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Andrea Nichols¹

Abstract

Feminist theory and research are limited in their focus on intersections of gender and sexual orientation in the victimization of sex workers. Through inductive analysis of 24 in-depth interviews and 3 focus groups with male-to-female transgender sex workers in Sri Lanka, police mistreatment was examined to show how the abuses sex workers experience reflect the intersectional nature of gendered victimization. Findings indicate they experience victimization by police simultaneously targeting their feminine gender expression and homosexuality. These abuses include verbal, physical, and sexual abuse as well as inequality in the police response to both their victimization and criminality.

Keywords

qualitative research, sexuality issues, sex work, intersections of race, class, and gender, policing, prostitution, Sri Lanka, transgendered sex workers

Research indicates that abuses against sex workers are widespread, including abuses by police. This research finds that sex workers have experienced violence, coercion, theft, bribery, and rape by police (Farley & Barkan, 1998; Kempadoo & Doezema, 1998; Miller, 1997, 2002; Schuler, 1992). Most of this research has focused on female sex workers, both because they are the majority of sex workers and because feminist scholars have given primary attention to the role of gender inequality in shaping the dynamics of prostitution. These scholars have found that the differential opportunity

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and status of women results in and perpetuates their disproportionate involvement in prostitution. Although this research is important and gives key contributions to feminist research and theory of sex workers, it is limited in its focus on how gender inequality operates in tandem with other forms of oppression, including discrimination based on sexual orientation.

An intersectional feminist approach is used in this article. Feminist research and theory has widely expanded its focus to include the intersectional nature of victimization, focusing predominately on intersections of race, class, and gender. Research generally finds that gendered victimization is often heightened or experienced in unique ways when individuals experience additional forms of oppression. For example, sex workers who are lower class and women of color experience heightened victimization. However, the focus on intersections of *gender* and *sexual orientation* in victimization of sex workers is limited in feminist criminological research and theory. Transgender¹ individuals' gender identity does not match their assigned sex. This study includes biological men who embrace a feminine gender identity and are homosexual working in the sex industry. Examining the experiences of transgender sex workers provides an important opportunity to examine how police abuses based on gender and sexuality function in tandem with the victimization directed toward such sex workers.

Sex workers working within exclusively prohibitionist systems may experience harassment, abuse, and violence with little protection from police. In this type of system, policing often serves as a formalized institutional power both reflecting and perpetuating gender inequality in the treatment of sex workers (Miller, 1997, 2002; Kempadoo & Doezema, 1998). Exploring police interactions with transgender sex workers thus allows for the study of intersections of gender and sexuality in victimization as reflected in police abuses. This article examines how gender and sexual orientation intersect to create unique configurations of abuses against sex workers who identify themselves as male-to-female transgender as well as how their experiences parallel that of female sex workers. Descriptions of police mistreatment are analyzed from 24 in-depth interviews and 3 focus groups with transgender sex workers to explore how the abuses of transgender sex workers reflect an additional component of the intersectional nature of gendered victimization.

Violence Against Sex Workers

Research suggests that compared to the general population, prostitutes are at an increased risk of violence and exploitation, including homicide, rape, sexual assault, robbery, and various forms of harassment (Alexander, 1988; Miller, 1997, 2002; Farley, 2004; Maher, 1997). Farley and Barkan (1998), for example, found in their sample of 130 sex workers that 82 % of respondents reported physical assault, and 68% of respondents had been raped since entering into prostitution. Eighty-three percent experienced physical threat with a weapon, and 8% reported serious injury including gunshot wounds, knife wounds, and other physical injuries. Similarly, in Sanchez's (2001) ethnographic study involving street prostitutes, respondents described experiences with assault, rape, and attempted

rape as normative. Decades of research corroborate these findings of increased victimization directed toward sex workers (Alexander, 1988; Farley, 2004; Farley & Barkan, 1998; Kempadoo & Doezema, 1998; Maher, 1997; Miller, 1997, 2002).

Most of this research focuses on women and girls, as they compose the vast majority of sex workers. The research on male sex workers and transgender sex workers is limited but finds that male sex workers are known to experience assault, verbal abuse, and robbery (Scott, Minichiello, Marino, Harvey & Jamieson, 2005). Research in London (Dennison-Hunt, 2007) indicates that transgender sex workers may be subjected to a heightened risk of victimization compared to female or male sex workers. Kinnell (2008) also notes that male sex workers face violence directed at them for their same-sex sexual activity in addition to the risks of sex work discussed above. Connell and Hart (2003) found rampant violence against male sex workers in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and noted that although the abuse paralleled that of female sex workers in terms of harassment, verbal abuse, hostile policing, and violence, the male sex workers also experienced homophobic violence. Farley and Barkan (1998) found that transgender sex workers were more likely to experience both physical assault and rape than male sex workers. Research on transgender sex workers also finds victimization targeting their gender identity as well as their sexual orientation and occupation (Kulick, 1998; Miller, 2002). Furthermore, research suggests that these sex workers in general experience harassment, abuse, and violence with little protection from police (Kempadoo & Doezema, 1998).

