in knowing how to approach women in queer spaces:

I used to be really confident approaching women as this like cute dyke before I transitioned, but now I don't know how to approach women because I look like a man and I know that there are certain social implications of men approaching women and I know that I am not the stereotypical guy...I don't know how to approach the women that I'm interested in. I don't want to offend anybody. I don't want to approach this really hot lesbian, gender queer person at the bar, who may want nothing to do with me or my identity, but I think they're hot. How do I know who to approach?

While recognition as a man invites potential attention from heterosexual women and gay men, it makes it difficult to approach queer women as potential sexual partners. Queer women were seen as desirable sexual partners by many interviewees because they often

had knowledge of trans men's bodies and the ability to communicate and make for satisfying sexual experiences. For some men, if they could maintain a sexual relationship with ostensibly heterosexual women, they saw it as a further confirmation of themselves as a man; however, the same men reported that when lesbian identified women were interested in them this actually diminished their sense of authenticity. For the most part though, these relations with queer and lesbian women were affirming of their gender identities (Pfeffer 2010; Ward 2010).

Sexual spaces with gay men could be particularly affirming and difficult to manage. Jason (Suburban, Midwest, 36, white, gay male, 12 years) and other men found that Bear¹² communities were especially accepting due to a general acceptance of a wide range of bodies.

There was this...huge Bear dance party. Oh, my God. I gotta tell you, it was amazing. I'm out there, I'm dancing, not wearing my shirt and I scarred pretty bad after my surgery...Just dancing and men just all around me, grinding on me, and making out with random guys and it was just so open and welcoming and comfortable...In the Bear community the biggest compliment you can get from another Bear is for him to look at you and say, "Woof." Okay? And there was this tall good-looking guy...and as I was walking by...and he looked at me, and he winked, and he was like, "Woof."

By dancing without his shirt and showing his scars from chest surgery, Jason opened the possibility that strangers would recognize him as transgender. Other men recognized him in the homoerotic context as a man through dancing with him, making out with him, and giving him a customary "woof." Other respondents reported similar patterns of

¹² Bear communities and identities refer to a gay men's subculture where larger and more hairy men's bodies (like a bear) are highly valued. The masculine appearance of the Bear is often constructed in opposition to the effeminacy of stereotypic depictions of gay men or the clone mentality of gay neighborhoods and circuit parties that values highly sculpted bodies but slim bodies and youthfulness. See (2005) for additional information.

acceptance with gay men and in homoerotic contexts—like Alec’s sex club—where the felt that they were accepted as men, which reinforced their sense of authenticity.

Overall, this differing treatment and recognition in various contexts were a source of authenticity to their gender identity as men. Others’ knowledge of trans men’s transgender status or history may or may not disrupt this recognition or authenticity. The dispersion of knowledge of transgender possibilities made for shifts in recognition based on place, in that they were more likely to be recognized solely as men where there was little knowledge of transgender people. This section focused on the importance of recognition of gender identity in the process of being a man. That recognition provides both a sense of authenticity, but also means being treated differently by other social actors. As I will show in the next section, the knowledge that they will be recognized as a man changes how they believe others will evaluate their actions and that authenticity to a gendered self is also a crucial part of being a man.

BECOMING AUTHENTIC

Men found authenticity through social recognition of their gender identity, but also through developing their understanding of a gendered self and enacting it in their everyday lives. This authenticity did not mean that they adhered to one of the more rigid ideal types from the first section, though they may, but rather that they gained an awareness of themselves and found practices that best aligned with that. The majority of respondents viewed men who did take on either hypermasculine or very faggy practices as less authentic, and “not caring” what others thought about them was seen as the most desirable (and authentic) way to be. These experiences of relating to masculine ideals changed over time as men reported learning to see and enact their gendered self.

Early in transition most respondents, particularly those that had transitioned more than five years before the interview, reported some pressure from others to conform to being a regular guy, in an effort to be recognized as a man. Levi (Urban West, 40, white, Queer, 8 years) described a common experience of this:

When I was first coming out people were like, “Oh, well you can't walk that way. You have to walk like a guy. You can't make your words go up at the end of the sentence. You have to keep it like this, a flat intonation.” These are the things I got. “When you look at your nails you have to do this, not this.”...This is how you have to be if you're going to be a man.

Thus, early on in the process of achieving social recognition men were presented with a fairly restricted pattern of practices that others suggested they emulate. Respondents reported that they received these suggestions from other trans men, transgender advice websites, family, medical and therapeutic professionals, and others. Through this instruction, the men learned that the ideal type of the regular guy was central to the expectations they encountered in particular contexts and potentially made up what they could anticipate being held accountable to everyday interaction.

Some respondents reported feeling like they were failing because they did not live up to these standards. Other trans men gave Bert (Southeast, university town, 49, white, Sexy/Flexible, 3 years) this message:

I remember meeting with a couple of guys that I met on the listserv and they're both very masculine, like conventionally masculine...in appearance and at that time, I totally had my dyke hair and I could tell they were like, “Just cut your hair.” They said, “Cut your hair.” They were trying gently [laughter] to masculinize me.

Even the more subtle pressures that Bert described were meant, as Bert reported interpreting it, as a helpful attempt at assuring recognition of his gender identity, rather than solely about him living up to a particular masculine standard.

Men often initially took on the hypermasculinity that they felt ensured them recognition early in transition and as time went on became more flexible. Dominic (Suburban Midwest, 27, white, Pansexual, 2 years) spoke about his masculinity early in transition:

I wouldn't say I was "overcompensating," during the beginning of my transition, but I definitely think I tried harder to be more masculine... I was more concerned about it before, watching kind of how I acted and stuff, 'cause I didn't really wanna be perceived as a gay guy or whatever, but now I just don't care.

Not only did Dominic want to be perceived by others as a man, but as a heterosexual man early in transition. Safety was part of Dominic's motivation for not wanting to be perceived as gay, which I will address at length in a later chapter, but recognition and authenticity were also at stake. Overall, it seems that they were more likely to conform to those expectations when they most worried that their gender identity would be misrecognized¹³.

Some men spoke of never feeling the need to try to present a particular masculine self, but that they were just themselves. They would pose the restrictive masculinity of other trans men as inauthentic and forced in comparison to their own authenticity. This is clear in Henry's (Suburban Midwest, 49, white, attracted to women, 7 years) comparison of himself and his friend who is also a trans man:

I never tried real hard to act like a man. He's been transitioning the same time, and he wouldn't do anything remotely feminine if his life depended on it. And it comes across as fake. He is "passing," because he doesn't believe it himself...I think if you're comfortable enough with who you are, you don't care.

When Henry describes his friend as "passing" he is implying that the friend is putting on an act and not being authentically himself. Henry does not question whether his friend is

¹³ See Dozier (2005) for similar findings about time since transition.

a man or not, but whether his practices are consistent with his gendered self. Colton (Suburban Midwest, 38, white, Attracted to Men, 3.5 years) and several other respondents said that being transgender and the process of transition made them want to be true to their sense of self:

I've never been one to worry too much about meeting the expectations of society. I probably never would have transitioned if I had. I'm not going to fight one set of sexual stereotypes my entire life only to turn around and embrace another.

Thus, his general non-conformity helped him resist the pressures to enact certain masculine ideals.

This question of authenticity is not just for rigid practices closer to hypermasculinity, but also for the rigid faggy masculinity of rural gay men that Michael describes above. Aidan (Urban Southeast, 21, white, Pansexual, 1 year), too, concurred that gay men in the rural town where he grew up did a rigid faggy masculinity when they first came out as gay after high school. Aidan viewed this as inauthentic:

You don't have to do this stuff. Be who you are. You don't have to wear makeup to be a gay man. You don't have to have froufrou hair... You don't have to wear girly clothes. You don't have to do any of that—just be comfortable with who you are, like everyone else.

Aidan's narrative negates the possibility that the attributes he described could be an accurate reflection of another man's gendered self. Instead, these narratives pose that early in a transition to new social identities, whether to the identity of a man for a trans man or to that of a gay man for cisgender rural men, men are more likely to take on prescribed patterns of practice. Most respondents described this more extreme version of faggy masculinity as well as hypermasculinity as inauthentic or as a stage on the way to figuring out their authentic gendered self. This is similar to popular notions that

hypermasculinity in general must be a form of compensation for a threatened identity, or the “masculine overcompensation thesis” (Willer et al. 2013). This appears to reflect a more general process as people (such as adolescent boys becoming men) undertake more rigid and defined sets of practices as they take on new identities or find their gender identities or gendered selves threatened (Willer et al. 2013).

Though some men, like Alan and Henry, always felt a sense of authenticity in their masculine presentation of self, most men described a process of becoming authentic and learning to care less what other people thought of them over time. Respondents connected this change to age and being reliably recognized as a man. Most of the older trans men in the sample described an opening of their masculine practices over time. Joel (Urban West, 49, white, primarily attracted to women, 22 years) talked about this as a general part of the aging process:

As you get older you seem more set in your ways. But as I’m getting older I’m finding that actually the pyramid goes this way [an inverted pyramid—from narrow to broad]. Because when you’re younger you’re coming out of childhood, where things were said to you in black and white ways obviously, “do this but don’t do that.” You’re a good boy if you do this, you’re a bad boy if you do that type of thing; or good girl, bad girl. And then as you get older you realize there’s a lot more variability in the world than you had ever dreamed of. And there are a lot more areas in the gray than you had ever dreamed of. And there are a lot more things that you can actually do logically [and not be a sinner] than you would ever think of.

Time and comfort with themselves in the social identity of being a man allowed older men to feel like they could engage in a wider range of practices. It is also possible that depending on their geographic and social location they were also experiencing a shift in flexibility for all men, but as I discussed above this change is uneven and the meaning of these changes is debatable.

Consistent recognition by others as a man was the most common reason given in respondents' narratives for increasing flexibility in their masculine practices. In other words, the reliable social recognition of their gender identity allowed them to be more authentic to their gendered self. Many respondents said that being recognized as a man actually gave them more freedom to enact femininities. Finn (Urban Midwest, 26, white, Queer, 3 years) described himself as an effeminate man and discussed how he came to be comfortable enacting various feminine coded practices:

Actually one of the things that was enabled by transitioning is my ability to be more feminine without being perceived as something that I wasn't. It's odd because when I was a bull dyke...it was very important for some reason to still be perceived in a very masculine way, maybe for reasons of gaining respect or something...So I couldn't be feminine. And now my masculinity is not questioned and so I can be effeminate if I want to be. I can wear pink if I want to. You know, I can dance if I want to. I can shake my hips and I don't have to just do the straight white boy shuffle.

Dominic (Suburban Midwest, 27, white, Pansexual, 2 years), who above reported engaging in more rigid practices, also talked about the importance of recognition as a man that allowed him more flexibility:

I'm not so concerned about how I act as opposed to when I was first transitioning ...I think it's because before it was like they didn't know (he was a man). And so I was wanting to try to be perceived as more masculine...I feel like I am a feminine guy and now maybe that's okay, because I'm being read as male. So I can be more relaxed because of that.

The narrative of increasing comfort with femininity was centered in the process of coming into authenticity. This authenticity was connected to an identifiable gendered self and the expression of that gendered self through social practices. Thus, this adds another layer to the process of recognition. A man must not just be recognized as a man, but what kind of man he wants to be seen as, whether it is one of the ideals above or a self that cannot be contained in one of those patterns. This negotiation between projecting a more

nuanced gendered self and the expectations of various institutional contexts is the subject of the final section of this chapter.

Shifting Masculinities

Situations dictate behaviors and the kind of communication that you want to have. Like if safety is an issue; that is one set of things. If I'm around more gay men, I'm more flamboyant. If I'm around more straight men then I'm a lot less flamboyant. People that I don't know – if I'm around strangers, I tend to be sort of narrow, male, masculine affect. I want to meet whatever the needs of the situation...I don't have one way to be. I have a bunch of ways and I decide them situationally.
–Levi

Many interviewees gave narratives of a coherent gendered self associated with particular interactional practices at the same time that they described a negotiation between that self and the expectations and constraints of particular contexts. In this section I focus on the narratives of a few interviewees to demonstrate how men learn to negotiate various contexts in light of their gendered self. I selected these particular men as illustrative examples of patterns across the data. These men had all transitioned five to seven years before the interview. This time frame meant that they had spent at least a few years being recognized as a man in a variety of contexts, but these experiences were fresher in their minds and easier to recall. Men that had transitioned more than 10 years before gave fairly consistent accounts of going through this process of learning, but had difficulty describing them in detail because they had become so accustomed to it. In addition, I chose these men because they were especially articulate about their experiences and their narratives illustrate the patterns across the data in a concise way.

This analysis is suggestive of the role of the gendered self and the content of situated expectations for “doing gender” (West and Zimmerman 1987). Isolating particular contexts and showing what practices men do in them would demonstrate

something about the situated expectations of those contexts (e.g., the practices men across the sample describe in the family). Yet, I choose to instead examine how individual men negotiate different spatial and institutional contexts to show that these contextual expectations, masculine ideals, and the gendered self interact to produce trans men's behavior in interaction. That is to say that behaviors are not necessarily a direct expression of the self or other aspects of the self and identity, nor do the expectations of other actors or structural features of particular contexts solely determine behaviors. Instead, the outcomes are a negotiation between self, identity, and expectations.

GAVIN

Living in a large midwestern city, Gavin was 27 years old at the time of the interview and had begun his physical transition seven years before. He identified as “mostly gay” and split his time among his work as a teacher, earning an additional graduate degree, and gay community spaces. He had lived in the Midwest most of his life and had lived in small cities, a college town, and now the largest city in his state. He is white, considers himself middle class, and has a master's degree.

Before his transition he presented himself as a butch lesbian and described his masculinity at that time as aggressive and hypermasculine. After he started transition and begun to be recognized as a man reliably, he became comfortable expressing femininity and started doing “gender play” by wearing some women's clothing and makeup when he would go out to gay bars. He found that this gender play made him unattractive to the other men at the bars and eventually stopped engaging in it in such an overt manner. He did report that overall, once he was recognized as a man, he became comfortable expressing a wide range of masculinities, particularly through his participation in gay

men's sexual cultures. At the point of the interview, he identified most closely with Bear masculinity and fit into the new man ideal type in that he was absolutely committed to combating social inequalities. This was the focus of his work as a teacher, and he was not afraid to be seen as gay in general.

Gavin's discussion of his shifting masculinities is illustrative of the concept in general. Here he talks about how his demeanor changes when visiting auto parts stores so that he appears more traditionally masculine and is not read as gay:

I lower my voice sometimes when I'm going into auto part shops or whatever. Not in any conscious way. I just can feel this happening and recognizing that I'm doing it...Like, being hailed into this different version of masculinity or something. And I can tell that I move differently. And there have been times when I've said like, "Thanks man," or something and I'm like, "Who am I?"...It's definitely not consciously this, "I don't want to be seen as gay." I think I usually feel like, going into auto parts stores in particular, I don't want to deal with the sort of scorn for people assuming that I don't know what I'm doing. I mean, I don't know what I'm doing. So it's also partly a compensation – if I seem more butch, maybe I won't have to deal.

Like in Levi's opening quote for this section, Gavin feels his masculine practices change based on the expectations of the space, in this case the institutional context of the auto parts store. Since this space is based on the regular guy ideal type of being handy and able to fix things, Gavin feels like the more normative practice of lowering his voice and changing speech patterns will help him get through the situation without discrediting himself. He also mentioned interacting with men at his gym and stopping at a store in a rural area as other institutional contexts where he felt pulled into these normative masculine practices. As Gavin's narrative suggests, these subtle changes are not necessarily fully conscious, though his facility at analyzing his own gender makes him more aware of and able to describe what happens.

In contrast, Gavin described being in gay male spaces and the classroom when teaching as places where he expresses gender differently. In gay male spaces he enacts a more faggy masculinity, while in the classroom he is not quite as faggy and embodies more of the new guy. He continued:

Even though I feel more comfortable in gay male space I feel myself pulled in a particular direction there, too. I do more of the sort of gay gestures or speak in ways that are more gay in gay male space than I would in the classroom on a daily basis... I think my movements are kind of like, looser or my body moves more in some ways. I sort of would like jut out my hip in some ways like, as part of... talking. Instead of just moving my hands or moving my hips in certain ways... The ways of talking are different than the way I would talk in classes too, that I'm sort of speaking in ways that are the like, questioning kind of voice a little bit more?... I think there's something a little more gentle in the way I deliver my words than when I'm in the classroom and being more direct. I don't know how else to explain that though.

Gavin went on to compare the salience of his changing enactments in the auto parts store versus the gay male spaces and his demeanor while teaching:

It's interesting that as I'm talking about feeling pulled into particular gendered ways of moving and talking in a gay male space and then these like, butch spaces, I've never felt that in the classroom, that I'm being pulled in a particular way, even though it has to have been some sort of like, subconscious choices that I've made that are about making authoritative statements.

The patterns of movement and speech he is drawn to in gay spaces and traditionally masculine spaces are much more visible, perhaps in their exaggeration, than his more subtle changes when teaching. The subtle changes to his voice and movements in the classroom help him fulfill his role as an authority figure. In all three situations he described, his changing actions help him meet the expectations of the context. Importantly, he did not necessarily report that others actively enforced particular expectations on him, but that he anticipated the possibility of this enforcement and

responded to that in light of his gendered self. He does not change who he is and how he thinks of himself as a man as he engages in different masculine practices, but he does feel a slight conflict as he engages in practices, such as in the auto parts store, that do not feel particularly authentic given his gendered self.

LEO

Leo lived in a large city in the West at the time of the interview. He had begun his physical transition more than five years before and was 36 years old. He identified as straight and bi-curious and was underemployed, working in an office and living at poverty wages. He had a bachelor's degree. He is a black man and had lived in the area about 11 years, after growing up in the suburban Southeast and West. He had a wife and, when not working, spent time with family and friends and on creative projects and transgender activism.

He described his transition as a "rocky road," but overall felt like being recognized as a man made him feel "whole." In the early part of his transition he characterized his masculinity as hyper-vigilant. In other words, he engaged in normative practices to ensure he would be recognized as a man. Later on, he reported that he felt like more and more he would fall into "typical masculine behavior" almost by default. He described this as being easier to fall into and that he was less likely to think about the implications of his actions, as he would have in the past. For all intents and purposes Leo is a regular guy, though he does have a consciousness around issues of inequality, particularly racial and transgender inequality.

Since transition, Leo feels that it is part of his masculinity to no longer care as much about conforming to the expectations of particular situations, but is more likely to

just be himself. At the same time, his descriptions of his practices show some of the same shifts that Gavin described across contexts. Giving an example of the typical masculinity he enacts, Leo explained:

My wife and I just finished having dinner and I just immediately got up from the table and walked out. She said, "You're not going to take your dish to the sink?" "Well, you still have your plate at the table and I figured you would just take it when you get yours. It's just right there." Right now she's unemployed, so she's taking on this housewife role, and she doesn't mind, but she hates seeing me take on the typical husband role. Like, "You're going to wash my dishes." Or, "You're going to be taking care of certain things because I'm actually going out to a job."

By Leo's account, his wife was clearly not completely comfortable with his behavior and with their roles in the context of the family and the home. At the same time, Leo slipped into the traditional breadwinner/housewife dynamic without thinking about it, though he could reflect on it when his wife pointed it out. For Leo, this arrangement lined up with his idea of himself as a regular guy whereas his wife had different ideas. Leo's view on this arrangement might be different if his wife was currently employed, but since he gave this as an example of his typical masculinity, it appears that he prefers this arrangement. This shows how the situated expectations of a particular context, in this case Leo's family, may not line up with each individual's preference as to what they would like to see happen. Rather, both their individual preferences and more widespread norms of the gender order, in addition to their economic situation, shaped Leo and his wife's arrangement.

A mismatch between his expectations and others' interactions was particularly apparent to Leo in the context of the public sidewalk. While most men were accorded more space when recognized as a man, Leo reported that he did not receive this treatment:

Walking down the sidewalk, either because I'm a man or because I'm black, I feel like I have to move out of the way and there are days that I don't want to move out of the way. And I want to make my bubble bigger and have other people move around me.

Though Leo was unsure of why he did not get the space he wanted, he did go on to mention that other men seemed able to take up that space without a problem. This stood out to him because it was a mismatch between his gendered self, which meant being a regular guy, and his actual experiences in the context of the sidewalk.

Like Gavin, Leo talked about how he expressed himself differently depending on the situation. Leo worked in a blue collar setting and enjoyed being a regular guy there and fitting in with the other men. At the same time, he was still active in the queer communities where he had been most comfortable before transition. He started by describing his workplace:

At work I'm not going to use the funny high-pitched voice...I work in a construction business so it really is, football, construction, just kind of straight guy stuff. I guess in its simplest form. They have a family, they have kids, they work, they support them. It really isn't too much that's going on. It's almost like a relief to go to work because it's almost so easy to get into that mode.

He went on to say that his co-workers were likely unaware that he was transgender and it did not come up there; however, due to his transgender activism, it would be easy for them to find out he was transgender with a simple internet search. There was a relief in getting to join in with the masculine practices at work, which were in line with his sense of himself as a regular guy. For all that, he contrasted his practices in the context of work with the context of queer community events:

If I were to go to pride or an all-queer event then I could throw out my faggyness ... that I have and still be Leo and still be whole and all that. There's a time and a place that you allow certain things to come up.

Thus, where the context of the regular guy workplace allows Leo to be a regular guy, the expectations of the situation do seem to limit his expressions. In queer contexts, his faggy masculinity can come out, and likely lines up with the acceptable range for men's behavior in that context, whereas the regular guy might not be quite as welcome. In both settings, he anticipates the risk of being held accountable to situated expectations and reconciles this with his gendered self. This faggyness is part of his gendered self from when he was more integrated in queer communities. All of these expressions feel authentic to Leo as he conveys different aspects of his gendered self in light of the expectations of each context.

IAN

Ian lived in a large city in the Midwest at the time of the interview. He was 27 and had started transition about six and a half years before. He is a white man and identified as gay. He grew up and went to college in the rural Midwest, had a brief stint in the rural West, and settled in his current major city a few years before. He held several part time jobs doing customer service work in professional settings. He considered himself working class and had attended some college. When not working, he spent much of his time with his boyfriend and with his fraternity brothers.

When he first transitioned, Ian lived in a small college town and felt that, because people knew him from before transition, he was not really recognized fully as a man. It was not until he moved to a small town in the West that he felt like he was recognized fully and regularly as a man, or in his words to be seen as "a man first and trans second." He told a few people in his new town about his transgender status, but for the most part, he was read solely as a cisgender man. He reported that this time helped him gain an

understanding of his masculine self and that he was not “the most butch guy.” In the end, he realized that he was a new man in many ways and preferred to associate with men that shared similar values.

While he ended his time in the rural town understanding himself as a new man, he felt like his practices there reflected the expectations for men in the town in general:

I think out in the town I was a little more, I think just due to my surroundings, I was falling into a little more of that, like, bro sports guy. You know, that type of thing.

In the small town he was drawn to be more of a regular guy, but when he moved to the major city, he found a new community of men who more closely lined up with his gendered self as a new man. When he moved to the city he started to act on his attractions to other men. While he had always been attracted to other men, it was not until they recognized him as a man that he was comfortable with having sexual relationships with them—a common experience in the sample, which I discuss at length in the next chapter.

As he became integrated into the community of gay men in his fraternity:

Being surrounded by them has allowed me to actually be a little more feminine, a little more flamboyant, I guess, than I had been before. During transition it’s so much about “I have to pass, I have to pass.” And now I’m just like, “I pass. I don’t have to worry about this.” ...Gay guys find me hot and if gay men find me hot and enjoy having sex with me, even how I am, I thought, I don’t have to worry anymore and I think it allowed me to let my guard down. There’s aspects of me that are really masculine like, kind of that bro, frat boy thing really easily, but I’m most comfortable around my close friends who are all gay men in my fraternity.

He went on to contrast the more faggy masculinity he feels comfortable enacting with other gay men to his experiences at a job.

As a group all the guys in the office would be interacting, it’s a very kind of huffed up that like, machismo tough guy, very crude and stuff. And I didn’t really like, take part in that. I tried to just be myself as much as possible. Of course, everyone changes based on the situation, so I’d kind

of bro it up a little...It's just little things like the body language and how you interact. In those kind of groups, I would find a way to like, take part and make jokes but not necessarily about the same things or in the same ways, you know...All those guys were great, thoughtful people. I think because I wasn't always just kind of the party line with the total bro thing they would actually have deeper conversations with me one-on-one than would ever have been acceptable to have conversations with the group. I think there's a lot of social intimidation and I think there's just a lot of acting that goes on, I mean, in trying to be the right kind of guy.

While Ian can find a middle ground where he can interact in the hypermasculine setting of the office by bringing out his bro side, he also sees a softer side to the other men because he is a new man. These one-on-one settings are frequently a place for men to show more feminized feelings, as I will discuss in the next chapter. Ian uses these conversations as an example to pose the hypermasculinity as inauthentic. At the same time, the authenticity of his gendered self was not challenged by shifting to incorporate the expectations of the two different homosocial settings. With his gay fraternity brothers he could enact faggy masculinity, whereas with his coworkers he enacted more normative practices. The context of the fraternity, especially because it has an explicit social justice mission, did not conflict with his new man identity, whereas the hypermasculinity of the workplace meant more negotiation between his self and his practices. One way he managed that was by occasionally intervening when the crude talk went too far.

KEN

At the time of the interview Ken lived in a major city in the West and had transitioned about seven years before. He was 29, a small business owner, and considered himself middle class. Ken identifies as queer and a white man. He grew up in the suburban West and had lived in his current city for about five years. He spent much of his time building his business with his partner, a woman, in both a business and romantic

sense. In addition, his open relationship permitted his participation in gay men's sexual and social cultures.

When he began transitioning, Ken had a gender queer identity. As he pursued medical transition, he found himself at odds with the gender queer people in the community where he lived in at the time who were against medical interventions. He enacted a somewhat faggy masculinity and was frequently read as gay. He felt like his urban style and young look, due to being short, exacerbated this. Earlier in his transition he felt like he "had something to prove" and enacted aspects of normative masculinity, but as he was recognized reliably as a man and moved to the major city, he became more comfortable being somewhat faggy. At the same time, when he would visit his partner's family in their "rednecky" town, he felt like he should present a more normative masculinity, though aesthetically he reported that has changed over time:

I definitely watch myself more there, how I talk, and how people are perceiving me. I pay a lot more attention to that. Like I wouldn't talk about like, "Oh, have you seen the Beyonce video?" Or stuff that I know other people are going to find strange. I try not to talk that much at all. I just try to keep my mouth shut and not say too much, and dress more casual, or in a way that's more acceptable. And that all kind of went out the window when the tight jean thing hit, 'cause all the kids down there, their pants are really tight. Here you'd be like, gay tight. If I would have worn those pants ten years ago in that same place, it would have been like, "What is wrong with you? You've got to be gay." And now it's like.... all the little boys have like long, heavy hair and were wearing really tight clothes. It's so funny you know. And it's acceptable. Nobody was thinking it was too weird.

Due to the his association of redneck as a form of hypermasculinity, he presents himself in a more normative way, though some of the styles popularized in urban settings have made their way to the rural area. This suggests that change is possible in rural places, too.

This made Ken more comfortable in regard to his dress, but he still shifted his behavior based on the expectations he anticipated to find in interactions when visiting the area.

Since various people came through his workplace throughout the day, the expectations there changed depending on who else was there. Ken reported that there was a tension between a group of bros, who came in to talk about the products he sells, and a group of his gay friends who would hang out at the business:

This intersection of dealing with these straight guys, like “Bro, what’s going on?” And that sort of thing, and having to choose how much I’m going to participate. ‘Cause I want everyone to feel comfortable, I don’t want them to feel like I’m judging them for being like “dude,” you know.... A lot of my queer friends only interact with queer friends and they just pretend that the rest of the world doesn’t exist. And I’m sort of in my job forced to deal with a wide variety of people. I deal with this old guy upstairs who’s probably homophobic, but I pass with him, so he feels comfortable talking to me. I just deal with all kinds of people, and so I’m always trying to meet people where they’re at and make them feel comfortable in this space.

As the owner, Ken needs to make sure everyone who comes in feels comfortable and for Ken that sometimes means enacting more regular guy practices to make other people feel welcome. Faggy masculinity may be more in line with his self and he does this with his queer and gay friends, enacting the regular guy is also a part of his daily routine. In light of the expectations of the context of his business and the men who are there at a given time, Ken shifts his behaviors.

Sometimes Ken meets his limit with customers who are inappropriate and transcends what he finds acceptable as a new guy:

This big guy who worked out all the time, he’s talked with me inappropriately about fucking women. I’m trying to like figure out whether to establish a boundary with him, which means he probably won’t come back. Do I want that or do I want to just end that conversation and let him know we’re going to talk about something else now? Or, if I just let him talk and say whatever he wants and it has nothing to do with how I

am, and it's not going to encourage me to talk about women that way, "You just say what you want to say." So yeah, I interact, I have to make a lot of those little decisions all the time.

This illustrates how through social recognition, the man engages Ken in backstage talk. The process of managing authenticity to his gendered self, the other man's hypermasculinity, and the constraints and possibilities of the context of his business are exactly what it means to be a man. He may choose to go against the expectations of his customer in their interactions as men, but he will also have to manage the potential consequences of that, where in this case accountability could mean a loss of business. Although this experience can be quite salient for trans men such as Ken, it is likely an experience that all men have as they encounter new contexts, as ideals shift over time, and they interact with different people over the course of their lives.

Conclusion

The analysis presented here was based on two central questions: How does one become a man? How do spatial and institutional contexts shape this process and the masculinities that trans men identify, enact, and evaluate? Through examining the relationship between the gendered self, social identity, recognition, authenticity, and expectations, I have argued that being a man is a life-long process of learning to negotiate the expectations of a variety of social contexts in light of the gendered self. Particular spatial and institutional contexts are important sites of the recognition of gender identity, which is the first part of the process of becoming a man. In addition, spatial contexts shape the expectations that men negotiate as they move between institutional contexts in their everyday lives.

Being a man refers to the connection between self and identity, social recognition, and the ideals and expectations in a variety of social contexts. The doing gender perspective shows that gender is an interactional accomplishment based on the situated expectations of particular contexts. This analysis also illustrates how the self and social identity are central parts of these interactions. Men's behavior and their subsequent interactions are shaped not only by their anticipation of being held accountable to the situated expectations of spatial and institutional contexts, but through a negotiation of their gendered self and the achievement of recognition of their gender identity. To be authentic in interaction is to fully express that gendered self, but shifting masculine practices between contexts do not seem to always threaten this self.

As the opening quote of the chapter shows, one does not learn what it is like to be a man until one is treated as such. Then, the task of the individual is to learn the expectations for men in particular contexts and negotiate them in light of the gendered self. This is a process that is likely most salient and most fraught for men in their early process of inhabiting the social identity, but occurs every time they encounter an unfamiliar context or when the expectations of the context change over time. The rigidity of rural, Southern, and Midwestern spatial contexts compared to the flexibility of urban and Western shows that large-scale changing masculinities may be spatially uneven. In addition, race and sexuality appear to be particularly important in shaping these practices. The best example of this is between urban and rural masculine ideals, though region certainly shows some difference as well. Overall, rural ideals seemed to reflect the more rigid gender order of those spaces, though urban spaces exhibit more variety and

incorporation. I will return to the larger questions of why this change varies in the conclusion.

Time may also be important in understanding various configurations of practice in the sense of the development of the individual and their gendered self. Though some men might see themselves as a regular guy, or as faggy, or be hypermasculine, periods where their identity was potentially in question tended to lead to more rigid practices. Some men posed extreme practices, whether faggy or hypermasculine, as inherently inauthentic, whereas other men saw these same practices as in line with their sense of self. Overall, it does appear that these narratives create a hierarchy of authenticity where practices that fall closer to the regular guy, with its geographic variations, are seen as more authentic in others by the majority of respondents.

Posing certain practices as inauthentic, as well as describing them as compensation for some kind of deficiency or immaturity, reifies a normative pattern of practice. This normative pattern may take on elements of other practices in a hybrid fashion and it may offer more flexibility than the John Wayne or Sylvester Stallone of older notions of idealized masculinity, but it still appears to operate as a controlling force. Rather than being a harsh and restrictive set of practices, this normative ideal is a Goldilocks masculinity—not too hypermasculine and not too feminine—but just right.

The redneck and thug as ideal types, representing rural and urban representations of racialized poor men's hypermasculinity, are racial projects that act as commonsense understandings of particular groups of men. The redneck represents the intolerance and rigid masculinity which urban white men define themselves against, and contains racism as solely a feature of rural spaces. The thug, on the other hand, represents the depravity

and personal failures of supposedly dangerous poor urban black men. As Carbado (2005) shows, being treated as a potentially violent criminal by police is what made him a black American upon moving to the United States. This image has clearly negative effects on black men in general as they have difficulty avoiding being cast by others in this image. Since, racism is contained in rural spaces by the ideal of the redneck, the material conditions of poor urban black men are thus explained by personal failings rather than structural or institutional racism. This supports Hondagneu-Sotelo and Messner's (1994) proposition that fairly privileged men (usually those that are white, heterosexual, and class privileged) pose the hypermasculinity of racialized groups of men to construct their own masculinity as more egalitarian, but in effect this may just cover small but not substantive changes in their own practices. This analysis adds a spatial understanding to this displacement of blame for inequality.

When understanding the changing relationship between masculinities and inequality there are two central questions. The first is, what is the effect of this controlling force on inequality between men and women? This is a question of the reproduction of narratives of natural difference and inequality. The differing treatment that trans men experience when recognized as a woman and as a man across contexts suggests an initial answer to this question: that inequality is still very much alive and well. The second question is about inequality among men, which is not only about which traits and patterns of practice are valued but about whose bodies various practices adhere to and which they slip off. The initial findings here suggest that sexuality, race, and class still centrally shape inequality among men, but in spatially and institutionally specific

ways. More evidence to answer these questions will emerge in the following chapters and I will revisit both questions in the conclusion.

CHAPTER IV

“STRONG WHEN I NEED TO BE, SOFT WHEN I NEED TO BE”: CONTEXTS OF MASCULINITY AND EMOTION

The ascendant hegemonic masculinity combines the kick-ass muscular heroic male body with situationally expressive moments of empathy, grounded in care for kids and a capacity to make us all feel safe. Feminism, antiwar movements, health advocates, and even modern business human relations management have delegitimized pure hypermasculinity. But many people still view effeminacy as illegitimate in men, especially those who are leaders. So, neither hard nor soft is fully legitimate, unless the two are mixed, albeit with a much larger dose of the former than of the latter. (Messner 2007:469)

In 2006 Californians elected Arnold Schwarzenegger as their governor. Michael Messner (2007) suggests that the masculinity that the “Governator” enacted as a politician reflects more Schwarzenegger’s roles in films like *Kindergarten Cop*, than his harder personas in films like *The Terminator*. Messner argues, as exemplified by the quote above, that the hypermasculinity of the Terminator is no longer seen as a legitimate masculinity for a political leader, especially in a left-leaning state like California. Instead, this hybrid incorporates a more compassionate and empathic persona along with the toughness of hypermasculinity. The violence of the action hero is rounded out, but not replaced by, situationally appropriate care for others and occasional expressions of vulnerability.

This hybrid masculinity challenges the notion of what Stephanie Shields (2002) calls the “myth of a male inexpressiveness.” She proposes, using a complementary argument to Messner’s, that the inexpressiveness that characterizes the action heroes of the 1980s has never been the real emotional ideal for men¹⁴; rather, a particular set of

¹⁴ According to Shields, this lack of emotion was perhaps only briefly an ideal for white middle class men in the 1960s.

masculine emotions when displayed appropriately, or “appropriate emotion,” is more representative of the masculine ideal. Manly emotions, in Shields telling, are characterized by being strongly felt, but under control. This socially desirable emotional display is formed in juxtaposition to women’s emotions, which are constructed as excessive and illegitimate in their scope, and other men, who are either overly rational (e.g., Al Gore in the 2000 presidential contest) or show excessive anger or violence, as in the masculine ideal type of the thug. These depictions of appropriate emotion are racialized and gendered. One key way gendering and racialization happens is through the labeling of particular expressions as emotions or not. For example, men’s displays of anger are often not coded as emotional expression, but rather just behavior. At the same time, expressions of anger are often only seen as legitimate in particular contexts and when done by white middle class men. In these cases, this appropriate anger is relabeled as assertiveness or as justified aggression. Thus, achieving the emotional ideal means not only displaying a particular emotion based on the situated expectations of a context, but is also determined by how others judge that expression to be appropriate or not. In other words, different individuals can show situationally appropriate emotion in a particular context, but this may be evaluated differently based on other aspects of social location, such as race or gender.

