"Not the Right Kind of Woman": Transgender Women's Experiences of Transphobic Hate Crime and Trans-misogyny

Abstract

Transphobic hate crime is gaining significant attention within the United Kingdom, and internationally, in academic, political and social spheres. However, transmisogyny is under-reported and also under-researched within hate crime scholarship. In this chapter, an overview is provided of the current state of transphobic hate crime within England and Wales. This is contextualised within broader conceptual debates surround genderism and the tyranny of gender (Doan, 2010). The methodological approach adopted for the research that informs this chapter is also outlined, providing an overview of the ways in which participants were recruited and a breakdown of participant's demographics.

This chapter ends by providing a critical exposé of transgender women's experiences of trans-misogyny. These experiences are contextualised and explored within two dominant spaces: LGBTQ+ spaces, and sex-segregated spaces. It is demonstrated that trans-misogyny operates within various contexts and may be motivated by different reasons within different contexts. The empirical results are first contextualised within the often complex relationships between cisgender gay men, masculinity and femininity. As such, it is illustrated that trans-misogyny is a manifestation of 'femmephobia', the cultural rejection of femininity and those associated with femininity. The empirical results are then contextualised within sex-segregated spaces, in which stereotypical, potentially misogynistic tropes around the 'ideal woman' are drawn upon to delegitimise transgender women who do not meet, or conform to these gendered expectations.

Key Words

Introduction

Historically, transphobia has gained little attention academically, politically and socially. However, in recent years, a spotlight has been cast on to the lives of transgender and non-binary people: their existence, authenticity and lives have become subject to public 'debate'. The 'debate' has centred around a number of socially constructed binary trade-offs, but has centred most specifically around 'gender-based rights' vs. 'sex-based rights'. At the very core of this 'debate' is the question of whether growing recognition and protection of transgender people is inherently dangerous, granted at the expense of the rights of cisgender women and girls. The rights which are claimed to be infringed upon relate most commonly to the provision of 'single sex services', participation in sports and the claimed erasure of lesbian identities.

Whilst these 'debates' have been happening for some time, they have been fuelled recently by Government announcements to reform the 'Gender Recognition Act (2004)' (GRA) in order to make the process of acquiring legal recognition for transgender people's gender identity more humane, and less intrusive (Women and Equalities Committee, 2018). Social media has become a hotbed of harassment, abuse and the targeting of individuals who engage in these conversations, experienced by those on both sides of the debate. It is important to note that a significant amount of concern and around reforms to the GRA centres on the consequences this may have for the Equality Act (2010) which designates the need for 'sex-specific' services and spaces. Although the focus of these conversations have centred on cisgender men being able to abuse this reform, by easily self-identifying as female to access female-only spaces, a significant amount of the narrative developed has transphobic undertones, and at times, explicit transphobia. The construction of 'gender-neutral' spaces as sites of significant risk and danger for women and girls has been engaged with academically (See Colliver and Coyle, 2020). Furthermore, the use of transphobic discourse is often

employed by those who seek to claim a 'victim position', and therefore delegitimising transgender people is central to this function (Colliver, 2020). Transgender men have been much less of a concern in online exchanges and are often overlooked completely. This is likely to be due to them not gaining access to spaces designed to protect a socially disadvantaged group whilst, or after, transitioning. This is unsurprising, as historically political, social and religious framings of danger have centred on men and transgender women (Stone, 2019).

This chapter provides a critical exposé of the ways in which transgender women experience transphobic hate crime and trans-misogyny within the United Kingdom (UK). This is achieved by drawing on data collected through semi-structured interviews with trans people living in the UK. This chapter does not devote significant space to engaging with theoretical and conceptual discussions around gender identity, as the previous chapter has eloquently outlined the most significant concerns. However, a brief outline of some of the concerns shared within hate crime scholarship is detailed, before framing this within the context of the 'tyranny of gender' (Doan, 2010). The chapter then explores the methodological approaches adopted throughout the research process that gave rise to the qualitative data collected. Finally, this chapter presents empirical evidence that illustrates the ways in which transgender women experience both transphobia and misogyny simultaneously and the impact this can have. It is also important to note that it is not the purpose of this chapter to debate the existence, authenticity or validity of transgender people. This chapter is situated firmly within the claim that transgender people do exist, are valid and worthy of respect. In doing so, it is hoped that this chapter frames some of the conceptual and theoretical debates outlined in the previous chapter within empirical data that outlined the reality for transgender women.