Police Abuses Against Sex Workers

Sex workers are not only subjected to violence, coercion, and exploitation by clients and other criminals but also may experience these dynamics with police officers as well, particularly in prohibitionist systems (Kempadoo & Doezema, 1998; Miller, 1997, 2002; Truong, 1990). In exclusively prohibitionist systems, there is a total ban on prostitution; sex workers, clients, pimps, and traffickers are consequently taking part in illegal activity. In systems such as this, prostitutes are the "participants" most likely to be arrested and fined, whereas laws against clients or third parties are less likely to be enforced (Kempadoo & Doezema, 1998; Sanchez, 2001). For example, Sanchez (2001) found in her ethnographic research of sex work that most officers did not enforce the law against male customers, but were likely to charge sex workers with procurement or solicitation of prostitution. This disparity is documented in multiple research studies (Carmen & Moody, 1985; Kempadoo & Doezema, 1998; Maher, 1997; Miller, 1997) although some new initiatives have been put forth targeting clients as well (Miller, 2009).

These arrest patterns have an additional consequence in that fear of further arrests, fines, or outstanding warrants regarding prostitution prevents prostitutes from going to police when they are the victims of crime (Miller, 1997). The criminalization of sex work thus provides little recourse for sex workers when victimized. For example, studies of sex workers in Vancouver (Cler-Cunningham & Christerson, 2001) and in

New York City (Thukral & Ditmore, 2003) show that the majority of incidents of harassment, assault, rape, and kidnapping among prostitutes are not reported to the police. When sex workers do make complaints, the police often do not register the complaints. In cases where police do register the complaints, the perpetrators generally are not convicted (Cler-Cunningham & Christerson, 2001; Thukral & Ditmore, 2003). Even prostitutes who do not seek police assistance may fear further victimization by police (Miller, 1997).

Police are generally not the protectors of sex workers and there is evidence to suggest that some police officers exploit and victimize sex workers directly (Maher, 1997; Miller, 1995; Scibelli, 1987). Ethnographic research has shown police coercing or forcing sex acts from sex workers, extorting bribes, and generally harassing sex workers (Carmen & Moody, 1985; Miller, 1997). For example, Miller (1997) found that some respondents in her study of street prostitutes reported being coerced into sexual activity in exchange for avoiding arrest by police. In their study of sex workers in New York, Thukral and Ditmore (2003) found 27% of sex workers reported assaults by police. These patterns appear in other countries as well, and research suggests that victimization by police may be heightened in low income nations. A survey of sex workers in India found that 70% were beaten by police and more than 80% reported being arrested without evidence (Sangram, 2002). In a study in Papua New Guinea, group rape by police was reported by a sample of sex workers who described situations where they would be taken by police to a police station or to an abandoned area and raped by a number of officers in tandem (Jenkins, 2000). Low income nations are more likely to be spots for sex tourism because of their lowered economic status. Consequently, large numbers of women become sex workers as a way of earning a living and supporting their families. For example, Lim (1998) found over a half-million women working in the sex industry in Thailand. In this context, the often lowered status of women and a general lack of economic opportunities results in large numbers of women working in the sex industry, which, combined with criminalization of prostitution, may result in heightened abuses by police.

Police Abuses Against Male and Transgendered Sex Workers

Although the law serves to regulate sexuality in its prohibition of prostitution, in many countries homosexuality is criminalized as well (Dorf & Perez, 1995; Gessen, 1994; Wijewardene 2007; Wright, 2000). Sex workers engaging in homosexual sex work are thus violating the law on multiple levels, and their experiences with police may be heightened regarding arrest, recourse, and victimization. Some research indicates that in addition to the abuses that parallel female sex workers, male sex workers also experience homophobic policing (Kinnell, 2008; Scott et al, 2005). Criminalization of homosexuality by formal law can give police actors authority and discretion in this area (Dorf & Perez, 1995), and some officers may manipulate these laws (in combination with law relating to prostitution) by extorting bribes and physically and verbally abusing male sex workers.

For example, through interviews with sex workers in Calcutta, Sleightholme and Sinha (1997) found that male sex workers are often effeminate males who face verbal abuse and physical violence from police. Their research also found that police routinely extort bribes from male sex workers in exchange for avoiding arrest, or these sex workers are taken to the police station and have to pay high fines to avoid detention (Sleightholme & Sinha, 1997). Wright and Wright (1997) note that transgender homosexuals in Bolivia are easily recognized because of their transvestitism (cross-dressing) and are the most likely group of homosexual men to be subjected to various social controls. Among these controls are police abuses such as arrest, detention, and forced bribes. They note that transgender individuals are stigmatized under the assumption that “they are street prostitutes, criminal, and immoral” (Wright & Wright, 1997). Even if they are not actually sex workers, they often are victimized, which is an important distinction and suggests the intersectional nature of victimization in the criminalization of sex work, sexual orientation, and transgender identity. Kulick (1998) noted in his ethnographic research that transgendered sex workers are regularly robbed, beaten, and harassed by police officers. He suggests that this is gendered, in that their “feminine” hair and nails may be pulled out as well. Similarly, research finds that some police officers harass, assault, and extort money or sexual favors from gay/transgendered men in Colombo and other areas of Sri Lanka (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, & Labor, 2006).