Both Messner and Shields agree that exemplars that incorporate this contextually appropriate emotion in the realm of politics, such as the Governor, serve to soften the image of men’s lack of emotional expression in light of challenges to traditional notions of masculinity. This does not reflect a change in actual power relations, but instead that appropriate masculine emotions become a new way for privileged men as a group to

assert men's superiority over women and other men. To show worthiness for authority, individuals must be able to display rationality when the setting calls for it and a more emotional side in other settings, though this emotion can never be completely out of control. While Messner demonstrates how this hybrid formation works at the structural level in the realm of political power, I will focus on how this hybridity emerges in everyday¹⁵ men's lives and experiences.

In this chapter, I explore how trans men experience and explain various affective states to show how emotional control is a key way of creating and maintaining gender, racial, and sexual inequality. In trans men's narratives, emotion is one of the biggest markers of difference between men and women and among men. These stories show that the ideal for everyday men that emerges from their narratives calls on men to be emotionally expressive when the context or situation calls for it and to be calm and rational when appropriate. This form of emotional control and the implication of its superiority serve as a justification for the authority and power of some men over women and less privileged men.

This chapter begins with a background in the sociology of emotions and affect theory. Next, the analysis starts by examining how trans men use emotion to mark difference between men and women and among men. The bulk of the analysis then turns to the central affective changes associated with testosterone therapy, namely anger, crying, and sexuality. The analysis concludes with an examination of the contexts where men report the greatest ability to be emotionally expressive and demonstrates how race, as an example, shapes how these emotional displays are labeled by others as appropriate

¹⁵ I use "everyday men" as a category to discuss men who do not hold political power or any particular widespread esteem or notoriety beyond their own everyday social settings.

or not. Finally, I discuss the implications of these findings for understanding emotion and the reproduction of inequality across contexts. Altogether, this analysis demonstrates that, rather than a masculine ideal characterized by inexpressiveness, the most valued emotion expression for men is a hybrid formation valuing contextually appropriate emotion. As I will mention at various points in the analysis, who does appropriate emotion and who does not are centrally organized by gender, sexuality, and race.

Background

Emotion emerged as an object of study in sociology in the 1970s and has become a central area of sociological inquiry from scholars using a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches (Stets 2010; Turner and Stets 2006). Emotions provide immediate and often initially non-conscious reactions to and evaluation of events, experiences, and other stimuli and shape the resulting response to them (Barbalet 2002). Some streams of scholarship in the sociology of emotions focus on linking biological and evolutionary processes to social elements of emotion and work on delineating primary (i.e., natural) emotions and counting and categorizing these universal human responses (Kemper 1987; Massey 2002; Turner and Stets 2006). Approaches rooted in social constructionist and symbolic interactionist traditions do not necessarily deny any biological influence, but rather focus on the social influences and norms that shape emotional displays and how people think about and label their feelings (Fields, Copp, and Kleinman 2006). This chapter uses this second approach, which is based largely off of the foundational work of Arlie Hochschild.

Hochschild's (1983) ground breaking work on emotion focused on how individuals work to alter their feelings according to the particularities of settings such as

the workplace, often in the service of capitalist profits. It is precisely this ability to change both one's own and others feelings that show that emotions, "are shaped by culture (e.g., feeling rules) and our human capacity to react to and make sense of our feelings" (Fields et al. 2006:156). Emotion work refers to the process of trying to alter what one is feeling and the quality of that feeling or to alter the feelings of others (Hochschild 1979). Feeling rules are social guidelines of given settings, often not consciously articulated, for how one should be expected to feel and for what feelings one should express in that setting. These rules can also refer to the appropriate intensities of particular emotions in a context. For example, one can be upset, but not too upset when treated unfairly (Hochschild 1979). Thus, emotion management or emotion work is the process of bringing one's emotions in line or in response to the feeling rules of that setting. The rules of a particular situation often become salient when there is a mismatch between the emotions an individual experiences and those rules. For example, if one did not feel sad at a funeral, it would be notable because feeling rules mark sadness as an inappropriate response to the situation. Each time an individual encounters the feeling rules of a new setting, they must use methods of emotion management to reconcile their initial emotional response with the social expectations of the particular context (Smith-Lovin 1989). Feeling rules, like most rules, can be broken or altered, and individuals do not necessarily follow them to the letter or do so enthusiastically (Hochschild 1979). As I will explore in more detail below, feeling rules and the expectations of emotion management differ based on social identities and tend to reflect relations of status and power.

Emotion became a particularly important topic of analysis in other disciplines as part of the “affective turn” in the humanities, an effort to bring together theorizing of the interplay between the body and the mind (Clough and Halley 2007). The two central streams of this work are derived from the work of psychologist and theorist Silvan Tomkins, which tends toward more biological realms, and philosopher Gilles Deleuze, a more socially centered approach (Gregg and Seigworth 2010). The Deluzian approach, as interpreted by philosopher Brian Massumi, offers a useful distinction between affect and emotion. According to Massumi (2002), affect is the totality of bodily potentials that result from stimuli. In other words, affect is the body’s response to the conditions and events it encounters. Emotion, then, is the expression of affect. It is that which is named or expressed. In this formulation, affect cannot be fully captured by emotion and, as such, there is always something left out or lost between affect and emotion.

Hochschild (1983) shows that the culturally available names for emotions both limit and create possibility for emotional expression. For example, if a language has a complex name for a particular feeling, it would be easier to express without losing its full affective qualities. In addition, the act of naming an emotion is “relative to the self” and we can see this relationship through the emotion (Hochschild 1983:226). For example, the same feeling would be labeled differently depending on who it is directed toward. We might label a feeling love, if it is directed toward someone close to us, or admiration, if it’s someone who is socially distant.

Deborah Gould (2009), in her study of emotion and ACT UP, synthesizes the social constructionist and affect approaches to show how political movements both create particular emotion states and how affective and emotional states can reproduce social

relations, in the sense that they represent attachments to dominant ideologies. She shows how particular cultural contexts, a social movement in her case, have an emotional pedagogy, which teach individuals to “make sense” of affective states and authorize selective feelings and actions while downplaying and even invalidating others (28). Thus, the names one gives to various feelings and the way one expresses them is relevant to the self and the cultural contexts in which individuals exist.

Emotions are a key part of the reproduction of social inequality and reflect the social divisions on which inequality is based (Fields et al. 2006). Race, gender, and sexuality shape the emotional experiences of individuals, stereotypes of emotionality, and feeling rules of given contexts. Research on social inequality and emotion has focused the most attention on gender, specifically differences between men and women. Appropriate feelings differ for women and men (Hochschild 1979) and women tend to engage in emotion work more often than men (Hochschild 1983; Lively 2008). Efforts to examine the feelings rules of contexts such as work show that that these rules are gendered and raced (Wingfield 2010) In general, emotionality and femininity are tightly linked in Western cultures and, due to this close association, some scholars argue that this connection is a sort of “master stereotype” and that beliefs about differences in emotion are at the core of ideas about gender difference (Shields et al. 2006). Women and men tend to equally share these beliefs about gender and emotion (Robinson and J. T. Johnson 1997).

Emotional control has been thought to be at the core of dominating or hegemonic masculinities (Connell 2005). This control justifies white heterosexual men’s positions of power relative to women and marginalized men. Yet, as I described above, there is

evidence that it is not ideal for men to be emotionless, rather that they are suitable for positions of power through being able to control which emotions are expressed in which settings (Fields et al. 2006; Messner 2007; Sattel 1976; Shields et al. 2006). There is a long-standing dichotomy constructed in Western thought that defines reason as superior to emotion, where man and white is valued as modern, whereas “others” are closer to nature and more savage (Ahmed 2004). Stereotypes often depict women in general, Latinos (Munoz 2011), and black people (Popp et al. 2003; Wilkins 2012) as excessively emotional or at least displaying excessive negative emotion and not appropriate emotions, such as the image of the aggressive and controlling black matriarch (Collins 2000) or the angry black man (Wingfield 2010). Efforts at emotion management to resist stereotypes, such as the stereotype of the angry or aggressive black woman, can lead to being seen as inappropriately cold and unemotional as in the case of black woman college professors (Harlow 2003).

Emotion and ideas about gender, race, and sexuality are tightly interwoven. I will look at this relationship in the lives of trans men by focusing on two questions. First, how are trans men’s narratives of emotion used to mark social difference and similarity based on gender, race, and sexuality? Second, how does context shape trans men’s expression and description of emotion? To investigate these questions, I coded all interviews for mentions of emotion and affect¹⁶, including what feelings were present and in what context they occurred. Thus, this coding scheme captured both trans men’s direct discussion of emotion and their reported feelings as they occurred in narratives

¹⁶ Affect is a difficult concept to code because it is non-linguistic. Following Gould, I looked for instances where I could “read between the lines” to find trans men’s descriptions of their bodily experiences that were difficult to name. These were often moments where interviewees professed the difficulty of feeling something but could not quite being able to name it or adequately describe it.

throughout the interview. Following Gould, I defined affect as the “nonconscious and unnamed, but nevertheless registered, experiences of bodily energy and intensity that arise in response to stimuli impinging on the body” (2009:19) and emotion as “one’s personal expression of what one is feeling in a given moment, and expression that is structured by social convention” (2009:20). This distinction allows for an examination of both the bodily affects of stimuli and emotions as they are expressed, in addition to the analytic space to examine what might be lost as affect is expressed as emotion. Like Gould, I use both feelings and emotions to describe instances of affect and emotion throughout the chapter. In addition, I coded interviews for theoretical concepts such as emotion work and management and feeling rules using the definitions given above.

Analysis

Marking Difference

Across the sample, trans men’s narratives of emotional difference distinguished boundaries between men and women and among men. Though emotional change was one of the most salient markers of transition, respondents demonstrated their masculine selves and difference between themselves and women through descriptions of their own typical emotional expressions, as well as distance from masculine ideals that mark marginalized groups of men. A dulling or distance from emotion was one of the most common narratives of emotional change with transition among interviewees. In addition, a majority of men demarcated difference through the ability or desire to engage in emotion talk. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the family and intimate relationships were the most common context for respondent’s talk of differentiating themselves from women and other men. One function of these narratives of emotion that demarcate difference between groups is

to preserve a higher status for privileged groups through solidarity-building, thus reinforcing difference can also reinforce social superiority (Fields et al. 2006). This is not the only reason for narrating difference between women and men and among men, and probably not a conscious aim of individual men, but this talk is likely to reproduce this effect regardless of intention. Overall, these narratives of difference begin to show the social expectations that shape men's emotional lives.

INHERENT DIFFERENCES

Trans men's descriptions of their own emotional states, which they often viewed as shaped by innate masculine characteristics, were a central way to demarcate difference between themselves and others. Sexual and romantic relationships and family were key contexts where respondents differentiated between women and men and among men on the basis of emotion. Some respondents pointed to emotional difference between women and men through their own reported inability to understand what they viewed as women's innate sentimentality. When I asked Eric (Urban, Midwest, 22, white, asexual, 3 years) how he sees himself as a man, he said:

I don't understand women, you know. I guess that's probably pretty common regardless of having lived as one, but I don't understand them. "Maybe it's a guy thing, I just don't understand you." [laughter] Women, they'll break up with somebody, but they still wanna keep that memento. I'm like, "No. If I were to do that, I'd just wanna get rid of everything that reminded me, burn it, whatever." They're like, "No, no, no. We like to keep a special memory, regardless of what the circumstances were." I go, "Oh, God, how can you do that?" you know? That's one thing. I don't know. Maybe...I don't wanna [sigh] say that I feel emotionless, but I feel like I don't express it, you know, which I think going back to that, it is a guy thing.

Eric notes that it is difficult for him to understand women, especially in their emotional responses to relationships. Though he identifies as asexual and does not anticipate

engaging in romantic relationships, Eric still uses this supposed difference between women's responses to the end of relationships and what he imagines he would do in the same situation to cement his status as a man. Towards the end of the quote, he shows some ambivalence towards his lack of emotion and reaffirms that it is emotional expressiveness that is the key marker of difference. His inability to understand women's expressiveness is naturalized when he describes it as "a guy thing."

This difficulty in understanding women's expressiveness extends to interviewees' descriptions of their relationships to women in their families and their own roles in the family. In a discussion with Ethan (Urban, Midwest, 38, black, heterosexual, 9 years) about parenting his two pre-teens he described his concerns about his daughter:

I'm worried about my daughter. She's the hothead in the house. She – whew!... No, she's at a point in her life when she's developing and she's thinking that she's a lot older and she's feeling her hormones is going. She don't know what's going on. You know, one minute she happy, happy, happy; next minute she in there crying 'cause her brother killed a spider. [Sigh]... This is the hardest part of being a dad. You know, I've never dealt with anything like this before ever in my life. Even when I was younger, I didn't go up and down like this. And I try to let her mom deal with it, but some stuff I have to be like, "Okay, this is what it is," and, "This is the rule," but pretty much her mom deals with her and I deal with my son.

Ethan has difficulty managing his daughter's mood swings and emotional expressiveness. Though he sets rules in the family, the realm of emotional expression is his wife's domain. Any parent might have difficulty managing their child's behavior when they had not experienced it themselves, but there is an automatic assumption in Ethan's narrative that his wife, as a woman, is naturally more capable of managing these extreme emotional expressions. This difference has the likely effect of reproducing particular work in the family. In this case, his wife must be the one to engage in the work of

managing their daughter's emotions, due to this difference.

Excessive emotional expression is also a marker of distasteful gender expression in men. For example, Wesley (Urban, Southeast, 44, white, pansexual, 20 years) discusses his preference for typically masculine men as sexual partners:

If I want a girl, I'll be with a girl. If I want a guy, I'll be with a guy. People say I'm hypocritical, but I don't want to be with a man who is trying to be the worst of all the things that are considered "female" aspects. [Can you give me an example of a guy like that?] Well, like hysteria. Supposedly females get hysterical over everything. The shopping, the hysteria, the loudness. If they're queeny, considered effeminate, whatever, I can't stand that.

Hysteria, as a medical diagnosis and term of description, has long been connected to women's supposed excessive emotion and uncontrollable emotional expression (Lunbeck 1997). In his narrative, Wesley connects excessive emotional expression to women, notes that this is one of the worst aspects of women, and that he "can't stand" being with men who are expressive in that sense. By his own description of himself elsewhere in the interview, he exhibits emotional control and this distinguished him from women and the unacceptable expressions of feminine men. Thus, faggy (queeny) men are unacceptable as sexual partners due to their excessive expressiveness and lack of control.

DULLED AND DISTANT FEELINGS

The most common narrative attached to emotional change across interviews was a dulling of feelings and distance from emotions since transition. Again, family and intimate partnerships were the contexts that the men spoke about most often when marking differences between themselves and women and among men. James' (Urban, West, 39, white, straight, 4.5 years) experience during a particularly trying period typifies this narrative:

I think it's harder to access them in ways. I'm emotional still, but I'm not as emotional. I've been going through a divorce for the last year and it's not as emotional as I thought it would be. I have a kid. My little family has been broken up and I happen to be a parent that really wants to hang out with my kid. It's a big deal. So to not wake up with her everyday like I used to, it's really hard. It's very hard. It's something I work on every day, like, letting go of it, 'cause this is the situation. But I just thought I would be a little more emotional. So [sigh], I feel like the emotions are there, but it's the accessing them that's hard. They're there, it's just I can't get 'em out.

For James, his affective response is still present in reaction to the difficult life changes he is experiencing as part of his divorce. This means that the feelings are there and he is affected by the situation, yet he has difficulty expressing those feelings. He deals every day with the trying situation and the feelings that spring from it, but they are distant in a way that he did not expect. James' emotions in this situation did not meet the feeling rules of the situation, shown in his expectation that he would be more emotional. This was confusing for James, but it meant that the sad events did not have the same hold over him because they were not as intense.

This new distance from feelings and a related lack of sensitivity made for difficulty in intimate relationships for some respondents. Chris (Urban, West, 48, white, heterosexual, 13 years) and a number of other men in relationships with women described the desire to be sensitive to their partners, but found it to be difficult based on their emotional shift. Chris said:

I should really buy her a ring and mark these milestones that kind of don't matter to me. A lot of things that matter to her, I am just oblivious to them. I just don't think the way I used to think. I do not have that same... I'm not as sensitive as I used to be. The hormones are the same every day for me. I don't have days where I feel sad. I know she has days where she feels sad and she's questioning stuff and she's depressed and I just know it's hormones and I just forget. "Oh, don't. Just let this ride. Don't try and work this out and get upset because she's being negative. Let it ride and don't say it's because she has her period." I think we're figuring it out, but

through her I realize how far I've come, because I don't think like she thinks anymore. I don't. I don't get hurt so easily. I mean I do get hurt but I'm not as sensitive anymore and that's hormonal.

Chris struggles with the emotional changes he ascribes to testosterone. Through conversation with his girlfriend and his own experience living as a woman, he feels like he should be more sensitive to her emotional states and fluctuations he credits to her hormonal cycles. Though he engages in emotion work to come closer to these ideals, he feels limited by his new lack of emotional sensitivity. He uses this emotive difference as a way to measure his transition. As he moves further away from the emotional states of his partner, he can clearly see the difference between when he lived as a woman and now.

At other times, men viewed this newfound lack of sensitivity, in particular less empathy or sympathy, as beneficial in their relations with family members. For example, Casey (Urban West, 36, Asian/white, Bisexual, 2 years) found his lack of sensitivity to others' emotions helpful in interacting with his mother. He said:

One of the great things about testosterone is that it makes you care less about how other people feel. It might be a down thing for some people but it's been super helpful dealing with mom. It's a weird thing. I feel like I just don't care as much. Before, if mom was upset or crying then I'd feel this like guilty or, "Oh no. I've hurt mom's feelings!" And now I feel like, "Jesus mom! Get over it." (Laugh) It doesn't hurt me as much and in general I find that to be the case. There's a dulling of delicate emotions and a sharpening of aggressive emotions for sure. For sure. I guess just worrying about stepping on toes or making people cry. I don't know, things like that. Maybe it's just consideration or feeling, I don't know, or I guess like the timid emotions.

This lack of sensitivity, which Casey's mom likely does not experience as a positive change, gives him distance from his mother's emotions and dulls their effect on him.

Casey, in a way that mirrors the majority of respondents, marked a distance from feelings that he saw as more feminine, including sensitivity to and consideration for the feelings

of others. Instead of losing touch with emotions in general, he actually reported a shift in the kinds of feelings he experienced most. This was a change from more feminine feelings to masculine feelings, and his general access to his and others' emotional states.

Overall, respondents described their emotions as more dull and distant after transition, especially in family and romantic contexts, which further solidified their narratives of difference from women. The new emotions were clearly masculine emotions. This attendant lack of sensitivity created problems in relating to women and, conversely, also made it easier to negotiate relationships with other family members. Overall, this distance seemed to make it easier to control the outward expression of their emotions.

THE STRONG SILENT TYPE

One of the most frequent ways that trans men marked their emotional difference from women after transition was in their interest and ability to talk about feelings and verbally express emotions. Not all men said that they were inexpressive, but a majority of the men explicitly reported that they, for the most part, did not need to talk as much as before transition. Leo (Urban, West, 36, black, straight and bi-curious, 5 years) explains the differences between the conversations he prefers as opposed to what his wife would like:

Guys are more like, get to the point of it and then move on. There isn't like, "I was feeling this way when this happened and I really got my feelings hurt and they should be more sensitive or at least think about what I might be going through. I'm stressed out. Stressed!" No, you need to be like, "I was fucking stressed out and he was an asshole and we need to move on with this project and get things done."

His wife wants to have more detailed and expressive conversation, but Leo did not want or need to talk and process emotions in the same way. Leo and other men express little

interest in having extended conversations about emotions in general. Stories like this across interviews demonstrated interviewees' impatience with this kind of emotional talk from women or from other men.

For many men the lack of emotional talk was central to their understanding of themselves as men and their masculine practices. When Brandon (Suburban, Midwest, 20, white, Straight, 1.5 years) described himself as a man, his disinterest in talking about emotion was central to his image of himself as a "stereotypical" guy:

I would say that I'm the kind of guy that's, I'm like the aloof one. I don't really do the whole like emotional bonding talking crap that girls do. Like I get it, but I don't do it... especially with other guys. Like you just don't. You're just like, "She dumped you," and it's like, "Ah, dude, that sucks." It's, "Yeah," it's like, "So, what are you gonna do now?" It's like, "Ah, I don't know. Yeah, it'll get better." And that's all you do. I'm the band-aid person. "Eh, you'll get over it, whatever." Everyone knows that it sucks. Everyone knows it happens. No one's, you know, unfamiliar with that, but we don't need to go over it again. I'm actually really just stereotypical.

Brandon marks himself as different than women through his distance from emotion and through not wanting to engage in talk about emotions. In denigrating this, he also suggests that it is less desirable for men to engage in emotion talk and that there is value in being a "stereotypical" man like him. Most of the heterosexual relationships described in this section are based on an asymmetry of emotional expression, women being more expressive and men as more controlled, whereas homosocial settings seem to be based on a sameness of emotional expressiveness.

Differences in verbal emotional expression in respondents' narratives distinguished them from other men, as well as women. Men that were overly expressive, as in Wesley's discussion of effeminate men above, were generally characterized as lesser than men who were not as expressive. Tom (Suburban, West, 28, white, Straight, 6

months) shared a story typical of men in the sample about changes in his emotional talk:

In my experience, it's just made me wanna talk about everything in general far less... It's like my brain doesn't see a purpose in doing that anymore, so I'm much more silent than I used to be. I observe that a lot more in other men —not all men, but, you know, some men... there's much less need to communicate your own feelings. And it's not because you don't feel them, you just don't see the purpose. I think women confuse how your brain is thinking for you just not having any feeling.

For Tom, his lack of talking about his emotions sets him apart from women because of a lack of interest in verbal processing rather than less of an ability to feel and challenging the notion of men's inexpressiveness. He differentiated among men in regard to their interest in emotion talk, too. When I asked him about men that differed from him, he described a gay man who is a close friend:

I just want you to know, I love gay guys, they're like my best friends. Some of my best friends are. But they can be bitches. Now that I know more about transgender and hormones, you know, I have no idea if it's hormonally influenced on these guys, or if it's social, or if it's just how they are, or what. But they definitely are more female in their reactions and how they communicate.... My best gay friend, he lives down in the other part of the state now, so I barely talk to him, unfortunately, and he only come up like a couple times a year. He's a very physically, a very manly looking male, but he absolutely has the brain of a female. But he doesn't express any like same gender inkling. Like he's happy being a man. And he loves men, but it just seems like... I mean he's just so much drama, such the stereotypical like... not that all females are drama, but, compared to most men, yes. He's brought me into more rooms to try talk to me about something than any girl I've ever... just needing to get stuff out and needing to have conversation and needing that intimacy.

Tom labels his friend as like a woman, due to his emotional expressiveness and desire to talk about his feelings, though he does note that not all women are excessively emotional. Thus, there is a nuance to his differentiation, but overall he still posits a general difference between men and women and some gay men based on how much they want to engage in emotion talk. He showed a distaste for his friend's expressiveness and posed it

as somewhat unnatural coming from another man. For Tom and Wesley, their distaste for the emotionality they connect to effeminate gay men could reflect insecurity of their own masculinity, as men whose masculinity is threatened tend to express more negative attitudes toward feminine gay men but not masculine gay men (Glick et al. 2007).

The ability to talk about one's feelings led some men to be labeled as gay regardless of their sexual identity or practices. Sam (Urban, West, 34, Latino/Mexican, heterosexual/queer, 3.5 years) described the process of telling people in his school program that he was transgender:

At first I was really accommodating and really incognito. Not telling anybody. I would slowly tell people and it's like they were just seeing what they were seeing and they would make assumptions like, "Oh, I thought you were gay." And I was like, "Yeah I'm sure you thought that I was gay." Because, I don't know, I'm not your typical straight dude at the supermarket or whatever. The kinds of things that I'm talking about. "Oh, you feel comfortable talking to me about relationships and I actually have something insightful to say back." You know? Or it's, "I understand why you're feeling vulnerable or PMSy right now."

Thus, Sam's classmates used his ability and interest to engage in emotion talk as a sign that he must be gay. In a common pattern in trans men's discussion of emotion, interviewees connected excessive emotion talk to women and gay men, whereas a lack of interest in or ability to engage in such talk marked them as a more typical man.

As I have shown in this section, the majority of respondents report experiencing less of an ability to articulate or feel emotions and more distaste and difficulty understanding the emotional displays they mark as excessive. At the same time, only a very few said that men should never express any emotions. In fact, most respondents said that the lack of ability to ever talk about emotions was a deficiency. Rather, the central distinction was in what emotions men should feel, how they should be expressed, and in

which context they emerge that constituted the standards for normative feeling rules for men. In the next section, I turn to the central affective changes that trans men attribute to testosterone therapy and explore how these changes relate to emotional control and expression.

Affective Transitions

Common sense understandings, widely reproduced across many media sources, purport that gender differences are the direct effects of neurological, hormonal, and evolutionary based differences between male and female bodies. At the same time, the prevailing findings of contemporary scientific research in these areas show that plasticity in things like brain function and complex relationships between bodies and their historical, cultural, and social contexts are more accurate depictions of human behavior (Fine et al. 2013). Hormones are a central part of these discourses of difference.

Testosterone is often thought to be at the heart of men's increased aggression and violence in comparison to women overall though this direct relationship is often erroneous and, at best, oversimplified (Sapolsky 1997). A naturally occurring hormone in both male and female bodies, testosterone was first synthesized in the United States in 1935 and since that time there have been attempts to use it to increase energy, sexual stimulation, and athletic performance, though synthetic testosterone has never gained widespread use—except for a black market life as an athletic performance enhancer (Hoberman 2005). Research examining the relationship between higher levels of testosterone in individuals—whether occurring prenatally, through natural production after birth, or via the administration of synthetic hormones—and differences in aggression, language, toughness, and status within groups show little correlation between

the two (Hönekopp and Watson 2011; McIntyre et al. 2011; Pennebaker et al. 2004). As Sapolsky (1997) explains, rather than a direct effect between testosterone and aggression, testosterone has a permissive effect, which means it does not cause aggression but exaggerates pre-existing behavior and patterns of aggression. Thus, if one is aggressive to those with less power or status but not those with higher social status, testosterone may increase that already existing aggression, but will not produce aggression towards higher status individuals. In addition, socially learned patterns of aggression will often persist even when testosterone is removed from the body. Testosterone therapy is widely used by trans men as part of a medical transition, though there have been few if any widespread studies of the effects of testosterone in terms of emotion and other psychological and physical effects (Pennebaker et al. 2004). Trans men's reports of changes due to testosterone are likely to be influenced by measurable changes to the body, in addition to being influenced by the strong cultural ideas about testosterone that influence all people.

The sixty men in the sample who had undergone hormone therapy reported that testosterone was the most significant marker of affective change related to transition. Though some of the few men that had not taken testosterone lived their daily lives being recognized as a man, almost all of those who did use it reported that the hormone created significant differences between themselves, men who had not yet hormonally transitioned, and people who subscribed to non-binary gender identifications, such as gender queer people or butch women. Mario (Urban, West, 31, white, Bisexual, 4.5 years) described this difference:

Hormones do so much in your body. I mean they really do. They do so much to your brain. They do so much to you emotionally; they do so much to you sexually and physically. There is such a huge difference between like a genderqueer person and a person who has transitioned.

The men varied in their acceptance and respect for non-binary identifications (a number of respondents identified as genderqueer themselves) but all marked a difference between the embodiments of those who had taken testosterone and those who had not. This difference was attributed to testosterone's varied changes to their physical bodies (hair growth, muscle and fat redistribution, deepening of the voice and other physical changes are common) and also a range of reported emotional and other affective changes. This section focuses on the three most common areas of affective changes—related to anger, crying, and sexual urges—that respondents reported and how these changes interface with their narratives of emotional control.

For the few men that had not taken testosterone—most planned to start eventually—they reported that one of their main delays was their fear of the emotional changes that testosterone would bring. During a discussion of his decision to wait to start testosterone, though he already had a doctor's prescription, I asked Mason (Urban, Southeast, 21, white, Queer/ Mostly Straight, 5 years) what he most feared:

The emotional changes, like the negative ones. I don't wanna become unemotional. I've heard people, like they can't cry or they just don't know how to process stuff and their frustration turns to anger or violence or whatever. That's just not who I am. So, that's just what scares me.

Mason reported being worried that he would become the stereotypical inexpressive man upon taking testosterone. Similar fears of emotional changes were reported throughout the sample.

The reported results from men that did use testosterone were in fact more complex. Trans men's narratives of these changes show that managing and controlling affective states is central to achieving appropriate emotion. There was a tension in

interviewees' accounts between the gendered and raced implications of the strength of these affective sensations and the need for control in relation to different contexts.

ANGER, AGGRESSION, AND CALM

Anger in some form or another is a common human emotion (Schieman 2006). Though most human societies include a range of emotional controls that vary over time, arguably the control of anger is one of the key things that humans need to live in groups with each other (C. Z. Stearns and P. N. Stearns 1986). Feeling rules that lay out the appropriate feeling and display of anger vary over time and context, as well as race, gender, and other aspects of social location (Schieman 2006; C. Z. Stearns and P. N. Stearns 1986; Wilkins 2012). According to Stearns and Stearns' history of anger, since the seventeenth century anger has been widely seen as a problem increasingly in need of control in the U.S. context. Though anger is most closely connected in cultural ideas of men and masculinity, the research on similarities and differences between men's and women's experience and expression of anger is inconclusive (Fabes and C. L. Martin 1991; Schieman 2006). Further, the ability to control anger has been seen as a widespread ideal character trait leading up to the twenty-first century and is tied to idealized forms of masculinity (C. Z. Stearns and P. N. Stearns 1986).

*Anger and Aggression*¹⁷

Stories of increased anger and aggression, sometimes referred to as "T-Rage" or "roid [steroid] rage," appear consistently in respondents' discussions of the effects they anticipated before taking testosterone, and some men did experience increases in these

¹⁷ In this section, I use a few different terms to describe feelings associated with anger, including aggression and rage. Aggression here refers to the enactment of anger on other people or other things. Rage is an extreme form of anger.

feelings. For example, Dominic (Suburban, Midwest, 27, white, Pansexual, 2 years) explained the fear of increased anger and aggression:

My therapist said, “You know, when you start T[estosterone] you might become more aggressive,” or whatever, and I didn’t wanna become more aggressive, but I definitely can feel that I am more aggressive now.

Despite his wishes, Dominic did experience increased aggression. It is notable that although many of the men expressed worries about increased anger and aggression, less than one third of the sample reported actual increases in anger or aggression.

The increase in emotions related to anger and aggression from those that did report this experience varied from mild irritation to intense feelings of rage. Interestingly, respondents did not usually consider anger as an emotion, though I name it as such for this analysis. This is a common way to distinguish gendered and racialized emotions (Shields 2002; C. Z. Stearns and P. N. Stearns 1986). This follows a general trend where expressions associated with women are regarded as emotions, whereas men’s expressions are seen as something other than emotion (Hochschild 1983; Robinson and J. T. Johnson 1997; Shields et al. 2006). In general when men directly labeled something as emotion, they were referring to emotional expression related to femininity and did not label affect more tied to masculinity as emotion.

Much of the anger associated with testosterone therapy appeared early on in taking the hormone, as well as right between doses. Ben’s (Urban, Midwest, 28, Asian, Heterosexual, 4 years) girlfriend at the time he started hormone therapy was nervous about potential mood changes because her former boyfriend, also a trans man, had become physically abusive with her after starting testosterone. The dose that Ben’s doctor

started him on ended up being too high for his small body and put his testosterone levels well above the typical male range. He had his dose adjusted:

She cut my dose in half. So now I'm at, at a point five every two weeks and my fiancée was like, "When you were first on T, like the next two days...it was like you had to watch your aggression because it was just that influx of testosterone was massive," So it was a kind of energy thing like where the first two days it would be okay, I'm extremely aggressive, extremely sexually driven, and then after that, for the next two, three days, all I wanted to do was sleep [laugh] 'cause my body was just trying to get used to all of it as quickly as possible. Now that it's on the right dosage, it's more even-keel. I'm still a little bit tired the next day, but I'm not as on-edge about things.

Thus, Ben made an effort to correct his dose and lower his aggression, but he still experienced fluctuations in his mood that he connected to testosterone. Increases in anger were often associated in these narratives with having too much testosterone or having a period of adjustment to new levels of this hormone in their body.

Respondents also linked heightened levels of anger and aggression to the timing of their testosterone doses, but this anger was primarily directed at people in lower status social groups. Casey (Urban, West, 36, Asian/white, Bisexual, 2 years) experienced increased aggression that he felt was caused by fluctuations of the testosterone levels in his body:

I am more of a jerk sometimes. Especially if it's Wednesday because I take my shot on Monday. So like Wednesday is peak testosterone day and if somebody gets on my nerves I can feel like this little like, (errr), this like anger bubble where I get like mouthy with them. Whereas, normally I would never have raised my voice, like I don't think I ever raised my voice to my mom before T and I would like stand up and like yell at her. That and sometimes a weird thing that probably happens more on Wednesdays, but sometimes if a woman says something that makes me mad I get this extra rage feeling and I want to hurt her and I'm like, "Whoa, what is this?" and it's like, "Wow!" ... In my head I just label it as this monkey thing. It just feels like this real animal thing. Like an immediate, it's like the dog pack or something and you want to like pummel the dog back down into its place or something. It can be on the phone. A certain kind of

woman voice where, where sometimes she won't even say anything bad, but she'll be like, "Can I put you on hold?" and if it's the wrong voice then I'll be like, "(errr) I just want to punch that woman!" (laugh) Or just at the bank last week some woman was like, "We might need to put a hold on this check." and I was like "(err) I've been banking here for 10 years!!" and it didn't mean anything but it was just like this rage and I felt like, "Man, if this glass wasn't here then I'd kick your ass!"

Notably, Casey reports experiencing these heightened moments of rage in connection with his dose cycle and views them as biologically based. At the same time, these strong feelings of anger and aggression are not random, because they are solely directed at women. Women were the most common targets for heightened levels of anger and aggression and these feelings were usually described in the contexts of the family or specifically with intimate partners. Casey only partnered with men and did not have an intimate relationship with a woman through which to reflect on his anger; instead, he focused on interactions with his mother and stranger women to describe his anger.

Casey reported increased verbal aggression during these times and the desire to be physically aggressive towards women. Yet, he felt like he should restrain himself from actually committing physical violence against women. In doing so, he and other interviewees set themselves apart from other men. He continued:

Of course I wouldn't [be physically violent towards women] but I could see how, depending on how people are socialized, *if that kind of thing is considered okay in your culture*, I could see how it could happen really easily and if you didn't have a million safety locks in place where you know it's bad that you don't hit women [laugh]. I could see how it could happen and how people could get conditioned to think that it's normal because it's in there. In the programming.

Here Casey mixes biological and social explanations for more extreme types of aggression. In this way of thinking, testosterone in general makes one angrier and fluctuations in the level of testosterone cause more extreme feelings of rage that produce

violent aggression. If one is taught that this kind of violence is acceptable then one might engage in it, though men who are taught not to can control these aggressive feelings.

Who are these men that cannot control themselves? According to descriptions in respondents' narratives of the ideal type of the thug and the redneck, it is poor men, white rural men, and black urban men that supposedly are unable to control their rage and aggression. This lack of control and propensity for violence are central to what marks the masculinities of the redneck and thug as unacceptable. Thus, through this description, Casey reifies difference between men and women through the effects of testosterone—men are just biologically more aggressive—and difference between groups of men—those that can control their aggression and those that cannot. Though it is possible that testosterone therapy enables more aggressive behavior as Casey suggests, that aggression still follows lines of already existing social categories (Sapolsky 1997). This type of narrative naturalizes violence against women, seeing it as an expression of individual men's aggression and their lack of ability to control it, rather than an expression of power. In addition, it locates that violence against women as the property of men who are gendered, classed, and racialized as hypermasculine and distances other men from culpability in a culture that promotes this violence. This was accomplished in interviews through the narrative use of ideal types like the redneck and thug. As I have shown elsewhere, Casey himself fears that uncontrolled aggression, in the form of transphobic violence, from men that fit the redneck ideal type (Abelson 2014a). As I have shown in the previous chapter, unruliness and aggression are hallmarks of both the thug and the redneck.