Transphobic Hate Crime

Research on transphobic hate crime within the UK is in its infancy, although there is some research and literature that has included transgender participants and lives (Antjoule, 2013; Chakraborti *et al.,* 2014). More recently, there has been a significant contribution to existing literature within the UK with the publication of Jamel's (2018) '*Transphobic Hate Crime',* which centres the lives of transgender people. As seen in the previous chapter, recorded incidents of transphobic hate crime is increasingly annually (Home Office, 2019). Whilst the Home Office claim that this increase is mainly due to improved reporting and recording mechanisms, (which the author does not contend is a contributing factor), it is unlikely that this accounts solely for the increased levels of hate crime. It is likely that there has also been a material rise in incidents of transphobic hate crime (Chakraborti, 2018). As seen in the last chapter, research often documents high levels of discrimination, abuse and hate crime experienced by transgender people (Government Equalities Office, 2018, METRO Charity, 2014).

In 2012 the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act amended the Criminal Justice Act (2003). This amendment made the monitoring of transphobic hate crime mandatory within England and Wales. As such, transgender identity became a characteristic to be considered as an aggravating factor during sentencing if the offence was motivated by hostility or prejudice based on the individuals transgender identity. Misogyny is not recognised under any of the various legislative provisions that criminalise hate and therefore crimes motivated by misogyny are not nationally recorded and reported with hate crime statistics. However, some police forces have begun to monitor incidents of misogyny, with Nottinghamshire Police recording incidents of misogyny from 2017 and North Yorkshire Police following suit (BBC News, 2016). As outlined earlier in the book, the Law Commission is currently reviewing the adequacy of protections afforded to groups who may

be victimised through hate crime. It is therefore possible that misogyny will be centrally monitored in the UK in the near future.

However, it is important to consider the legal implications this will have for transgender people who may experience incidents motivated by transphobia and misogyny. The Criminal Justice Act (2003) as it currently stands does not appreciate intersecting systems of oppression and marginalisation. Therefore, transgender people who currently experience victimisation fuelled by transphobia and racism cannot have both characteristics considered during sentencing. Therefore, we must question how effective legislation will be at addressing transgender peoples experiences of trans-misogyny, or whether the current 'isolated, silo' approach will continue. If multiple forms of victimisation, oppression and marginalisation can be acknowledged in legal frameworks, then the unique experiences of transgender women may be fully acknowledged.

Academically, issues of hate crime have been engaged with for some time (Chakraborti and Garland, 2012; Iganski, 2008; Perry, 2001). The difficulties associated with defining and conceptualising hate crime have been well documented (Hall, 2005; Jacobs and Potter, 1998). However, in academic writing, it is Perry's (2001) definition of hate crime that has emerged as key, and she notes that:

> 'Hate crime … involves acts of violence and intimidation, usually directed towards already stigmatised and marginalised groups. As such, it is a mechanism of power and oppression, intended to reaffirm the precarious hierarchies that characterise a given social order. It attempts to re-create simultaneously the threatened (real or imagined) hegemony of the perpetrator's group and the 'appropriate subordinate identity of the victim's group. It is a means of marking both the Self and the Other in such a way as to re-establish their 'proper' relative positions, as given and reproduced by broader ideologies and patterns of social and political inequality.' (2001:10)

This conceptualisation of hate crime suggests that these incidents are best understood as extreme forms of discrimination. As such, incidents of hate crime will target those already ostracised, oppressed and marginalised within society, distinctively marked as 'different', as the 'Other'. Perry (2001) argues that this is cultivated by cultures of segregation. If we apply this conceptualisation of hate crime to transphobia, it can be argued that the 'Other', transgender people, are socially constructed in negative relation terms. In this sense, cisgender is marked as normal, unremarkable and as the identity through which everyone is measured against. Therefore, cisgender identities rarely experience the same level of interrogation and 'debate' that transgender identities do. It can therefore be argued that there is an 'expectation that all people are cissexual, that those assigned male at birth always grow up to be men and those assigned female at birth always grow up to be women' (Bauer *et al.,* 2009:356). Consequently, those who do not conform to this linear expectation of gender presentation may be socially marked as 'different'.