As with female sex workers, male sex workers are also unlikely to report any victimization to the police because of their experiences with police officers and their fear of further arrest. Scott, Minichiello, Marino, Harvey, and Jamieson (2005), for example, found in Argentina and Australia that male sex workers’ claims of violence to police are often unreported because of the social stigma of both their sex work and their homosexuality. In systems where homosexuality and sex work are illegal, homosexual sex workers have little recourse for their victimization because they would be putting themselves at risk for arrest due to both their homosexual behavior and their sex work.

While this small pool of research suggests that police victimization of male sex workers occurs and sex workers experience abuses directed at their sex work, sexual orientation and gender identity, the victimization is generally not placed within a gendered context. The aim of this prior research generally is not to explore the *gendered* nature of victimization against transgendered sex workers. These research findings usually have revolved around other topics that include transgender sex workers as an aside (see Kulick, 1998; Miller, 2002 for exceptions). For example, Wright and Wright (1997) focused on the influence of AIDS on developing a gay community in Bolivia and briefly noted that transgender homosexual men are more likely to experience violence, but it was not the primary focus of the article. Similarly, Farley and Barkan (1998) briefly noted that transgender sex workers experienced heightened victimization, but did not explore the gendered nature of their victimization or further explore this dynamic. Research on male and transgender sex workers, which explores the gendered dynamics of their victimization as a focal point, is limited.

Interlocking Systems of Oppression: Intersections of Gender and Sexuality

Decades of feminist scholarship suggest that patriarchal systems result in the subordinate opportunity, power, and status of women. Prostitution is largely a phenomenon built on these structural and cultural conditions of gender inequality (Enloe, 1989; Schuler, 1992). Because women often have fewer economic opportunities and are more likely to be sexually objectified, women compose the vast majority of sex workers on a global level. For this reason, feminist scholarship focusing on violence directed toward sex workers focuses primarily on violence against women (Maher, 1997; Harris, 2000). Feminist theories of gendered victimization generally are limited in their focus on the violence directed at male sex workers who express femininity (see Kulick, 1998; Miller, 2002). Although feminist theorizing has advanced through large volumes of work recognizing intersectionality and gender, most of these theories focus on intersections of race, class, and gender. Intersectional literature that does focus on intersections of gender and sexuality (Blackwood, 1998, 2005; Halberstam, 1998; Johnson, 1998; Manalansan, 2003; Wieringa, Blackwood, & Bhaiya, 2007; Wijewardene, 2007) generally does not focus specifically on victimization. Literature that does focus on intersections of gender and sexuality in regard to victimization (Kulick, 1998; Mason, 2002; Miller, 2002) suggests that violence directed at one's gender or sexuality targets not each of these in isolation, but concurrently. Mason (2002) maintains that individuals embody and express multiple identities, and victimization parallels the confluence of these identities. Research directed at varying cultural constructions of sexuality, sexual orientation, and gender are limited regarding the gendered victimization of sex workers, where the victimization is directed at both *feminine gender identity* and *homosexuality*.

For example, a small body of research finds the experiences of gay male sex workers who are feminine are different from the experiences of gay male sex workers who are masculine (Kulick, 1998; Wright & Wright, 1997). This suggests that sexual orientation-based violence does not necessarily occur in isolation, but is also shaped by their gender. In a patriarchal society, both heterosexuality and masculinity are more highly valued. Individuals who are homosexual and feminine may find that intersections of gender and sexual orientation form a dynamic of dual oppression (Franklin, 2004). Male-to-female transgender sex workers may be stigmatized not only for their homosexuality but also for their feminine gender identity and expression as well (Kulick, 1998; Mason, 2002; Miller, 2002; Wright & Wright, 1997).

In this manner, the experience of transgender sex workers is unique and provides a context for exploring the intersections of gender and sexual orientation in victimization. Previous literature is limited as to the extent and gendered nature of violence and other forms of abuse directed toward transgender sex workers. These dynamics are complex, as constructions of gender and sexuality vary greatly both between societies and within societies. Drawing from a case study of transgender sex workers in Sri Lanka, where same-sex sexuality is gendered in such a way that only feminine identified individuals are labeled as homosexual, the current research illustrates how the components of gender and sexual orientation intersect to produce unique victimization

directed toward transgender sex workers in the context of police abuses. In addition, this study explores how gender and sexual orientation shape the victimization of transgender sex workers through the findings that both parallel and differ from the abuses experienced by female sex workers.

Data and Method

This article uses secondary analysis of data collected in Sri Lanka involving the commercial sex industry from 1999 to 2002.² This research is taken from 24 in-depth interviews and interviews from 3 focus groups with male-to-female transgender (nachchi) sex workers in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The Indian word nautch is the likely derivative of the word nachchi used to describe transgender boys in Sri Lanka. This word originally referred to nautch girls, who were courtesan dancers/sex workers in India, who became stigmatized under British colonial rule (Levine, 2004). Nachchi sex workers primarily engage in street level sex work, and there is one street in Colombo in particular that they are known to frequent.