When the theme of rage appeared across interviews, it was most often coupled with discussions of engaging in emotion management to shift expressions of aggression. Some men could control their anger through recognizing that anger and talking themselves down. Physical exercise was another common tactic to control anger and aggression. For example, Bobby (Suburban, Southeast, 31, white, Straight, 1.5 years) relayed this advice to trans men first starting testosterone:

You're gonna have a attitude change. You're gonna be an asshole until you get your level right. Expect it. Okay. Make sure the people around you expect it. And if you can't control it, learn how [pause] quickly. Work out, punching bag, whatever you gotta do...Because if you don't have a way to take the aggression out, you'll take it out on the people around—not physically, but, you'll just, you know, you'll gripe at the people around you. You don't mean to, but you don't have an opening beside the people around you if you don't learn to deal with it. Like me, I learned, you know, pushups. If you get mad, you do pushups. Just do it.

Clearly many of the men experienced anger and rage, but they managed those emotions in order to not be the violent men that they disparaged.

On the whole, men engaged in a variety of methods of emotion management in an effort to control their expressions of anger. The most common tactic to manage the bursts of anger related to starting testosterone was physical exertion, whereas reflection, whether alone or through therapy, was a common strategy for managing more regular expressions of anger and aggression. Respondents reported experiencing shifting levels of anger and aggression along with testosterone therapy and the most common feature of these accounts was their effort to control these expressions.

Feeling Calm and Feeling Right

While there was fear across the sample in regard to increased anger due to testosterone therapy, and some instances of this, more than half of the men in the sample

actually reported feeling more calm as a result of testosterone therapy. A number of men went from having extreme problems with anger to feeling generally more composed and reporting significantly less anger after starting testosterone. Cooper (Rural, Midwest, 26, white, omnisexual, 4 years) worried about his anger getting worse upon starting testosterone, but this was not the case:

The testosterone—from others' experience and my doctor's experience—my experience has been rather unusual. It actually calms my anger. I have had anger issues and that's another thing I'm going to therapy for. And the testosterone actually calms that. I was a little bit concerned about it, but I thought, "Well, I already have the anger of a guy. How much worse could it go?" But I found that it actually helped.

He was surprised with his decreasing anger with testosterone and noted that it was unusual, though the results from this sample suggest that it may not be as unusual as his doctor and others think.

Aidan (Urban Southeast, 21, white, Pansexual, 1 year) too described extreme anger and violence, which lessened after transition. He described his mental state at the time, "I was really aggressive. I wasn't happy with myself, my life, with anything." During this period there were several incidents where he hit his girlfriend and even made her bleed. As he recounted these incidents he expressed remorse even though he said that she brought it upon herself and used other similar language as an excuse for his violence. Regardless, he did not want to continue to be aggressive and violent:

I don't wanna hurt anyone. It killed me to see her bleed. It was a terrible experience. I felt so bad about it, but I just snapped. You just don't make decisions at that time—it just fucking happens. So, since I've been on the T and transitioning, I'm a lot more calm. I don't get mad about things. I don't get frustrated. You know, a lot of people will say it's like compared to 'roid rage or whatever. You get really aggressive—and I don't. Like I've had one time that I got mad. I just like flipped my shit and it was at my GPS, so... my GPS can handle my wrath. That was the only time.

Everything else, I actually think I handle things a lot more calmly than ever before, 'cause I would really jump to that aggressive stage.

Though Aidan came from a past of being physically abusive, starting testosterone reportedly made him calmer and he felt more in control of his emotions. This control was particularly evident in that he could direct his anger in an appropriate direction, toward an object rather than a person.

Testosterone therapy was also reported to change how respondents expressed anger. Eric (Urban, Midwest, 22, white, asexual, 3 years) had been particularly afraid of increased anger, because of previous incidents of rage and physical violence:

My anger got me in trouble once just a bit—probation for nine months and anger management. Basically, I assaulted someone. Anger. [Who was it?] Do you really wanna know? It was my mom. As I've told you, my mom is close to me. We're much tighter these days but... Yeah. [Do you think that's something that could happen again?] Like me? I don't think so. I actually don't. I mean [pause] sure, I get angry, but I tend to take it out on myself, sometimes physically, but, you know... I have more internalized things, I guess. Which isn't always a good thing, but... I don't see myself taking it out on other people.

Eric described being afraid that the diagnosed mental health issues that contributed to his assault on his mother would worsen with testosterone therapy. In actuality, he reported that he was somewhat calmer with testosterone. He reported a tendency to instead internalize his feelings instead of externalizing them through physical violence against others. Again, these violent incidents among respondents, whether before or after transition, were primarily directed toward women in their family, especially intimate partners.

Jason (Suburban, Midwest, 36, white, gay male, 12 years) had a similar experience where his anger lessened after he started testosterone, but rather than a direct chemical effect on his emotions, he attributed his calm to his satisfaction with the

physical changes related to transition, which enabled him and other trans men to be recognized by others as men. He explained:

Lots of guys worry about rage and just thinking that adding testosterone, they're just gonna become these angry guys. I can tell them from my own experience and from my friends, it was very much the opposite effect. It's like we spent so much time being angry because of who other people perceived us to be, and then once those hormones took over and we could see ourselves in the mirror, that anger dissipates. It takes a little bit of time, but, you know, as, as you grow up, and, as, as I call it "growing up," you know, "on T," you really start to see yourself and that rage just kind of goes away. It's not there.

It is likely that a mix of the bodily effects of testosterone, the social changes of transition—a long anticipated goal for many of the men—and having their gender identities reliably recognized by others shaped these changing feelings. This sudden or eventual calm was one of the most consistent reports in relation to transitioning through testosterone therapy.

This newfound sense of calm was often difficult for the men to name, other than saying that they finally "feel right" in their bodies. When I asked Raphael (Urban, Midwest, 38, Mexican, Queer, 1.5 years) about the effects of testosterone he said:

I am surprised at how good I feel within my own skin. I don't think I was expecting to feel that good or confident. I just feel way more, I guess, confident or comfortable, which is really nice.

Aaron (Urban, Midwest, 24, white, "I wouldn't", 5 years) recalled a similar feeling when describing the effect of testosterone:

I went on testosterone, and emotionally, it was...I felt so much better. I started feeling really comfortable in my body in a way I hadn't expected or looked for or been aware that I wasn't feeling. I was aware that I wasn't super-comfortable, but it was like this huge weight that I didn't know I was carrying.

This general bodily sense of “feeling right” was difficult for the men to describe in much more detail other than an overall positive feeling that confirmed that taking testosterone was the right decision. This “rightness” was associated with increased confidence.

According to Turner and Stets (2006), individuals in positions of power are more likely to experience emotions like confidence and security. Thus, part of feeling could be attributed to moving into the relative privilege of being recognized as a man.

Moving into the social status of man as well as becoming more gender conforming may contribute to these feelings of calm and confidence. As shown by the findings regarding treatment in the previous chapter, when respondents are recognized as men they are generally afforded more respect and given space. It is likely that one would feel better when one is suddenly listened to and given space by others. It is also feasible that since treatment varies by race and class, this experience differs by degree for men depending on their social location and the spatial context where they interact. It is notable that the surprise that many men reported as they became calmer upon starting testosterone reflects the strength of the popularly constructed connection between testosterone and aggression.

Properly Angry

Men across the sample did not embrace excessive displays of anger, even if they found them understandable at times, but they did identify contexts and particular ways of expressing anger that were acceptable. According to these narratives, anger is something to be used judiciously, often in more extreme situations, and is most appropriate when used in the service of others. Thus, control was the key component of the proper relationship to anger for men.

Overall, interviewees admired men who could control their anger. Doug (Urban, Southeast, 24, white, straight, 7 years) saw his grandfathers as models because of their control of anger, a core component of who they are as men:

Beaver Cleaver's dad. That's my grandfather. Never said a bad word about anybody—never seen him angry, ever. The most I've ever seen the man angry was if my grandmother does something he doesn't like he'll chuckle and say her name. It's just like, "Oh, Izzy." I mean, he's a 1950's man. My other grandfather, he won't say a word unless he gets angry, but he doesn't, he's not angry like any way you could see. Like, the last man that was treating my mom wrong, grandpa found out about it and granny actually called her, and she was just like, "You know your dad's gonna get the gun, right?" He's just not playing around. And you don't think he would ever shoot anybody, but he would be the man standing on the front porch with the gun that you think's gonna shoot you. He's the same way [as Doug's other grandfather]. Never heard him say a bad word about anybody, never heard him angry...or never seen him angry. You know he's mad...because he's just in the corner looking at you. And, you know, he could literally jump out of the chair and tear you to pieces...but he's eighty-two years old, and he looks like the Indian that was crying on the Cherokee Trail commercials. That's what he kind of looks like. He's got that really soft face...but there's just like a strength that comes out of him that, you know.

Doug admires the paternal kindness he sees in both of his grandfathers. His white grandfather is more easygoing while his other grandfather, who is Cherokee, gets angrier, but keeps it under control. Both grandfathers very much exemplify the regular guy, particularly in its Southern incarnation, though his Cherokee grandfather can bring to bear the threat of violence when needed. The admirable quality in each of his grandfathers is their ability to control their emotional displays and not be aggressive or otherwise excessively angry. For his Cherokee grandfather, the extreme emotional display of aggression only comes out in the appropriate context of defending his daughter. His ability to wield the potential for violence, standing on the porch with this

gun, in the protection of others, but not having to actually use that violence is the hallmark for an appropriate display of anger for Doug.

Like Doug's grandfather, anger on others' behalf, particularly in the service of vulnerable populations, was consistently marked as an appropriate venue to display anger. Michael (Urban, West, 40, white, Queer, 2 years) worked with poor and often homeless LGBT youth. Though he would not generally characterize himself as an angry person, he did experience increased anger in particular situations after transition:

I get angrier on others' behalves. I get angry on my youths' behalves, the kids I work with. Yeah, for me it was just kind of part of the package of transitioning. [Do you do anything with that anger?] Yeah, I do research. I write things and I talk to people about what happens for my youth and I go to conferences and I'm loud about it, sometimes.

The advocacy and activism that results from Michael's anger show that it is not necessarily a harmful emotion. In fact, as Audre Lorde (1984b) argues, anger can be a useful way to communicate a response to injustice and inequality. Thus, the suppression of anger is not always ideal and can be used to close off important forms of communication.

Anger was often viewed as acceptable when it was relabeled as assertiveness. The relabeling of aggression to assertiveness is fascinating considering the body of research that suggests that the same behavior might be labeled as "bitchy" or "angry" and thus, inappropriate and excessive in a woman and assertive and appropriate for a man. Even when others did not affirm their "assertiveness", men appealed to a basic sense of right and wrong and feeling compelled to enforce that distinction in the service of those they thought needed protection. Dylan (Suburban, Midwest, 36, white, asexual [leaning bisexual], 6 years) volunteered regularly with a program that distributed food to homeless

people in a local park. During one of the distribution events a man started preaching about “fire and brimstone” to the people in line for food. Dylan intervened with the other man and asked him to only speak to individuals rather than the whole group, because the religious message might have been making people uncomfortable. Throughout his description of the events, Dylan reported that he was calmly assertive, but one of the supervisors did not see it that way. He described what happened when they returned from the event:

Well, we get back and one of the co-leaders comes up to me and reams me about it. Says I can't do that, “It's a public park. We can't tell people what to do.” She had started in on me, and—this is another thing. She said I was sensitive and that also ticked me off, because it's not so much that I'm sensitive, it's just that I know what's right and I know what's wrong...and if I feel something is wrong, I'm going to act. She was saying, “Even if there was somebody doing hate speech down there, we couldn't tell them to stop.” And I went off and I said, “We'd better. This organization better stand up for people and say, “This is not right. What that man was doing was not right.”

Dylan justified his intervention with the man in the park and his subsequent argument with the leader through an appeal to a general sense of right and wrong in the service of those that were less fortunate than him. While his ideals of protection might be noble, his behavior evidences a desire to control the situation and his labeling his behavior as assertiveness rather than anger frames it as rational.

Altogether, the men in the sample showed that they valued masculine expressions that demonstrated control over anger. In these narratives anger can be appropriately expressed in order to help or protect people who are weaker or more marginalized than themselves—women, children, and others seen as vulnerable. These emotional displays were affirmed through relabeling these displays as assertiveness rather than aggression, and appealing to a general sense of right and wrong. This frames the behavior as a

rational response rather than an emotional one. Throughout these narratives of anger, trans men use both their bodily experience of emotions related to anger to distinguish men from women and differentiate between model men like Doug's grandfathers and unacceptable men who were prone to uncontrolled violence. This emotional control at its center is about disciplining excessive emotionality; crying, which I turn to in the next section, is the most obvious sign of this.

BOYS DON'T CRY

Crying was the affective display that was most connected to women and femininity in respondents' narratives of emotional change with transition. Nearly every interviewee that mentioned crying reported that they cried less often after starting testosterone therapy than when they lived as women. As I will demonstrate in this section, crying is predominantly seen as the antithesis of emotional control and rationality, though it is understood as appropriate for men in particular contexts.

Across these narratives, crying was closely associated with women and women's excessive emotional expression. Saul's (Urban, West, 47, white, Queer/Apparently heterosexual, 14 years) parents had difficulty believing that he could transition to live as a man because of his propensity for crying:

When I told my parents that I was transitioning they were shocked because as a woman I was pretty soft, very gentle, sensitive and all that good stuff. "But you cry at everything! You can't be a guy!" [laugh] It's like, "Yeah yeah. That's the hormones. They're not right for me. I need something different."

For his parents, Saul's emotional expressiveness and propensity to cry before transition erased any ambiguity or possibility that he could be anything but a woman. Saul went on to say that these emotional expressions may have partly been a way of

“overcompensating,” because he did not want his gender to appear ambiguous prior to transition, in addition to having the wrong hormone in his body. Thus, Saul connected crying to both women and estrogen.

An inability to cry as easily as before was common in men’s reports of distance and dulling of their emotions with the start of testosterone therapy. Holden (Suburban Midwest, 25, white, Queer, 5 years) presented the typical narrative of not needing or being able to be as emotionally expressive after starting hormone therapy and noted that he no longer talked to his mother about his feelings. Like Holden, a few even lamented the loss of crying as a form of emotional release and had to work to find other ways to release emotion:

The ability to cry or the lack of ability to cry now like, being on T. That’s different too. Just finding another way to release emotion. I can’t release the tears. [Have you found other outlets for that?] Going to work out sometimes but I don’t stick with that plan unless I’m super upset or something. Then I’ll go work out. But yeah, it’s kind of hard trying to find other outlets, because sometimes just being able to cry is nice. I kind of miss that.

Though the majority of men do not report missing the ability to cry, like Holden, they do report a very similar inability to cry as connected to their overall decrease in emotional expression and increase in emotional control.

Men reported that the shift from excessive emotionality to calm rationality was an overall improvement, even if some respondents missed emotional connections to others or the ability to release emotions as easily. Uncontrollable emotions and bodily feelings, often connected in these narratives to their former menstrual cycles, were described by interviewees as chaotic in contrast to the control that went along with their new emotional

states as men. Phillip's (Suburban, Southeast, 28, white, bisexual, 3 years) narrative exemplifies this trend across experiences:

It's been different. Emotionally, it's been different. Because, I was so up and down before and I would cry all the time. You know, I was so depressed... I mean, I would just have so much emotion as a woman, and now, I mean, yeah, do I still occasionally cry at some things? Like when my sister passed? Or, if I just am frustrated with life a certain day? Is it a lot? No, not at all, but it's better. Because I was just, I felt so overwhelmed with emotion...I mean it was just terrible and then the mood swings and everything was just ridiculous. More than normal [women], and without that the quality of life's so much better.

This excessive emotionality, as exemplified by crying, was connected to women and often associated this with the menstrual cycle in trans men's narratives and was then contrasted with a calmer emotional state after testosterone therapy. The excessiveness of emotion and bodily intensities as a woman is exemplified by Phillip's description of the affective turmoil he remembers before the onset of his monthly period and the relative control over his emotions now. This contrast is especially clear between his life before, when he "would cry all the time" and his life now, when he identifies particular contexts or events that prompt this emotional display—his sister's death, for example. Notably, Phillip recounted later that these infrequent incidences of crying were unlikely to occur in public spaces. Thus, his formerly difficult to control feelings became controllable and only appeared in particular contexts.

Rationality in opposition to excessive emotional display repeated as a theme throughout nearly all discussions of crying. Josh's (Rural, West, 43, white, Mostly Heterosexual, 5 years) experience illustrates this pattern:

I mean, it's just like, if you were to ask what my feelings were about something, I would have to search. I still have feelings. I still have emotions, but unlike before, it just isn't at the top ready to bubble out. [How is that for you?] I like it better. I'm in more control of what it is I

tell people and what I can tell people. ‘Cause it just felt like [before], “God I can’t keep this in.” And the whole crying when I was angry, because nobody gets that. They just think that you’re all hurt or whatever. They don’t get that you’re so infuriated that that’s the response that comes. I know a lot of women that that happens to. More than it doesn’t. So I don’t get angry very often now, but when I do it’s more, it’s not as visceral, it’s not as visceral at all. It’s more in my head, and before I say anything or whatever, I can pretty much not just blurt out stuff. I can think about it, and be more rational about it... It’s like I’m not emotional anymore. I have emotions and I feel them, but I’m not so emotional that I can’t keep it under wraps. I really appreciate that. I mean, I still get touched by movies, but I don’t cry so often at movies, but I still can. I was worried at first that I couldn’t be touched, and then I went and saw a movie, and something happened with a friend and I realized oh, “I can quite easily be touched. It’s just different.”

Josh experiences distance from his emotions with transition and reports increased emotional control. In this narrative, he contrasts women’s excessive emotional display of crying, especially from anger and frustration as opposed to sadness, with his rationality. Similar to men’s control of anger, respondents note particular contexts, spaces and events when they are able to cry—inside darkened movie theaters and when a tragic event happens to a friend.

It is noteworthy that the previous discussion of anger and the coming discussion of sexuality are generally connected to increasingly visceral bodily experiences, in contrast to reports of lessening visceral bodily reactions related to crying, though in the case of anger these affective states are rationalized. These narratives evidence a shift in bodily intensities and respondents’ experience and articulation of these feelings in relation to emotional expression and emotional control. Yet the way these bodily experiences are expressed varies based on the feeling rules of various contexts.

Controlling where and when they cry was a hallmark of their masculine expression for a portion of the men, both before and after their transition. Paul’s (Rural,

West, 30, white, maybe bisexual, 7 years) experience over time illustrates this pattern, even though initially his narrative seems to contradict the pattern where men cried less. Control is still central to the narrative. He talked about how he was much more open-minded and flexible now, because he no longer “had something to prove.” He described when this change happened:

Once I started feeling comfortable in my own skin. I started letting my guard down and I didn't really care what people thought. I think I was more comfortable sharing stuff with people. Because lots of stuff I didn't want anybody knowing, 'cause I didn't want to look like I was vulnerable. That's why when I was younger I wouldn't cry, especially in public. Absolutely not. And if I felt like I was going to, I would leave the area, or leave the room, and do it in private. I was not an emotional person. I did not want to show emotion, especially crying in front of other people. I'm not sure why it was, I guess I felt like it was a weakness and I didn't want to show weakness. Now I don't really care. Last summer I was invited to be a witness at, one of my coworkers and her significant other's lesbian wedding. And it was just going to be the two of them, the person doing the ceremony, a friend of them and me. And so their other friend and me were going to be the witnesses. And at the ceremony, as soon as it started, and it was such a happy time, I felt little tears welling up in the corner of my eye, but I wasn't ashamed of that. In fact, we kind of made jokes about it later because the other guy who was being the witness, he was the same way. He's more of a like, I wouldn't say he's flamboyant, but if you met him you'd totally know that he's gay. And so we kind of made jokes about, you know as soon as it started I felt little tears and it was sort of like a funny thing. So you know, because it was a happy time.

Paul experienced a change over time in his willingness to cry in front of others. He went from not being able to cry in public during his stepfather's funeral to shedding a few tears at a wedding or, as he described elsewhere, a particularly touching movie or television show would also provoke tears. He contrasted his previous rigidity with more flexibility in line with the gay man who also cried at the wedding. There is a subtle suggestion in Paul's story that gay men are closer to this kind of emotionality, but that crying for both of them, even in this setting, was remarkable enough to joke about afterward. When I

asked him why he had been uncomfortable in the past with others seeing him cry, he replied:

I think it had a lot to do with my brain being male and not realizing it. And always knowing that when you're younger, even though you're not male, if you're around other little boys, and they like skin their knees and they're like crying to their mom or their dad or whatever, especially their dad, and dad's are all like, "Boys don't cry." You pick up on that. I think it had a little bit to do with that. But mainly the whole weakness thing, because that's another male thing. If you cry in front of people you're showing weakness. Well I'm not a weak person. I don't want to show anybody that I'm weak. So I'm going to do my damndest to not show emotions, even if that is a detriment. That's just the way I felt when I was younger. Now I don't really care, although I'm still not really a crier.

Thus, what Paul describes as an innate gender identity as a man made him more susceptible to the messages about emotional control boys around him received as children. Overall in his explanation, it was the need to distance himself from vulnerability that was the primary driver for extreme emotional control that characterized his life before transition. Paul actually sees his increased emotional expression as a sign of strength and comfort as a man, with the insinuation being that men that cannot express emotions are doing so to cover for insecurity. At the same time, Paul continues to distance himself from being "a crier" and still notes it is in particular contexts that this is appropriate. In other words, though his transition narrative is one of opening emotional expression, it is still one of emotional control. In fact, his expressions have become more contextually appropriate than they were in the past.

While most of the men attributed their change in crying behavior directly to the effects of testosterone, there is also the strong cultural message that men like Paul reported: "boys don't cry." These social expectations for men's emotionality likely had an effect on the men's ability to cry, especially as they worried most about

misrecognition of their gender identity when early in transition. Overall, crying was marked as a particularly feminine and excessive emotional expression. For the most part, respondents reported not being able to cry as easily or as often once they transitioned. Some men missed the emotional release of crying, while most appreciated their increased emotional control and ability to rationally respond to stimulus. This rationality was a relative relief in contrast to the excessive and out of control feeling of crying.

In the end, the ideal relation to crying for most men in the sample was to be able to cry in particularly sad or sentimental contexts—such as funerals or weddings—whereas they could mostly handle day-to-day problems while maintaining a controlled emotional display. In the face of the apparent myth of men’s total inability to cry, many politicians will now cry in public (Shields 2002), but this does not necessarily mean men showing a vulnerability that threatens the maintenance of patriarchal relations. As Hondagneu-Sotelo and Messner argue, “a situationally appropriate display of sensitivity such as crying, rather than signaling weakness, has instead become a legitimating sign” (1994:204). Thus, crying in appropriate situations in the face of the myth that “boys don’t cry” is more likely evidence of hybridity rather than a sign of substantive change in social relations.

AFFECTIVE SEXUAL CHANGES

Nearly half of the respondents mentioned an increase in sexual desire with testosterone therapy¹⁸. It is common for trans people to experience changes in their sexual practices and the meanings of those practices with transition (Schilt and Windsor 2014).

¹⁸ This includes nearly every man who mentioned changes in sexuality with testosterone therapy. A few mentioned decreased desire, but the rest of the overall sample did not necessarily mention a change one way or another. This topic did not come up in every interview because some men were uncomfortable talking about their sexuality and for others it was not a notable part of their transition, which suggests they did not experience a striking change.

Like anger, this tended to be stronger early on in transition and taper somewhat over time. Overall though, they reported experiencing lasting changes in their libido, sexual object choice, and other elements of sexuality¹⁹. Men in the sample still valued an element of control over what they often described as nearly uncontrollable and difficult to describe bodily sexual urges during transition. Yet, the most striking change for most men with transition was the relationship between romantic emotions and sexuality.

Barely Controlled Urges

The men that reported increases in sexual desire early on in testosterone therapy typically reported thinking about sex constantly, wanting to engage in sexual acts more frequently, and feeling sexual desire more intensely than before. As James (Urban, West, 39, white, straight, 4.5 years) explained:

A lot of guys find out when they start testosterone that sex changes a lot, as in how much more horny you are. The libido's bananas. It's out of control.

As part of this increased libido men described the urge to masturbate much more frequently and in places where they wouldn't have before, such as several men mentioning masturbating in the bathroom at work in the first few months of taking testosterone. In addition, a number of men described an increasing interest in pornography and other visual sexual stimuli.

A majority of the interviewees that reported increased sexual desire shared a strikingly similar story that, for them, exemplified this period of time and their barely controlled sexual urges. Like Sebastian above, respondents frequently said that they experienced an increase in sexual arousal from visual stimuli, whether from pornographic

¹⁹ Various hormone therapies have been used over time to increase sexual desire and affect sexual function, yet no causal effect has been proven beyond colloquial reports (Hoberman 2005).

images or looking at another person. These stories of barely controlled sexual urges all involved intense arousal from looking at a woman in a non-sexual context, where trying to enact their desires would likely be seen as inappropriate or even threatening. For Joel (Urban, West, 49, white, primarily attracted to women, 22 years), the first of these experiences marked a change in sexual object choice with transition:

I did notice certain things, mostly with myself. I was somewhere, for instance, and I was talking to a woman and we were alone. This was about six months after I started testosterone, so I really was just barely passing. And she was wearing a sweater over her top. Well, she was hot, so while we were talking she just took her sweater off and I almost jumped through the ceiling. I mean I almost jumped through the ceiling and I almost ran out of the room, it was like "I'm not allowed to be here. She's taking her clothes off." And she said "It's ok, you can stay." And it turned out she had a top on underneath, but the point being that up to that point, I had only been interested in males and then all of sudden, on the testosterone, I became interested in females. It was like a light switch went off. No more interest in males, only interested in females. And it was instinctual that, for instance, she took off her sweater and I jumped.

Joel's story signifies not only his changing sexual attraction, but also his realization that as a man he was subject to new (hetero)sexual mores and interactional rules. His attraction to the woman signaled the possible transgression if she was to undress in front of him, but it was also signaled by the mere fact that he was a man and she was a woman. Thus, her disrobing in front of him became a sexual situation where it would not necessarily have been when he lived as a woman. He appeared to have this visceral response to the woman removing her top not only due to his new sexual desire, but it also shows the ways in which heterosexuality shaped the relations between himself and a woman.

These incidents often involved staring at parts of women's bodies, which the men telling each story reported thinking was probably inappropriate, but difficult to stop. For

example, Phillip (Suburban, Southeast, 28, white, bisexual, 3 years) shared this story about his boss:

My boss, I couldn't stand her, but I remember having a meeting with her one time and I couldn't stop staring at her breasts. And I'm like, "Are you freakin' serious? Stop looking at 'em." I'm telling myself, literally, in my mind, "Stop looking at her tits," and, "What is my problem?" But I mean really there's not much control especially in that pubescent boy or, you know, adolescent boy thing. It's like this drive. I mean it was, it was rough at first [laugh]...I was not realizing it was gonna be that high and I'm like, "She was in a lot of cleavage, I mean probably more than she should have been, you know." But, I'm like lookin' at 'em, and I'm like, "God, it's so obvious. I'm doing it, too," and I couldn't stop. I'm like, "What the hell's gone wrong?" [laughter] That's toned down of course.

The struggle in Phillip's internal discussion was a common feature of these stories. In addition, it was common for men to say that these incidents, and their constant thinking about sex, gave them empathy for adolescent boys experiencing the onset of puberty.

Mario (Urban West, 31, white, Bisexual, 4.5 years) described changes in his sexual arousal at the beginning of transition:

The first year is when your sex drive is the most out of control. It calms down after a while. Now I can handle it, but the first year was ridiculous. It's like you're a 14 year old boy and it was almost immediate. It was like, I could tell within the first couple of weeks of first starting to take it. And it's also, part of it is also that you're really excited that you started taking your hormones and so you're like jacked up a little bit, but once it starts going in your system it really was just getting more and more. The whole first year it was just crazy, anything, nothing, would turn you on, like anything. A fucking picture of something. Which is something that would never before actually make me horny enough to want to have sex or to jerk off. Like some random picture or some thing on TV. That's what I mean about visual. I feel like women don't operate that way, where they'll see a picture and get really charged up about something, but I totally would. Or things that would never turn me on before would.

Mario reported finding that taking testosterone, in addition to the initial excitement of transition, changed his libido and the kinds of stimuli that aroused him. I asked what surprised him most about taking testosterone and he said:

I expected that. I definitely knew a little bit going into it about like, I knew my sex drive would get big. I didn't realize to that extent. I remember hearing this guy talk about it where you feel almost like you're turning into a monster or it's this force that you don't know how to control yet. You know? I remember being on a bus and there was this woman who was in her late 30s. She was in some like little power suit, which is of course is something that I always love, [that] I think is really hot. But I was standing up holding something and she was sitting down and I like had to fight with myself not to...because I could kind of almost a little bit see down her shirt...but it's like I could feel myself, like that was one of those moments where I'm just like, "Don't do that!" 'Cause if someone sees me doing that, it would look really bad. Especially if she sees me doing it...but it was almost like I had to fight with my own eyeballs not to look at it because it was so strong. The urge was so strong for me to do it. It's not like I'm going to jump on her or something, but it's just like that act of leering in a way, which a lot of women see as being fucked up and pervy and over sexual and stuff. But, sometimes its almost like you can't control it.

Like Phillip, Mario felt like his behavior was inappropriate on the bus, but he could barely restrain his gaze. Across these similar stories, the men emphasized the bodily and barely articulable sexual urges that attended their early days on testosterone, but as their physical transition progressed these urges became more easily controlled and less urgent.

These oft repeated stories seemed to be so striking to each man because they felt like they were on the edge of control and most of them found that somewhat disturbing. None of the respondents said that they had actually sexually assaulted a woman or that anyone had noticed their inappropriate looking, but they still appeared to feel ambivalent about these incidents. On one hand, they found these barely controlled sexual urges to be uncomfortable. On the other hand, these desires were a marker of coming into being a man, just like adolescent boys traverse puberty. This conferred a sense of authenticity as they recognized their own bodily impulses that they assumed lined up with the experiences of other men.

The more troubling aspects of these narratives of barely controlled urges subtly feed into the rape culture narrative of sexual assault being a result of men's natural irrepressible lust, as opposed to the feminist interpretation of sexual assault as a form of social domination. In other words, if these "good" men can hardly control these impulses, it becomes more understandable that some men cannot control themselves. Although they did not necessarily overtly say this, there is a suggestion across interviews that a lack of control of their sexuality is a sign of hypermasculinity. We see here that the line is not necessarily having strong sexual urges or not, but rather a thin line of being able to (barely) control those desires and express them in the proper contexts. Learning to control these excessive bodily urges, feelings that women and other people without testosterone coursing through their bodies could never understand, was part of the larger project of emotional control in different contexts at the heart of respondents' ideals of themselves as men.

Sex Among Men (Without Feeling)

I've tried to explain it to women and just be like [smack] that, that just need. It goes beyond want; it goes beyond... I don't need the touchy-feely. I don't need any of that. I just need to get off and go on about my day. – Jason

One of the most significant and consistent changes that trans men reported with taking testosterone was that, like Jason (Suburban, Midwest, 36, white, gay male, 12 years) in the quote above, they felt less of a need for a romantic emotional component to their sexual activity than before. The affective sexual urges, as described in the previous section, were often difficult to name for respondents, in a pre-linguistic sense. In general, as the men found that their sexuality was less connected to romance or emotional expressiveness, sex with other men became more appealing. A significant portion of the

sample gendered their sexual relationships by engaging in sexual relationships devoid of romantic emotions with men, while reserving emotionally intimate sexual and romantic relations with women.

In an interesting juxtaposition of the virilizing effects of testosterone usually associated with heterosexual men, more than one-third of the sample reported an increased sexual interest in men after taking testosterone²⁰, though some never acted on it, and even more mentioned that this was a common experience for men who took testosterone. For example, Felix (Urban, Midwest, 33, white, queer, 8 years social) talked about this potential as he pondered his decision to start taking testosterone:

I think that's one of those things that I'm a little bit nervous about starting T. A friend of mine, who actually lives in another Midwestern state, took me aside one day and he was like, "You know that you will be taking gay juice, right?"

Using the phrase "gay juice," Felix's friend referenced the common idea that trans men developing sexual interest in men during transition is a direct effect of testosterone. Yet Felix, like a number of other men, had a different explanation for this phenomenon:

I was like, "I'm not going to be taking gay juice." My personal theory, my hypothesis, is that the people who start taking T and their bodies start looking more and more like [a man], and they get comfortable with it, they start becoming less and less resentful of men. I think it's not like T makes you gay. So we'll see, I'm very happy in my current relationship. So, I would be shocked if I ended up changing—if my sexual orientation changes so dramatically that for some reason I may not be able to continue this relationship. Also, I just really like girly girls. So yeah, I don't know, we'll see. That's a big question though. I'm not ruling out any possibilities.

²⁰ Testosterone and other hormones were once used by doctors in efforts to "cure" homosexuality (Hoberman 2005). These efforts reflected homophobia rather than medical evidence and were ineffective.

Felix's explanation for what he has seen in others relies more on the sorts of changes that happen as a result of transition and being recognized as a man and less on the direct influence of testosterone on his body.

Men reported a fascination with other men's bodies that encouraged sexual exploration with other men. Sex with men provided a way to learn about embodied aspects of being a man, through the exploration of others' manhood. In other words, this offered a way for men who had little experience with men's bodies to get some understanding of how parts, such as penises, feel and work. Seth (Urban, Midwest, 23, black/white, 2 years) describes this:

I guess for me there's always been an element of physical attraction to men. I think a lot of that was just like, "Oh, I want this body." There is so much that was that. Now, I'm definitely okay with being like, "Oh yeah, that dude is a good looking dude. He is a hot dude." I don't know, again, I can see that, but as it relates to emotionally, I like women. Sexually sometimes I've heard that it's really common for trans guys to kind of go through a phase of being physical with men and maybe that leads to something or not. Honestly, I feel like I have kind of been affected. Not that I have really done anything about it, but I think that there's a sense of catharsis. At least for me that's what it would be, because I am pretty good visually...I can only imagine that if I were touching [another man's penis] something that it would allow me to even feel more like that was happening to me...I say this now, and if I was actually in the situation, would I really? I don't know. But I don't really feel super attracted to men emotionally, so I don't really ever foresee myself having a boyfriend or having a fling with a guy or anything like that. That really is a woman. But I'm comfortable enough, I think, in my sexuality to recognize that maybe something [with men], but I don't know, [it's] very separate.

Thus, Seth imagined sex with a man would help him explore a male body and imagine how sex would feel with more typical male genitals. Both Seth and other men that actually acted on their desires reported a divide between emotional relationships with women and sexual relationships with men. Sex with men was seen as less complicated, because it involved sexual engagement without emotional entanglement.

A majority of the men in the sample that talked about their sexuality said that they no longer wanted or needed a romantic emotional component to sex. Instead, they most wanted to satisfy their affective bodily desires without the “touchy-feely stuff” that Jason mentioned above. For a number of interviewees, sexual relations with men offered just that. Ian (Urban, Midwest, 27, white, Gay, 6.5 years) went from mostly having relationships with women to mostly men after transition:

Obviously when you're taking hormones it increases your sex drive and I think my approach to sex is different. It shifted. Rather than being more of just an enjoyable and deep bonding relationship to being like, this is just part of just a simple physical need. Like, there was a shift in mentality in that sense, but it was also how just like, sexuality goes. Being comfortable with myself as a guy has really helped because now I feel like I can actually have relationships, you know, if I want to go out and meet somebody for sex, I can do that and I don't have to feel weird about it being like, you know, because it's like yeah, now if you don't like this that's fine. I was able to come to terms that I've always been attracted to guys. That's something I've known, but I've repressed it.

Thus, for Ian both the shift in his sexuality from an emotional base to an affective need as well as his comfort being seen as a man allowed him to engage in sex with other men, whether through long-term relationships or shorter term encounters.

Luke (Rural, Midwest, 47, white, Pansexual, 5 years) also experienced a surprising change to his sexuality when he transitioned:

When I started to transition all hell broke loose. I found myself looking at guys all the time. I found myself wanting to have sex without protection [pause] in like cemeteries...anywhere I could find. It really tore me up. It turned my world upside down, because I identified as a lesbian my entire freakin' life, even as a kid and now this. And I'm like, “What?”

Eventually he found a measure of relief in his new sexuality. Luke reported that the one night encounters he found with men through a popular personals website were satisfying because they fit his new matter-of-fact sexual desires. He said:

In fifteen months, I've probably met about fourteen people. So, just for a one-night stand kind of thing. Yeah, I just want it quick and easy, don't wanna cuddle, whatever. "Do it, please. Thank you."

Each of the fourteen people he found through the website were men, though prior to transition he had identified as a lesbian and primarily had sexual relationships with women. Again, like Luke, many of the men made a distinction between emotional relationships with women and relationships with men that were only sexual.