The 'difference' that the 'Other' present may lead to feelings of fear and insecurity within the dominant majority about their position within social hierarchies. The construction of transgender, and LGBTQ+ communities more broadly becoming the 'dominant voice' within society has been central in cisgender communities claiming a victim position (Colliver, 2020). The dominant group must therefore find ways to 'police' minority communities in order to ensure that the perceived subordinate group remains subordinate. Perry (2001:2) argues that this can leave 'minority members vulnerable to systemic violence'. In this sense, the power dynamic is therefore maintained through the process of 'gender policing', which may manifest in incidents of discrimination and violence. Jauk (2013:808) argues that 'violence against trans people is often triggered by gender non-conformity and violence is a form of gender policing'. In this sense, transphobic hate crimes can be conceptualised as 'message crimes' (Perry, 2001). Resultantly, incidents of transphobic hate crime function to

send a wider message to transgender communities that gender deviance will not be tolerated (Burgess *et al.,* 2013).

Consequently, it can be argued that hate crime targeting transgender people functions as a mechanism of 'intimidation and control exercised' by dominant groups who sense a need to reaffirm their position in fluctuating social hierarchies (Perry, 2001:2). However, in relation to discrimination, abuse and hate crime targeting transgender women specifically, Serano (2007:14-15) argues that they 'become the victims of a specific form of discrimination: *trans-misogyny'.* As such, transgender women do not simply experience transphobia as a result of deviating from expected gender norms that are dictated by cis-normative expectations. They also experience misogyny simultaneously resulting from embodying 'femininity', or at least, the perception that they embody femininity. In a patriarchal society which stipulates women, and therefore femininity, are 'less than', the perceived 'choice' to embody femininity presents a unique set of challenges and experiences for transgender women.

This can also be seen in media representations of transgender people, which have increased in recent years and have tended to focus on transgender women. Media representations have often been misleading and defamatory (See, for example, Express, 2020). These media narratives are regularly drawn upon in discussions about the rights transgender people, and transgender women in particular, deserve. Therefore, irresponsible media reporting often fuels transphobic narratives that seek to delegitimise transgender identities. Media narratives often present transgender women as dangerous, drawing upon sexual offending and physical violence to delegitimise their female identity and construct them as 'men wearing dresses' (Serano, 2007:15). In constructing transgender women in this way, cis-normative gender roles are reinforced that construct men as physically dominant and women as vulnerable and weak (Connell, 1987).

Methodology

This chapter draws upon data collected through semi-structured interviews with transgender people living in the UK. The data were collected over a 9 month period between 2017-2018. All participants identified as transgender, were over 16 years old at the time of interview and lived within the UK. The semi-structured interviews formed part of a wider research project that sought to explore transgender and non-binary people's experiences of abuse, discrimination and hate crime. The wider research project also consisted of an online survey completed by 396 transgender and non-binary people, and a discourse analysis of comments posted to *YouTube* in response to videos, which had a focus on 'gender-neutral toilets'.

A total of thirty-two semi-structured interviews were completed as part of this research project, however, this chapter draws specifically on fourteen interviews that were conducted with transgender women. Participants were primarily recruited through social media, although the researcher attended various Pride events around the UK in order to advertise the research. Literature advertising the research was also sent to every Gender Identity Clinic in the UK and a number of charity and support organisations that work with transgender people. Whilst a diverse sample was obtained in relation to age, ethnicity, religion and disability status, it is likely that the sampling method has resulted in only transgender people being recruited who openly disclose their trans history.

The qualitative data was analysed thematically, guided by the process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). An inductive approach was adopted when analysing the data, as the scarcity of research into transgender people's conceptualisation of their experiences created difficulty in trying to locate pre-existing themes. Using an inductive approach also avoided many of the pitfalls associated with deductive analysis including the reframing and exclusion of key themes by relying on predetermined frameworks (Thomas, 2008). In order to ensure the most accurate representation of participants narratives, participants were involved throughout the analysis process, including checking and verifying codes developed and reading the initial

analysis. This allowed participants the opportunity to reflect on the research process and clarify any points of uncertainty. Three central themes were developed from the data: 'Normalcy and the Everyday', 'The Hierarchical Nature of Hate Crime Victimisation' and 'Space, Place and Belonging'. Incidents of trans-misogyny ran throughout all of the themes developed, and therefore this chapter does not focus on one key theme. Rather, all themes are discussed, with a specific focus on incidents of trans-misogyny experienced.