Two Sri Lankan field researchers did both the contacting and the interviews. Initial contacts were made with individual nachchi sex workers by field researchers while the nachchi were working on the streets. From here, snowball sampling was utilized to expand the sample. This technique allowed access to sex workers who would otherwise have been difficult to contact due to the illegal and hidden nature of both their sex work and homosexuality. All participants were interviewed by Sinhala speaking research assistants. Participation in interviews was completely voluntary and respondents were assured of confidentiality. Pseudonyms were used for all of the participants and names were changed at the time of the interview so no identifying information would remain with the interview notes. Pseudonyms from a list of Sri Lankan names were developed from local newspapers, store clerks' nametags, and an online list of popular Sinhala names.

The interviewers began by asking the participants about their family background, education, and employment. Interviews also included questions regarding the participants' first sexual experience, entry into and experiences in the sex industry, gender identity, and sexual orientation. In addition, interviewers asked participants generative questions about their experiences with their families, communities, clients, and police in relation to their transgender identity, their homosexuality, and their sex work.

The interviews were first translated (either from the original audiotape recording [$N = 13$] or from a written Sinhala translation [$n = 14$]) from Sinhala to English by a Sri Lankan field researcher. Subsequently, a sociologist at the University of Colombo in Sri Lanka did a translation check, which involved checking each translation for accuracy, cross checking interviews to ensure that the Sinhala-to-English translations were consistent, and providing in parentheses the actual Sinhala words/phrases used in reference to any words related to prostitution, sex, sex acts, sexuality, gender, violence/victimization, and use of slang. Each translation was then read and additional queries were directed to the Sri Lankan sociologist to either confirm the translation or include the Sinhala phraseology.²

Data Analysis Procedures

The analysis used was an inductive process that began by exploring the details and specifics of the data to discover important patterns and themes through open coding. When a recurring theme of police interactions was found in the transcripts, it was further explored using selective coding. The research design and interview questions guided the selective coding of the data. Questions regarding police included (a) "Have you ever been caught by police?"; (b) "Have you ever gone to the police for help?"; (c) "Have you ever been to jail?"; (d) "Do you have any problems from police?"; and (e) "Do you have help from police?" The responses to the questions were rich with detail.

A general pattern of police abuse was found in almost all of the interviews, and there were few accounts of interactions with police that were not abusive. Exceptions included a case where a respondent had developed a love relationship with an officer and a few brief statements that there were also good police. Through further selective coding, additional abusive interactions with police were identified. Abuse was defined as harmful, injurious, unequal, or offensive treatment. The various forms of abuses were then analyzed by creating a data file that only included narrative accounts of abusive interactions with police. These cases were then explored further and categorized by different types of abuse. Separate data files that included merged narrative accounts of abuse included monetary, physical, verbal, and sexual abuse as well as inequality in police response and forced gendered behavior. Narrative accounts that were relevant to multiple categories were duplicated in each relevant file and labeled as a duplicate. Within these separate merged data files, further analysis detailed different types of monetary abuse including forced bribes and theft. Sexual abuse was further categorized as including coerced, nonintercourse sex acts (such as oral sex and masturbation); rape; and group rape. Inequality in police response was comprised of failure to protect, inequality in punishment, and false accusations. Forced gender behavior consisted of forced singing, dancing, and various forms of cleaning, and cooking/preparing tea. Analyses demonstrated that many cases of abuse occurred simultaneously.

Study Setting

Constructions of gender vary cross culturally, as do constructions of sexuality and sexual orientation. In Sri Lanka, constructions of gender and sexuality are conflated. Effeminate males who have a same-sex sexual preference are labeled as homosexual, whereas their masculine male sexual partners are not. These constructions of gender and sexuality are similar to those in Bolivia, Brazil, and the Philippines (Johnson, 1998; Kulick, 1998; Manalansan, 2003; Whitham, 1992; Wright & Wright, 1997). Although homosexuality is illegal and strongly condemned in Sri Lanka, male-to-male sexual contact is relatively common (Jayasundra, 2000; Miller, 2002; Silva, Sivayoganathan, & Lewis, 1998). In one study, nearly two thirds of men reported having engaged in male-to-male contact at some point in their lives (Silva et al., 1998). According to the Kinsey

Institute (2009), Sri Lankan boys often engage in mutual masturbation, thigh sex, oral, and anal sex. In Sri Lanka, virginity is highly valued for women (Kinsey Institute, 2009); as a result gender segregation occurs in adolescence. This separation of boys and girls and the unavailability of female partners may result in relatively high rates of male-to-male contact (Jayasundra, 2000; Kinsey Institute, 2009; Miller, 2002; Silva et al. 1998). While this male-to-male contact occurs, constructions of sexuality in Sri Lanka are such that men are usually not considered gay and consequently stigmatized unless they are feminine as well. These gay men expressing femininity are defined here as transgendered. In Sri Lanka, these transgender men, who often take part in a subculture involving sex work, call themselves *nachchi* or *pons*.