Interestingly, while men like Seth supposed they would only want sexual relationships with men and more romantic relationships with women (but had not actually had sex with men), about ten of the men in the sample had sexual relationships with other men, but stated that they were only interested in longer term emotional relationships with women. Woody (Urban, West, 32, white, Queer, 7 years) had considered himself bisexual when he first became sexually active in high school. He had sexual relationships with both men and women for some time, though as he became more uncomfortable living as a woman he stopped having sexual relationships with men. He said he could not bear for them to see him as a woman, but once he transitioned he was comfortable having sex with men again. He occasionally felt frustrated that because he is a trans man, other men assume he will display an emotional expressiveness thought to be typical of women:

I'm supposed to be more sensitive and talk about my feelings and wanna cuddle. I'm like, "Actually, I just wanna suck your dick. I want you to fuck me. I want you to suck my dick, and then I want you to go home." You know, "I don't wanna talk about my feelings and I don't wanna cuddle with you, because that's weird, and that's not what I'm into." And they're like, "Ah!" I've had these conversation with gay guys that know that I'm trans where they're just like, "It's like you're a straight guy," and I'm like, "Well, I kind of am a straight guy." I date exclusively women, but I sleep with men. I never date men; I just sleep with them, you know. And I have like friends that are guys that I sleep with, but it never turns into a romantic situation, and I'm okay with that. You know, I just don't have those feelings for men.

He went on to explain that he does have close emotional friendships with other men, but that he does not mix sexual and romantic relationships with men. Like Ward's (2008) "str8" identified men, part of the way that Woody maintains an identity as a straight guy is through the way he has sex with other men. In Ward's analysis this means that men associate themselves with "straight culture," while taking part in homosexual and homoerotic acts. He went on to explain why he had not been able to have sex with men in the years leading up to transition and what has changed:

It just never really happened again until I transitioned and then it was like I kind of felt more comfortable being with a guy, because I felt like I was finally getting to relate to them the way that I'd always wanted to, which is like, "I am your bro-dude-friend," you know, like, "and we're gonna have sex," and then like continue to be like broing down together. I felt like it was a little bit easier. I know that there are guys that are attracted to like butch dykes, but I feel like it's this, very much in this way that like they perceive that person as female, and I was just like, "I don't really want you to perceive me that way." And, so in the best situations, like when I have sex with a guy, he reacts to me as another male who just has like a sort of differently organized body parts.

As shown in Woody's quote, this distinction between romantic and sexual relationships was another form of emotional control. For these men, romantic emotions were only suitable with women, whereas with men they could purely enjoy sexual pleasure without romantic entanglements because they were labeled as sexual and not emotional spaces. There were, however, men that had long-term romantic relationships with other men, whether these relationships were monogamous or not, and gained immense satisfaction from them, though they were a smaller minority in the sample. Overall, the connection between heterosexuality and emotional relationships reifies a form of heteronormativity as it is joined to the institution of family. In this hybrid masculine formation, sex with other men might be acceptable as long as it does not interfere with the emotional space of

the heterosexual family. One could interpret this as a queer effort of delinking the connection between sexuality and family, but it seems that these sexual practices still reproduce the normativity of emotion in the heterosexual family and thus the superiority of heterosexuality.

Counter Narratives

Many of the men who reported the changes to anger, sexuality, and other affective experiences above attributed these to the effects of testosterone. Some men saw this as solely caused by testosterone, or other physiological differences between men and women, while others viewed it as a combination of multiple factors that caused these changes with transition. A few of the men, however, expressed frustration because they thought other trans men were using testosterone as an excuse to engage in otherwise problematic behavior.

Mario (Urban, West, 31, white, Bisexual, 4.5 years) noted that testosterone created large differences between people who had and had not undergone testosterone therapy. At the same time, he thought other trans men went too far in explaining all behavior changes through this narrative. He said:

I think for a lot of people things come out when they transition that were there before. You know, when people say you get ‘roid rage kind of feelings? Like you get really angry and violent? That is total bullshit unless you happen to have those things naturally. Testosterone does heighten things like that. I mean if you're the kind of person that would let your anger get carried away, then you can get carried away if you have more testosterone in your body. That's always been very interesting to me, like the guys that transition and get to be like these really macho jerk offs and I wonder sometimes if part of it is like that is like their, the epitome of being a guy to them, of like being very macho and being like a very like, it's almost like they're continually having to prove their masculinity by being like that. I mean maybe they're just kind of a jerk anyway. They're just kind of a jerk as a girl and now they're more of a jerk as a guy, but I think the element of being like this macho asshole that's almost

misogynist. That seems so inexcusable coming from where they come from, but it's almost like they take these liberties that they think they can get away with it because they're trans. Because they used to be female it's impossible for them to be misogynistic so they can say and do a lot of things.

Thus, returning to the narrative of overcompensation from the previous chapter, Mario sees this hypermasculinity through expressions of anger, sexual dominance, and misogyny as a possible overcompensation for a threatened masculine self. At the same time, he questions whether trans men take on this unquestioned hypermasculinity because they feel like they can “get away with it.” Jeffrey²¹ (College town, West, 25, white, queer, 4 years), also had misgivings about the connections other trans men made to new behaviors after starting testosterone:

When I was nineteen or twenty and getting ready to start taking T I'd moved to the city to get T in a clinic. This culture, this big bubble of young trans men that was coming up...and we were all pretty new to it, and so was the medical industry, so there was not much dialogue checking the behaviors of transmasculine people. I was experiencing a lot of people in my immediate and extended community just totally using it as a free card. You know, like, “I'm more aggressive because of this,” or, “I'm more horny because of this and so I push boundaries and I'm working it.” Stuff like that. Okay, whatever, maybe your hormones are making you act in these more jerky ways, but now it's your responsibility to learn how to deal with it. And also as a person being on hormones, and, granted, I have been on low dose, however, I've been on it for a long time and a pretty wide range and never anywhere in that range did I experience any of that sort of behavior that I felt like I could excuse. So, being somebody that didn't personally experience it, whenever I hear transmasculine people talking about that, it gets incredibly hard for me to believe and I feel like it's an excuse.

It is possible that this behavior could have reflected more restrictive ideals that have since transformed, but the overall picture does not signal that this hypermasculinity has gone away. What may be more likely is that some men feel comfortable expressing a more

²¹ Jeffery advocated that men should use a lower dose of testosterone than recommended so that bodily changes would occur more slowly—in the same frame of time that cisgender men usually experienced the changes of puberty

hypermasculine gendered self in particular contexts, homosocial contexts for example, whereas they know to show a softer side when in other settings.

Mario's and Jeffrey's statements are examples of the more critical perspectives represented in the narratives of trans men's experiences of transition and emotion. In contrast, other men, Casey for instance, who talked about his barely controlled anger against a bank teller and a woman on the phone, seemed to revel in the changes they reported experiencing and their newfound expressions of a stereotypically masculine self. Most of the men fell somewhere between these two and had some ambivalence about how they enacted various affective changes in interaction. I present these conflicting narratives to show that the sixty men who took testosterone reported a wide variety of affective changes and presented multiple explanations and justifications for their resultant feelings and behavior. This variety in itself provides evidence that there is not a direct line between testosterone and particular feelings for all people and that trans men's understanding and evaluation of each other's experiences is an ongoing conversation among them.

In sum, this section has shown that emotional control is a central theme in men's narratives of the shifting affective states they experience when taking testosterone in relation to anger, calm, crying, and sexuality. These affective impulses and urges changed with this aspect of transition and men tended to display more controlled emotional expressions of calm and assertiveness in contrast to the excessive emotionality of affective states such as crying. The men described sexual urges as barely controlled and told of an overall shift in sexual desire and practices towards those traditionally associated with other men. Increased sexual interest and practice with men would seem to

contradict the traditional connection between idealized masculinity and heterosexuality; however, the connection between heterosexuality and intimacy was maintained through narrating sex with other men as a sexual context without emotion.

In learning to better control their bodily urges they likened themselves to adolescent boys; thus, the achievement of this control was a key part in becoming a man. What was clear throughout these narratives was that respondents' idealized notions of emotion and masculinities were, for the most part, not the traditional ideal of the emotionless man, or the man who can only express anger. Rather, those men were seen as problematic and regressive. Instead, the ideal emotional man of the contemporary period is one who is able to control his emotions, in that he uses his distance from emotions to be rational when the context calls for it and to be more emotionally expressive when appropriate.

Contexts of Emotion

I told my mom, "If I turn out to be half the man that dad was, I'm gonna be twice the man that lots of people are." 'Cause I think men get too much of the, "Boys don't cry," and, "You have to be tough," and, "You have to do this. You can't do that." And I really think the world would be a better place if people would just be themselves...If something's sad and you feel like crying, cry. It doesn't matter if you're a man. Men get sad. You know? It's okay to cry. I have found that since the testosterone, it's very hard for me to do so. It takes a lot. Used to be [snapping fingers] just like that. Oh, yeah. But, I just wanna be the kind of man that accepts people for who they are. You know? Be strong when I need to be, soft when I need to be. —Henry

Henry's (Suburban, Midwest, 49, white, attracted to women, 7 years) description of the relationship to emotion he models on his father denotes a desire for a wider emotional life, in general, for men. Rather than hiding emotional expressions, such as crying, behind a facade of toughness, Henry believes that men should be themselves. Like many of the

interviewees, Henry found it more difficult to cry after starting testosterone and reports a distance from emotional expressiveness. At the same time, his description of the idealized emotional life for men exemplifies the most common pattern across the sample. Rather than being unable to express emotions or, conversely, being overly emotive, the ideal man can be soft when he needs to be and hard when he needs to be.

Thus, the emotional control I have described throughout the chapter is not the complete quashing of emotions at all times, but rather, again, about controlling which emotions are expressed in which contexts. In this final section of the analysis, I look at the contexts where men do and want to express those softer emotions, in other words feelings they thought of as feminine. The negotiation of these spaces reproduces some forms of inequality while they also allow for new formations of masculine expressions.

FAMILY

Throughout the sections above, it comes as little surprise that family and intimate partnerships were the most frequent site where men's discussions of their changing emotions took place and that this was the most common context for discussions of emotion in general. Overall, interviewees saw the family as a site where emotional tenderness should be located, which they often worked to achieve with their partners and children or other family members. Men used the emotional space of family as a safer space to recover from the injuries of other contexts.

For men who emphasized distaste for excessive emotionality, which they saw as weakness, the family was an institutional context where men could and should show softer emotions, at least towards their partners and children. Very much lining up with the more conservative regular guy of the South, Aidan (Urban, Southeast, 21, white,

Pansexual, 1 year) shows his distaste for excessive feminine emotionality and a lack of toughness:

I'm not really into sissy things [laughs]. [What are sissy things?] Whining. I call everyone I know a titty baby. At some point or time in their life, they would get called a titty baby by me. You know, "Suck it up. Quit cryin'." I like to fish and wakeboard and go out on the boat. You know, different things like that compared to other sissy guys who don't wanna get wet or sweat. I'm not really worried about bugs or animals. I'm not gonna go pick up a snake. If there is one, I'll figure out how to get it away from me. I'm not gonna like run and scream. So, things like that. But as far as like my partner goes... I'm kind of a ladies' man. Pretty sweet and sensitive and all. I think about her a lot and different ways to do surprises and stuff like that. Kind of a typical like traditional guy, you know?

Identifying as a "traditional" or regular guy Aidan sees himself as rough and tumble out in the world. For him, "sissies" are fearful and excessively emotional, crying all the time. In contrast, he can handle a potentially frightening situation, like encountering a snake, in a calm and rational manner. Yet, the tenderness and consideration that would make others an object of his ridicule is perfectly acceptable in the context of his relationship with his partner. It is his ability to be tough in the world and soft at home that makes him a regular guy.

Like Aidan, Simon (Urban, Southeast, 49, white, primarily straight, 11 years) connected this emotional toughness and strength to the Southern ideal type of the regular guy and compared himself to this type:

I think I'm kind of different than most Southern men. To me a Southern man is strong. Well, I hope I'm strong, but I also know that I have a tender side...And most Southern men do have tender hearts; they just don't let 'em show very often. 'Cause, you know, you get told, "Boys don't cry. Man up. Grow a set." whatever. I mean, I love sports and almost every Southern man does. See, to me, a man is not just tied up in manual labor or beatin' on the chest or the macho stuff. A man is crying when they put your daughter in your arms, or your son in your arms, because you realize your whole life has just changed and something great's come into it.

Thus, for Simon the tender heart that Southern men cover up is acceptable to expose in the context of new fatherhood. While he must be tough for the outside world, the Southern man should be soft in the family. Even Simon, who wants an even wider range of emotional expression for himself than even the “typical man” in the South, still reaffirms his similarity to this ideal through his emotional strength and love of sports. Thus, even in the face of a stricter ideal, there is still evidence of hybridity.

Learning how to control emotions, such as the kind of excessive anger some trans men experienced early in transition, was the primary aim of emotion work in contexts such as work and family. Sean (Rural, Midwest, 34, white, straight, 11 years) found that his anger hurt his work life and that he no longer wanted to be angry towards his wife:

I would lose my temper a lot more early on in our relationship and somewhere along the line, I just—I don’t know what I thought, if I thought that I was being tougher somehow or if I was being stronger that way or showing strength. But I realized at some point that I was weaker to do that. I wasn’t controlling myself.... that’s always what I thought about being a grownup, then I’d go, “Man, I have to do this self control.” That seems to be the theme of most of the lectures I give to my son.

For Sean to truly be strong he realized that he must control his anger and stop directing it at his wife. Thus, control is another manifestation of the same underlying quality of masculine strength. The family context was also an opportunity to help his son learn to appropriately control anger in order to manage emotions across contexts like his father.

The family represented a site to express softer emotions although certainly some men described family settings that varied from this ideal. These narratives of family exemplify the way in which men talk about expressing emotions differently based on context and this form of emotional control as an ideal. In the next two sections I show how race and class shape these narratives of masculinity and emotion.

SUPPORT SETTINGS

The next most frequent context where men expressed softer emotions was in small group settings with other men. Both one-on-one conversations with men who would be receptive and therapeutic settings or support groups offered contexts where men could be more open about their experiences and express a wider range of emotion. The settings ranged from informal conversation between men to organized support groups. The men in the sample both sought out and created these contexts for other men to manage a variety of emotional issues.

A number of men reported that they were surprised (once they transitioned) about how open other men could be in a one-on-one setting. Jason (Suburban, Midwest, 36, white, gay male, 12 years) said:

You know, guys are much more emotional than they will ever let on. Generally, only to their closest friends. I think they're a little more emotional than women can be; they just deal with it very differently. The man-on-man dynamic is very different than a man and woman dynamic. I consider myself incredibly lucky, because I have the ability to connect with women and men kind of on the same level. I may not be a woman anymore, but I spent enough years with estrogen running through my body that testosterone didn't dummy down.

Several of these men reported that because they had lived part of their lives as women they were better at communicating about their feelings. They said that this made other men and women engage them in emotion talk more often. In general, men tend to be more expressive when others are also being expressive (S. M. Gray and Heatherington 2003).

Men in the sample who were therapists or social workers and ran support groups found that these settings were a place where men could shed the tough demeanor that they carried elsewhere. Wesley (Urban, Southeast, 44, white, pansexual, 20 years)

organized such a group for cisgender men:

I've actually facilitated men's groups for my job. Natal [cisgender] males sit there who are crying to each other about shit, problems they're having with their women, and they will get up and when they walk out the door, they're right back to the, "I'm a super redneck. I'm in control. And that bitch better have dinner waiting for me when I get home and a cold beer on the table," kind of thing. But twenty minutes ago they were crying about the fact that they can't get their woman to blow 'em when they want to. You know? So there's always another side to what you see outside. And if all you ever see is the outside, you might think you're not that. But the culture out here tells these guys you can't be weak in public. It's hard as hell to get men to show up to a friggin' support group. Which is why there's so much domestic abuse. There's a lot of domestic violence out here, a lot more per capita than other parts of the country.

In Wesley's account he draws on the ideal type of the redneck and shows that even these men could open up about their softer feelings and cry in the setting of the support group.

These men represent a hyper controlled emotional life and Wesley's connects this to violence in the home in his account. For most of the men, family was a space where respondents valued emotional openness. Thus, men like the ones in Wesley's support group, who only had one outlet for these softer emotions and struggled even to make it to that space, were marked as deficient in these narratives because they could not control their anger at home. Hypermasculinity is once again the ideal type for men to construct acceptable masculine practices against and locate the source of violence and inequality.

Men who worked in therapeutic settings found it especially meaningful to create these spaces of emotional opening. Saul (Urban West, 47, white, Queer/Apparently heterosexual, 14 years) worked at a treatment facility for mostly poor men of color. He found that the patients' masculine expressions differed quite a bit from his own open and soft style and this caused some difficulty in working together, but in the end made for a satisfying outcome:

It's just not that comfortable for me to relate to really masculine guys. I had clients who were, either because they were overcompensating or whatever. I had this guy who was a little bit taller than me and really kind of buff, and every single session was a chess match. We were in there and it was like fighting with him. I finally said, "Dude, what's up with this?" and he said, "Well, you're not the kind of person I would normally associate with." (laugh). I'm like, "Really? Tell me more about that." Well, he basically meant that I'm too soft and that's kind of weird for him and so we had to work through some of that. I think it was really valuable, but it wasn't easy (laugh). You know, trying to get him to look at it was like, "What about you and the softer parts of you that you're not comfortable expressing?" These were guys with substance abuse problems so you would get the front was very hard and defended and, inside they would be 11-year-old boys and it was like, "Aww," and there would be sweetness there and they couldn't show it to anybody because they would just be targets. I was like, "Aww."

Even if Saul shows quite a bit of sympathy for the poor men of color's inability to express emotion, his narrative still marks his own ability to be soft in those settings as more desirable than his patient's deficient emotional expression. His somewhat paternalistic view when the men do show softer emotions poses them as immature.

Men across the sample found emotional opening with therapists, in recovery groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, and other support groups. Those who could not easily show softer emotions in these contexts or demonstrated a hyper-toughness in general were marked as lesser than men who could easily shift their emotional expressions between contexts. It may be a desirable goal in general for men to express softer emotions in a variety of settings—but it is notable how this lack of facility with softer emotions is raced and classed in interviewees' narratives.

BROTHERHOOD

The final context of emotional expressiveness that consistently appeared in interviewees' stories is not one of the spatial or institutional contexts at the heart of this project, but rather a more abstract space that I have labeled *brotherhood*. In Brandon

Jackson's (2012) work on black fraternity brothers, he describes brotherhood as a concept that allows men in fraternities to form bonds of emotional closeness and be emotionally expressive with each other without threatening a masculine self. In other words, the concept of brotherhood allowed men to display softer emotions in these contexts. In this section I use brotherhood to denote spaces of emotional closeness that the men in this study described or wanted to create with other men.

I use brotherhood to highlight a tenderness between men and a willingness to support others in moments of vulnerability. For example, Michael (Urban, West, 40, white, Queer, 2 years) was relying on a wheelchair for mobility while travelling and a man who worked at the airport helped him:

Going home on this trip, I hit up against that same guy who pushed me through the airport, you know, my miracle mile man. He pushed my pretty ass through three stations, three terminals. This is in some ways kind of the sweeter end of masculinity and what's seen as a man to me is somebody who goes out of their way to be of service, who will step past their discomforts to be supportive in a way of each other, especially. There's some brotherhood to it. I do really wish there was a better word that wasn't gendered because sisterhood has such bad connotations, you know. But, people who work hard and are supportive of their loved ones and protect the people they care about, and those are in my idea of masculinity too.

As shown here, brotherhood offers a space for men to care for each other when they are vulnerable in a way that affirms a masculine gendered self rather than being diminished for showing weakness. Michael explained elsewhere that his discomfort with the gendered nature of the term sprang from several sources, such as reifying binary ideas of gender, but also because of the troubled history of the term sisterhood in feminist movements—tensions I will return to further in this section.

As men facing marginalization due to their transgender status, brotherhood was

important for trans men to foster among one another. In fact, many respondents referred to other trans men as their brother throughout their interview. This brotherhood was created in both formal support groups and, more importantly in informal communities and friendships. In a discussion of what he might gain through being around other trans men in his rural midwestern setting, Dominic (Suburban Midwest, 27, white, Pansexual, 2 years) spoke of possible brotherhood with other trans men:

An understanding. Like a, a bond, 'cause they understand. They know what I'm going through. I feel sometimes very much alone here, because I have a lot of gay guy friends around here, but they just don't understand it. I think trans is kind of a separate category from GLB in a sense that it's identity rather than orientation. But, I think it'd be a sense of just, an understanding. Someone to talk to that you could share in a common bond that you have. Like, a lot of the experiences, especially with dating or any of that kind of stuff, I could talk to somebody about, you know, a guy like myself would understand. A lot of that I don't really have the sources to go to. Rather than, of course, there's the YouTube community, which I love. That's huge. But it's different than having someone around here that you can actually meet up with, to go out with and you're on the same page.

The knowledge through a shared set of experiences of being a trans man in a particular place is something that Dominic wants to share with other men. Though cisgender gay men in his area can provide some friendship and some support, it is not be the same as a trans man who has had similar experiences. He does get this brotherhood through YouTube communities, but that does not satisfy his desire for brotherhood based on experiences of local geographic context.

Though brotherhood can be created in formal transgender support groups, Mark (Rural, Southeast, 43, white, Straight, 10 years) reiterates the importance of being close with other trans men in general:

As a therapist, I think it is so important to have that support. To have people, like the bird of a feather flocks together, same. Other people that

could understand that. I think maybe if Randy [a trans man friend] had that in his life, he wouldn't have killed himself. As a trans guy, yeah, I think it's really important not just to have the emotional support, but just have a network of people that you can associate with, and hang out with, and be friends and not, and not have to [pause] deprive yourself of sharing of who you are...A little of that shared experience.

As a trans man and mental health provider himself, Mark sees connections between trans men as core components of their emotional health. Thus, brotherhood is an important space of emotional opening and an important space of shared experience for men who are sometimes marginalized in a cissexist society. Brotherhood is a space to get and give validation between men with similar social locations or for men to give validation to marginalized men, such as in Michael's example with the man helping in the airport. It can be especially difficult for rural trans men to find these kinds of community, though even men in major cities with large transgender populations and support systems had difficulty finding a real space of mutual support.

Brotherhood, like all concepts based on one aspect of identity or social location, is an inherently exclusionary concept at the same time that it reflects bonds of shared experience. On its face, the concept of brotherhood is likely to exclude women and non-binary identified people and in practice it will not always be a satisfactory or fulfilling bond for men from different race, ethnic, class, and sexual identities and experiences. Sisterhood, as a concept in feminist thought and politics, was seen by some feminists as a powerful rallying cry for women to come together as a united front under the banner of women such as in consciousness raising groups (Fisher 2001). In practice, this limited notion of sisterhood was most powerful in addressing the needs of white, usually middle class, and often cisgender and heterosexual women (Combahee River 1983; Hames-Garcia 2011a; Hull, Scott, and B. Smith 1982; Lorde 1984a; Stryker 2008). Brotherhood,

too, seems to have difficulty transcending racial and ethnic difference.

Nearly every man of color in the sample spoke to their frustration with the whiteness of transgender support groups and local transgender communities and this was especially salient for Latino and black trans men. Leo (Urban, West, 36, black, straight and bi-curious, 5 years) described how his experience of transition was shaped by race:

This time last year I was like, “This is deep. I’m a black man. This is different and it’s a different consciousness.” This is when I started noticing how my white brothers were really just not getting it as far as it being different. I think I’ve only found one white guy and he happens to be a white cop but he’s so able to articulate what happens to black men in the system and you know I think there is just like a true empathy and I think a true empathy for his trans-brothers who, for no fault of their own, are put in this situation because they want to live whole.

Though he did find a space of brotherhood with one white trans man—who developed empathy through work in the criminal justice system—most white trans men could not understand how race dramatically shaped Leo’s experience. It is likely that most white trans men in Leo’s area did not understand how racial privilege shaped their experiences as men because these racial experiences tend to be minimized and are often not consciously marked (Frankenberg 1993; Tatum 1992). Thus, the brotherhood among local trans men was incomplete and somewhat exclusionary for Leo and other men of color.

Sam (Urban, West, 34, Latino/Mexican, heterosexual/queer, 3.5 years) talked about his need to be around other Latinos as a space of emotional closeness:

Culture and language is very important. Socializing with Latino heterosexuals it's just so different. Just the fact that I'm Latino and the language, the culture is so rich. It's like I feel less self-conscious about being trans. When I was working at my old job the reason I think I was able to survive a lot of that was that they were all Latinos. So I relied a lot on that. But in this new arena it's predominately white and here I am dealing with the trans stuff but also the language and the culture. It's just

overwhelming.

He went on to explain that when he told people in his graduate program he was transgender, it was a Latina that he reported being able to be more expressive with, whereas he did not feel comfortable showing emotion with his other classmates. Among trans men, he found that racial difference caused barriers to emotional connection:

Even with my friend, the older trans guy, he's white. It's like we're close because we're both trans and our experiences and we see the world in similar way, but yeah, the culture, it's still a barrier. There are times that minus just the transgender experience...I feel just a different level of closeness with my Latino gay guy friend that was lacking and my other friend who still identifies more with the trans identity but is still going by their female name, is Asian. As people of color we also have a long history. A level of closeness, too. It does make a difference. It's not any little thing. It's a big thing.

Thus, the shared experience of culture and histories of racial oppression in addition to gender and sexual oppression made his space of brotherhood with other people of color closer than those with white trans men.

Contexts like fraternities, which were premised on the idea of brotherhood, could produce particularly jarring experiences when brotherhood broke down along lines of race. Gabriel (Suburban, Southeast, 21, Multi-racial [black/Latino/Native American], queer, 2 years) belonged to a fraternity for gay and queer men and their allies that had a strong social justice mission. He described an incident with his fraternity brothers:

Someone had posted a picture in a Facebook group that was trying to sell stuff. They were trying to sell their bedding, and behind the bed was a giant confederate flag. Somebody commented, "Hey, how much for the flag so I can burn it?" "Ha, ha, ha. Clever." [Laughter]. And they were like, "Look, it's not racist." And I was like, "No, no, no; it is really." I basically got into this Facebook argument with this person. I'm like, "No that's actually a really racist flag. Don't be offended that someone was offended at your flag." I remember I was rushing, I was a pledge at this point, and I remember asking some of my pledge brothers, "Hey, can you help me with this person?" Like, "You're white. Please tell your other

white people to stop.” And they didn’t—they refused. Basically for them, it’s like, “Well this is bullying.’ And I’m like, “No, no, no, you don’t understand. That flag is like bullying extreme.” I was like just so distraught over the fact that they couldn’t understand why this is such an issue.

He felt like his fraternity brothers had minimized his reaction to the racist imagery, and suggested that he was overly aggressive—bullying the man on Facebook. As Wilkins (2012) and others have shown, black men’s anger at racism is often characterized as excessive. Gabriel became upset that his pledge brothers’ sense of brotherhood did not extend to supporting him in this incident. Gabriel reported that this was very upsetting for him because he had an expectation of support and brotherhood from the other pledges.

It is illustrative to compare Gabriel’s experience with another incident where an interviewee challenged others behavior and had his action affirmed by other men. Paul (Rural, West, 30, white, maybe bisexual, 7 years) told the following story of his new emotions that went along with transition:

I had an incident happen where these guys were on a bus, and I knew the bus driver, we talk all the time, so I was talking to him. These guys at the back of the bus, I’m at the front, and they’re like using the F word every other word. In between me and them, so I knew anybody between me and them could hear, because if I could hear they could hear—there was a mom with her kid there, between the guys in the back and me. So, when they finally took a breath I said something like “Do you honestly have to use the F word every other word? Because there is a child right here.” And they’re like, “What?” You know, so I repeated myself and they were getting all agitated about what I was telling them. Then the bus driver backed me up. He goes, “If you don’t knock it off, you can get off on the next stop.” The bus driver kicked them off, and they wanted me to get off the bus so they could get in a fight with me. I’m like, “No.” But blood pressure was going through the roof, so I thought it was an anger issue. I wrote it to the [online] group and they were like, “No, you were just being assertive.” And I’m like, “Oh.” So I think most of the people, when people assume that it’s ‘roid rage or whatever, it’s most likely they’re being more assertive.

In this scenario Paul uses his newfound comfort and confidence that went along with

transition, which he described earlier in the interview, to intervene in the men's behavior in the back of the bus on behalf of the woman and child. While he does not say this explicitly, his narrative suggests that the woman and child needed his protection against the crude behavior of the other men. In contrast to Gabriel's experience with the man with the Confederate flag, the appropriateness of Paul's behavior was affirmed when the driver ejected the offending men from the bus. In addition, through the online group, Paul re-labels the feelings and emotional display he initially named anger as assertiveness. Especially through the online community group for local trans men, brotherhood was there for Paul and not for Gabriel. As a white man, Paul's intervention was appropriate and controlled whereas Gabriel's was out of line and bullying.

Contexts of family, support, and brotherhood were spaces of opportunity for softer emotional displays. Learning to navigate these spaces and using them for emotional release are key aspects of learning how to maintain appropriate emotional control. The family is idealized as a space of emotional softness even in more conservative masculine ideals. Support settings by design offer a space for emotional opening, but are used in interviewees narratives to mark difference among men along race and class lines—stigmatizing men of color and poor men. The notion of brotherhood creates spaces of emotional opening where men can maintain a masculine sense of self, but brotherhood can be racialized as white and thus exclude trans men of color from full participation in community. Spaces of brotherhood are also racialized in which kinds of emotional displays others will be.

Conclusion

This chapter was framed with two questions regarding men's emotions. First, how

are trans men's narratives of emotion used to mark social difference and similarity based on gender, race, and sexuality? Second, how does context shape trans men's expression and description of emotion? To conclude this chapter, I review the central findings, respond to these questions, and briefly discuss the meaning of these findings for understanding the role of emotion and contemporary masculinities.

The first part of the analysis demonstrated how respondents use narratives of emotion to mark difference between men and women and among men. They used discussions of inherent difference, distance from or dulling of emotion, and a decreased ability or desire to engage in emotion talk as the central markers of difference. Overall, women and gay men were constructed in these accounts as excessively emotional in contrast to a majority of respondents' more subdued emotional states. Notably, a lack of ability to feel and express any emotion was also marked as deficient.

In the next part, the focus turned to a lengthy analysis of men's descriptions of the bodily changes they experienced as part of testosterone therapy centered on anger and calm, crying, and changes in their bodily experience of sexuality. Increased anger and aggression related to testosterone use was a common fear for men before they started transition. Though some did experience increased anger, mostly directed at women, most felt more calm and rational after transition. Men who could control their anger and use it appropriately, usually in defense of people who were constructed as vulnerable or otherwise in service of a sense of right and wrong, were admired among interviewees. This control was best evidenced by the common report of a not crying as much as when they lived as women and now crying in situationally appropriate contexts, such as weddings and funerals. The final part of this portion of the analysis attended to the new

sexuality that came along with testosterone therapy for many of the respondents. Overall, this was characterized as barely controlled sexual urges that men had to actively manage early in transition. Control over strong affective urges, related to sexuality, aggression, or crying, as an ideal was the central theme of this overall analysis. This presence of these strong feelings along with the control that let them appropriately express them in the right contexts were held as ideals. An inability to exhibit control, of crying for women and of aggression for hypermasculine men (often men of color and white poor men), was marked as inferior. In addition, the analysis of a group of men who only wanted sex with other men and romantic relationships with women after transition, illustrated that heteronormativity can still be produced by men having homosexual sex, by marking the heterosexual dyad as the only proper place for sexual relationships that included romantic feelings.

While the first two sections of the analysis refer to the differing contexts that shape the emotional difference and control, the third part of the analysis brings context into focus through a discussion of the settings where men describe expressing softer emotions. I show that family, support settings, and brotherhood act as sites of emotional opening; moreover, in the case of support settings and brotherhood, the spaces themselves recreate exclusions based on race and class. According to these narratives, men of color's anger is marked as inappropriate aggression in contrast to white men's anger, which is seen by other men as properly assertive. It is likely that these same divisions were not constructed in the family because many family members have shared or similar racial and class identities and backgrounds.

To answer the initial questions, contextually appropriate emotions are the way

that difference is marked in trans men's narratives between men and women and among men along lines of gender, race, and sexuality. The most significant difference in these accounts was between men's and women's typical emotions, which were constructed most often as based on natural differences between men and women. The context of the family, particularly intimate partnerships with women were the most common contexts for men to describe these differences. This is not surprising as the family was designated as a space of emotional expression and was the site that these men were most likely to have close contact with women. Marking difference between men was based mostly on the ability to control emotions and display them in situationally appropriate and controlled ways. Interviewees commonly saw gay men, or at least faggy ones, as being excessively emotional, much like women. Hypermasculine men, through racialized and classed depictions, could not control anger, aggression, and their sexuality. Posing these excessive emotional displays by some men, the lack of appropriate emotion, as the source of violence against women and others, lays blame for these social problems on the individual's ability or inability to control themselves rather than structural explanations for violence and inequality. In other words, good men can control their sexual urges and expressions of anger and they can even cry when the situation calls for it. Bad men, on the other hand, cannot control themselves and are the sole perpetrators of violence. Proper men can discipline their bodies, in the sense of these affective experiences and expressions, while women, feminine men, black men, poor men, and others bodies' are ungovernable.

With these findings in mind, how do we view the hybridity of the Governor in the lives of everyday men? It is clear that the contextually appropriate softness that

accompanied the hypermasculinity of the image Schwarzenegger displayed in his campaigns and time as California governor was an ideal in everyday men's lives. Like the Governor, it was best for everyday men to be soft when they need to be and hard when they need to be. We can also see that Schwarzenegger's whiteness and class position allowed him to display both the hypermasculinity and sensitivity of this hybrid formation in a way that legitimated rather than threatened his suitability for power and prestige; these same expressions would likely delegitimize poor men or men of color's access to power. A clear example of this is President Obama's careful avoidance of being seen as angry as a way to soothe white racial fears, an experience very familiar to other professional black men (Wingfield 2013). As Coates (2012) describes:

Part of Obama's genius is a remarkable ability to soothe race consciousness among whites. Any black person who's worked in the professional world is well acquainted with this trick. But never has it been practiced at such a high level, and never have its limits been so obviously exposed. This need to talk in dulcet tones, to never be angry regardless of the offense, bespeaks a strange and compromised integration indeed, revealing a country so infantile that it can countenance white acceptance of blacks only when they meet an Al Roker standard.

Thus, the image of the angry black man, at the center of the thug ideal type, is present too in the realm of politics²². President Obama must not just control his emotions as a man, but as a black man, as Schwarzenegger must as a white man. The expectation of hybridity is still there, but it is racialized as well as gendered. The desirability of this hybrid for everyday men both supports this formation in the political realm and reflects how everyday men maintain their own legitimacy in local relations of power.

²² Comedians Keegan-Michael Key and Jordan Peele perform an excellent satire of this dynamic through a series of sketches featuring "Obama's Anger Translator." See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_M8BIAJJSw.

CHAPTER V
GEOGRAPHY OF VIOLENCE: SPATIAL FEARS AND THE REPRODUCTION OF
INEQUALITY

Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) is a solemn occasion, usually held each November, set aside to memorialize those victimized by transgender related hate violence (Anon n.d.). The purpose of the event is to remember those who have been killed due to transgender related hate violence and to bring broad public awareness to this kind of violence. A typical TDOR event involves a candlelight vigil and public reading of the names of those murdered due to anti-transgender violence in the prior year. The official TDOR website listed nearly 200 events in November 2013 across the globe, from Columbia, South Carolina to Wellington, New Zealand, though most were clustered in the United States and other Anglophone countries. TDOR serves the crucial purpose of giving activists and community members the space to reflect and mourn. It is a chance to build movement commitment and energy to end this form of gender violence. While the event serves these important purposes, at the same time it serves as a vulnerability ritual that reinforces the notion that transgender people are inherently vulnerable to heinous acts of violence. These dual effects are all the more interesting given that those who most often do the memorializing are white middle class people on college campuses, while those being memorialized are nearly all poor trans women of color (Lamble 2013).

As I will demonstrate in this chapter, the kinds of fear that are both produced and recognized in vulnerability rituals such as TDOR act as powerful forms of social control that reproduce systems of social domination in spatially specific ways. In fact, rather than prevent forms of violence, these fears as they are enacted in the everyday lives of trans

men may actually reinforce systemic violence against those memorialized in TDOR events. To show this, I will briefly describe some general findings of the gendered fear of violence literature and violence against transgender people. Then, I will analyze how the trans men in this study mapped their fears spatially, with a particular focus on how race and sexuality shape safety in rural spaces. I will extend this argument in the next chapter through examining the production of fear and violence in institutional contexts.