A diverse sample was recruited for all elements of the research project, and the interview participants all had different life experiences. However, in relation to the fourteen interviews drawn upon for this chapter, all participants identified as female. 65% of these participants identified as heterosexual, 28% identified as bisexual and 7% identified as lesbian. Participants were also able to self-identify their ethnicity and seven of participants identified as White British, one identified as Black British, one identified as Thai, one identified as an Irish Traveller, one identified as White European, one identified as Asian Bangladeshi and two identified as dual-ethnicity. Six of these participants also identified as having a religion or faith, with two women identifying as Muslim and four women identifying as Christian. Six of the participants also identified as living with a disability, ranging from learning disabilities to sensory impairments. A range of age categories also participated in the research, with the youngest female participant being 17 and the oldest female participant being 67.

Findings and Discussion

This chapter now moves on to present empirical data collected throughout this research project to provide an overview of the ways in which trans-misogyny manifests. It will be demonstrated that transgender women experience trans-misogyny in a range of spaces and contexts. This chapter explores these experiences within two central spaces: LGBTQ spaces and 'sex-segregated spaces'.

"Sorry, you are way too femme" – Trans-misogyny in LGBTQ Spaces

Ideas around misogyny within LGBTQ+ spaces has been well-documented, focusing primarily on gay men's relationship with femininity (Hale and Ojeda, 2018; Richardson, 2009). Whilst work has been done that explores 'femmephobia' and the impact this has on feminine, cisgender gay men, less attention has been paid to the experiences of transgender women specifically in LGBTQ spaces (Hoskins, 2019; Richardson, 2009). Whilst commonly referred to as 'LGBTQ spaces', these spaces are often shaped and dominated by gay men, and may therefore not be as inclusive, or safe for the broader spectrum of gender and sexual minorities (Casey, 2004; Nash, 2013). Therefore, when discussing transmisogyny within LGBTQ spaces, these are actually experiences within gay, male spaces. Gay male communities have a complex relationship with notions of masculinity and femininity (Sánchez and Vilain, 2012). In relation to establishing a gay identity, issues of gender presentation may be a central feature.

Significant work has been conducted around gay masculinities, the rejection of femininity and consequently the exclusion of feminine gay men from LGBTQ+ spaces, friendships and romantic and sexual relationships. It has been argued that the 'straight acting', masculine identity has been constructed as the 'gold standard' of gay identities. As such, other forms of gender expression are judged unfavourably against masculinity, which has come to symbolise the marker by which desirability and attractiveness are measured against (Bailey *et al.,* 1997; Phua, 2007). Masculinity certainly appeared to be a feature in participants narratives regarding their experiences within LGBTQ+ spaces.

> 'So I was in the smoking area chatting with my friend, a really hot gay guy, he gets
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> loads of attention. Almost to the point where it is annoying because we can never talk
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> in private without someone coming over and hitting on him. He is like, the perfect gay
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> boyfriend, he is masculine, ripped, facial hair, beautiful eyes… These guys come

over, both muscle guys, and I realise I used to see them a lot before I transitioned. We are standing there talking for a while and they obviously don't recognise me. Anyway, I decided to come out to them, so I reminded them who they would previously have known me as. The first guys response was 'why would you choose to do that? You were so hot and manly before'. The second guy chipped in and agreed and then really annoyed me. He was like 'OH MY GOD, yes! I remember you, you were the beautiful black guy that we all wanted to fuck!''

(Deena, 34)

There are a number of points made in the excerpt above that are worth attention. Firstly, even though Deena no longer identifies with a masculine gender identity or expression, her description of her friend directly feeds in to the narrative around masculinity be consumable and desirable. This narrative is reinforced by comments made to her that position Deena as 'hot and manly before', in which manly signifies an identification with masculinity. Deena is simultaneously constructed as previously desirable and therefore currently undesirable for her move away from masculine ideals. This is also steeped within socially recognisable motifs of transgender people consciously 'choosing' a gender identity. In this sense, the perception that Deena has 'chosen' to associate with more traditionally feminine identity markers can be used to isolate and exclude her. The construction of transgender people 'choosing' to live a particular 'lifestyle' is a key rhetoric in justifying transphobic discourse (Colliver *et al.,* 2019).