In the current research, the word transgender is used because it is fitting to the way in which participants defined themselves. The *nachchi* did not simply have same-sex sexual attractions (gay) nor were they merely effeminate males or transvestites. They cannot be defined as transsexual, as they were cross dressing but had not undergone surgeries or hormone therapies and had no desire to do so. The *nachchi* are gay effeminate males who walk and speak like women and situationally dress and accessorize like women as well. Some of the respondents believed they had been women in their previous lifetime or their identification as feminine was the result of karma. The respondents felt they were like women in their minds, mannerisms, and behaviors but had a man's body. The following quotes exemplify this dynamic:

Then also, normally from small age I was like a girl. Played also with girls only. Had more association with girls. To tell the truth what I do is mostly what women do. So during the time I went to school, went to school also with girls, came back also with girls. The boys found it strange. (Malith)

That is we are like women Like women in the sense, that is ones who stay similar to both women and men So, that is something we did in every *athme* [circle of our births], so some say it's a *karuwe* [bad karma], but I of course think it's not a *karume* That is anybody who sees us takes a liking. Now even ladies, if they see us, "anee, looks like a girl, that boy." Now say like that. So that is also a thrill to us, no, that we are like a woman. So we like to be like women. So from some *karume*, from last *athme*, we have become like this. So, we go like women, we talk, Miss [the interviewer] must realize I talk also like woman, no . . . we have male qualities [body] . . . but the voice, face. Yes, that is different, yes. Like women. Otherwise everything is like men. (Lahiru)

I liked to associate with girls. I liked to stay like girls, to wear dresses, to do hair styles, to cook rice, I liked to do things like that So when I stayed at home also I washed the pots and pans. Cleaned the house. That is what I did. From those days onward I liked doing girly things only. (Viraj)

From my small age they got to know I'm like a girl. So I was very playful, cooking and all, doing all of Amma's [mother's] work. More than a girl I'm very good at that. From birth I had that talent, to sew and all, to stitch and sew. I had the knowledge for that. (Indrajith)

From childhood in the sense from the time I could think, I always liked very much to imitate things that females did. I liked to dress like them, I liked to work like them, to cook and stuff, things like that I liked very much to do. We usually imitate what the females do. Because we are mostly drawn to that side only. So because of that from small days onward, I cook at home, arranged the house and things. (Suranjith)

Others in the sample indicated the same sentiment, that they were feminine, and sexually attracted to men. They also indicated a preference for activities such as dressing like women, cooking, and fashion. In a culture that defines these things as feminine, the definition of transgender is applicable. Sri Lankan society stigmatizes gender transgression and cross dressing (Wijewardene, 2007). Generally the nachchi cross-dress, and their identity as nachchi is defined by gender transgression (Kinsey Institute, 2009). The respondents in this sample described shaving their eyebrows, wearing dresses, carrying purses, and wearing makeup. Most respondents did this situationally.

Legal Contexts of Commercial Sex in Sri Lanka

Legal contexts of commercial sex and homosexuality in Sri Lanka exacerbate the victimization of nachchi sex workers. Two aspects of illegality are key, the illegality of prostitution and illegality of homosexuality. The Vagrants Ordinance addresses illegality of prostitution. The Vagrants Ordinance is one aspect of law in Sri Lanka that is particularly relevant to nachchi sex work, as nachchi primarily engage in street-level work. This law includes as vagrants those that engage in public loitering and prostitution. The Vagrants Ordinance also includes solicitation that can be interpreted to include criminalization of clients as well as prostitutes. In addition, the ordinance includes criminalization of third parties involved in prostitution—those aiding, abetting, or compelling a prostitute.

While prostitution is illegal in Sri Lanka, so is homosexuality. Homosexuality was made a criminal offense under the British colonial rule in 1883 and currently exists under Penal Code 365A (Gujarat, 2004). Under this code homosexuality is punishable by 12 years in jail, but until recently, the law was rarely enforced (Gujarat, 2004; Kinsey Institute, 2009). More recently, because of the rise in sex tourism in Sri Lanka, the criminal justice system has begun to enforce this penal code more, with a rise in arrests and convictions of homosexual male sex workers (Fernando, 2002). Researchers find that law and cultural stigma are used by law enforcement to harass, rape, assault, and blackmail the nachchi (Kinsey Institute, 2009; Miller, 2002; Price, 1998). This background information on law and sex gender systems is important for understanding the context of the victimization nachchi receive from police.

Results

The ages of the respondents who participated in the study ranged from 18 to 42, with the majority of them in their 20s. The average age of entry into the sex industry was 15. All of the participants described coming from impoverished family backgrounds. Most of the participants were Sinhala, the predominant ethnic group in Sri Lanka, although 3 Muslims and 1 Tamil also participated in the interviews. The interviews suggested there was significant victimization of nachchi sex workers by the police. As indicated in the following subsections, police abuses took the form of verbal abuse, physical abuse, forced bribes and theft, failure to protect, inequality in punishment, false accusations, forced gender behavior, and sexual abuse. Some of the abuses were unique reflections of intersectional abuse; others paralleled the general experiences of female and/or male sex workers.