Background

Violence

In general, the predominant image of vulnerability to violence is a white, middle class woman walking alone at night. As has been well documented by feminists, this image is part of a culture that shapes women's behavior and their access to public space (Hollander 2001; Madriz 1997). On the other hand, men, especially ones who are black and or poor, are seen as likely perpetrators of violence (Reid and Konrad 2004). In general, a lack of vulnerability to violence is a hallmark of idealized masculinities across most settings (R. Connell 1995; Hollander 2001; Messerschmidt 2012b; Pascoe 2007).

The main finding in these literatures is that there is a disjuncture between reported fears and actual reported experiences of violence (Hollander 2001; Madriz 1997). Men, in general, report low levels of fear but are more likely than women to experience all forms of interpersonal violence except for sexual assault (Reid and Konrad 2004). Women, in general, are more likely to report fears, yet experience lower levels of interpersonal violence except rape and sexual assault (Reid and Konrad 2004; Schafer, Huebner, and Bynum 2006). When women are assaulted it is most likely perpetrated by someone they know (May, Rader, and Goodrum 2010; Pain 1997; E. Stanko 1990; G. Valentine 1989).

In addition, this research shows that men may be less likely to report fears or experiences of violence as part of maintaining a masculine sense of self (Brownlow 2005; Goodey 1997; Hollander 2001). Though this literature focuses on differences between men and women, as the images of vulnerability and prior analyses of these data illustrate, patterns of fear and violence are simultaneously shaped by race, class, sexuality, and transgender status among other categories of difference (Abelson 2014b; Doan 2007; Grant et al. 2011; Lombardi et al. 2001; Perry 2001; E. A. Stanko and Hobdell 1993).

Much of the research on interpersonal violence focuses on the individual characteristics of perpetrators and victims to explain patterns of violence, but neglects the context in which violence and fear are produced (Herrenkohl et al. 2011). While women report higher levels of fear in general, both men and women map out their fears spatially as “geographies of fear” (Brownlow 2005; G. Valentine 1989). At a basic level, this means that both men and women tend to think that some places and spaces are more dangerous than others and they attempt to avoid or manage their interactions within these spaces accordingly. I will also use geography of fear to describe this spatial distribution of fear and add to the contextual understanding of the production of fear and violence in the lives of trans men. My analysis in this chapter shows that the different fears and experiences of violence in particular contexts encourage specific forms of social domination.

Defining Violence

For this analysis I followed Jackman (2002), by defining *violence* broadly as “actions that inflict, threaten, or cause injury. Actions may be corporal, written or verbal. Injuries may be corporal, psychological, material, or social” (405). This definition

captures the intentionally harmful acts that would be included in narrower definitions of violence, but also mundane acts that have benign intentions and still cause harm. In addition, this definition highlights structural and institutional violence in addition to interpersonal violence. This broad definition of violence stems from the work of feminist theorists and activists to capture the range of violence that potentially brings harm to women and other marginalized people (Renzetti 2004). Overall, it is useful because rather than seeing violent events as exceptional and deviant, it incorporates the idea that “violent actions are a normal part of the human repertoire of strategic social behaviors” (Jackman 2002:389). To capture the experiences of actual or feared violence in the lives of participants, I coded interviews for all mentions of violence, fear, or safety. Each mention was coded for the type of violence or fear, the effect of the violence or fear (e.g., physical harm, changes in behavior), who experienced it, and who was the perpetrator. In addition, each mention was coded for various contextual variables, such as region, urban/rural, and institution.

Going beyond the spectacular violence displayed at TDOR and using this broad definition of violence, what kinds of violence do trans men report experiencing most frequently in their everyday lives? How do representations and various discourses of transgender violence and other forms of social violence affect their social interactions? How do race, gender, and sexuality differently shape trans men’s experiences of fear and violence? Finally, how do various spatial and institutional contexts shape trans men’s fears and experiences of violence? I answer these questions in the following analyses by looking at trans men’s spatial distribution of fear and their experiences in particular institutional contexts.

Analysis

The trans men in this study report that the most notable change in their sense of safety as they transition is that they no longer fear being raped walking alone at night. In fact, they report the jarring experience of women now being afraid of them in this setting. This experience signals being recognized as a man in public—a much desired aspect of transition for most respondents. At the same time, it caused conflict for many trans men because they were now being perceived as a threat to women, a result few wanted and none saw as an aim of their transition. Concurrently, the racial, class, and sexual meanings of the particular contexts shaped the interactions.

For Ethan (Urban, Midwest, 38, black, heterosexual, 9 years), changes in his feeling of safety and experiences of violence exemplify some of these trends. First, Ethan described his most prominent fear growing up living as a woman and how it affected his access to public space:

Growing up that's always been a fear of mine, to be sexually assaulted. It was always on my mind, especially when I was younger and looked more like a female. That bothered me a lot, so I stayed in the house a lot of the time because that was a very big fear of mine. But, as I got older, and I started to change [transition] the fear level of that happening started coming down.

Though his fear of sexual assault went down he realized that, as a black man, he was now seen as dangerous, in these same public settings. He explained:

I mean, you just notice certain things. Like if you get in an elevator and it's a Caucasian woman in there, she'll hold her purse a little closer, or she'll move over to the corner, but since I've noticed stuff like that, when I get in a elevator, I will move to the other side. You know, 'cause I know I make them feel uncomfortable.

Even though he is not afraid of violence against himself in these situations, he still alters his behavior to minimize other's fears, so that he is perceived as less dangerous. As a black man he also experienced increased contact with the police. He explained:

I get harassed a lot more by the police. And I really don't care for that. I don't have a criminal record. I've never been to jail. I've never been in handcuffs, but I've been spread-eagled plenty of times. And I'm not that type of person, so for you just to [siren sound] pull up on me, just up out of the blue...and be like, "Okay, assume the position," I'm like, "Again?" You know, "You fit the description." "Of what? A typical black man?"

Ethan's experiences of harassment from the police also pushed him to avoid public spaces, though not as much as his fears of sexual assault did as a woman. The image of the thug follows Ethan through public spaces, no matter if it does not line up with his gendered self. Ethan's fears and experiences of violence (of sexual violence when he lived as a woman and of being seen as dangerous living as a man) shape his behavior and the ways he is able to access different spaces.

Through this example we see that both fears and experiences of violence are connected to the context in which they happen and are shaped by race and gender. Both fears and violence alter his behavior. To the extent that these experiences are common, what is the larger effect of men's fears and encounters with violence on relations of social domination related to gender, race, and sexuality?

I will show in this analysis that as men and as transgender people, trans men have a complicated relationship to fear and violence. Like Ethan, most of the interviewees reported that they had feared sexual assault as women, but that the fear diminished once they transitioned. In fact, as men, they were supposed to be fearless. They found that as men (especially men of color) they were newly perceived as dangerous in a number of settings. Yet, as transgender people, trans men had a new set of fears of transgender-

related violence. As Westbrook (2008) has shown, media and activist discourses construct transgender people as inherently vulnerable (though also deceptive e.g., Bettcher 2014). Halberstam (2005), analyzing reactions to the murder of Brandon Teena, a trans man in small town Nebraska, demonstrates that rural and Midwestern transgender people are viewed as especially vulnerable, particularly by queer and transgender people in cities on the East and West Coasts. Trans men face a contradiction: as men they are not supposed to be vulnerable, even though men are actually more likely to experience physical violence than women. But, as trans people, they are supposed to be inherently vulnerable. I will start to look at trans men's relationship to fears and violence by analyzing how fears are distributed spatially.

Spatial Contexts of Violence

My initial findings in regard to safety showed that perceptions of safety were mapped spatially, by institutional context, and varied based on race, sexuality, ability, and class. In this chapter I will report the spatial fears of the overall sample and findings regarding effects of this fear, especially in rural contexts. This chapter shows how the specter of fear of spectacular violence, mapped spatially, encourages conformity to gender, sexual, and racial inequality. I will begin by reporting the spatial patterns of fear in each region and then analyze the reproduction of racial, sexual, and gender domination in rural settings.

Across interviews there were regional differences in perceptions of safety. These fears were broad and usually signaled a fear of general social conservatism along with the idea that the people found in those places were prone to violence. Overall, respondents tended to describe the West Coast as the most tolerant of the regions for a wider range of

masculinities and also acceptance of transgender and lesbian and gay people. The Southeast was characterized by both those that have never lived there and who do as the least tolerant of the three regions. The Midwest was generally viewed as somewhere in the middle as both more open and tolerant than the South but less than the West (though really only slightly better than the South according to people from the West). The reality of legal protections for transgender people at the state level actually mirrors this mapping by participants. The 17 states that ban discrimination based on gender identity/expression are clustered on the West Coast and in the Northeast, with three states in the Midwest and none in the Southeast offering such protections (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force 2013). Those that currently lived or had lived in each region tended to articulate a more nuanced geography of safety in each place—of which an urban and rural distinction was one of the primary organizers.

The story of Brandon Teena was a specter hanging over trans men's discussion of fear and violence. Nearly half of the interviewees mentioned Brandon Teena or the film *Boys Don't Cry* in their discussion of violence. The story appeared in a typical way when Holden (Suburban Midwest, 25, White, Queer, 5 years) described the difference in his fear when interacting with men in the large college town where he lived versus interacting with rural men nearby:

I guess for me I would feel more safe in a group of College Town guys than in a group of redneck guys. Um, you know, I mean, I don't know, like the whole Brandon Teena story...definitely that's like, it makes me uncomfortable. I guess because I feel like I don't fit the typical male stereotype that's kind of in place in that type of culture. So yeah, so it makes me feel really uncomfortable and if I were to be confronted or something that would be a scary situation.

He believed that because his masculinity did not line up with redneck men, he would experience violence like Brandon Teena. Thus, he avoided interacting with such men and modified his own behavior to avoid violence.

Ken (Urban, West, 29, white, queer, 7 years) explained how learning about Brandon Teena as a young person stayed with him and affected his behavior when interacting in rural spaces. He said:

The Brandon Teena story, which they talked about and hyped, I'm really glad that that story is out there, but at the same time I remember before I ever even thought of transitioning I went to the youth group and I was maybe 19. They showed the Brandon Teena documentary, and I had to get up and leave. Because I remember looking at pictures and thinking that that's me, that that could be me. And I got, it wasn't even so much that I was tied to the gender, at that point. Or the fact that he identified as male, it was that he looked like me, short hair, very sort of presenting as masculine. So I think it was this built-in fear. From stuff like that...But no, I've been very, very lucky, and sometimes I feel like I'm paranoid about this kind of stuff. I couldn't believe how much safer and how much better it felt once I moved here [current major Western city]. It's not as if things don't happen here, because they do, but if something happened here, I feel like it's so much less than in this little redneck town. I definitely watch myself more (in a small town). How I talk, and how people are perceiving me. I pay a lot more attention to that.

In discussions of violence across the sample, all participants combined could name only a small number (fewer than 5) instances of spectacular violence committed against trans men that respondents knew. For most, the story of Brandon Teena was the one incident they could actually name of the type of violence that they feared most. As Ken acknowledged, violence can happen in major cities, but fears of spectacular violence against trans men were most closely tied to rural spaces. In other words, the story of Teena's murder produced a general fear for trans men, but the particulars of the story rooted this violence as most common in rural places. Teena's story did not just shadow descriptions of rural violence, but also represented imaginings of the possibility of

spectacular violence in all kinds of settings marked as unsafe and, as I will discuss at the end of this chapter, reinforces a politics of respectability and strengthens the carceral state.

WEST

Overall, those living in the West characterized everywhere outside of major cities on the coasts as unsafe and undesirable, though respondents described more subtle understandings of safety in the places they lived. For example, there was consensus among men living in the San Francisco Bay Area about which places were safer than others. They mapped their geography of safety as follows: The gay neighborhood, the Castro, was seen as safer than other neighborhoods. San Francisco was seen as a safer city than others and the San Francisco Bay Area was viewed as safer than nearly everywhere else outside of it (Abelson 2014a). Respondents from the West characterized the South and Midwest regions and rural places in general as far less safe for trans men than the West Coast.

Generally, respondents who had spent their lives as trans men in a place like the San Francisco Bay Area described a sense of freedom because they felt little threat of transgender-related violence. For these men, living elsewhere seemed not only difficult but was almost unimaginable based on their spatial understanding of the possibility of violence. Woody (Urban West, 32, White, Queer, 7 years) described how his lack of fear allowed him more freedom in interacting with a broad range of people:

I might be spoiled because I live in the Bay Area, so there's not really the same threat of violence that there is in other parts of the country or the rest of the world. So, I might feel different in places like that.

He imagines a different life for himself outside of the Bay Area where his interactions would be more restricted. Leo (Urban, West, 36, black, straight and bi-curious, 5 years) too thinks his life would have been significantly different if he did not live within the safety of the Bay Area. He explained:

In the Bay Area guys are just spread out. There's a lot of us but we blend in really well and are just scattered to the four winds as far as the greater Bay Area. I've often thought of what my life would be like if my parents never moved us out of Texas. It's really hard to comprehend. I know there are trans guys in Texas. You know, they're everywhere, all over the world. But to see myself in that position being anywhere further than a bus ride to get to my doctor...I don't know.

Like interviewees across the sample, Leo felt more comfortable in a place where there were a greater number of trans men and easily accessible resources. He reported elsewhere that he felt particularly safe with the knowledge that there would be trans men wherever he went in the local area. The inability to imagine the lives of trans men living in more dangerous places created a sense of social distance from those inconceivable lives. Yet, their stories revealed a more complicated relationship to their sense of safety as trans men when outside of the region. The places where they mapped fears also provided forms of safety as trans men.

In direct conversation about safety, nearly all of the men in the Bay Area and urban parts of the West Coast asserted that most other places are unsafe for trans men. At the same time, more than half of this subset of men reported elsewhere in their interview that those more dangerous places actually allowed trans men to remain unrecognized as trans men (as noted in the first substantive chapter) and thus, provided a form of safety. Alec's (Urban West, 25, White, Queer, 4 years) experience between the Midwest and moving to California exemplifies this pattern:

I started passing in Ohio probably sooner than I would have passed out here, if that makes any kind of sense. I think here there would have been more support for, “I’m trans—please use male pronouns,” than there would be in Ohio, but I think there was that automatic sort of switch. Whether or not they recognized that I was a trans guy or not, they just recognized that I was a guy (in the Midwest).

The same openness to transgender identities and understanding of politics that make places like the Bay Area feel safer, also make it more difficult to be recognized as a man. According to this experience across interviews, when people do not have an understanding of a third category of gender, transgender in this case, then they are likely to choose male or female when they are sex categorizing another person as was evident in the first substantive chapter.

In contrast to the overall depiction of trans men’s lives outside of cities as unlivable by trans men on the West Coast, about a third of interviewees talked about men they knew who had moved from cities like San Francisco to small towns in supposedly dangerous parts of the country. In these accounts, the same ignorance of transgender identities that allowed Alec to be read as a man in the Midwest gives trans men the opportunity to move to a town and blend in and just be a man. Drew (Urban, West, 37, white, queer, 2 years) explained this pattern when talking about men he knew that had transitioned before him in San Francisco:

I was pretty good friends with this guy that transitioned like 5 years before. Then randomly he, well, most of them moved. A lot of the guys I knew back then moved to like seriously to like small towns. Just really stealth-like in a trailer and just not be part of the queer community at all. I remember that happening and being like, “Whoa.” It was a trip. I understand the concept a lot more now, but at the time I was like, really? You’re just going to leave San Francisco and go live in like Arizona in a trailer? Okay. I understand what their journey was. They just didn’t feel gay at all or part of the queer community. I still super feel part of the queer community because I’ve been part of it for so long. I can’t imagine leaving it. It’s part of the security blanket with all my friends. I can’t

imagine just going off and then not being a part of it.

Drew found a crucial sense of safety as a queer identified person in queer communities, which he thought would be unavailable in a small town. Yet, he reported that the further he went along in his transition, the more the notion of living in a small town appealed to him. When he described his musings about plans for when he retired, he said:

I wonder if I would just be one of those guys that would get a little cabin in fucking Wyoming or Montana and go fly fishing and retire and just live there and just be like a dude in town. I can see myself doing something like that. Even now I think about moving to the East Bay, like if I want to get a house or something. I don't think I would be out to my neighbors at all. I would just be like this straight guy with my girlfriend living in like freaking Concord (a nearby suburb).

Thus, while these “other” places were labeled as dangerous in a broad sense, a number of respondents identified aspects of those places that made them safer as trans men due to the recognition of their gender identity. For men like Drew, there is an appeal to the idea of living out a more conventional life now that they appear no different than other men to their suburban neighbors. This can be one way that recognition of gender identity and gendered self line up and provide a sense of safety for individual men.

In some senses this dynamic of a lack of knowledge of transgender possibilities characterizes suburban and non-metropolitan spaces as less modern than the cities where there is both broad knowledge and protection of transgender people. These less modern spaces allow trans men to find safety in a place where they imagine they will solely be recognized as a man, even though access to more masculine presentations are available for female assigned people in rural spaces (Kazyak 2012). In addition, this life may only be available to men that can enact particular gender, racial, and sexual identities, as I

analyze in more depth below. In any sense, the safety of the city offers a bind for trans men who wish to leave transgender and queer identities and histories behind.

MIDWEST

Interviewees in the Midwest mapped out a more varied and detailed geography of safety in general than those in the West. Felix (Urban, Midwest, 33, white, queer, 8 years) was happy living in the major midwestern city where he currently lived after stints living in a more conservative city. There was a possible move in his future for work and I asked him if there was anywhere he would avoid moving. He said:

I would avoid the South. I mean, basically we're looking at an electoral map, pretty much the red states. It's almost that cut and dried. Also, the sort of the Middle West. Yeah, the South and sort of the big square states I would probably avoid. I mean, maybe Colorado but still I would feel much more comfortable on the coasts. That would be the only conceivable place I would look for jobs.

Like other people living in major cities he believed large cities on the East and West Coast to be most safe, yet his feeling of safety, like other Midwestern trans men, showed a finer distinction when I asked if there was anywhere he felt unsafe traveling:

I would say the Iron Range. So, west, closer to the Dakotas. Basically the whole stretch of the side of the state I would avoid. Whereas, starting with the Twin Cities and up to Duluth and then even farther like, along the north shore of Lake Superior. That is just a lovely little corridor of kind of, yeah there's some kind of aspects of rural life, you know, if it snows ten feet you're not going anywhere for a couple of months. And you'll see the occasional incendiary yard sign. But for the most part because it's touristy, it's really open-minded and I feel perfectly safe. I vacation there every year, feel perfectly safe. And then, even I traveled down south for work to a couple of the smaller towns in Rochester, even that's okay. I think it's like, when you get into sort of a little farther out and then like, in Michele Bachmann country, in St. Cloud. I would not go to St. Cloud. I'm just like, "Nah, I'm not going there."

The rural areas he actually traveled to and were geared towards tourism and educational and medical industries (Rochester area) felt safer than the area that has elected one of the

most radically conservative politicians of the era. Electoral politics stood proxy for the kinds of conservative and potentially violent people that trans men expected to find in these places. Like Felix, the majority of respondents in the Midwest painted their broad map of safety using the language of “red states” and “blue states.” These labels were particularly salient as Barack Obama’s reelection in 2012 was in the middle of the month-long trip during which I conducted most of the Midwest interviews. This specific language was not necessary for trans men in the West who depicted most places outside of the West Coast as dangerous. At the same time, the language was too broad for men in the Southeast who all lived in “red states.”

There were few incidents of spectacular violence against trans men reported among interviewees beyond the story of Brandon Teena. When I inquired if they knew any trans people who had experienced physical violence or heightened harassment, the men turned to stories of violence against trans women of color, like the ones featured in TDOR. In fact, the one incident of spectacular violence against a trans person that Felix mentioned happened in the place where he felt most safe—his own neighborhood. He said:

Have you been up on the CeCe McDonald murder? That would be the biggest one that comes to recent memory. I think that some of my friends have had one of incidents of like, vocal harassment and that especially goes for the kind of gender queer kids who are passing by a different bar on their way to a show or something. But nothing. As far as I can tell aside from the CeCe McDonald thing, nothing violent. But that was a big deal. And I actually live like, six blocks from there. It’s been interesting because we live in a very liberal neighborhood and then this crazy thing happens in front of the grocery store that I go shop at. That was weird. I don’t know if you know the story, but basically the guy [Dean Schmitz] and his friends started, basically initiated an attack on CeCe and she stabbed him with a sewing scissors. And it turns out he had a giant swastika tattooed on his chest and stuff like that which they admitted her history in court of having written bad checks but they would not admit the

evidence that he had a giant swastika tattooed on his chest.

From reports of the incident, it is likely that the violence was motivated by a combination of racism, transphobia, and homophobia. Felix said that the incident made him feel “more wary” in his neighborhood for a time, but this diminished because the area he lived in was known for being safe for LGBT people.

Though it is possible that individuals who will enact spectacular social violence are found disproportionately in rural places, the case of CeCe McDonald and others demonstrate that they also exist in the major cities viewed as most safe for transgender people. As I have found elsewhere (Abelson n.d.), trans people living in rural places are more likely to know and avoid those that they perceive as dangerous, whereas urban trans people like Felix or CeCe McDonald may not know which of the strangers around them is likely to be violent. The politics reflected by the swastika hidden under *Dean Schmitz's* shirt might have been common knowledge in a small rural community. There were no more reports of this kind of violence in rural places than in urban places in this sample; rather, participants' narratives were similar in their lack of experience of this kind of physical violence overall. I return to a discussion of these dynamics of rural fear in the final section of this analysis.

The larger institution of the criminal justice system spans these spatial contexts; at the same time, the system is very much tied to the control of urban communities of color (Alexander 2010; Davis 2000) and in some senses may be the ultimate perpetrator of violence against CeCe McDonald (who served 19 months in a men's prison for defending herself against violence [Hsieh 2014]) and against many trans women of color who face particular and disproportionate brutalities in this system (Spade 2011). The specter of

violence limits where Felix feels safe to travel and live, which restricts his job prospects; however, as he would agree, through being recognized as a white middle class man he is not subject to scrutiny by the same people who attacked CeCe McDonald. This lack of surveillance allows him to feel safe in a large city and maintain the understanding that potential violence is somewhere outside of it.

Those living in rural places in the Midwest, like those living in the South, plot a more finely graded geography of safety where particular rural spaces are seen as safer than others. For example, Dominic (Suburban Midwest, 27, White, Pansexual, 2 years) had recently moved back to nearby the large conservative rural town where he grew up. While he lived in a different state than Felix, other interviewees from Dominic's state characterized this section of the state as particularly unsafe for LGBT people. His experiences of homophobia and strictly enforced gender conformity growing up and attending a local college in the town gave weight to the assumptions of those living outside of the area. He explained:

When I was in high school, back in '03 is when I graduated, if people were gay they didn't come out for sure, definitely in my high school. 'Cause I remember this one couple, this one girl who was kind of out, because she'd walk around with her, holding her girlfriend's hand, and that was the only one lesbian couple I knew of in my whole high school. It wasn't 'till years later where I found out through a couple friends of mine, that people actually ended up—or not ended up—but just came out. So, you don't really hear too much about it, but it does exist. Does that make sense? The large town is a kind of the more hush-hush type of place. When I was a lesbian—and I'm with my girlfriend, I'd get looks, for sure.

This climate made him fear reprisal if his current work were to know he was transgender. While this entire part of the state was seen as unsafe by trans men living in large cities elsewhere, Dominic lived in a smaller town 15 minutes away that was a vacation destination for gays and lesbians from around the region.

Out here it's definitely more liberal. Especially right where we're at right now, this is very gay, lesbian, trans-friendly town. Just last week they had a Halloween parade and a lot of gays and lesbians and trans – not trans – gays and lesbians come out here.

This part of the state both confirmed and was contrary to the characterizations by trans men living elsewhere. Dominic's local knowledge allowed him to make more subtle distinctions in understanding the places that were safe and the places that were not. Though he was afraid of people in the larger town knowing he was transgender, he cultivated a community of gay and lesbian people with whom he could be open in the smaller town. Dominic's comment at the end of the quote above, that one sees a lot of gay and lesbian people but not trans people in the town, demonstrates that while the place might be less homophobic, it still lacked a transgender community. It also provided very limited transgender-related resources, especially medical resources. This is characteristic of other rural places, as I will discuss in the next chapter.

Though rural midwestern trans men saw more variation in the rural Midwest, they too characterized the South as particularly intolerant; only a small minority even granted difference with some of the large cities or more tolerant areas such as the Raleigh/Durham/ Chapel Hill area of North Carolina. A few respondents went so far as to suggest that the more intolerant Midwestern places were actually somehow polluted with cultural values from the South. Brandon's (Suburban, Midwest, 20, White, Straight, 1.5 years) geography of safety exemplifies the pattern of others from the Midwest who do not live in a major city. When discussing what places he considers dangerous or where he would be less comfortable traveling, he named parts of particular Midwestern states, rural areas, and the South. Prior to the interview he had spent time working in a small town in another midwestern state that he considered very conservative. Brandon described his

coworkers in the town as particularly homophobic and the only gay man he knew there left due to harassment. He feared telling them he was transgender. Interestingly, while the town was in a clearly midwestern state, he connected the violence there to the South. He said:

I moved with my fiancée to [the small Midwestern town], very conservative. It's the middle of, it's BFE, I mean it's [town]-tucky, you get all the in-bred people from Kentucky come up. It's horribly conservative; it's gross.

Due to his fear, he did not tell many people there he was transgender. He feared transgender-related violence and observed harassment of a gay male coworker. Thus, even though Brandon had a more nuanced spatial distribution of fear than men that lived in major cities, the idea of the South as a source of intolerance still permeated his understanding of danger.

SOUTHEAST

In an overall sense, men in the Southeast agreed that the West and East Coasts were generally safer than the South; however, trans men living in the Southeast identified and sometimes lived in the same kinds of tolerant areas that men in the West and Midwest described. These safer areas were usually major cities or liberal enclaves in places like college towns. For example, Bert (Southeast, university town, 49, White, Sexy/Flexible, 3 years) found a tremendous amount of support in the Southeastern “liberal enclave” where he lived when raising money for chest reconstruction surgery:

The community are so supportive, and, and my sense of, of, um, what happened around my fundraiser was that people just really wanted to help. There was just a lot of love and, people were like, “Well, we just love you and we want whatever you want,” you know, “Here.” ... Maybe other areas aren't quite like that. I get the sense that they're not. Particularly like, you know, small towns in this state. I mean twenty miles from here it's a different world.

Bert, like other men living in the areas of the Southeast they characterized as safer, marked out distance between where they lived and more tolerant places.

Alan's (Urban Southeast, 32, White, gay male, 5 years) story very much fits the metronormative narrative of moving from a dangerous small town to a more accepting city, though he challenges the idea that all places in the Southeast are inherently dangerous. He explained:

You'd think in a place like this where we're not exactly the most tolerant atmosphere, you'd think it would be more hoop-jumping (for medical and legal transition), but, no. This city is unique from the rest of the state in that we do that here and we're pretty understanding. If you tried to do that in, say, [small town a few hours away] you'd have an issue. [This city] is definitely unique and a lot of people come here because they know they're gonna have a safe environment here. People flock here.

He went on to explain that he was one of the people that had flocked to the city from a small town in a different state. When I asked what the area where he grew up was like, he said:

Awful. It's a small town in the backwater of the state. And just to give you an idea, we had evangelists who'd get on the radio on Sunday morning and they would give you sermons about how homosexuals should kill themselves so they wouldn't be tempted to hurt children. I went to band camp and we actually had someone that was outed during the camp, and we were all forced to line up while this kid was dragged bodily out of the camp and thrown out. He didn't do anything to anybody; they just found out he was gay, and so not exactly the most tolerant environment. They have the hate down there quite a bit, so I was very, very happy to leave. I was terrified of myself being down there, because if anybody even suspected then, you know, something bad was gonna happen to me.

Alan felt like he had to leave his small town for the more accepting city. He did appreciate certain aspects of small town life, but he did not think he would have survived there as a gay or trans man. I will show in the next section that the fears that trans men assign to rural spaces, whether realized or not, compel various forms of social conformity

and the reproduction of social relations of domination for the men that actually lived there.

In sum, interviewees' fears were mapped spatially, relying on region and urban and rural distinctions to locate their fears of violence. No matter their own location, individual men tended use their local knowledge to articulate a more detailed understanding of where was safer and less safe. Men who lived in the West tended to think that everywhere outside of coastal cities was unsafe, whereas men who lived in the Midwest and Southeast made finer distinctions between and within regions. Overall, men across the three regions viewed the South and most rural places as less safe.

Rural Contexts and Conformity

Across the interviews, there was fear of heightened transphobia, homophobia, and racism in rural places compared to most urban or suburban places. The interviewees reported experiencing or witnessing evidence of homophobia, gender conformity for men, and racism in rural places. Thus, when men interacted in rural spaces they were more likely to conform to local expectations for gender and sexuality, and for white trans men, to participate, at least passively, in systems of racial domination. Because others recognized the majority of these men solely as men in most everyday situations, a fear of transgender violence was not usually at the forefront of their minds: it was rather not being properly masculine, being perceived as gay, or being marked as a person of color that triggered these fears in most settings. For example, Jason (Suburban, Midwest, 36, white, gay male, 12 years) found that as his sexuality and gender presentation changed, he had new fears. He explained:

Coming out as a lesbian and being able to hold my girlfriend's hand walking down the street never once was an issue, never, not once. When I

began my transition and I was married to a woman, holding her hand obviously, we were every other straight couple on the planet. But once I transitioned and really started dating men is when that fear of [pause] “Am I gonna get my ass kicked for holding my husband’s hand?” Really...that was something that scares the shit out of me. You know. Transition never. It didn’t scare me. Being a gay man scares me.

When he had been partnered with women—read as a lesbian when he was living as a woman and as straight when living as a man—he wasn’t afraid. But now partnered with men as a man, he is afraid. In general, there is greater tolerance for the female masculinity associated with lesbians than the effeminacy associated with gay men in rural places (Kazyak 2012). Although this may be true of urban places as well, it reflects the more flexible gender expectations for women in rural places.

Jason went on to say that although fears of homophobic violence were often present in the back of his mind across spatial contexts, he and his husband had not experienced any problems in their medium-sized midwestern city with a sizeable gay population. When I asked if there was anywhere he would feel less safe holding hands with his husband, he described the very small town in another midwestern state where his family lived and he said, “Never, never, never, never, never, never...No, never in a million years.” He reported feared physical violence against himself and his husband, but also problems for his family in the community. Yet, while Jason feared homophobic violence, his ability to be read as a cisgender man—and particularly as a white man—offered him access to the rural space and a relative sense of safety. At the same time, heightened awareness of the potential for transgender violence in rural settings may have sharpened his fear of homophobic violence in the town. It is not that he did not think there was extreme transphobia in the town, but he thought that no one would know he was transgender.

Trans men living in the areas that were seen by others as less safe, such as rural spaces, mapped their fears of social violence in more specific terms than men who saw everywhere outside of Chicago or San Francisco as unsafe. For example, Jack (Rural, Southeast, 49, white, straight male, 4 months) was early in his physical transition and although others read him as a man in most situations, he had fears about transphobic violence because he worried that he was not recognized reliably as a man. He said:

I don't wanna be a freak. Because, again, they're not as accepting here... You know, cross dressers and drag queens or whatever. Coming from the [Southwest City] area you see that all the time... But, here? You'll get shot and thrown in a holler. [Is that in this city (where the interview took place) and everywhere outside, or does it vary?]. I think it's a little bit more accepting in the city. I think the lesbian/gay, transgender... as you get further into rural, it's definitely not. I mean you still see KKK signs... Uh, no, they don't take kindly to Hispanics or blacks or any of that.

Since Jack was not secure in the recognition as a man that made other men feel safer in rural settings, he had heightened levels of fear. Like several other interviewees, he went from talking about potential violence for sexual or gender transgression to racist violence against people of color. This suggests a conflation in these narratives of different forms of bigotry. In some senses, even white respondents, who are very unlikely to experience racist violence, fear people they think are racist, because they think individual racist attitudes are likely to be accompanied by transphobic, sexist, and homophobic attitudes. The combined fears may encourage men to be complicit in some forms of intolerance in order to protect themselves from the forms that are directed at them. Though these fears of transphobic violence were very present in Jack's mind, he, like other white working class rural trans men in this study, gained acceptance in the community where they lived

through being read as a white man doing masculinities in line with rural community ideals.

Gabriel (Suburban, Southeast, 21, Multi-racial [black/Latino/Native American], queer, 2 years) echoed this sentiment about the racial divisions of rural communities.

When I asked him about his sense of safety when he would visit his black family members in a rural southeastern community, Gabriel said:

Most of my concerns when traveling through that area is making it from pocket to pocket of black communities. I get very uncomfortable in a racial sense. I'm not actually too concerned with being perceived as queer, 'cause that usually isn't the first thing that comes to mind in those areas. At this point I'd have to be like on top of a dude making out for them to notice that there was something queer about it. So, that usually isn't the first thing. I'd be more concerned about the white communities in those areas. My family is from that area, but there that line between black and white is way broad, like it's a thick, thick line that isn't often crossed.

Even though he has relationships with people in that area, those prior relationships would not break the line of white supremacy. Since others usually read him as a heterosexual man, he doesn't worry about transphobic and homophobic violence among strangers—only racist violence.

Sean (Rural, Midwest, 34, White, straight, 11 years), reiterated the role of whiteness in surviving and claiming belonging for those living in predominately white rural communities:

If you're of another race, you're not going to fit in here. The people that have money and power are white around here and if you can't figure out how to get in with that you're not going to get anywhere. I mean, I don't feel like I have a lot in common with most people in this town, but I feel like I can pass. I do what I can with that, but I realize that it's a gift I've been given. Race makes a huge difference because it's so obvious that you're an outsider.

It seems that white trans men can find a measure of acceptance and space from transphobic violence in rural communities by taking part in systems of racial subordination and division. As Andrea Smith (2006) explains, it is common for marginalized people to gain a little space from their own oppression through actively or passively taking part in other systems of domination.

When I asked about specific instances of transphobic violence, very few interviewees could name actual examples of physical violence against themselves or other trans men they knew personally. Yet, the specter of transphobic violence was present in the frequent repetition of Brandon Teena's story. At the same time, they generally could point to witnessing homophobic and racist violence against themselves or people they knew. The specter of transphobic violence made them less likely to challenge relations of social domination based on race, gender, and sexuality in their interactions.

Brandon Teena was ubiquitous in discussions of safety and the violence against him was tightly connected to the rural town where he lived. The obviousness of the threat to transgender people in rural places was a common explanation of this violence. Though Teena's story evoked a sense of vulnerability for trans men across interviewees, especially tied to rural spaces, that same rurality became a way for them to differentiate themselves from him. Several interviewees wondered why Teena would stay in the town and why any transgender person would. Others assigned negative characteristics to Teena to further differentiate themselves from an individual who, at least partially, might be responsible for this horrific violence. For example, Colton (Suburban Midwest, 38, White, Attracted to Men, 3.5 years) explained:

As an example, if you look at the situation with Brandon Teena, he was hanging out with drug dealers. He was hanging out in situations that

would have been dangerous even if he wasn't trans. And he was also living in a very small-minded town at a time when these things were not as well known, and I think that probably made a difference. I would be wary of moving to certain parts of the country, and maybe without reason, you know. One thing that I think is nice about the Midwest is that it tends to be a very live-and-let-live kind of area, where it's as long as you're not messing with my personal freedom then you can do what you, whereas I think there are some areas that are more fundamentalist, for example, where a person would be in more danger than they are here.

Colton's explanation lays out both assumptions about tolerance of trans men and about the activities that make one more likely to become a victim of violence. Like most other men in the sample, Colton did not explicitly blame Brandon Teena for his own murder. Yet this process of differentiating themselves from the characteristics that lead to victimization does have this effect. It becomes a cautionary tale of how to avoid violence. In these explanations, conformity to a range of social mores becomes the way to prevent violence rather than the structural factors that might make some individuals more likely to experience victimization than others.