However, it is not just the trans-misogyny that Deena experiences that is worth comment. Whilst it is clear from her description that there are underlying tones of transphobia, femmephobia and a lack of interest in her romantically or sexually, she also experiences the racist, fetishisation of black men (McKeown *et al.,* 2010). This adds a complex layer to gay communities' relationship with masculinity, which is situated within racialized expectations

of narratives and the hyper-sexualisation of black men. It is important to aknowledge that social configurations of masculinity and femininity may also be culturally situated in which gendered expectations are not universal. It is important to note here that Deena is constructed as not only betraying her gendered expectation of masculinity, but for betraying a specific, racialized masculinity.

What also became clear throughout participants' narratives is the acceptance of femininity within LGBTQ+ spaces within the context of entertainment, comedy and a particular cultural configuration of femininity that is consumable for some cisgender, gay men.

> 'I was in my local gay pub, it is quite a small venue, not a crazy party pub, more like the place you go to socialise, catch-up with friends etc… Sunday is always cabaret at [the pub]. I am standing at the bar, talking to two guys, they were a couple I think. They were happily chatting away and then they asked me what time I would be performing. I must have instantly look confused as the other one instantly asked 'oh, sorry, are you not the drag queen?'. I was quite taken aback, I know my make-up was a bit messy, but I didn't think I looked like a drag queen. So I confirmed that I wasn't the drag queen, trying to be as polite as possible. Then one of them turns around and just bluntly says 'ooooh, you're a tranny'. It was said in a way that was posed as a question. I replied and told them I was a woman and one of them just laughed. The one standing next to me just turned his back on me. It was clear that conversation was over.'
>
> (Piper, 42)

The experience described by Piper above illustrates the ways in which femininity is sometimes perceived as 'acceptable' within LGBTQ+ spaces, particularly with cisgender gay men. In the excerpt above, Piper describes an exchange in which she is initially perceived to be a drag queen. Within this context, the exchange is friendly, with the patrons consuming

this 'acceptable femininity'. In this sense, there are appropriate ways to 'do difference' (Perry, 2001). This emphasises the ways in which performative femininity, which is often rooted within comedic values is somewhat socially accepted within gay male culture, providing a distance is maintained between the performer and audience (Berkowitz *et al.*, 2007). However, the reaction to Piper when she discloses her trans identity illustrates the juxtaposition of femininity within gay spaces. As such, to be perceived to cross the 'gender binary' permanently is deemed an inappropriate ways to 'do difference'. Whereas, the temporary 'crossover' that is satirical in nature is deemed an appropriate way to 'do difference'.

Performative femininity may be acceptable 'on stage' and in performance areas. However, this is harshly juxtaposed with the experiences of transgender women when they try to authentically occupy social space designed for LGBTQ+ people, which tend to be dominated by cisgender, gay men (Pritchard *et al.*, 2002). It can therefore be argued that femininity, when remaining within the confines of performance and comedy is socially accepted. However, transgender people experience trans-misogyny when attempting to occupy 'inclusive' space, which is regulated and policed by cisgender men. Additionally, the use of the term 'tranny', which in itself, signifies a contempt, disdain or hostility towards transgender people. The term itself is also highly gendered, and is most commonly used to denigrate transgender women. This is a more explicit, overt example of the trans-misogyny participants faced.

"Not the Right Kind of Woman" – Trans-misogyny and Gender Policing in 'Sex-Segregated Spaces'

Finally, this chapter will explore the ways in which transgender women experience abuse in sex-segregated spaces, perpetrated by other women who seek to 'police' the authenticity of transgender women. Until this point, the data that has been presented has focused on

transgender women's experiences trans-misogyny as a result of embodying perceived femininity. In this section, transgender women's experiences in 'women-only' spaces is explored and it will be demonstrated that transgender women often experience discrimination and abuse as a result of failing to conform to cis-normative expectations of femininity.

For the participants in this study, this was most strongly felt in 'sex-segregated toilets', in which they felt an element of 'hyper-vigilance' in relation to gender. The spatial design of public toilets has been explored and it has been argued that public toilets are designed in such ways that facilitates surveillance (Bender-Baird, 2016; Cavanagh, 2010). This certainly matched the experiences of participants in this study.