Verbal Abuse

Verbal abuse consisted of name calling that specifically focused on the nachchis' femininity and sexuality. "Ponnaya" is derogatory slang for transvestites, very effeminate males, or males who are weak in their relationships with women. "Ponnaya" is also used to imply that nachchi are not able to sexually function like "real" men, and is seen by nachchi as insulting to both their gender and sexual identity. Respondents indicated that police use this word to deliberately insult and denigrate them. Lakshith described a general account of this:

Now even if they [police] see you in the road . . . they pass saying . . . "Ponnaya, ponnayo, what are you doing?" this and that, yes, "Ponnaya get in the jeep." So [police] say this and that and insult [us] in filth, remand for no reason. That is why. Now the police of course can't stand us. That much we are bitter to them, we also can't stand them. We're so disgusting to them. From that [I] get scared.

This example of verbal abuse includes name calling relating to intersections of their sexual orientation and femininity by using the word "ponnaya." Almost all of the respondents reported verbal abuse by police predominately by being called "ponnaya" in the course of their sex work and outside of their sex work. Moreover, verbal abuse often accompanied other abuses. For example, Lalith described a general account of verbal abuse crossing lines with physical abuse:

Most harassment to us is from the police. From the police and from the thug kollo [men]. They call us, "Kella,[Girl] Baba [Baby], Chuti [Little One], where are you going?" and throw stones at us. Major harassment, that is the thing.

When used by the police, in this context, calling to homosexual transgendered men in words used to refer to girls is meant to insult, and is another form of verbal abuse used by police officers.

Physical Abuse

The majority of the nachchi respondents reported physical abuse by police, often occurring in tandem with verbal abuse. Respondents primarily described being hit, beaten, or having stones thrown at them by police. Physical abuse occurred both in jail and on the street while the nachchi were engaging in sex work or soliciting for clients, but notably, physical abuse by police also occurred outside of their sex work. The following example illustrates physical abuse by police while Kusum was not working but simply going out to buy something from the store:

From the police also we have plenty of harassment. Even if you just go to the road to buy something, sometimes they would take us and would hit and all and would send us back [from jail] next morning, there are times like that.

When asked what happens when the police come, Chaminda responded,

The thuggish police beat us badly. They beat us badly and shame us and put us in places where we would get shamed and . . . they drag us and take us just the way they drag prostitutes, they drag us in the road and take us.

Notably, Chaminda stated that the nachchi are treated like female sex workers, but Kusum indicated an additional component of abuse because they are beaten outside of their sex work after being identified as a nachchi. Like verbal abuse, physical abuse sometimes accompanied the other forms of exploitation. In addition to physical and verbal abuse, the nachchi described being regularly subjected to routine theft and police extortion of bribes.

Forced Bribes and Theft

A majority of respondents described police extorting bribes in exchange for avoiding arrest. The nachchi also stated that money was routinely stolen from them on police rounds. Police were described as opportunists, extortionists, and thieves. Respondents stated that they are vulnerable to theft and forced bribes by police not only because of the illegality of their sex work and homosexuality but also because it is known that the nachchi are carrying cash received from clients. Susil suggested that police see the nachchi as an opportunity to make easy money. "They try to get money from us. That is to take money. They expect that." Nachchi have few alternatives; if they refuse to give a bribe, they will be arrested and have to pay a fine for engaging in sex work. Indrajith expanded on the various forms of forced bribes, including what are considered luxury items in addition to money:

The police of course are just trash. Take our money and scold us. Now when we go with a customer, [police] would take 2000-3000 [rupees]³ from him and

insult us calling us “pons”. They insult us, scold us and take our money and go. If not things like that they say, “Bring an arrack bottle [hard liquor].” Say, “Bring a chicken.” We earn about 100-200, so giving that, can you do [buy] those [expensive items] no? So because of things like that the police of course are very [morally] weak. A lot of trouble from the police.

Many of those interviewed noted that they always carried enough to cover a bribe if they got caught engaging in sex work. This delineates the normative nature of giving bribes, as nachchi would not carry bribe money if extortion was not expected. When asked about self-protection from the law, Viraj replied, “I do things like this, I take money . . . [because] if they catch [us], [we] have to give . . . a bribe. Bribes only they take.” Most of those interviewed described not only forced bribery/extortion, but theft as well. Viraj described theft as routine: “Now if I get caught to police people, they check pockets and all and take everything” and noted that “police people are the madavi kariyo [no good people/ bullies] only.” Viraj described the inability to save money because “the police people will snatch it away . . . Even if we find two hundred [rupees] a police person will come [and take it].” Respondents reported that if they were arrested, they would not go home with any money in their pockets. Whatever they came in with, the day’s earnings would be appropriated regardless of the fine for sex work. Forced bribes and theft parallel the general experiences of female and male sex workers.

Failure to Protect

Some nachchi described being denied the same quality of service or any service at all because of their transgender identity. The majority of respondents who went to the police to report some form of victimization described having police services refused. Jayantha described situations in which s/he had to hide from groups of men who were chasing hir. When asked if s/he had ever gone to the police for help, s/he responded, “The police do not accept our entries, no...If we run to the police, they will say ‘get out ponnaya.’” When asked the same question, Malith described an incident in which s/he went to the police to report a crime and the police refused service:

Now so we go in the night and kollo [men] take us and beat us and take our money and gold jewelry and we report that to the police but no action is taken. They tell us, “Hah hah, get out. Get out!” and chase us.