This analysis evidences a disjuncture between spatially mapped fears and a lack of experience of spectacular violence. In the course of his interview Tim (Urban, Southeast, 22, Latino, gay/queer, 6 years) began to talk about the omnipresence of this fear, and who he thought vulnerability rituals such as TDOR serve. He explained that he thought these fears were overinflated. I asked where he thought they came from and he explained:

I feel it comes more from people who are less directly affected by the threat [of transphobic violence], and maybe that's not true in all spaces, but I don't know. I feel like Atlanta in particular has a fairly strong presence of older Black trans women who are the people most at risk for assault for being trans. Who actually tend to use that discourse somewhat less than people with more power because I feel like when it comes from like this middle class white person appealing to like terror and violence it can mean something... [More] than coming from Black people...I really

really don't want to minimize the extent to which, especially when like Black trans women talk about the threat of violence, how real that is, but I also feel like to some extent they don't talk about it as much as people who get more out of displaying their fear do.

What might more privileged people get out of displaying their fear in general and in vulnerability rituals such as TDOR? One possibility is that they gain a sense of innocence. The display of this fear, regardless of whether it is actually felt or not, marks them as vulnerable and potentially absolves them of their culpability in other forms of inequality and violence. In this line of thinking, if they are vulnerable then their actions or inactions become excusable because they are done as an act of understandable self-preservation. As shown above though, those that actually experience this violence are often discredited and the violence is blamed on personal moral failings and other individual characteristics. Thus, there is a tension in whose voice is heard and whose claim to protection is seen as legitimate.

By examining fears and experiences of violence as they are mapped onto rural spaces, we see how fears of transphobic, homophobic, and racist violence act as powerful forms of social control in this particular spatial context. It appears that these fears, whether realistic or not, encourage conformity to local expectations of sexuality and gender and encourage participation in systems of social domination over others—all of which depends on the social location of the man. Thus, contexts that are seen as more inherently dangerous are more likely to produce both social control and reproduce systems of domination.

Conclusion

As I have shown through examining the fears and experiences of trans men, fears of violence act as powerful forms of social control in everyday life. These fears shape

men's participation in systems of social domination related to gender, race, and sexuality in spatially specific ways. Rural spaces were particularly associated with danger in trans men's narratives and thus elicited strong pressures for conformity in everyday interactions.

Trans men's fears were mapped spatially and varied based on region and relation to urban or non-metropolitan settings. Men on the West Coast tended to see everywhere outside of major cities as dangerous, though they did map a nuanced geography of safety of their local area. Midwest respondents overlaid their fears onto electoral mappings of different states and relied on their knowledge of local places to distinguish safer and less safe locations, whether urban or rural. Overall, the South was viewed by midwestern men as particularly dangerous and as a possible pollutant in the Midwest. Men in the Southeast mapped their geography of safety using more subtle shadings and marked distinctions between the safer places where they lived and places outside of them. In rural contexts, fears based on transphobia, gender conformity, racism, and sexuality were prominent and matched with experiences of violence related to race, gender conformity, and sexuality. Conforming gender practices and complicity to systems of domination such as white supremacy were the result of avoiding violence.

These findings suggest that our understandings of men's fears and other gendered fears are inadequate unless they are understood through an analysis of race, sexuality, and other aspects of difference. Certain contexts, particularly spatial contexts, elicit these fears and produce relations of social domination that have the capacity to bleed across our social lives. Fears of violence through discourses of vulnerability—particularly discourses of transgender people's vulnerability—encourage the recreation of systems of

social violence through everyday interaction. Actual experiences of violence in these particular institutional settings likely strengthen images of trans men's vulnerability across geographic and social space.

I have shown in this chapter that discourses of vulnerability, even when not born out in experience, encourage conformity in everyday interactions and lead to the reproduction of systems of social domination based on gender, race, and sexuality. But, are there other likely effects of this ubiquitous understanding of transgender vulnerability? What are the implications of these understandings on political efforts to better the lives of transgender people? I suggest here that the likely outcome of these fears is support for "law and order" policy and a politics of respectability that reinforces the structural violence perpetrated against the very people it seeks to protect. "Law and order" policy relies on a framework that primarily attributes violence to individual actions and neglects structural sources of violence and inequality. This limited view of violence produces partial and possibly ineffective solutions to addressing these social problems. I return to a more lengthy discussion of this in the conclusion. It is clear though that this reproduction of the narrative of transgender vulnerability, as exemplified in events like TDOR, does produce conformity in situations where men might otherwise break with the bonds of social control. TDOR serves an important purpose, so that those who no longer have a voice are not forgotten, but at the same time a proliferation of images and understandings of transgender people's vulnerabilities as well as their strengths might be more effective at addressing the needs of transgender people. In the next chapter I continue this analysis of violence by focusing on how particular institutions promote fear, violence, and the perpetuation of social inequality.

CHAPTER VI

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXTS OF VIOLENCE: HETEROSEXISM AND CISSEXISM IN EVERYDAY INSTITUTIONS

In this chapter, I continue examining fear and violence in trans men's lives through an analysis of the ways in which particular institutional contexts provoke fears and actual experiences of violence. Using the same methods of analysis and background literature on violence and inequality as the previous chapter on spatial contexts, this chapter centers on understanding how particular features of institutions promote specific patterns of social domination. First, I use an analysis of trans men's accounts of public sex-segregated bathrooms to show how the bathroom is a site of the production of heterosexism and gender conformity. Second, I turn to analysis of medical contexts to illustrate how the authority of physicians and other medical personnel in healthcare settings reproduce cissexism in varied ways. While these patterns of domination are created in each institutional context, their effects likely reverberate across individuals' lives.

Bathrooms

Willie Houston was shot with his hands in the air, raising his palms in front of his chest and reasoning with the gunman: "Man, we had a good time, and I'm just ready to go home and go to bed." ("Fiancée Describes Houston's Shooting" 2001)

Not every person memorialized on Transgender Day of Remembrance identified as transgender or regularly transgressed normative situated gender expectations (Roberts 2008; D. Valentine 2007). On the night of July 28, 2001, Willie Houston, his fiancée Nedra Jones and another couple enjoyed a night on a riverboat cruise in Nashville, Tennessee to celebrate Houston and Jones' recent engagement. A series of mundane

actions that conflicted with the gendered and sexual rules of the public restroom turned a celebration of the pinnacle of heterosexuality into a tragedy of homophobic violence.

At the end of the evening cruise, Houston and his party stopped to use the restroom before disembarking from the boat. Jones handed her purse to Houston to hold as she headed to the women's room. Melvin Holt, Houston's friend who was visually impaired, also needed to use the bathroom. Houston escorted his friend to the men's room while still holding his fiancée's purse. In the bathroom, Houston and Holt encountered Lewis Davidson III and a friend who started harassing Houston with homophobic remarks. Apparently, the presence of the purse and his helping another man overrode Houston's mild-mannered effort to establish his heterosexuality with the protest that his "honey," a woman, was right outside. Davidson and his anti-gay remarks followed Houston outside the bathroom where he rejoined the two women. At this point Jones joined in the verbal altercation with Davidson. While Houston continued to try to calm the situation, he asked Davidson not to disrespect his fiancée. The verbal altercation continued to the Opry Mills parking lot where Davidson fatally shot Houston.

In a sense, though Willie Houston was both cisgender and heterosexual, the root of the events that led to his death was homophobia connected to gender transgression. What role might the interactional rules of the men's bathroom have in the tragic events? Why in this institutional context might the presence of a purse and the feminized act of caring for another man lead to murder?

Up until that night, visits to public bathrooms had probably been an unremarkable feature of Willie Houston's everyday life. For most cisgender, heterosexual, able-bodied people, their use of public restrooms only becomes a topic of conversation when one is

commenting on the availability or cleanliness of a particular bathroom. Yet, sex segregated public bathrooms are a common topic in transgender writing and activism (e.g., Borenstein 2006). To understand why this institutional context is prominent in the lives of trans people I give a brief overview of research on public restrooms and then go on to analyze their role in the experiences of the trans men.

Public sex-segregated²³ bathrooms are an invention of the 18th Century linked to urbanization, sanitary reform, and the separate spheres ideology (Gershenson and Penner 2009). On the surface, public bathrooms are an effort at maintaining public health and hygiene (Cavanagh 2010). Additionally, they provide a backstage space where one can repair their face, their public presentation of self, and take care of biological needs (Goffman 1977).

Public bathrooms, as an institutional context, have their own interactional rules and norms in addition to their function as backstage space. The space of public bathrooms provides ample opportunity for a variety of interpersonal rituals. Negative interpersonal rituals reaffirm another's humanity, often strangers, through the right to be "left alone" and unremarkable. In the bathroom this means a sort of privacy as one completes one's business, as well as one's right to have a turn by forming lines for stalls and sinks in crowded bathrooms (Cahill et al. 1985). In the public spaces of restrooms one might perform positive interactional rituals, which involve some form of acknowledgment that one has met before or have a prior relationship (Cahill et al. 1985).

²³ I use the phrase "sex-segregated" to reflect that they typical way that these spaces are ostensibly segregated by sex, or the constellation of biological characteristics that might include genitals, chromosomes, or hormonal structures. The segregation of sex characteristics into two distinct groups, male and female, is also socially constructed. This is not to say that use or access is limited to people with only particular sex characteristics, but that the intention of the segregated space is based on an assumption of biological sex difference. Gender, as an interactional accomplishment, certainly shapes experiences in these segregated places, as the participants' experiences demonstrate, and legal battles and panics over who should use which restroom often refer to sex difference.

The particular interactional constraints of men's urinals, which Cahill et al. (1985) and Goffman (1971) explain as protecting modesty when men are briefly exposing their genitals while urinating, conflict with the performance of positive interactional rituals. This conflict is typically resolved by avoiding visual contact during any verbal exchange at the urinals. Cahill et al. (1985) argue that behaviors in the public areas of the bathrooms resemble those in other public spaces. One of the chief differences between this interactional space and other public spaces is what Inglis (2001) refers to as fecal habitus. This habitus denotes both designations about what is clean and what is dirty and the embodied sets of behaviors around defecation and bathrooms. Weinberg and Williams (2005) find that this habitus is in fact shaped by gender and that for heterosexual women, non-heterosexual women, and non-heterosexual men these rules and ideas are less restrictive by far than for heterosexual men.

In addition to their hygienic and interactional functions, public toilets are also a "tool for keeping existing social categories in place" (Penner 2009:141). According to Jaques Lacan (2006), public restrooms are a site of "urinary segregation." As Goffman (1977) notes, the sex segregated nature of public bathrooms serves as a reinforcement of gender difference. This marking of difference is particularly important, as fewer areas of public life are sex-segregated for men and women. Goffman wrote, "The functioning of sex-differentiated organs is involved, but there is nothing in this functioning that biologically recommends segregation; that arrangement is totally a cultural matter... Toilet segregation is presented as a natural consequence of difference between the sex-classes, when it is rather a means of honoring, if not producing, this difference" (1977, 316). The retreat into sex-segregated or status-segregated spaces reinforces

difference periodically during everyday life and these settings are one of the earliest sites of training in public gender difference across contexts (Garber 1992). Cavanaugh (2010) builds on this further by finding that public bathrooms reinforce sexuality, race, and class as well as gender. The modern public restroom is particularly a place of gender and sexual surveillance where, “Gaps between the perceived sex of the body, gender identity, and the insignia on the toilet doors are subject to inquiry. The space is designed to authorize an invasive and persecutory gaze. Mirrors, fluorescent lighting, and metallic surfaces all invite voyeuristic attention” (Cavanagh 2010:43).

The surveillance function of public bathrooms is evident in the proliferation of accounts of what Halberstam calls “the bathroom problem” (1998:22) or the problem of harassment and violence against gender non-conforming and transgender people when using public bathrooms. In a range of institutional contexts, such as work, school, and public space, transgender and gender non-conforming people report being denied access to safe and appropriate bathrooms through both institutional policy (Borenstein 2006; P. J. Williams 1991) and individual harassment (Cavanagh 2010; Feinberg 1993). The denial of public bathroom access through institutional policy or fear of violence has a variety of psychological and physical consequences for transgender and gender non-conforming (GNC) people, including avoiding public space altogether or planning out routes and destinations based on access to accessible bathrooms (Juang 2006; Minter and Daley 2003; National Research Council 2011). Besides the stress of finding a safer bathroom, transgender people report a range of medical problems due to “holding it” for great lengths of time or avoiding medical care due to a lack of bathroom access (Cavanagh 2010; Herman 2013). In addition, recent political efforts by lawmakers in

Tennessee and Arizona aim to prevent transgender people from using bathrooms that conform to their gender identity but do not match their legal documentation (Floyd 2012; Gardiner 2013). Many gender panics revolve around the issues of which sex-segregated bathrooms transgender people should be allowed to use (Westbrook and Schilt 2014).

Access to bathrooms through supportive institutional policy and practice in places like work and school (especially as someone is transitioning in those spaces), are key to transgender people's success and comfort in those contexts. Yet, contexts where transgender people are known as such present a different interactional challenge than the settings of public bathrooms where strangers are present. In this section, I focus primarily on public sex-segregated bathrooms where respondents are mostly describing interactions with strangers or people who are unaware of their transgender status or identities.

More than two-thirds of respondents mentioned the institutional context of the sex-segregated public bathroom as a source of fear. Upon analyzing trans men's accounts, I found that there is a disjuncture between trans men's fears and actual experiences in public bathrooms. They fear harassment and the possibility of being perceived as threatening in women's bathrooms and they do experience harassment in these spaces. Conversely, though they fear violence in men's rooms they actually report experiencing very little across the sample. Yet, these fears of violence in men's public restrooms are a form of social control that encourages a general adherence to the homophobic rules of men's restrooms. Like the geographies of fear in the previous chapter, both these fears and experiences of violence are powerful forms of social control that reinforce domination and subordination in particular regard to gender and sexuality in the institutional context of the bathroom. Women's bathrooms are a place of gender

policing whereas men's bathrooms are a site of reestablishing heterosexism and masculinity throughout daily life. Over time, these rules become embodied and like second nature, which shows how the enactment of systems of domination are imbued in the seemingly banal rituals and actions of everyday life.

Managing Bathroom Fears

Men most feared sex-segregated public bathrooms when they were early in their transition or being read as between genders. They feared that they would no longer fit in in the women's room, but would not be accepted in the men's either. Josh (Rural, West, 43, white, mostly Heterosexual, 5 years) did not think he was read reliably as a man. He said:

If I can help it I don't use bathrooms, public bathrooms. Because I don't want to get hassled in the women's bathroom, yet I don't want to get beat up in a guys' bathroom.

Though there was fear of both spaces, the harassment of the women's room versus the feared violence of the men's made some men use the women's restroom longer than they felt comfortable. In that "in-between" state they often had legal documents, such as a driver's license, that would establish their belonging in the women's bathroom.

Overall, men of color and white men told of similar experiences in accessing these sex-segregated spaces. It is likely that race, gender, and sexuality are intertwined in these bathroom experiences, as shown by Eng and Hom's (1998) analysis of a Korean American dyke's interactions with white women in a women's restroom. The white women believed the Korean American woman was in the wrong bathroom and attributed this to an inability to read English. Thus, race, gender, and sexuality are likely at play even when these differences do not manifest in interviewees' accounts. It is also likely

that men of color were seen as more dangerous in women's restrooms, based on the perceptions of vulnerability and dangerousness as discussed in the previous chapter, but their accounts did not contain information one way or another that indicated this. Race may have played a role for white men and men of color in their decisions about when and where to use the women's bathroom when they were in this in-between state, though this was not evident in their narratives.

Jack (Rural, Southeast, 49, white, straight male, 4 months) had started testosterone therapy, but had not yet had his planned chest reconstruction surgery and feared that others would not view him as a man when driving around rural areas all day as part of his job. He said:

I was afraid to go into the men's room, 'cause I didn't want the shit kicked out of me. But, literally, every time I go into the women's bathroom, I'm getting, "Aah! There's a man in here." Okay, so then you hold it, you know, hit a dumpster with a napkin. I still have bathroom phobia, because I still have breasts.

Finn (Urban Midwest, 26, white, Queer, 3 years) also described his experience using women's public bathrooms when he presented as a butch woman or early in his transition where he was seen as threatening:

I was very fearful any time (I needed to use the bathroom). I would just not go to the bathroom. I mean, I'm sure this is a story you hear all the time, but you plan your whole day around when you can use a bathroom, and it's all about, "Where are there unisex bathrooms? Where can I safely pee? When can I make a stop at home so that I don't have to use," you know, "if I can't find a unisex bathroom?" And that's probably the biggest danger that I always felt in bumble fuck Wisconsin was this, "Can I use the bathroom safely?" Other than that, I mean, people just they would check whichever gender box they wanted to and move on with their day as long as they didn't feel like I was threatening anybody.

Thus, for Finn and others, finding a bathroom that felt safer was a constant worry in public. Being perceived as a threat or at least presenting a gender where others

recognized them as a man or judged their gender presentation to be extremely non-conforming led men to avoid using public bathrooms. As Finn noted, avoiding public bathrooms in order to avoid harassment and other forms of violence was common in the sample and among trans people in general. Being unable to comfortably use these sex segregated contexts leads to less access to public space, emotional and psychological stress, and can cause health issues such as dehydration and urinary system problems (Herman 2013). For Finn, Jack, and other respondents, this perceived threat was mapped spatially and presented a more extreme danger in rural settings where they supposed they would find more violent and intolerant men, such as rednecks. They worried that both rednecks and regular guys would use violence to protect threatened women in the bathroom, since protection was a core component of these ideal types and seen as a legitimate expression of aggression. Though respondents reported problems across rural, urban, and suburban spaces when trying to access women's bathrooms, they imagined the consequences might be worse in rural places and the South in general. According to their reported experiences, these spatially mapped threats were not more severe in rural or Southeastern places, though it is difficult to tell if this was due to increased vigilance or misplaced fears.

In some instances, such as traveling through airports, it was difficult to avoid using a sex-segregated bathroom. This can make for tough choices for trans men who do not feel like they are reliably recognized as men. Andrew (Suburban, Southeast, 43, white, straight, part-time), described his decision process for which bathroom to use when traveling while presenting as a man:

About half the time I'll go into the men's bathroom and half the time I'll go in the women's. And I think it's a decision that I don't know until I get

up there and walk through the door. Predominantly what keeps me from going in to the men's bathroom is where I am. And I think to myself, “you know if somebody's gonna look at me sideways, and wonder what I’m doing in the bathroom, I would rather get ‘caught’ quote in the women's bathroom than I would in the men's.” Because I can prove that I’m supposed to be in the female bathroom. You know I've got the ID for that. I don’t have the ID for the other. And I don’t want to get caught in you know Georgia with Bubba (laughter) in the bathroom.

Thus, the likelihood that he might encounter men that he perceives as more intolerant and violent in particular geographic contexts leads him to choose the risk of harassment in the women’s restroom. By possessing documents that confirm his legal gender status, he has a level of confidence that he can resolve any questions of his belonging in women’s bathrooms should he be confronted by bathroom users or institutional authorities. This ultimate proof may not be available for undocumented trans men and thus, the bathroom dilemma would be even more fraught. In addition, men of color who have an ID that matches the bathroom they are trying to use may be concerned that any interaction with institutional authorities, including police, might be more dangerous for them. For many respondents, this frequent harassment in the women’s room was a sign that they must use the men’s room even before they felt ready to challenge their fears of physical violence.

Early experiences in sex-segregated settings caused heightened fears. Sean (Rural, Midwest, 34, white, straight, 11 years) shared his experience of having a heightened concern when needing to use a bathroom in a job where he was stealth early in transition. Being stealth among familiar people could cause heightened concern of exposing his body. Sean said:

I worked as a carpenter. That was really tough because that was my first job as a man and I was working with a crew of three other guys and we were building pole barns, and there’s no bathroom. I kind of hate that the transgender movement talks bathrooms all the time. It seems like really the smallest, like, not the most important thing but that really sucked

because we were out in the woods, out in the country and I couldn't, you know. So yeah, that was a bad time for me. I just didn't drink any fluid is kind of how I got through that. It was really stressful.

Thus, the issue of bathrooms is heightened in other sex-segregated settings. In order to deal with this, trans men risk harming themselves by avoiding using the bathroom at all. Eventually, due to harassment in the women's room and to avoid damaging their bodies, most of these men started regularly using men's bathrooms.

THE RULES OF THE MEN'S ROOM

Men's public bathrooms are a site of trans men's fear because it is the sex-segregated space that one tends to encounter most frequently in one's everyday life, but one seldom sees the inside or has any experience with the interactional rules of the other space. The difference between the interactional rules of men and women's bathrooms was repeated consistently across interviews. As Henry (Suburban, Midwest, 49, white, attracted to women, 7 years) stated:

You have to learn bathroom etiquette. Men don't talk in bathrooms. The ladies' room is a social gathering place. They'll talk about everything. Men don't; they go in; they do their thing; they get out. You don't look at 'em if you don't absolutely have to, you know?

Andrew (Suburban, Southeast, 43, white, straight, part-time) reiterated:

Women will stand at the sink and chat with a complete total stranger over the jewelry that she's wearing for 20 minutes. Men don't talk. They go in and do what they have to do. They hopefully wash their hands and they walk out. And they don't look. They don't pay any attention to whether you're at the urinal. They don't pay any attention to whether you go in a stall. They're just not that interested.

As has been widely noted, the interactional rules of most men's public bathrooms are based on maintaining heterosexuality (e.g., Halberstam 1998). Respondents link the worry for transphobic violence in these spaces to not properly performing normative

sexualities. The worry is that by breaking those homophobic rules one might be read as a gay man or found out as transgender and then physically assaulted.

For example, Andrew described his fears when he visited a busy public bathroom on a trip to Chicago. He said:

I remember standing in line waiting for the stall, because I have to go in the stall. The urinals are over here to my right; the sinks are back over here behind my left shoulder. There were men in there everywhere and I remember there was some teenage kid standing over at the urinal and I was standing in line staring straight ahead thinking to myself, “Don't look at that kid, don't look at that kid, don't look at that kid.” Because I thought if I look at him and I get caught looking at him, somebody's gonna think I'm...a pervert or a weirdo. “What are you starin' at this young kid for? He's using the bathroom” and I just remember standing stock still staring straight ahead like I was watching paint dry waiting for my turn.

Following the rules of the bathroom offered some protection for Andrew in general. He continued his discussion of the bathroom:

If I go into the men's bathroom...99% of the time nobody's gonna look at me one way or the other. Why? Because they're probably not gay, you know? And I don't mean to be you know stereotypical but the idea is that if a guy is lookin' at you in the bathroom then he's probably wanting something more.

Thus, through following the rules and making sure not to be perceived as gay, trans men were able to access the space. Recognition by others as a man, particularly a heterosexual man, allowed them to use these sex-segregated spaces without violence.

GOING BY THE RULES

These heightened fears of violence in men's bathrooms never materialized for most respondents when they did start using men's bathrooms because they participated in these rules and the rules themselves prevented a lot of scrutiny from other men. For example, Sebastian (Urban, Midwest, 40, white, Pansexual, 4.5 months) described the

first time he started consistently using men's bathrooms on a road trip from his midwestern city to a conference in the Southeast:

The trick of it is just what everyone else says it is. Guys in bathrooms don't make eye contact. And as long as you're dressed and you look relatively male and you're not, you know, looking at their penises or anything like that, then they don't care. I mean, no one noticed really. I went into all these bathrooms this weekend at the conference, rest stops, restaurants, that sort of thing [and nothing happened].

As the men became more familiar with the sex-segregated space, they learned how to use the interactional rituals of the men's bathroom to increase their sense of safety. Ben's (Urban Midwest, 28, Asian, heterosexual, 4 years) girlfriend feared that he'd be victimized when using the men's bathroom, but after some experience Ben was no longer afraid. He said:

Like the male restroom. You know, girls would go in the bathroom and they might chitchat or, you know what I mean, which I find awkward, you know? It, it must be a girl thing, you know? Um, but, you know what I mean, like going in the guys' bathroom; they're either in there to do their thing. There's no sort of communicating. If you have to go somewhere where there's more than one (multi-stall bathroom), you just make sure it's an individual stall and you make sure it's the very last stall or whatever. And no one's probably too interested in what you're doing anyway. If you're at the very end stall, they're probably thinking, "Oh, this person's gonna be in here a while. I'm gonna, wanna sit right beside them anyway?" [So she was afraid of you going into the bathroom?] Right. Right, that things would happen. And I was like, "Um, most guys are in and out," you know? They have nothing to communicate about...ever.

The difference between Ben's and his girlfriend's fears might reflect their different knowledge of the interactional rules of the sex-segregated spaces. If one is accustomed to the typical interactional rules of women's restrooms—which allow for a lot more scrutiny and conversation—then one might fear that a trans man would encounter violence from other men. When trans men learn and gain practice with the interactional rules and adjust

to the fecal habitus of the men's room they become competent actors in the space and are no longer fearful. Additionally, Ben and other trans men's preference for the rules of the men's room versus discomfort with the women's room both affirms his group membership as a man while clearly demarcating gender difference. Their heightened fears of homophobia and transphobia made it especially important for respondents to follow the interactional rules of the bathroom early in their transition when they may not be recognized as a man as easily and they have not fully become accustomed to the new set of interactional rules. In addition, as Cavanagh (2010) pointed out, trans men early in transition might further feel vulnerable as they are often mistaken for being young and effeminate which could invite further homophobic violence.

Sex-segregated settings where one's body might be more exposed than in a multi-stall bathroom, such as locker rooms, created greater fears for most respondents. Yet, there too men managed their fear by learning to adjust their routines and protect sensitive bodily areas. When I asked Jacob (Urban, Midwest, 55, white, Bi, 13 years) if there were particular places he felt more afraid than others he said:

Oh yeah. In the men's locker room. So I mean, I used to have that feeling when I walked in there, I'm like, I don't have a penis. I'm like, anybody could figure out something, and I was actually, I figured out a way to take a shower. And so, I mean, I would go in there, shower and come out and they wouldn't know. But I was terrified. I'm like, "somebody easily could figure this out." And um, so yeah, I feel more scared in the locker room than I do anywhere.

By choreographing his movements, such as turning his body at particular angles, he was able to protect parts of his body from view. Both their fears of the men's bathroom and their experiences there, as I will discuss in the next section, shaped this adjustment and eventual comfort for most men. The effects of this process may seem benign at the

individual level but may work to reproduce sexual and gender inequality as all men go about their everyday business.

Fears vs. Experience

When respondents first started regularly using men's public bathrooms their fears were heightened, yet very few actually reported experiencing any problems at all in the men's room. James (Urban, West, 39, white, straight, 4.5 years) had an experience that illustrates the most common pattern of fear and experiences of violence for men early in transition:

In the men's room, you just go about your business. There's no eye contact. You just go in and do your thing and look at the ground and go. But it's like, my heart's pumping and I'm just like, "Fuck!" you know. It's still just really nerve-wracking to me to go into the men's bathroom." [Have you ever had any bad experiences in men's bathrooms?] The only problems I've ever had is just when I go into the women's bathroom, you know... And that, the first incidence was over ten years ago, actually, where the police came and they were surrounding the bathroom and, you know, they were like, "What are you doing in here?"

As shown in James' account, it was women's restrooms where trans men reported experiencing violence in the form of verbal harassment and having to deal with institutional authorities. Thus, the fear of women's restrooms described above was realized through experience, whereas, their fears of physical violence in men's bathrooms did not manifest for most trans men.

These experiences in women's bathrooms may have heightened their initial fears of bathrooms, but the longer they used the men's bathrooms they realized that, as Kristen Schilt (2010) also found, they learned that the rules were actually a bit more flexible. For example, sometimes men did talk and plenty of other men use stalls rather than urinals.

Over time, they developed a male-socialized gendered habitus, which conveys a comfort that marks them as “natural” inhabitants of that space.

As the men confronted their fears of men’s public bathrooms and had few negative experiences, using the men’s restroom became more routine and fears faded. Most men reported that their fears in bathrooms significantly diminished as they were further in their transition. For example, Gavin (Urban, Midwest, 27, white, gay mostly, 7 years) said:

I think any sort of trans-related safety concerns I’ve had don’t factor in for me in a major way at this point. I’m really comfortable with passing at this point and I’ve spent years dealing with male bathrooms in this place at this point so it doesn’t like, I don’t think I worry about that in the same ways.

For Wesley (Urban, Southeast, 44, white, pansexual, 20 years), he had become so comfortable in the bathroom that he would use it as an excuse to take his time and get a break from work. For Wesley, the bathroom turned from a place of fear to one of comfort as his body and actions had become habituated to the gendered space.

The rules of the men’s bathroom created a sense of safety over time. For example, Seth (Urban, Midwest, 23, black/white, 2 years) said:

The only other area that I was nervous about would be the bathrooms... The nice part is that protocol is eyes forward. No one’s really looking too hard at anybody. I was not too nervous about it, but at the same time I was very aware that this could always be a possibility. I don’t so much worry about it now, but it was definitely on my radar a lot before. You know, I never had any like, close encounters. I’ve never had an issue in the bathroom or anything.

Thus, both the understanding that the rules protected respondents from scrutiny and the repeated experience of accessing the bathroom with no issues created a sense of safety over time. Like rejection from women’s bathrooms, being able to access the men’s bathroom without any notice—or to be recognized through the negative ritual of being

left alone—was a confirmation of their recognition as a man. In addition, the experience of accessing the sex-segregated space became unremarkable as part of their everyday routines and they were less likely to make distinctions based on their geography of safety.

Not only did respondents embody the rules of the space and become accustomed to bodily practices to cover body parts that might mark them as outsiders in the space, over time access to the space changed the way they thought about parts of their body. Woody related this account of his access to men's locker rooms and his relationship to his genitals. He said:

I almost am kind of like, “this is completely normal male genitalia” [pause] you know?...I'm totally comfortable with it. I don't know if that makes much sense, and it might kind of sound a little weird, but it's like, “This is male, this is normal male genitalia,” ‘cause it feels completely male to me and it's not like I'm trying to envision it a certain way. I mean I get changed in a locker room full of guys every single day...and I get changed in front of guys every day. And the great thing about sexism and homophobia is that guys do not check each other out in locker rooms, unless you go to like [the large gym in the local gay neighborhood], where they'll definitely check you out. But, when it's a bunch of straight guys, they're not checking each other out, because they're afraid that someone's gonna think that they're gay. And if there's a gay guy there, he is definitely not checking anybody out, ‘cause he's afraid that you're gonna know that he's gay. So it's like I turn around. All they're pretty much seeing is my butt, but I'm not as like freaked out about it as I used to be. Like now, I'm just kind of like, “Whatever,” and nobody's fucking looking at me, like I'm not even worried about it. I'm not nervous.

Thus, his comfort in the context allowed him increasing confidence and acceptance of his own body. This acceptance into the space allowed him to view his own body differently over time. Thus, this naturalization into the space happened not only on an intellectual level but on an embodied level as well.

The homophobia of the bathroom actually creates a form of gendered safety and encourages conformity. Over time, adhering to the rules of the gendered space becomes

like second nature for men. Thus, they are read by others as naturally men in the gendered space. The space for all men reinforces the naturalness of “urinary segregation” and reinforces the homophobia of the interactional rules of the bathroom. Trans men should not be singled out in particular for reinforcing these norms. It is rather that the interactional rules of the bathroom promote binary understandings of gender and homophobia. Surely most men do not go in fearing every public bathroom they enter, but that is the point, those rules become incorporated to how one just is in those situations.

These experiences in the bathroom demonstrate how varying fears shape processes of social domination and subordination, but also how sometimes one must, usually unthinkingly, partake in these rules in order to accomplish everyday bodily functions and survive in a particular social context. Following the rules reduces fear and minimizes interactional difficulties. The salience of fears for trans men in bathrooms decreases over time—which is less of a reflection of a misreading of the potential for danger in these spaces, but rather an example of how the micro-processes that create and maintain heterosexism and cissexism (through reinforcing binary gender) happen rather powerfully as unremarkable quotidian practices.

As I have shown elsewhere, ability also shaped trans men’s experiences accessing bathrooms (Abelson 2014b). Michael’s (Urban West, 40, white, Queer, 2 years) experience of being positioned in his wheelchair by an attendant at crotch level of men at urinals in an airport bathroom exemplifies the intersection of ability, gender, and sexuality. Ability also figured in Willie Houston’s story, since he likely was targeted for assisting another man in addition to carrying a purse. For another respondent, his diabetes made it a particularly urgent issue to use public bathrooms frequently.

The interactional rules of the bathroom encourage gender conformity. This is best illustrated by the experiences of men with the most non-normative gender presentations. Jeffery (College town, West, 25, white, queer, 4 years), according to his own description, had a particularly nonconforming gender presentation when traveling recently around the United States. At the time, he had a full beard, long flowing hair, and would often wear skirts and feminine jewelry. He noted how this affected his experiences:

It was a wild gender experience this last year and traveling while being so obviously transgendered in some ways, people couldn't figure it out. People were just a lot more rude. It hasn't happened as much since I've got—I got back to California in July, and it was nice getting back. It was hard for me to live in the Midwest, again, because people are lot more outward about their discussions of your gender in public, which happened all the time... And, in general, what they'd do I experienced as gender-bashing, and it usually is. It's usually judgmental. It's usually coming from prejudice and bigotry. There's usually a level of hatred in it, and oftentimes it's violent. I mean, I get yelled at. I get all kinds of stuff. I get nearly assaulted in bathrooms occasionally.

Julian (Urban West, 28, white, Queer/pansexual, 7 years), who also had a particularly nonconforming presentation and what he described as a flamboyantly feminine personal style had similar experiences while traveling for work. He said:

I usually don't go to places like straight bars, 'cause they're just really not good spaces for me—if I did, I would go with women and go into the women's room. It confuses people a lot, but I know how to walk the walk, because...I was socialized to be feminine, and so it's an easier space for me to be in. I look femme enough that people just get weirded out, but they don't like scream at me, at least at this point. I get in more trouble in the men's room where people question whether or not I should be in there, which is unusual [for trans men]. Like several, where like people'd be like, "Hey, you"...everything from like, "Hey, you know, this is the men's room," to, like, "What the fuck—this is the men's room," to people like wanting to debate with me about whether or not I should be in there, or like wanting to see my ID. Things like that. Which most of the time happens in like bars. When I'm on the road, if I happen to go into a men's room like [pause]... I mean if I'm, on the road now, I pretty much never do. When I first started traveling around, when I would use the men's room like it just would make people really visibly uncomfortable, and I'm

like, “Okay. I’m like in a deserted rest area. I don’t really wanna push people and make them uncomfortable. I think I’m just gonna go with the easy route,” and, plus, it’s much nicer in women’s rooms when you’re on the road.

In general, gender non-conforming trans people experience more violence overall (Jauk 2013). It is both adhering to the rules of the bathrooms and having a somewhat conforming gender presentation that allow for the comfort over time experienced by most respondents. In the sense that “being left alone” in the men’s room through negative interactional rituals for most of the men was a form of social honor, those who are visibly gender queer do not receive that honor and become abject. In fact, most go through the process of being stigmatized when they experience harassment in women’s public restrooms to receiving social honor through the interactional rituals of the men’s bathroom while gender queer people continue to be stigmatized.

In addition, bathrooms in particular contexts may cause problems, but due to other contextual characteristics are not perceived as threatening. Like the gym in the gay neighborhood that Woody mentioned above, some sex-segregated bathrooms are the sites of homosexual sex. As Lee Edelman (1994) and Halberstam (1998) point out, men’s public restrooms can also be homoerotic spaces. Though interviewees did not frequently mention these kinds of spaces, they elicited particular concerns. As Gavin (Urban, Midwest, 27, white, gay mostly, 7 years) said:

I don’t know that I ever feel unsafe in bathrooms that don’t have stall doors, but those are usually at gay bars so it’s really just more about managing like—I don’t know why gay bars have bathrooms with no stall door but it’s happened at a number of gay bars. So I don’t know, I’ve sort of developed strategies for like, leaning forward in particular ways and like, trying to make sure that I have got enough sort of obscured that it’s not gonna be an issue if someone steps over there.

Though Gavin has some concerns, echoed by several other interviewees, about bathroom

stalls with no doors, the context of the gay bar—where one is unlikely to experience violence for being perceived as gay—did not provoke fear. A gay bar might feel safer for a trans man in general due to a lack of perceived transgender bias. It was the lack of homophobia that lessened overall fear in the bathroom. Men such as Gavin still felt the need to cover their genitals, but there was not evidence of the elevated level of fear such exposure would cause in other public men's bathrooms.

Overall, we see another disjuncture in fear and experiences of violence. Men's public bathrooms are a great source of fear, but few reported experiences of violence. Yet, the adherence to the rules of the bathroom as an everyday unremarked upon practice—due to fears of transphobia for trans men and homophobia for all men—reproduce linked sexual and gendered hierarchies. Actual experiences of violence mark that gender non-conformity does not belong in the women's or men's public bathroom and these experiences are also shaped by ability.