> 'I came out of the cubicle, minding my own business, went to the sink area to wash my hands, check my appearance in the mirror. Anyway, I'm standing there washing my hands and there are two women beside me talking to each other. All of a sudden, their voices get lower, but I can still roughly hear what they are saying. They are now standing there, making assumptions about me, talking about the size of my hands, saying that I must have only recently started to wear make-up because it wasn't that good. I only had lipstick and mascara on, how bad can that be? Anyway, I just remember leaving the bathroom as quickly as I could, making my excuses to leave the meal, getting in the car and crying. I just remember sitting there feeling like I would never be the right kind of woman that people accepted.'
>
> (Rose, 67)

The excerpt above is one that was fairly common across participants narratives of their time within public toilets. Rose experienced a situation in which the authenticity of her identity as a woman is under surveillance and being questioned because of 'stereotypically' masculine features. In this sense, Rose experiences trans-misogyny in a unique way, as a result of being identifiable as transgender, but also for failing to conform to expected gender norms for

women. Doan (2010:635) argues that transgender people experience a 'special kind of tyranny – the tyranny of gender – that arises when people' fail to confirm to, and actively challenge expected, dominant gendered behaviour within Western society. This may happen so frequently within public toilets as they represent the ultimate sex-segregated spaces within Western society (Doan, 2010; Greed, 2019).

Failing to meet appropriately ascribed gender expectations was a common theme that underlined participants' narratives that they perceive motivated the abuse, discrimination and hate crime they experienced. However, it is important to note that conforming to socially prescribed gender norms was not the ultimate goal for all transgender women who participated in this research.

> 'So I walk in to the toilet, there is a group of women, all drunk and loud standing by the sinks. I feel their eyes on me as soon as I walk in. I get myself in to a cubicle, sit down, go to the toilet, I can hear them all talking. I wait for a while hoping they will leave. After what seemed like forever, I flush the toilet and walk out. I walk over to the sink, and the question comes. 'Are you a man?' I look them up and down, turn back to the mirror and continue washing my hands. They then decide to have an open conversation about me, obviously I must be a man, look at what I was wearing, no woman would ever wear that. Of course I was a man, I was obviously wearing a bra that I had stuffed as I didn't have real boobs. I did by the way, I had undergone surgery at this point. Obviously I was a man, I wasn't wearing any make-up. Obviously I was a man, I had short hair. It just went on and on… I was attacked by all of them, well the men they were with as I left the pub.'
>
> (Isa, 58)

Isa experienced a verbally and physically violent attack as a result of failing to conform to expectations around femininity. In this case, traits associated with femininity (make-up,

fashion choices, long hair) were all drawn upon as a way to delegitimise her identity as a woman. This is inherently transphobic, in that it denies the material existence of transgender women being able to authentically occupy a female social identity, but it is also fuelled by misogynistic narratives that construct women in ways which are easily identifiable and sexualised (make-up, attire). In the situation described above, Isa experiences a form of 'genderism' – that is, 'a hostile reading of gender ambiguous bodies' (Browne, 2004:332). However, it should be noted that these assumptions and expectations surrounding 'appropriate' gender presentation do not just permeate society, but are prevalent within healthcare systems. Healthcare professions within gender identity clinics 'have the power to determine what constitutes an appropriate or 'trans enough' patient (Pearce, 2018: 60). These expectations may pressure trans women into dressing and presenting in hyper-feminine ways associated with particular clothing items and make-up (Ellis *et al.,* 2015). Therefore, it is clear to see that cisnormative expectations of gender identity, expression and presentation permeate through various levels and institutions at a societal level. As Isa does not seek to conform to traditional notions of femininity that are associated with a specific physical presentation of a gendered body. This feeds in to a narrative that cisgender people can 'always tell' who is transgender and who is not (Colliver *et al.,* 2019).

Whilst transgender people may experience gender surveillance within different spaces, given then segregated nature of public toilets, it is unsurprising to find that public toilets are sites of significant anxiety for transgender women (Faktor, 2011). However, transgender women experience heightened levels of 'gender scrutiny' in not just public toilets. Other spaces in which women's gender presentation may be scrutinised include changing rooms in retail stores.