A few respondents who reported to the police described that the police blamed them for their victimization. For example, when asked about experiencing harassment, Suranjith stated,

Yes, you get in the road . . . people with no proper manners. They are the kind of people who mostly come like that and harass. So sometimes, they take you and

get what they want fulfilled [rape]⁴ and then beat you. They beat you and snatch what you have in your hand or pull what you are wearing, so there are a lot of criminals like that . . . so that is why we are scared a lot also no. Now to go in the road in the night also, we are very scared, we are scared because you face problems like that. So even if you go to the police, you don't get any help from the police . . . "What were you doing in the road? Why were you all in the road?" Like that they ask.

In addition, reporting victimization to police can put the nachchi at risk for further victimization and exploitation. Raju described going in to report a crime and being forced to have sex with two of the officers.

It's like this, something was stolen from my brother's house, and when I went to the police for that, two officers who were in the jeep called me. "If you don't stay [have sex] we will lock you up," they said.

Inequality in the police response to the nachchi's victimization exemplifies a system that does not serve the interests of nachchi nor offers them protection, instead they describe a system that serves to exploit and victimize them. As the above quote delineates, the nachchi experience this discrimination not only because they are sex workers but also for complaints outside of their work in the sex industry. This is important because although male and female sex workers generally experience inequality in the police response to their victimization, the current research finding indicates that transgender sex workers experience this outside of their sex work as well, indicating a transgender identity as a source of this inequality in police response.

When asked if s/he was ever harassed, Indrajith described being beaten by men in the community, raped multiple times, and having his eyes wounded to the point that s/he had to have an operation. Indrajith was then asked if s/he had ever gone to the police for help, and s/he responded as follows:

Normally incidents, police, police of course don't take notice. When you go to the police, they say "So it's because y'all also do something you get beaten, no," . . . Those people [perpetrators] are also scared no... Those people, when we go to the police they also talk insultingly to us... We go to the police and they [perpetrators] give some number of 500, 1000 rupee notes, then they [the police] will take their side. Don't take our side. They don't care two hoots about us.

In this example, bribery is associated with police failing to protect the nachchi. Respondents described multiple forms of inequalities in police response that went beyond police trading bribes to ignore their complaints. Moreover, interviewees indicated that not only are the nachchi likely victims of crime without recourse because they are at the bottom of the social hierarchy, but they are also likely scape-goats for crime.

False Accusations

Many of the nachchi stated that they believed their arrest for crimes they did not commit was related to their transgender identity. A majority of respondents claimed to have been the victim of a false accusation. They would be identified as nachchi, whether they were working or not, and falsely accused of crime. When asked if s/he had ever been caught by police, Malith described a situation of false accusation when s/he was not engaging in sex work:

Yes, I have got caught to the police about twice. To tell you the truth one time I was on the beach, my life was in a difficult situation and I did not know what to do and I went to the beach and was thinking and when I got up, I was taken on suspicion [of prostitution]. And [they have] written false accusation in the books, that is, "Was intending to solicit and that is why we brought this one," like that they wrote false accusations, told me to sign them, they took me in by force . . .

At that time I asked,

What did I do that is so shameful? I was on the beach minding my own business. You all don't know the problems I have, I was seated minding my own business, other than that I did not do anything that you all accuse me of doing. You all do this to innocent people like that making false accusations.

I fought with them saying whether it's right. To tell you the truth, the police harass us a lot. When they find out we are like this, homosexuals, they harass us a lot. How many things are happening in the country—there are thugs, murderers, looters. They stay, still don't go after them. We are just homosexuals, what are they to do to us? Even the police have been told of how many things [that] are going on in the country. [They] don't bother about those. Without going after [those crimes], they are chasing these homosexuals in the road. Make false accusations about them and put them in court. To tell the truth.

Mustafa described an incident in which s/he was with a client in his car, parked on the beach:

When we were parked, some group of kollo came and took that Sir's purse. Then that Sir told the police that I was also involved in it. I didn't even know anything about it. Saying I was involved in it, they beat me and all and put me in prison.

Mustafa stated that s/he pled guilty, was convicted, and served 2 years for the offense. Because the group of young men said "it happened with my knowledge," and "this man said I took it," Mustafa said "I accepted the offense." Mustafa's example demonstrates a false accusation and the law taking the side of the accusers. It also

demonstrates a bias against the nachchi, in this case with the serious consequence of incarceration for a crime not committed.

In some cases, the false accusations occurred when they were not working. Because the nachchi identifiably embody femininity, they are easily recognized as transgender. The false accusations are directed at the nachchi not for their sex work, as in the case of female sex workers, but for their transgender identity combined with homosexuality.