The institutional context of the public bathroom is the site of both fear and varying experiences of violence. Goffman (1977) noted that these sex-segregated spaces are a reminder and producer of gender difference in the midst of a society with decreasing gender segregation in most arenas of public life. Sex-segregated public bathrooms continue to create gender difference for all and in a particularly salient way for transgender people. In addition, the women's bathroom is a site for the active policing of gender normativity. Though gender is policed to a certain extent in the men's room, as Halberstam (1998) notes, the men's room is primarily a sexual space, as evidenced by the centrality of heteronormativity to its interactional rules, whereas the women's is based on gender, as shown in the enforcement of gender conformity in the space. The interactional

rules of the men's bathroom, based strictly on heterosexist ideals, may serve a similar function as Goffman (1977) found regarding gender, as a regular reminder of the regulation of sexuality as part of masculinity. With the advent of gay and lesbian rights victories, the men's public bathroom as an institutional context may function as a regular reminder of the dominance of heterosexuality and gender normativity. With this background, the murder of Willie Houston becomes less shocking, but rather an extreme outcome of the reproduction of gender and sexual domination through the everyday rules of this institutional context.

Medical Institutions

Medical institutions and doctors as institutional authorities are, at their core, supposed to heal people from illness. Yet this was the primary site where trans men reported experiences of transgender related violence. The three central types of violence men experienced in this context were lack of availability of competent transgender healthcare, violence and discrimination while receiving transgender healthcare, and experiencing psychological and physical violence while accessing non-transgender related care²⁴. Trans men's lack of power in these institutional contexts and the focus on their bodies made trans men particularly vulnerable in these settings. The mistreatment and discrimination they feared was often borne out in their experiences and caused physical, psychological, and financial harm. Medical contexts were often the sites of more subtle forms of violence that may not include hitting or yelling, but caused small, often psychological injuries that had a larger cumulative effect of harm over time (Nadal,

²⁴ I describe a number of different kinds and intensities of violence in this section and this is not meant to suggest that a microaggression has the same effect as being physically assaulted. Rather, I described these different forms violence to show the multiple ways that cissexism and transphobia are produced in medical contexts and to show that varying kinds of violence have a cumulative effect.

Skolnik, and Wong 2012). These various forms of violence are not only enactments of cissexism and transphobia that directly harm trans men, but also encourage gender conformity.

Searching in Local Contexts

Transgender people in the United States have sought medical transitions since they were first publicized in the mainstream press in the second quarter of the 20th Century, but have had to negotiate with medical practitioners to access care (Meyerowitz 2002). Transgender people themselves pushed the advancement of this field. As Joanne Meyerowitz stated, “In traditional medical histories, doctors often stand as pioneers in science. In the history of transsexuality, doctors, with few exceptions, lagged behind, reluctant pioneers at best, pushed and pulled by patients who came to them determined to change their bodies and their lives” (2002:131–132). As Meyerowitz notes, there was a conflict between knowledge and authority. Especially in the early period, transgender people had considerable knowledge of proper medical procedures and technological advancements, but while many doctors had little knowledge, they held the authority to grant access to medical procedures or not and they could decide who should and should not receive treatment or which kinds of treatment to use. Transgender people themselves did the work of educating doctors about transgender issues against the sometimes-conflicting agendas of medical researchers and doctors. Meyerowitz found that due to hesitation and gatekeeping on the part of doctors, transgender patients often felt they had to “tailor their accounts” and present themselves as model patients in order to be granted access to medical transition. Between their differing agendas there was a mutual distrust between doctors and patients (Meyerowitz 2002).

This ideal model of the transgender patient often requires that trans people present themselves as being a mentally ill person who needs treatment for their condition, though today trans people often do not have to fit this mold to access care. Being the model patient has required that transgender people produce a narrative of being “trapped in the wrong body” and that they expressed a desire to enact normative gender practices and be heterosexual after transition (Bettcher 2014; Meyerowitz 2002; Spade 2006). In addition, they needed to present themselves as wanting to engage all aspects of medical and legal transition and, especially in the model of the early university-based gender clinics, to be stealth upon transition. Dean Spade (2006) demonstrates that the medical construction of this ideal patient that dates from this early struggle between knowledge and authority is a “reification of the violence of compulsory gender norm compliance” (329). There are now competing models, which I discuss in more detail below, that allow for a less rigid process to attain medical and legal aspects of transition without fitting into this ideal model. Though respondents’ stories did not contradict Spade’s interpretation in general, these trans men spoke more of other kinds of violence in relation to medical care that were more pressing.

Respondents living in major cities such as San Francisco, Chicago, and Minneapolis-St. Paul were usually able to find transition related care fairly easily. Finn (Urban Midwest, 26, white, Queer, 3 years), who lived in Minneapolis-St Paul, said:

I’ve been so lucky around here. The Twin Cities is a great place to live and to have surgery. Because the infrastructure around here, in particular the health care system, is so set up for us to get our needs met. And I guess I’m speaking as someone who has insurance, so I’m in a really lucky spot. But I mean, I know that there are sliding scale options for folks and financing options, and we have two good top surgeons, and both who do high quality work. We have a whole host of medical providers who have listed themselves in the Minnesota Trans Health Coalition website so if

you want to find somebody who's a trans friendly health provider in most any field you can find someone. And so I have a fantastic team of health care providers. I have a therapist, an acupuncturist, a couple of chiropractors. I've got surgeons and primary doctors and anything that I want. I can find somebody who will do it and who will understand the issues related to my specific needs. What's really great is like, they actually all talk to each other. They have a network. And so when I've had a question for one of them, you know, I hear later that they've called up one of the others and asked like, so do you know anything about this? And it's so funny because, and then so efficient and smart to do this. So I feel so lucky to have landed here. This place is just, I mean, it's such an easy place to go through a transition.

However, those living in rural areas or in smaller and less cosmopolitan cities often had difficulty finding local medical providers that were willing to prescribe hormones or provide additional care. Henry (Suburban, Midwest, 49, white, attracted to women, 7 years) wanted to find transgender-related care in his local area but encountered difficulty.

He said:

This area right here it's very hard to find doctors who will help you get started. The one that was in this area has stopped doing that. The doctor I have now, she's good. I was her first transgender patient, and she was about number twenty-five I called...after getting a, "Nope. Nope. Absolutely not" (from other doctors). I had one doctor tell me... "Absolutely not! And any doctor who does should have his license revoked."

Though Henry was able to find a willing doctor eventually, the process was time-consuming and led to verbal harassment, as in the example above.

Other men living in rural areas could not find a willing local doctor and had to travel to the closest metropolitan areas, though not every doctor in a given city would provide care. Like Henry, Jack (Rural, Southeast, 49, white, straight male, 4 months) experienced abuse when seeking care from practitioners in his rural area. Jack explained:

I'm way out in the country. In the hills, mountains, however you wanna say it. Um, the rednecks. So I talked to my OB-GYN about it. Taboo situation. "No. We're not gonna discuss that." You know, "You were

born a female. God made you a female. God doesn't make mistakes. Maybe you need to go to church."

After being rebuffed by the transphobic OB-GYN Jack spent about five months chasing down leads in his local area, including information from a PFLAG website and contacting a Veteran's Administration doctor who treats trans patients, but Jack was not a veteran. Finally, he found a support group in a medium-sized city about 50 miles away from where he lived and received information about willing doctors. Unfortunately, even once he found care, his options were limited:

The only problem that we have down here is getting physicians. Because there's not a lot of physicians that are very supportive of it. As a matter of fact, there's one doctor here in the area who will start you on your T. There's another doctor up where I am, that once you've been on T for a year, you've had your marker and your name changed, then he will renew and continue to see you, and refill your T, and take over your monitoring at that point. But he will not start you. And everything has to be changed. Oh, yeah, very much so.

This limited availability leads to difficult situations for trans men when the providers who are willing to give them care treat them poorly. If they have few other options based on geography or financial resources, they are more likely to stay with an unsatisfactory provider or put up with violence.

Josh (Rural, West, 43, white, mostly heterosexual, 5 years) explained the fears of local trans people in accessing medical care:

A lot of trans people, they don't go to doctors because they are afraid of being treated badly. And that happens a lot, that happens here.

When he tried to get a particular kind of care from his local physician, whom he thought would be sympathetic, he was told to seek care elsewhere:

When I asked my family physician, when I told her, and asked if you'd be willing to, under provider guidelines from the Wadell Clinic, if she would

be willing to prescribe the T and everything, she was like, “Go to San Francisco, go to San Francisco.” She’s a lesbian, but she like flipped out.

Even in San Francisco, Drew (Urban, West, 37, white, queer, 2 years) had difficulty with getting hormone treatment from his doctor initially:

I went to my doctor and my doctor wasn't down either, she was a butch dyke, and she was like, "Oh, you don't want to take that stuff. It's going to make you get all hairy and it's going to make your clit get big, your voice is going to drop. You don't want to take that." and I was like, “Yes I do! That’s exactly what I want.” Then she told me that I would have to go to like therapy for 6 or 7 months and I went and saw my therapist once and I had my therapist call her and just tell her to put me on the stuff. My therapist lied, because I used to go to her all the time. She lied and said I had been going for the whole time. You know what I mean? So then she gave me the goods. She gave it to me in her office for like the first 5 weeks and then she gave me a prescription.

His therapist was willing to bend rules and advocate on his behalf to help him attain the medical interventions that he was clearly confident he wanted and needed. Though Drew had enjoyed seeing this physician for several years, he eventually left when she refused to help him with a legal gender marker change:

I asked my doctor about it and she wasn't down with it. That's part of why I wanted to go to a different doctor. She was like, "You don't want to do that because once you do that there's no going back." (Laugh) "And you'll never get your passport changed. They'll never agree to it." That's just bullshit because I know for a fact that a lot of guys I know have changed their passport and I was like, “Oh, she's not really down with this.”

Luckily, the doctor who did his chest reconstruction surgery was willing to write the letter instead. Drew had similar experiences of dissatisfaction in accessing care from his physician as rural men or those living in metropolitan areas with few providers, but Drew could easily find a different care-provider with little hardship. Unlike Henry, Drew did not have to call 25 different doctors to find a replacement. Even for men that had few financial resources, there are several free or low-cost clinics in San Francisco, and other

major cities, that provide both transition-related and routine primary care. The clinics provide trans-competent healthcare in general and transition-related care usually through an informed consent process or similarly flexible model.

There are many medical needs for which one's primary care physician may not have the expertise or the willingness to provide a particular course of treatment requested by a patient, which would not necessarily be considered violence. Certainly some physicians felt like they could not provide proper treatment and recommended trans men patients go elsewhere without it necessarily being an act of violence. Yet, through these men's accounts it was clear that the larger pattern was of physicians who denied treatment and particular course of care because the patient was a trans man. Physicians regularly prescribe testosterone treatment to men whose hormone levels fall below the typical range, yet trans men are often considered a special case and denied this care (Jockenhövel 2004)²⁵. In addition, under Jackman's (2002) broad definition of violence, the doctors do not have to intend harm for their acts to qualify as violence. In fact, their intentions could be absolutely benign. It is the harm that trans men experience in this context, including emotional strain and discomfort, as well as financial distress, that mark these as acts of violence. The threat that doctors might deny treatment sets up the conditions where trans men are more vulnerable to abuse from the doctors that will consent to care.

²⁵ In a time when doctors prescribe all sorts of pharmaceuticals (e.g., antidepressants) and perform a variety of medical procedures that significantly alter individuals' body (e.g., all kinds of cosmetic surgery) and have potential negative side effects (e.g., medication for toenail fungus that may cause liver failure), it is notable how reluctant many physicians are to assist trans people in their medical transitions. The frustration caused by this reluctance has been widely noted in scholarly and activist discourses around transgender medicine and was present throughout interviewees' accounts.

Tap Dance for Care

I didn't really have the experience you always hear about, about being a man trapped in a woman's body, which is largely something that transsexuals had to tell people under the Harry Benjamin standards in order to get the care that they wanted anyway. -Sebastian

Sebastian (Urban, Midwest, 40, white, Pansexual, 4.5 months) reported in the quote above that he had an atypical experience in both his narrative of understanding the source of his transgender status and of accessing medical transition. Producing this narrative has been one way that transgender people have had negotiate with medical practitioners to access care, which is less common today, but an experience reported by a few respondents. In addition, when respondents were able to find care they often had to manage inappropriate and damaging behavior from providers. Phillip (Suburban, Southeast, 28, white, bisexual, 3 years) traveled about 70 miles from where he lived to find a doctor in a university town who would continue his hormone prescription, because he could not find a willing provider where he lived. In describing his interactions he said:

The one guy at the endocrinology specialty clinic, he [pause] I had never felt uncomfortable with the doctor at all. He actually asked to see my breasts and I was like... I'd never had that with my gyno... I was seeing a gynecologist, 'cause a gynecologist can prescribe the testosterone, too, and he never had to see anything like that. And I'm thinking, that's kind of weird, but I showed him, because, you know, you do your little dance, you do your little tap dance, in front of these people, you know, the red tape. But I was just like, "What the hell?"

Phillip described experiencing a sense of violation when the doctor wanted to examine his breasts, but feeling like he had to put up with it to continue receiving care. The doctor, as an authority in the medical institution, committed violence by having Phillip expose his body for display, which Phillip reported there was likely no medical reason to do so. Phillip had to delicately negotiate his interactions with the doctor in order to maintain

access to hormone therapy. As a gatekeeper, the doctor had ultimate control over the situation and could treat patients inappropriately with few consequences. Patients like Phillip feel like they really only have the option to suffer this treatment or restart the arduous process of finding more competent care elsewhere—a process that was fairly easy for trans men in major cities, but not for those in more isolated geographic contexts. Medical professionals use a variety of criteria to determine whether trans people should receive transition related care, which often rely on whether the patient fits the ideal model of the transgender patient rather than established medical protocols (Meyerowitz 2002; Spade 2006; Whitehead and Thomas 2013). At the same time, if the patient challenges the doctor's behavior or authority they take the risk of the doctor denying treatment.

Josh shared a similar story of the one local doctor who is known to prescribe testosterone in the rural county where he lives. Even when trans patients complained about abuse and inappropriate behavior the doctor's behavior did not change. He said:

Our HMO here, the endocrinologist that they make you see, she does things that are out of line. All she has to do is prescribe the T. That's it. She doesn't need to have you take off your clothes. She needs to do basic blood work, that's it. So pretty much everybody, and she's been talked to about it, and she still does it. She has, like for my friend, she called his therapist and said, "Well I don't believe him and blah blah blah. I had, I examined him, or her," she kept using her, "and she has normal genitalia." Which is bullshit. So this doctor, which is the gateway to getting T, has people take off their clothes, calls other doctors inappropriately, and it's common that she does that. She's been talked to at least two or three times around it.

From Josh's account, there was a consensus among transgender patients that the doctor's behavior was inappropriate. She was even admonished by the institution where she worked. Yet, the doctor could use her authority as ensured by the structure of medical institutions to treat transgender patients inappropriately.

Other respondents mentioned providers that abused them or seemed incompetent but they kept going there because there were few other options. The closest doctor Dominic (Suburban Midwest, 27, white, Pansexual, 2 years) could find was in a small city about 40 miles from the rural area where he lived. He said,

The one that I could find was in the city. And even—I don't know. I wish I could have a different doctor. He's not the most professional, I would say. He's said some rude comments before to me, that I personally just didn't think it was appropriate to say. There was this one where he said—and I like him. He's a good guy, but... There was, he had an intern with him and I was going in there for a regular check-up. I think I'd just had my hormone levels checked and he was asking questions, "How are things going?" and then he was going over that, and he said, "Well, we don't need to test you for testicular cancer, 'cause you don't have any balls," right in front of this intern. And it, you know, at the point it was kind of funny, but that kind of hurt me at the same time, you know. I don't know. I thought it was kind of rude and inappropriate.

Though he did not generally dislike the doctor, Dominic still reported that the doctor's behavior hurt him. The power imbalance between patient and doctor heightens the subtle form of discrimination of the doctor's rudeness. Both the immediate and cumulative psychological harm that the doctor causes in the patient qualify this simple and likely unintentional act as a form of violence. In addition, he felt like he had to continue care with the doctor because though Dominic knew of other doctors in the state he felt like it was too far to travel and the cost would be prohibitive. It seemed that the presence of interns and being used as a teaching case made other trans men uncomfortable as well. Gavin (Urban, Midwest, 27, white, gay mostly, 7 years) could only find reliable health providers through the university hospital in the town where he lived when starting transition. He said:

I had a couple of yearly exams (pap smears) with the second doctor I had who was around for a little bit longer before he suddenly closed his practice. He was prescribing my testosterone and he also did some of these

yearly exams. That was uncomfortable. I feel like it's always going to be awkward but he always had some student. Like, an intern just like seeing how it worked. How that office works. And he would ask, "Is it okay if so and so is in the room there?" You know, "Seeing how it goes?" That always felt strange to me. That felt kind of uncomfortable to me. Just thinking about these sort of histories of displaying non-normative bodies in this educational, sort of medical setting.

Thus, Gavin felt that his body being displayed for others was a form of exploitation, which was likely heightened by the general discomfort Gavin sensed from the doctor. Again, though the doctor did not physically assault or yell at Gavin, the discomfort from being put on display indicates these more subtle forms of violence. Even though the care he was getting was not ideal, when the doctor left the medical center Gavin was unable to find a new doctor for gynecological care and had not had his yearly exam since. In addition to the psychological and emotional harm trans men experience in these situations, these fears and experiences are detrimental to their overall health because, as interviewees reported, they will avoid going to the doctor in general due to their experiences of violence.

Seeking Affirming Care

Due to limited availability of experienced doctors, most rural and suburban respondents traveled to nearby cities, if they were able, to access transition-related care. Some men, like Henry, were able to find willing providers in rural places, but in all but a few major cities such as San Francisco, Minneapolis-St Paul, and Chicago if the local provider acted inappropriately, did not give good quality care, or had restrictive ideas about the transition process, trans men either had to endure the problems or try to travel for their regular care. For those that were able, traveling to increase their quality of care was a satisfying solution.

When Mark (Rural, Southeast, 43, white, Straight, 10 years) started his transition while living in a small southeastern city he found a doctor through his therapist who was willing to prescribe testosterone:

My therapist hooked me up with a gay doctor, who was sports medicine, for my hormones. That little bastard, he held me captive. I had to go to his office every two weeks...to get the shot. Wouldn't write me a script or anything. I did that for about three or four months, and I got sick of it ... 'cause I had to schedule my time to travel there. And, so I said to him, "Look, if you're not gonna hook me up with a script, I'll go elsewhere." And I guess he didn't believe me, so I went elsewhere. So, I found a doctor in (large college town 50 miles away)—a lesbian.

Due to the first doctor's insistence on control of the process, Mark traveled to find a new doctor that would treat him humanely. Individual doctors may decide to follow more restrictive protocols in giving care for a variety of medical issues, which we might characterize as violence or not. The pattern across interviews indicates that trans men experienced psychological and financial harm from doctors. It was particularly difficult for trans men with fewer financial resources to find a new doctor, especially if there were few doctors in the area. Further, regardless of the doctor's intention or motivation, trans men named this as particular to them as transgender patients and marking this as transphobic violence.

How did receiving care with little or no violence affect trans men's experience of transition? Jacob (Urban, Midwest, 55, white, Bi, 13 years), living in a large midwestern city, described how the university-based gender clinic changed significantly with a new director, from an empowering approach to a restrictive approach:

The old director supported trans people. The new director, you had to do it his way. That's when the whole gate-keeping thing started. It wasn't like that before because the old director was trans so she knew the psychic thing that people were going through. That's the very awful thing about the universities, is they take the joy out of our transitioning. They don't

get it because they make us go through all this shit that I'm sure you've heard a million times from people. So that was the biggest thing. They took the joy out of transition. Not only did they take the joy out of it but you had to [deal with] their abuse. And then you still had to deal with your own gender stuff. So it was a huge difference.... So basically the biggest thing is that it should be a joyful transition, it should not be a painful transition. It's their pain. And if you have the proper support and stuff it doesn't hurt. It does hurt before that time. But once you start to transition it's really truly a joyful thing. It makes us happier than hell. It doesn't cause pain.

Thus, as Jacob explains, restrictive medical processes not only cause various forms of harm, but also take away the potential for finding joy in transition. As Dean Spade (2006) points out, medical gate-keeping through the medical production of the category of transsexual prevents access to medical care for transgender individuals who do not fit into the ideal model of the transgender patient. There has been great debate regarding the inclusion of Gender Identity Disorder in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychological Association*, which was recently removed due to longtime activism by transgender people and allies. Many practitioners rely on some version of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH), formerly Harry Benjamin, guidelines, and proscribe some period of psychotherapy and require trans people to demonstrate “lived experience” to access medical transition, though these guidelines have become more flexible in recent years (World Professional Association for Transgender Health 2012).

Alternatively, some trans health providers, such as the Howard Brown Health Center in Chicago or the Tom Wadell clinic in San Francisco, have turned to an informed-consent model where transgender people can access hormone therapy through a streamlined process that assumes that they can make decisions about their own body. At Howard Brown, this means that a person will have three appointments—first a medical

check up, then a meeting with a social worker, and finally a second medical appointment. Their services are offered on a sliding scale. Trans men in all three regions sought providers that were convenient, affordable, and if possible didn't make them do any kind of dehumanizing "tap dance" to receive care.

As long as the technologies have been known, transgender people with the means to do so have traveled, sometimes internationally, to access medical care (Aizura 2013; Meyerowitz 2002). Interviewees traveled as far as Thailand or Serbia for genital surgeries, though most men were able to find hormone therapy, chest reconstruction surgery, and procedures such as hysterectomies domestically. Sometimes they had to travel far within their region to access competent trans healthcare.

It was unsurprising that interviewees in Chicago and outlying areas traveled to Howard Brown for care, but striking how many interviewees from much further away traveled to Howard Brown for competent care and the informed consent process. Interviewees traveled from Wisconsin, Central Illinois, Northern Indiana/Southern Michigan and as far as the 300-mile, five-hour drive from Cincinnati to go to Howard Brown. Dean Spade (2006) argues that "the medical regime permits only the production of gender-normative altered bodies" (319) and that the medical diagnosis itself acts to regulate individual gender expressions. Thus, traveling to gain access to the more open format of care was an effort to break free from the regulatory effects of the disease model and more restrictive standards of care.

The ability to travel is limited by available funds to pay for travel and lodging and to take time off work, but many of the men who traveled did not have many financial resources. Similar patterns emerged in other cities such as Minneapolis–St. Paul or

Atlanta, though interviewees on the West Coast were less motivated to travel. The people that had an easy time of accessing medical transition tended to be in a large urban center or were more likely to easily get transition-related care on the West Coast than the Midwest or South. In any regard, people who have greater financial resources and family support are able to more easily find care.

Dean Spade remarks, “Sexual and gender self-determination and the expression of variant gender identities without punishment (and with celebration) should be the goals of any medical, legal, or political examination of or intervention into the gender expression of individuals and groups” (2006: 317). Respondents articulated a wide range of acceptance and rejection of various models of transition-related care and these men were active in seeking the care they wanted, even as economic factors and convenience led others to deal with what care they could find in place.

Violence While Getting Medical Care

The most jarring violence interviewees experienced was when trying to access medical care to heal from injury or illness and being subjected to violence from medical practitioners. This transphobic violence occurred regularly while trans men were addressing non-transgender related health needs and ranged from subtle annoyances such as doctors making inappropriate jokes and dealing with bureaucratic structures in which they were illegible, to abuse and physical violence at the hands of medical personnel. This violence caused a range of reported harm from more minor psychological effects to physical pain.

Respondents frequently found that their transgender status or history would come up when visiting the doctor for unrelated reasons. Gavin (Urban, Midwest, 27, white, gay mostly, 7 years) said:

I've been in there a couple times like, for allergy stuff and for some reason it will come up that I'm trans. I don't know if it was on my record or whatever, and the doctor asked me some questions that indicated he knew something about trans stuff but not enough to know that it had nothing to do with what I was doing there and that these questions weren't relevant based on where I was at in my transition.

Gavin and other respondents found that the reminder of their transgender status and medical personnel's lack of training in transgender-related health issues made their transgender identities and histories salient in situations where it would not otherwise have been. This caused unnecessary discomfort and stress while trying to access care.

Michael (Urban, West, 40, white, Queer, 2 years) had trouble when going to the local hospital to get care for disability-related medical issues. He faced structural issues having to do with policy and the content of forms:

The medical center, they suck, they're horrible. They don't have space for a, a partner, if they're not a domestic partner. ... There's no space for being queer, let alone for being trans in the paperwork. And I'm an advocate for, you know, for trans-competency and queer-competency and I go in to get my own care and it sucks.

Although few people likely take pleasure in filling out forms when seeking medical care, the experience becomes problematic when the forms and procedures do not have space for gender and sexual diversity. When the men's identities were unintelligible in this sense, Michael and other trans men reported experiencing psychological harm.

Medical staff using incorrect pronouns was often reported by interviewees as evidence of a lack of transgender healthcare competency. This is a common micro aggression that transgender people face, which causes stress and psychological harm

(Nadal et al. 2012). Cooper (Rural, Midwest, 26, white, omnisexual, 4 years) found that his experiences accessing general medical care varied depending on at which of the hospitals in his rural area he sought care. He said:

The only time I've really run into a problem with a hospital was Medical Hospital before they became part of the large medical system. It wasn't like, they refused me service or anything but when I told them that I preferred male they just kept calling me female.

When this particular hospital was absorbed into a larger medical system, his care improved. He believed that the large medical system had better training and policies regarding the treatment of transgender people. Though relatively minor when taken as individual incidents, at least in comparison to the reports of psychological, verbal, and physical violence in the rest of this section, these incidents of violence add to the marginalization of trans men and add to their feelings of powerlessness in an institution where they are trying to seek healing.

Similar to the abuses suffered when trying to seek transition-related care, trans men experienced inappropriate and invasive surveillance of their bodies during regular medical care. During a serious illness, Aaron was hospitalized. He said:

My endocrinologist at the hospital pulled down my pants without my consent to look at my genitalia. She kept going, "Just checking." Now, what was she just checking? She never said. And it's not like I was there for some related issue. I was there for new-onset diabetes.

Being transgender and vulnerable to a physician's authority in medical institutions make trans men like Aaron subject to violations of the privacy of their bodies at a time when they are especially vulnerable. Chris (Urban, West, 48, white, heterosexual, 13 years) expressed this sentiment well when a doctor verbally abused him while he was seeking care for sleep apnea:

I've never had bad experiences because I'm just a people person except with doctors because I'll tell them. I told one doctor and he didn't want to touch me after he found out. That's horrifying. It's just awful when you feel sick that you're so despised just because of who you are and it's not even who, it's what you are because he liked me before, was fine with me and he grabbed my tongue and looked down my throat and he said, "Not a problem. You have this thing. We can do surgery; it'll clear it right up." Then, I don't know why I told him, I think I did because I didn't want it biting me in the ass somewhere. And that's when he said, "Oh! You have mental problems. It's obvious you have mental problems." So it went from there.

Many respondents like Chris reported that medical providers assigned a deficiency in mental health or that they are morally deficient, as in Jack's attempt to get transition-related care from the conservative religious OB/GYN in his rural area.

Being in a non-metropolitan area with only one major hospital meant that their transgender status might not only affect the respondents, but also potentially the people associated with them. Sean (Rural, Midwest, 34, white, straight, 11 years) experienced poor treatment for his own medical problems at the hospital in a small city nearby, which he suspects affected his wife's treatment there:

My wife has a lot of health problems and she had this neuropathy and she fell and broke part of her face on the chair. And she had to go to the doctor (in a nearby small city) and get surgery and everything else. Well a week or two earlier before I went in. I had a horrible kidney stone. I didn't know what was going on and I went in there and, you know, after a while I had to tell them well, it could be a pelvic problem or something and I had to tell them my deal and boy, were they nasty to me, and they got rid of me. They were like, yeah, bad gas. Go home, you'll be fine. And so then I came back the next day in horrible pain, and screaming in pain, and I'm not a noisy person, and had this dry heaving and just sick as could be. And finally they did a CT scan. Okay, you have a kidney stone, here's some pain medication. And luckily I passed it so I didn't have to go to any other doctor. They were pretty nasty to me and weird with me. Then two weeks later we had to go in for my wife's—she had broke her face and they remembered me. And then I think that got passed around because I heard people talking in the hallway. And she had to get surgery for that. Well, they didn't give her antibiotics after surgery and I don't know if that's because they didn't like me or they were giving her substandard care or

not. I won't go that far but she ended up getting a bone infection which was really serious and yeah. It ended up where she had to get IV antibiotics every 12 hours for like, I think it was four or five months. And she had to go down and sit in a hyperbaric chamber and get oxygen once a day down in [a major city an hour away] for months. So that really sucked. And then she had to get another surgery at the end of it all. But when we kept trying to go back to the surgeon saying, "You know, she's still in a lot of pain," they were really dismissive of us and acted like we were just there to get attention.

Sean strongly believes that the medical personnel's knowledge of his transgender status had some effect on both he and his wife's care at the local hospital. The image of transgender people as duplicitous and mentally unstable (Bettcher 2007; Spade 2006) may have made the hospital personnel more hostile to trans patients and their families, as well as more likely to suspect them of drug-seeking behavior.

Jason (Suburban, Midwest, 36, white, gay male, 12 years) shared a particularly harrowing recent story of seeking care for a severe bladder problem:

It got to the point where I was in so much pain that I went to a Catholic hospital here in town. I have never in my life been treated like such a subhuman, ever. The nurses were rude. They were like, "What do you want us to do? Put a catheter in you? What do you want?" And I was like, "Make it stop hurting." I was like, "I'm not here looking for pain drugs. I want you to figure out what the hell's going on." Um, the doctor literally was in and out of the room, like just didn't wanna deal with me. They ordered a CAT scan.

During the CAT scan the nurse he was left alone with assaulted him. He continued:

I mean, why would anybody do that, but it hurt and I screamed. You know. And ever since then I, I will not go see a doctor by myself. Later, they literally kicked me out of the hospital and I was in agonizing pain, so I was like down by the parking garage and I was just kind of laying there holding my gut, and, you know, nurses walking by, nobody paying any attention. Eventually I got out of the garage. But, um [pause] that was quite possibly the most horrific experience I've ever had in my life.

These experiences of violence in accessing all sorts of medical care led to avoiding medical care altogether and made most medical situations fraught with quite justified

fear. This is one area where trans men's fears and their experiences lined up and resulted in tragic consequences. If anything, their experiences of violence often exceeded their fears. The disjuncture here is in the fact that medical institutions that are supposed to help all people and encourage health end up as the main perpetrators of violence in the lives of transgender people.

Context mattered in respondents' ability to seek out competent and humane medical care. Though men experienced violence across geographic contexts, those in large urban centers, particularly in the West, had many more options for accessing care. Since many of the trans men of color lived in urban centers (likely due to histories of racial segregation and migration [Massey and Denton 1993]) their ability to find care was similar to urban white men in the sample. At the same time, racial disparities in access to healthcare would likely to affect access to care, but this too was not evident in these narratives. In general, those with financial means and family support had the most success in getting medical care without violence. They used knowledge of their local areas to find competent care, though options were limited as in Sean's example, or emergency situations such as in Jason or Aaron's cases made them particularly vulnerable and unable to avoid medical violence.

Medical institutions were a particular site of transphobic violence because trans men's bodies were often exposed and it was difficult to hide their transgender status. The unequal power relation between doctors and patients inherent in the medical context made trans men particularly vulnerable to abuse by medical personnel. In addition, this power imbalance shaped the men's presentation of themselves as transgender people in order to fit doctors' ideas of which transgender people deserve care.

Though I have not detailed it extensively here, medical contexts produced not only diverse forms of violence, but also an array of resistance to this violence among trans men. Some of it is evident in the accounts above, such as maneuvering to seek different care providers and helping new doctors, as in Henry's case, understand how to treat trans patients with respect and dignity. Many of the men quoted above engage in resistance through organizing and educating in their local communities and at regional and national levels. For example, after his horrific experience Jason started speaking at trainings at other local hospitals in an effort to educate medical practitioners so that his experience would not be repeated. Although resistance is not the focus of this analysis, it is important to recognize that trans people are not the dupes of the medical system as some authors have argued (e.g., Billings and Urban 1982; Raymond 1979). In the face of structural conditions of unequal power in these institutions, trans people actively undertake a myriad of approaches to create justice in this context.

Conclusion

The specific institutional arrangements of bathrooms and medical contexts produced particular forms of fear and violence that reproduced patterns of social domination, through both mundane everyday activities and clear acts of intentional violence. Men's bathrooms provoked a particularly strong set of fears that were not realized by most men. Women's bathrooms were more common sites of violence in the form of verbal harassment. Over time, men become habituated to the homophobic interactional rules of the bathroom, which reproduce heterosexism through unremarkable everyday practices. Lastly, medical violence was the most common form of transgender related violence in the men's lives: they face barriers to accessing competent transgender

related health care and general healthcare without being subjected to transphobic violence. Individuals went to great lengths to access competent medical care and resisted medical violence in many forms. Actual experiences of violence in these particular institutional settings likely strengthen images of trans men's vulnerability across geographic and social space.

In this chapter, I analyzed trans men's narratives of using sex-segregated public bathrooms and accessing medical care to show how relations of domination based on sexuality and gender are produced in everyday interactions based on the structural arrangements of particular institutions. This gives evidence of the diffuse and diverse ways that inequality and power are produced in social life and how specific institutions produce particular forms of inequality. If public bathrooms were not sex segregated, would men be as likely to reproduce heterosexism and gender conformity in them? Would medical contexts produce transphobic violence if they were structured around empowering patients rather than reifying doctors' control? The answer in both cases is likely no. In addition, if these relations of domination are produced in particular sites, they are not limited to them. We can see how in the case of bathrooms, this reminder of heterosexism, that is likely below the level of consciousness for most men, is peppered throughout men's days as they go into these institutions. This homophobia surely followed Willy Houston out of the bathroom. Though Houston's case is clearly an extreme example, it does show how transgressions of heterosexist rules of the bathroom do not stay in those contexts. The same can be said for trans men's experiences of violence in medical contexts as this violence causes physical and psychological harm that carries into the rest of their lives, in addition to being a reminder of cissexism. In the face

of increasing legal equality for gays and lesbians, as well as transgender people, these contexts reaffirm that cissexism and heterosexism have not gone away, but still persist in the fabric of the institutions that many people encounter in their everyday lives. I will return to this discussion and the implications for transgender politics in the conclusion.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapters I have explored how various spatial and institutional contexts shape trans men's experiences of gender, sexuality, and race. The analysis relied on intersectional and social constructionist perspectives on gender, race, and sexuality to understand how becoming a man, affective and emotional experiences, and fears and experiences of violence are formed by the spatial contexts, particularly urban and rural settings, and institutional contexts, such as family and medical settings, that trans men inhabit and travel between in their everyday lives. These findings contribute to sociological understandings of men and masculinities and the experiences of transgender people.

Findings

In the first chapter of the analysis I argued that becoming a man is a life long process of learning to negotiate different social contexts in light of the gendered self. This process is built on a relationship between the gendered self, social identities, recognition, authenticity, and situated expectations. Particular spatial and institutional contexts are important sites of the recognition of gender identity, which is the first part of the process of becoming a man. This analysis used the doing gender perspective to explain how situated expectations, including the spatially specific masculine ideal types I outline in the chapter, shape men's behaviors as they anticipate being accountable to local norms and expectations. I build on this perspective by showing how men negotiate between these expectations, social recognition of gender identity, and authenticity to the gendered self in interaction. This illustrates how individual level characteristics figure into the

interactional accomplishment of gender and how and why individuals' gender practices change between settings and vary among individuals; it evidences a constant tension between agency and constraint in social interaction. Both expectations and men's comfort in expressing their gendered selves change over time, thus this is a dynamic rather than static process.

Using racial formation theory I show how racialized hypermasculinities, such as the thug and the redneck, are racial projects that act as a way to contain racism in rural spaces and assign blame for black men's poverty to individual rather than structural characteristics. This adds a spatial understanding to Hondagneu-Sotelo and Messner's (1994) proposition that privileged men construct themselves as more enlightened in contrast to the hypermasculinity of racialized groups, which allows more privileged men to pose themselves as comparatively egalitarian. However, this may just cover small but not substantive changes in their own practices. Displacing the blame for inequality allows some men to maintain their privilege and appear more egalitarian at the same time.