> 'I was shopping with my mum, I had only recently come out to her, and I had done
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> well in my A-levels so she took me shopping. Anyway, we went in to a couple of

shops, we bought a few things. I was able to go in to a few changing rooms with no problem. Then we went in to one shop, I picked some stuff up, went to the changing room, and the woman that worked in the shop told me I couldn't go in. My mum asked why, and she basically said that the changing rooms were for women only, and I was obviously a boy. I don't know why she assumed she knew what was between my legs, but I'm guessing that because I was wearing jeans and a jumper, I have short hair, I was wearing trainers. I had to walk off in the end, my mum was standing there arguing with her, because she said that the changing rooms were for real women, not boys who want to play dress up. We put in a complain, they gave us some vouchers, that's it.'

(Rachel, 18)

Rachel experienced a hostile reading of her gendered body when trying to access a public changing room. Whilst fears around sexual violence to women and girls in sex-segregated spaces is documented (Colliver *et al.,* 2019), the refusal of access seemed to relate primarily to her authenticity as 'female'. In this sense, her experience is similar to that of Rose, in that she is marked as 'not the right kind of woman'. Rachel therefore does not benefit from cissexual privilege which 'is typically given to those who are not trans and thus more able to orchestrate a normative concord between their gender identities and the sex of their bodies, as perceived by others' (Cavanagh, 2010: 54). It is evident that there is a disconnect between Rachel's sense of self, and the perception of her gender, and thereby her biological sex.

The narrative of 'men wearing dresses' and 'boys playing dress up' is also evident in Rachel's account of her experience. Serano (2007) specifically outlines this narrative as an example of trans-misogyny and links this to the pathologisation and fetishisation of transgender women. What is also interesting in these accounts of abuse and discrimination is the perceived gender of the perpetrator. Whilst it is documented that most perpetrators of hate

crime are men (Chakraborti *et al.,* 2014), instances of gender policing, trans-misogyny, and holding transgender women to account for failing to meet cis-normative gender expectations are primarily perpetrated by women. This strongly coincides with a wider societal awareness around transgender women and the need for cisgender women to 'protect' their 'safe spaces' from men (Colliver, 2020; Colliver and Coyle, 2020). As a result of this, bodies may be subject to heightened levels of surveillance. However, it is important to note that the impact of this is not limited to transgender women, as a number of gender non-conforming women have experienced gender policing and attempted expulsion from 'women-only' spaces as a result.

Conclusion

The empirical data presented in this chapter has illustrated different contexts within which trans-misogyny operate. Trans-misogyny is not exclusive to heteronormative, cis-normative spaces and this chapter has demonstrated the complex, harmful relationship that exists between cisgender, gay male culture and femininity. It is therefore vital that issues of transphobia, femmephobia and trans-misogyny are not solely located outside of LGBTQ+ communities, as this risks overshadowing the toxicity within and between communities. Furthermore, transgender women are often judged unfavourably in relation to stereotypical, cis-normative expectations around gender. Therefore, they experience trans-misogyny in unique ways for 'attempting' to embody a feminine presentation and identity, but 'failing' to achieve the required criteria. Of course, this is not to say that achieving a stereotypical feminine presentation is the goal for all transgender women. However, it is clear throughout these narratives that this is the perception of cisgender women when reading gender ambiguous bodies.

This chapter has also noted that the very nature of trans-misogyny appears to be gendered in relation to perpetrators. Mainstream LGBTQ+ venues tend to be dominated by cisgender,

white, gay men. Consequently, transgender women's experiences in these spaces can be significantly impacted by the attitudes, and gender policing of gay men. In these spaces, transgender women may experience trans-misogyny as a result of a disdain and discomfort with femininity in an authentically, embodied manner. On the other hand, in sex-segregated spaces, and when transgender women occupy 'women-only' space, they experience trans-misogyny as a result of not being the 'right type of woman'. Given that research illustrates that perpetrators of hate crime are predominantly male, and perpetrators of misogyny are male, it is important not to overshadow the experiences of transgender people who experience trans-misogyny perpetrated by women.

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, existing legislation fails to acknowledge the often intersecting forms of oppression that individuals experience. This failure within legal provision is demonstrated within participants narratives explored in this chapter. Participants in this research project often experienced transphobia, racism and trans-misogyny simultaneously. Failure to legally recognise these simultaneous experiences of oppression, marginalisation and discrimination means that the experiences of transgender people, transgender women in particular, cannot be fully acknowledged or responded too. Whilst it is significant that misogyny is currently being considered within the Law Commission Review, it is also important to push for a more reflective legal system that is capable of recognising trans-misogyny.

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