The rigidity of rural, southern, and midwestern spatial contexts compared to the flexibility of urban and western contexts shows that large-scale changing masculinities may be spatially uneven. In addition, race and sexuality appear to be particularly important in shaping these practices. The best example of this is between urban and rural masculine ideals, though region certainly shows some difference as well. The more rigid practices of rural places were often posed as inauthentic in comparison to the Goldilocks masculinity of the regular guy. Overall, rural ideals seemed to reflect the more rigid gender order of those spaces. On the other hand, urban spaces exhibit more variety and

incorporation, at least for white men. This offers evidence of hybridity as a normative ideal.

The central questions of this chapter were about the changing relationships between masculinities and inequality. The first question concerned the reproduction of inequality between men and women and the second, about inequality among men. According to these findings, the creation of difference and inequality between men and women is still very much alive and relies on discourses of difference as an explanation. This analysis demonstrates that gender, race, and sexuality are still primary shapers of domination among men, but that these function in spatially and institutionally specific ways. I elaborate on these findings at more length below.

In the second chapter the analysis focused on how the ideal of men's emotional and affective life calls for contextually appropriate feelings and emotional displays. Trans men's narratives show that difference in emotion and emotional expression are key markers of distinction between women and among men. In this formulation women and faggy men are overly emotional in contrast to most of the participants subdued emotional states. At the same time, an inability to express any softer emotions, often associated with hypermasculine men, was also marked as deficient. Following Shields (2002), this demonstrates that the ideal for men is now contextually appropriate emotion rather than inexpressiveness.

Individuals' bodies were central to narratives of emotional control. Bodily difference related to testosterone treatment was a chief way to distinguish in these accounts between men and women as well as trans people that did not hormonally transition. This was especially true of the ability to control these intense bodily urges

when trans men described their experiences of transition and the attendant affective and emotional changes related to anger and calm, crying, and sexuality. Men that could restrain these barely controllable urges again shifted blame to individual men for not disciplining their own impulses. One form of control was relabeling anger as assertiveness rather than changing one's affect or actions. These narratives of affect and control reify rape culture discourses that suggest most men are only a step away from losing control of their sexual desires. Narratives that connected testosterone therapy to increasing sexual attraction and actual sexual activity with men, may evidence a break with heterosexual norms that link the hormone with desire for women. Yet, a significant subset of men reported that they were only interested in sexual relationships with men and reserved romantic and emotional relationships for women. This reinforces the normative value of the heterosexual dyad as the most esteemed and legitimate form of family life.

Finally, I show that race and class shape contexts of emotional opening, such as support settings and spaces of brotherhood. Again, respondents use the racialized and classed hypermasculinity of other men in support settings, who they characterize as having difficulty in expressing softer emotions and an inability to control anger, to affirm their own contextually appropriate emotions and capacity to correctly control those feelings. In addition, men label the appropriateness of particular displays differently based on which men are enacting them. Others may see a white man displaying a specific behavior as appropriately assertive, whereas for a black man, the same behavior would be labeled overly aggressive and inappropriate. This analysis supports Messner's (2007) assertion that the ascendant hybrid ideal combines some display of contextually

appropriate softer emotions, coupled with toughness and control of violence when necessary. Through trans men's narratives we can see how this hybrid ideal in the realm of politics is enacted in the lives of everyday men.

The final two chapters of the analysis focus on how trans men's narratives of vulnerability and their attendant fears, as well as experiences of violence, are shaped by spatial and institutional contexts. In "Geography of Violence," I show how vulnerability rituals, such as Transgender Day of Remembrance, create fears of spectacular violence for all transgender people, even though those most likely to die as a result of transphobic violence are trans women of color in poverty. These fears act as powerful forms of social control that reproduce systems of inequality in spatially specific ways. Through narratives of fear and violence, trans men show that rural spaces and the South are the most common sites of fears of transphobic, racist, and homophobic violence. Though few of the men had experienced any overt violence in these contexts, the specter of Brandon Teena appeared throughout their stories and concerns for safety. These spatially specific fears act as forms of social control that push men to take part in reproducing heterosexism, gender conformity, and racism. Again, this distribution of fear suggests that harm is most likely to be at the hands of particular violent individuals that are more likely to be found in specific locations, rather than in structural forms of violence.

In the final chapter of the analysis I used the same understanding of violence to examine how the structural features of particular institutions shape fears and actual experiences of violence as men encounter them. Sex-segregated bathrooms are the site of the reproduction of heterosexism and gender conformity through mundane everyday practices. In the way that sex-segregated bathrooms act as a reminder of gender

difference in a time of increasing gender equity, at least in a legal sense, it appears that the men's bathroom is a reminder of heterosexism in the face of increasing formal rights for lesbians and gays. It is likely then that this reminder of heterosexism, as created in this context, bleeds into the fabric of the rest of our social lives. The nature of sex-segregated bathrooms in general causes trans men harm early in transition as they suffer psychological stress and potential health problems in trying to access or having to avoid public bathrooms altogether.

Medical contexts were the final setting where I analyzed the production of fear and violence in trans men's lives. Though there was a disjuncture between fears and actual experiences of violence based on region, rural setting, and men's bathrooms, in medical settings trans men's fears of violence were often realized. The disjuncture here was rather in experiencing violence in a setting where one expects to be healed. This violence ranged from microaggressions to acts of physical violence in these contexts; trans men reported psychological and physical harm from this violence. Unequal power relations between transgender patients and healthcare providers as structured in medical institutions set the conditions for this violence.

This institutional analysis demonstrates that different structures of inequality are produced in diffuse and diverse contexts. In addition, this violence produces diverse methods of resistance, especially in the case of medical contexts. Thus, particular institutional features promote specific forms of violence at the same time as they produce certain modes of resistance. In the end, it is likely that the structural features of institutions must change in order to eliminate these sources of fear and violence.

Discussion

In this final discussion I explore some of the implications and contributions of the dissertation. I focus this discussion on three areas: understandings of social interaction and social inequality, the field of men and masculinities, and the production of fear and violence as a part of transgender politics. Throughout this section I point to some of the limitations of this project and avenues for future inquiry.

Contexts of Social Interaction and Inequality

The central contribution of this project is an expanded understanding of the importance of context in shaping social interaction and in the production of social inequalities. I have shown that spatial and institutional contexts shape trans men's experiences of gender, sexuality, and race. These contexts condition the social expectations and the structural conditions that individuals negotiate, reproduce, and resist in their everyday lives, especially at the level of interaction. Though some social research does attend to context at times, it is usually treated as a background characteristic. This study shows the value of foregrounding context through comparative work across spatial contexts, such as region and urban/rural, and across institutions. It is through these comparisons that we can understand how individual, interactional, and institutional/structural conditions all come into play to shape people's behavior as they move about their lives.

The concern with context at the center of this work emerged out of the initial interview project in the San Francisco Bay Area and was very much inspired by the work of women of color feminists such as Evelyn Nakano Glenn (2002) and Chandra Mohanty (2003), especially in incorporating region as a spatial context. I primarily focused on

sexuality, gender, and race in this analysis and without centering that analysis on intersectionality and multiplicity I would have missed the full picture of what was occurring in trans men's experiences. There were times in the interviews that race or sexuality did not come to the forefront, though certainly gender was present throughout. The presence of gender is not surprising given that the sample was gathered based on a particular gender related social category, trans men, and transgender experiences and masculinities were the center of the analysis. Further analysis and data collection might help to bring out more complexity in regard to race, sexuality, and context, but this analysis also suggests that in particular settings certain aspects of intersectionality might appear more salient. For example, perhaps men's bathrooms are central sites of the reproduction of heteronormativity in the contemporary United States, but if we studied public bathrooms in the Jim Crow era in the U.S. South we might conclude that race was clearly one of the main organizers of access to bathrooms. This does not mean that sexuality did not shape the bathrooms then and race does not shape them now. Rather, what is closer to the surface might give us insight into the particular role of that institutional space in the creation of power and resistance in a specific time and place. In addition, this analysis of race, particularly in describing the racial projects of the thug and redneck, relies primarily on a black/white binary or a white men/men of color binary. An increased focus on the experiences of Asian, Latino, Native, and other trans men, and importantly a more nuanced comparative analysis of racialization and transgender experiences, would deepen this analysis in significant ways.

West and Zimmerman's (1987) doing gender is by far the dominant theory of gender in interaction for the contemporary sociology of gender. Although they certainly

point to the importance of context in their understanding of the role of situated gender expectations, this aspect of the theory is often not actively addressed in the voluminous scholarship that uses this perspective. As I have shown here, spatially situated ideas of how men and women are and should be are part of what makes up those expectations. In addition, I have shown that the gendered self is not just an individual characteristic but that it also shapes interaction. By combining an analysis of how individuals negotiate the gendered self and their anticipated accountability to local expectations, we gain insight into how the actual behaviors that individuals engage in reflect the tension between structure and agency in those contexts. This self is not solely gendered, and an understanding of a multiplicitous self and the intersectional nature of situated expectations help to show how these interactions go beyond gender alone. For instance, the black men in the sample showed consistently that the expectations they anticipated encountering and the treatment they received from others were simultaneously shaped by race and gender.

This analysis also suggests how the doings that are products of this negotiation are repeated and become routinized, such as in men's bathrooms. This repetitive nature of gender has been theorized by others (e.g., Butler 1990). It can also be absent in work that uses the doing gender perspective, which at times treats actors as if they have no prior history coming into a particular interaction. Conceptualizing this as social practice better gets at this repetition that constitutes gender in interaction. These dynamics may be an important site to identify changing social relations at the interactional level. Future research should look at changes in the gendered self and when individuals are successful

in enforcing their own expectations of a situation over the larger norms and widespread expectations that constrict practices and reproduce inequality.

This project contributes to efforts in queer studies to build understandings of the experiences of rural LGBT people. Here too, context matters for understanding the lives of transgender people. The image of rurality hangs as a threat over the heads of transgender people in metropolitan and other non-rural settings, but the stories of rural trans people tell us that these lives are actually livable. Overall, it is important to go beyond the narrative that trans people are not to be found in rural places or that their only realistic chance of having a livable life is to follow the metronormative narrative to the city.

Rural trans men may have particular needs or experiences related to place, as do their urban counterparts. Again, a comparative contextual analysis can tell us how the needs of these populations converge and differ. For example, I have shown that trans men in both urban and rural contexts report improper care from medical providers. Yet, they differ in that urban trans men have less difficulty finding new providers, especially in major cities. This suggests that rather than building another trans health care center in a major city (even if it is needed), some resources should be directed to smaller cities or for doctors with expertise in trans healthcare to regularly travel to underserved areas for regular clinics.

Those that do not live in the Midwest and Southeast often construe these regions as similarly impossible for transgender lives to thrive. It is difficult to counter these narratives when little research focuses on trans and queer lives outside of the East and West Coasts. Fortunately, there is increasing scholarly and popular interest in LGBT lives

outside of coastal cities and this study complements that work. Future work could attend to the connections between non-metropolitan and Midwestern and Southeastern connections to a globalized world and further comparative analysis with similar settings in other world regions. For example, comparative analyses with work like Gopinath's (2007) analysis of region, rurality, and lesbians in India could be a start for intriguing transnational analysis. In sum, the proliferation of research and understanding of transgender lives should aim to match the diversity and complexity of those lives.

Masculinities and Inequality

This work speaks to a central contemporary debate in the field of men and masculinities about the meanings of what Bridges and Pascoe (2014) call hybrid masculinities. Through discussion of the ideal type of the regular guy and the desirability of contextually appropriate emotion, I demonstrate that hybridity is an accurate depiction of contemporary masculine practices. In general, hybridity means that the hypermasculinity central to some scholars' understanding of hegemonic masculinity is no longer seen as widely acceptable, and most importantly, no longer serves to legitimate patriarchy. Instead of rejecting everything about subordinate masculinities, such as those associated with gay men, this hybrid formation allows for incorporation of these formerly subordinated practices. The debate is not so much about the existence of hybrid masculinities, but rather about their meaning. Are they a sign of more egalitarian gender relations and decreasing homophobia (Anderson 2009)? Are they solely local variation (R. Connell and Messerschmidt 2005)? Or, are they superficial rather than substantive changes that repackage hegemonic masculinity without upsetting relations of power in any significant way (Bridges and Pascoe 2014; Messner 2007)? Clarifying the role of

hybrid masculinities is crucial to a better of understanding of contemporary relations of domination.

In the first chapter of the analysis I asked two central questions that are important for addressing this debate and understanding the role of contemporary masculinities and inequality: what is the effect of hybrid masculinities on inequality between men and women? What is their effect on inequality among men? For the first question, evidence of differing treatment and privilege that many trans men report experiencing upon social recognition of them as men, as well as the characterization of women's excessive emotionality, signal that inequality between women and men is very much alive. In regard to the second question, the fact that men of color, particularly black men, did not experience these same privileges, and that their affective expressions were connected to aggression and violence, shows that racial hierarchy is still present. Though, according to interviewees' accounts, overt acts of homophobia were generally unacceptable and only enacted by hypermasculine men, homophobia and heterosexism still seem embedded in social relations as evidenced by narratives of participation in the everyday homophobic rules of the men's bathroom, as well as descriptions of heterosexual dyads as the proper place for emotional romantic relationships. With this evidence, I would argue that Anderson's position (2009) appears to be overly optimistic.

The remaining two positions in this debate are similar in their understanding that hybrid formations do not necessarily signal substantive changes in gender relations, but differ in that Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) see them as only local variations, whereas Bridges and Pascoe (2014) argue that they reflect wider reaching dynamics. Reflecting on the analysis of urban flexibility and rural rigidity for masculine ideal types,

there does appear to be spatial variation in the adoption of hybrid formations as idealized masculine practices. The Goldilocks ideal, as described in “One is Not Born a Man” and the “Hard When I Need to Be, Soft When I Need to Be” ideal of contextually appropriate emotion, both give evidence of hybridity as an ideal. Hybridity may be a reflection of challenges to the gender order and an attendant appropriation of aspects of subordinated and marginalized masculinities in order to make symbolic changes to masculine styles and ensure the maintenance of hegemonic relations. If this is so, then it is likely that hybridity would emerge in the spatial contexts where these challenges are the most intense. This may explain the urban and rural difference.

Urban spaces, particularly major cities, are far less homogenous than rural spaces in terms of large communities of color and large gay populations. The realities of major cities in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries may mean that the common idea of hegemonic masculinity may not be as sufficient for legitimating patriarchy and the gender order. Though the 20th Century saw several large migrations of black, Latino, and Asian people to major cities, alongside the growth and entrenchment of visible LGBT communities, this period was largely characterized by ghettoization of sexual and racial minorities. This pattern of segregation was exacerbated by suburbanization and urban renewal of the post World War II era until the late twentieth century (Massey and Denton 1993) and supported by white racial politics (Lipsitz 1995). In some senses, the hegemonic form could inhere in the middle class suburban ideal protected in white affluent and heterosexual suburbs. Yet, as this process of suburbanization began to reverse with re-urbanization and gentrification of the 1990s until today, the more rigid masculinity of the past could perhaps no longer maintain the legitimacy of the gender

order. In other words, this urban and rural difference may be a sign of the coming of a particular historic bloc or a shift in hegemonic power relations. Rural spaces are inherently associated with whiteness, whereas that is not possible in urban spaces in the same way because of concentrations of people of color—though there may be more men of color in rural spaces than in the past (Cloke 2006). Thus, different strategies to maintain the gender order must be necessary as power becomes unstable with historic change in particular spatial contexts. The change over time in major cities is evident when comparing men that transitioned in the 1980s versus the 2010s; furthermore, there is some evidence of increasing hybridity in less progressive cities and rural places.

Taken in sum, the above discussion points to the importance of locating hybridity in its spatially specific contexts. Following Hondagneu-Sotello and Messner (1994), this also suggests that the non-hybrid ideal of rural spaces serves as a symbol that shores up the legitimacy of the hybrid and, thus, legitimizes patriarchal relations on a large scale. In other words, this construction suggests that good men are in the cities and bad men are in rural spaces, regardless of continuing evidence of inequalities in both places. Like the regular guy, these men are definitely imagined as heterosexual, even if they take on some aspects of femininity or faggy practices. With the masculine ideals of the thug and the redneck, we can see how this masculinity project is a racial project. Both the thug and the redneck protect the regular guy from being implicated in unacceptable violence, homophobia, sexism, and racism. In some senses this might represent local variation, but naming it as such risks minimizing the important role that this variation might play in maintaining larger hegemonic relations.

Amidst the critique that these hybrid formations do not necessarily represent substantive change, I think that it is valuable to note that it is a good thing that men want something more than a narrow range of masculine practices, even if it is only expressed on the surface. Many of the men who participated in this study truly wanted to be good men, whatever their version was, and quite a number wanted to combat their privilege directly. This was not always easy to do and trans men should not necessarily be expected to be the vanguard of a gender revolution. It must be the most privileged men that give up their power, and more importantly meaningful structural changes must occur to ensure justice along the lines of gender, sexuality, and race.

I hope that these surface level changes will go deeper and move men and others into actions that actually breaks down gender relations and delegitimizes the privilege of white, straight, middle and upper class men. These changes in style could gesture towards real change, but it takes much deeper collective work to make real changes in social relations a reality. Longitudinal research on different measures of gender, sexual, and racial inequality can give us better evidence of change than solely the styles adopted by some privileged men. If we are to focus on individual actions, progressive men show the best avenue for change through constant critical reflection, but this is no easy task. In all, it would be best to exercise caution at every surface change in privileged men's practices and every iteration of the new man, as the attendant celebrations often obscure continuing systemic inequities.

Time and development were also important for understanding men's practices. The time of their early transition was a big influence on particular practices; this is probably due both to the salience of gendered experiences at this time and insecurity

about being recognized as a man. This finding is suggestive about the importance of understanding men's experiences at other transitional points in life and how gender, sexuality, and race become salient and shape the experiences of those times. Longitudinal research as men move through different significant life changes would better elucidate these processes at work over the life course. The life history and narrative approach I used here gets at these changes and some of the conflicts that men experience between how they would like to behave and how they do. Yet, the longitudinal approach might better help to understand additional dimensions of these changes and their attendant narratives, without the recall bias of life history. This was evident in the first chapter where men that were about five years into their transition could better describe the period of change than men who were either in the thick of those changes or men that had experienced them many years before.

This study addresses the cisgender and essentialist bias in the masculinities literature. Trans men should not only be included in a study of masculinities because they can better articulate their experiences as a man; rather, they should be included because they are men and their experiences as men are often neglected. Trans men should be part of any diverse sample of men. In addition, intersectional approaches should not solely consider gender as being a man or woman, but whether one is transgender or cisgender as well.

This project focused on the category of man and I may have glossed over some of the participants' non-binary gender (e.g., genderqueer) identifications. Recruitment efforts, due to the research design, were likely to leave out individuals that have not and do not plan to transition. Though I made this conscious decision to limit the scope of the

sample to focus on the experience of transition and make this project manageable, additional research that compares the experiences of binary and non-binary identifying people would be valuable to further understand these experiences of gender, race, and sexuality. The finding that the most gender non-conforming people were the only ones who experienced violence in men's bathrooms points to overall conformity and non-conformity as an important variable when understanding the lives of transmasculine people and men in general. For transgender people, like most cisgender people, conformity might shape their everyday experiences far more than their cisgender or transgender statuses.

Transgender Violence

Legal equality goals threaten to provide nothing more than adjustments to the window-dressing of neoliberal violence that ultimately disserve and further marginalize the most vulnerable trans populations. (Spade 2011:33)

One thread running through each of the chapters, from interviewees' narratives, was the idea that most inequality and social violence is the product of individual actions (usually by people other than the interviewees themselves), rather than a product of social structure and institutional arrangements. By posing transphobic, racist, homophobic, and sexist violence as the property of bad individuals, particularly connected to rural men in the South, this violence becomes a problem of individuals who cannot control their affective urges or propensities rather than a problem of social structure. The fears at the base of this framework for understanding violence and inequality are affirmed through vulnerability rituals such as TDOR, where individual trans people are memorialized for the crimes committed against them by these bad individuals. Yet, for all of the fears of violence presented across the analysis, most were not realized. I have demonstrated the

myriad ways these mostly unfounded fears act as powerful forms of social control that encourage conformity and the reproduction of relations of social domination.

Additionally, these types of fears encourage a trans politics that may not make a lasting change in the lives of the majority of transgender people.

Transgender activism and political efforts were revitalized in the mid to late 1990s, organized around the horrific acts of violence committed against trans people such as Brandon Teena, Marsha P. Johnson, and others (D. Valentine 2007). Though these efforts took a variety of forms, including the formation of TDOR, one major strategy focused on transgender inclusion as a protected group in hate crimes legislation (Spade 2011). On the surface, lobbying efforts to include transphobic crimes in hate crimes legislation were a great victory for transgender people, but at the same time they supported a “law and order” solution to the problem of transgender marginalization. Lisa Duggan (2003) argues that the “law and order” politics of neoliberalism mean that increased policing and imprisonment have become the primary methods of containing the poverty produced by the economic effects of neoliberal policy. In a neoliberal framework, social problems are solved through these “law and order” approaches with an emphasis on personal responsibility rather than structural understanding of social inequities. As Spade (2011) illustrates using the insights of critical race theorists, these approaches to legal reform are based on the idea that violence against transgender people happens because bad transphobic people do it, in line with the narratives in this study, rather than examining structural sources of violence. Spade shows that these laws focused on hate crimes and anti-discrimination are not actually effective at deterring or ameliorating these incidents of violence and bias. Whether through formal policy or

grassroots organizing, these approaches, under the guise of increasing safety, work to direct further resources to the criminal justice system, which perpetuates considerable violence against poor people and especially economically marginalized people of color (Hanhardt 2008; Whitlock 2001). As Whitlock explains, “Attempting to address hate violence in ways that reinforce the structural violence of this system will only fuel the cycle of violence, hatred, and polarization” (2001:8). In the case of transgender violence, these “law and order” politics are likely to cause further violence against the poor trans women of color who are also most at risk of being victimized by the spectacular violence imagined in the narrative of transgender vulnerability (Spade 2011). Thus, these approaches are most likely to strengthen the institutions, such as police and prisons, which visit incredible structural violence against poor and racially marginalized trans people. This structural violence increases the marginalization that makes trans women of color more vulnerable to these acts of interpersonal violence.

Legal and political efforts would best focus on reforms targeted toward the most common sources of violence faced by transgender people, at the same time as measures aimed at bettering the lives of the most economically and socially marginalized trans people. Rather than hate crimes legislation, the lives of many trans men would be improved by institutionalizing gender-neutral bathrooms and better training for medical professionals. Anti-discrimination laws in employment, housing, and education do make most trans men in this sample feel safer in particular geographic locations, and that feeling of safety may make them more likely to address other inequities. At the same time, as Crenshaw (1989) makes clear, legal strategies that only focus on one aspect of identity or social location will necessarily leave out those who simultaneously experience

multiple forms of social marginalization. Thus, legal efforts must be combined with measures to address the poverty, racism, and other forms of structural inequality that make particular trans people more vulnerable. As scholar-activists such as Dean Spade (2011) and Andrea Smith (2006) point out, in order to combat the structural violence perpetuated by the state one must consider solutions outside of the logic of the state itself and away from a liberal-rights framework. We could imagine a TDOR that goes beyond making sure that the dead are not forgotten or increasing police attention to transgender people, to catalogue the less spectacular abuses that transgender people suffer in medical contexts, in prisons, and otherwise at the hands of the state and other institutions. The solutions from this wider focus might shift the blame from individuals and onto the structures that make individuals vulnerable in the first place.

Spade (2011) suggests that some legal reform strategies, focused on administrative law rather than hate crimes or anti-discrimination doctrine, might be effective in easing some of the structural violence that transgender people face. These reforms may not be the ultimate solutions, but work to achieve them may serve as an entry point for activism and coalition building among trans people. From this analysis it is clear that public bathrooms and medical institutions would be fruitful sites of reform. Increased numbers of the single occupancy style gender inclusive bathrooms, sometimes called family restrooms, can be a welcome addition for a person who fears harassment or violence because others think they might not belong in the women's or men's bathrooms. These bathrooms are also useful to others, such as disabled people, because these bathrooms are usually accessible, especially if, for example, a disabled man has an attendant that is a woman or the other way around. Institutions and governments can

make policy that all new or remodeled buildings have several gender inclusive bathrooms, as well as changing any sex-segregated bathrooms that are already single occupancy.

The more radical change would be to abolish sex-segregated bathrooms altogether. This idea creates quite a bit of fear and is a key cause of gender panics (Westbrook and Schilt 2014). I encountered a model of a non-segregated bathroom at, of all places, the Palace of Versailles outside of Paris, France. The bathroom for visitors, at least the one I used, was open for everyone. It resembled any large multi-stalled bathroom, the only difference being that the partitions between stalls were tall and went all the way to the floor. People of all genders and sexes, presumably from all over the world, seemed to be able use this bathroom together with no problem, no one was attacked or seemingly made to feel uncomfortable. It was a relief to use for me, as I have had my own presence in the women's bathroom challenged by other women more times than I can count. This suggestion is not to minimize that ending bathroom segregation would be upsetting to many people and cause a great deal of initial discomfort, but gendered bathrooms, a thoroughly modern invention, did not exist in this form until the last two centuries. This would not only add to transgender and gender non-conforming people's comfort and health in everyday life, but it has the potential of disrupting the production of homophobia and gender conformity in these institutional settings. The good appears to outweigh the period of adjustment in my estimation.

It will likely take a combination of approaches to reduce the multiple forms of violence that trans people encounter. It bears repeating here that the burden of combatting social inequality based on race, gender, and sexuality should not fall the most heavily on

a group of men that experience quite a bit of marginalization for their gender status, even if they are unlikely to experience spectacular transphobic violence. Overall, this project has shown that various spatial and institutional contexts produce different relations of dominance related to gender, sexuality, and race. This aligns with a view of power that is multiple and produced through different technologies, rather than solely at the hands of a repressive state. At the same time, the narratives of trans men illustrate that resistance, too, must be contextual and that effective strategies for change must take into account both the specific context and how that context fits into the larger landscape of social life.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Table 6: West Participants

Name	Density	Age	Transition	Race	Sexual Identity	Education	Income
Sam	Urban	34	3.5 years	Latino/ Mexican	Heterosexual/ Queer	Master's Degree	<10k*
Mario	Urban	31	4.5 years	White	Bisexual	Bachelor's Degree	50-75k
Saul	Urban	47	14 years	White	Queer/ Heterosexual	Master's Degree	50-75k
Levi	Urban	40	8 years	White	Queer	Master's Degree	<10k*
Alec	Urban	25	4 years	White	Queer/ Gay	Bachelor's Degree	40-49K
Oscar	Suburban	19	7 months	Asian/White	Bisexual	High School	<10k*
Drew	Urban	37	2 years	White	Queer	Some College	30-39k
Chris	Urban	48	13 years	White	Heterosexual	Bachelor's Degree	30-39k
Casey	Urban	36	2 years	Asian/White	Bisexual	Doctorate	75-99K
Ken	Urban	29	7 years	White	Queer	Some College	50-75k
Leo	Urban	36	5 years	Black	Straight, Bi Questioning	Bachelor's Degree	30-39k
Joel	Urban	49	22 years	White	Primarily Attracted To Women	Master's Degree	10-19k
Paul	Rural	30	7 years	White	Maybe Bisexual	Bachelor's Degree	30-39k
Josh	Rural	43	5 years	White	Mostly Heterosexual	Master's Degree	10-19k
Tom	Suburban	28	6 months	White	Straight	Some College	20-29K
Michael	Urban	40	2 years	White	Queer	Master's Degree	<10k*
James	Urban	39	1 year	White	Straight	High School	40-49K
Woody	Urban	32	7 years	White	Queer	College	10-19k
Jeffery	College Town	25	4 years	White	Queer	Some Graduate	10-19k
David	College Town	41	9 years	White	Bisexual	Bachelor's Degree	40-49K
Robert	College Town	41	10 years	White	Mostly Straight/Bisexual	Bachelor's Degree	50-75k

Table 7: South Participants

Name	Density	Age	Transition	Race	Sexual Identity	Education	Income
Anthony	Suburban	24	In process	White	Polysexual	Some College	<10k
Tim	Suburban	22	6 years	Latino/ White	Gay/ Queer	Some College	10-19k
Diego	Urban	21	n/a	Latin	Gay	Bachelor's Degree	30-39k
Andrew	Suburban	43	part time	White	Heterosexual	Bachelor's Degree	75-99K
Mason	Urban	21	5 years	White	Queer/ Mostly Straight	Some College	40-49K
Aidan	Urban	21	1 year	White	Pansexual	Associate's Or Technical	<10k
Alan	Urban	32	5 years	White	Gay Male	Some College	10-19K
Bobby	Suburban	31	1.5 years	White	Straight	Some College	30-39K
Jack	Rural	49	4 months	White	Straight Male	Bachelor's Degree	50-75K
Simon	Urban	49	11 years	White	Primarily Straight	Bachelor's Degree	<10k
Wesley	Urban	44	20 years	White	Pansexual	Master's Degree	20-29K
Doug	Urban	24	7 years	White	Straight	Some College	30-39K
Bert	College Town	49	3 years	White	Sexy, Flexible	Some College	40-49k
Mark	Rural	43	10 years	White	Straight	Master's Degree	40-49k
Phillip	Suburban	28	3 years	White	Bisexual	Bachelor's Degree	20-29k
Malcolm	Urban	22	2 years	White	Gay/Queer/ Bisexual	Bachelor's Degree	<10k
Gabriel	Suburban	21	2 years	Multi-Racial	Queer	Some College	<10k

Table 8: Midwest Participants

Name	Density	Age	Transition	Race	Sexual Identity	Education	Income
Ben	Urban	28	4 years	Asian	Heterosexual/Queer	Bachelor's Degree	10-19k
Raphael	Urban	38	1.5 years	Mexican	Queer	Some College	20-29k
Aaron	Urban	24	5 Years	White	I Wouldn't	Bachelor's Degree	10-19k
Henry	Suburban	49	7 years	White	Attracted To Women	Some College	30-39k
Dominic	Suburban	27	2 years	White	Pansexual	Some College	<10k
Brandon	Suburban	20	1.5 years	White	Straight	Some College	<10k
Ethan	Suburban	38	9 years	African-American	Heterosexual	Some College	20-29k
Eric	Urban	22	3 years	White	Asexual	Bachelor's Degree	<10k
Dylan	Suburban	36	6 years	White	Asexual, Leaning Bisexual	Associate's	10-19k
Jason	Suburban	36	12 years	White	Gay Male	High School Equivalent	50-75k
Julian	Urban	28	7 years	White	Queer/ Pansexual	Master's Degree	10-19k
Luke	Rural	47	5 years	White	Pansexual	Bachelor's Degree	30-39k
Gavin	Urban	27	7 years	White	Gay. Mostly	Master's Degree	20-29k
Wyatt	Urban	20	2 years	White	Homosexual	Some College	<10k
Owen	Suburban	18	5 years	Mixed Race	Queer	Some College*	<10k
Steven	Rural	22	2 years	Latino	Open	Some College	20-29k
Silas	College town	19	10 months	Black	Queer	Some College	<10k
Logan	College town	21	2 Years	White	Gay But Fluid	Some College	<10k
Sebastian	Urban	40	4.5 months	White*	Pansexual	Master's Degree	20-29k
Holden	Suburban	26	5 years	White	Queer	Some College	<10k
Colton	Suburban	38	3.5 years	White*	Attracted to Men	Some College	30-39k
Ian	Urban	27	6.5 years	White	Gay	Some College	10-19k
Sean	Rural	34	11 years	White	Straight	Associate's	20-29k
Felix	Urban	33	8 years	White*	Queer	Some Graduate	30-39k
Cooper	Rural	26	4 years	White*	Omni sexual	Bachelor's Degree	<10k
Finn	Urban	26	3 years	White	Queer	Bachelor's Degree	30-39k
Jacob	Urban	55	13 years	White	Bi	Bachelor's Degree	50-75k
Seth	Urban	23	1 year	Black/White	Straight	Bachelor's Degree	10-19k

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview will be semi-structured. Respondent will be asked to tell their story and interviewer will follow-up to probe the story and cover topics respondent didn't address.

Warm up questions (if needed)

- How long have you lived in this region?
- Where else have you lived?
- What do you like or dislike about living here?
- Tell me about where you live (town, city, region, etc.)? Are there parts that are safe or dangerous? Would you rather live somewhere else (neighborhood, city, region)? What are people like here? Who lives here?

Transition

- Tell me about your transition (Start with... Tell me about your decision to start a physical transition?)
- How did you think it was going to be?
- What was/is the actual process like? Were there certain milestones or parts that were more important than other parts?
- Was it challenging to pay for?
- Is there anything you didn't expect, or that you found surprising?
- Were there things that were anticlimactic?
- What were your emotions like?
- What was your relationship like to your body? Did your body feel different? Was there anything that was surprising or different than you expected?
- Are there any other procedures you would like to undergo? Is there anything you have done that you would do differently?

Transgender Questions

- Were people close to you supportive at first? Did this change over time? How did they react to the process? (Friends, family, coworkers, partners, strangers, etc.)
- Did you feel like people treated you differently? Were there any surprises around this? What was the best reaction and what was the worst reaction you received from people you know or knew?
- How did your work handle the transition?
- Did you have a romantic partner during your transition? Did it affect the relationship? How?
- How did strangers treat you? Did they recognize you as male? How did it feel if they misread you? Did this change over time?
- When you were thinking about this transition were there people you wanted to be like... were there people you didn't want to be like? How did it turn out? Was it different than you expected?
- Did you seek out or receive advice? What did you think of the advice? (I've seen websites that give different tips for transition like how to cut your hair, where to

- buy clothes, reviews of surgeons, and advice on passing? Have you seen these? In what ways do you think websites like this are useful or not?)
- How do you think your experience would have been different or similar if you had lived in a different city or area?
 - Are there places in this region that are known for being more accepting of transgender people? Would you move to those places? Do you want to stay where you are?
 - How and with who do you find support? What does support mean to you?
 - What do you think of representations of trans people in the media? (For example, what do you think of the pregnant FTM man in Oregon and the recent media coverage of him and his family?)
 - Were there any representations of trans men (books, websites, etc.) that you saw yourself in?
 - Have you mentored or given advice to other trans men?

Masculinity questions

- What kind of man do you see yourself as?
- What are/were men (trans and bio) like where you live/lived?
- How do you think that you are alike or different from men around you? (How do you feel similar or different to other trans men, bio-men, friends, family, co-workers, and men of same racial or ethnic background?)
- How do you compare to your father?
- Did you feel pressure to act a certain way? From who? Where? When?
- Are there times or places where you feel like you need to or should act more or less masculine? Or masculine in a different way? Are there times or places do you feel comfortable being less masculine? Are there situations where it might be dangerous to be a less masculine man (like a public restroom)?
- Have there been people that expect you to be more or less masculine or to be a certain type of man?

Relations

- Was there any change in how you feel/felt about different communities or groups?
- Are there any groups that you belonged to before your transition that you don't now? What types of groups do you belong to now? What are they like?
- Are there places that you feel more comfortable or less comfortable? That you feel like you belong more or less?
- Do you feel more tension or acceptance from certain groups than you did before?

Gender Definitions and Direct Questions

- How do you define man/woman? Male/female? Masculinity/femininity?
- Do you think these things are natural?
- Are there other categories?
- Can people change these things?

Ending question...If you were conducting this interview is there anything else you would have asked or what would you have asked?

APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

DO NOT WRITE ON THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following question in the space provided to the best of your ability.

1. Age _____ (years)

2. What is the highest level of education you have achieved? (check one)
 - Grammar School
 - High School or Equivalent
 - Associate's Degree or Technical/Vocational Degree (2 year)
 - Some College
 - Bachelor's Degree
 - Master's Degree
 - Doctoral Degree
 - Professional Degree (MD, JD, etc.)
 - Other _____

3. Employment Status

Are you currently? (Check all that apply)

- Employed for Wages
- Self-Employed
- Out of work and looking for work
- Out of work but not currently looking for work
- Homemaker
- Student
- Retired
- Unable to work _____

4. Describe your current occupation:

5. What was your approximate household income last year? (check one)
 - None
 - Less than \$10,000
 - \$10,000 to \$19,999
 - \$20,000 - \$29,999
 - \$30,000 - \$39,999
 - \$40,000 - \$49,999
 - \$50,000 - \$74,999

- \$75,000 - \$99,999
- \$100,000 - \$124,999
- \$125,000 - \$149,999
- Over \$150,000

OVER

6. Your race?

7. What is your religious affiliation?

8. How often do you attend religious services?

9. What best describes the area that you currently live?

- Urban
- Rural
- Suburban
- Other _____

10. How long have you lived in your current region?

11. Describe your social class (for example: working class or middle class)

12. How long has it been since you started your transition?

13. How would you describe your sexual orientation?

14. What is your political affiliation?

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