Inequality in Punishment

According to laws prohibiting prostitution in Sri Lanka, both prostitutes and clients are committing a crime; however, transgendered sex workers described being arrested or fined when caught on the job while clients were less likely to be punished, and if they were punished it was likely to take the form of minor fines or coerced bribes. Findings indicate that in some cases, officers extorted money from both clients and nachchi sex workers, but none of the sex workers described incidents in which a client was arrested or brought in on charges. This exemplifies inequality in arrest patterns that parallels that of male and female sex workers. Dinuth was asked if s/he or any client had ever been caught while engaging in sex work. S/he replied,

That day they didn't have [arrested clients]. Took nachchi like us. There were more than seven, took all of us. Why, because Colombo gets thieves. Snatch chains and rings. [They] thought we were mostly people like that.

This example shows inequality in police response in tandem with false accusation, based on their nachchi identity. Jayantha described being caught by police, while his client was let go:

I went to the streets and that was a day when I earned well Go wearing make-up and stay [had sex] and after that, I was caught... that was the last deal. Caught me when I was in the vehicle . . . two police officers put me in the vehicle and took me The first dirty scummy thing they did was . . . that Sir in the vehicle [the client] was allowed to go and I was taken in . . . Because of the dirty thing done, then that person also must be produced to court no. No? I went because that man came no? I didn't go by force, wave the hand and get in, no? I got in because I was asked to get in.

Forced Gendered Behavior

In addition to experiencing inequality in arrest, Jayantha also described being forced to take part in feminine gender behavior in the morning following the incident described above.

[While]I was in police [custody]... A lot of injustice was done by the police to me. I was wearing a dress, keeping breasts, with long hair. I was like a woman that day In the morning they put the radio on and told me to dance Told me to dance for those [songs], I still danced for whatever way I could. [Police] came to squeeze these of mine [breasts]. Did like this, did nonsense . . .

Many nachchi described similar situations in which police forced them to display feminine gender behavior. In over a third of cases, nachchi described having been brought in on charges, and then forced to sweep, sing, dance, clean uniforms and shoes, cook, and arrange and prepare tea. This form of police behavior is clearly gendered. The nachchi are clearly identified by their dress and accessories and forced by the police to take part in traditionally feminine behaviors in Sri Lanka, while simultaneously being condemned for performing these behaviors. In some cases these activities were accompanied by verbal abuse, primarily by the use of the derogatory term *ponnaya*. Respondents indicated that this behavior is a form of demeaning abuse with the intent of humiliation. Viraj was jailed on charges of prostitution and described an incident with police involving forced gender behavior: “I’m very scared of policemen of course They straight away tell ‘Go sing a song! sweep!’ Talk to us like dogs.” Lahiru noted that nachchi sex workers are treated differently than female prostitutes when they are forced to do these gendered behaviors, indicating a unique configuration of abuse based on transgender identity/embodiment and sexuality:

The prostitutes have more freedom than us. That’s because they are women. We of course are mostly taken for a joke. To do ridiculous things and for various, various things. At times we get really fed up. “Why in the name of god are we like this, and things are like this?” and we feel angry inside. There is like a sadness that comes. That is what I can say.

Ranil stated that they are also verbally abused when they are forced to do these things by police.

The police . . . disturb you—come and crack jokes, so put you in a difficult situation only. So that is they insult [you] really badly, tell to dance, tell “Dance!” “How did y’all give [the ass],” they ask, “how did y’all do [have sex],” they ask, “how do y’all suck the Sirs,” so those [things]only [they say]. Listen to those [questions] plenty of times and after giving answers to those only, in the end they remand and put [us] in prison also.

This example shows forced gendered behavior occurring in tandem with sexual verbal abuse, specifically targeting their homosexuality in the verbal references to oral and anal sex. As the next section shows, the majority of respondents reported that officers also went beyond such verbal sexual abuse and perpetrated sexual coercion and violence as well.

Sexual Abuse

While police condemn and punish nachchi sex workers for their profession and sexual orientation, over half of the respondents described police engaging in sexual encounters with them. These encounters included sexual bribes, coerced sexual activity, individual rape, and group rape. Those interviewed stated that sexual coercion occurred in the road, in jail, and in prison both in the course of their sex work and when they were not working. Ranil described rape by police as a normative occurrence:

They look at us like animals, that is, like they have found a prey like. They need to take us like that, so . . . when they see us, they fight over each other and get things done [e.g., sex] from us . . .

The mildest form of sexual abuse described by the sample included coerced sexual acts. Some respondents reported being forced to masturbate officers, provide oral sex, and engage in sexual acts with other nachchi while the officer watched. Nalin illustrated an example of forced masturbation with another nachchi sex worker in the street by police:

[The police] have caught [us], when we were in the park, while we were behaving [working] . . . police told . . . [another nachchi sex worker] to take my one [penis], and told me to take his one. . . . After watching, told us to run and kicked us and left us So they also must like to watch us doing it no, and we did it, so what else to do?

Jayantha gave a description of forced oral sex while in jail: “One day in the night a jailer came and . . . when I was in the cell, he told me to take it to the mouth.” Sexual bribery was also described by respondents as a “trade” for dropping charges. Lahiru described a trade of oral sex when not carrying bribe money:

We always keep some money at least a hundred [rupees]³ with us and go. Why because police catch Either we give them a hundred and escape or stay with them and either suck their thing or do backside and escape. Anyway even in daylight we can't go anywhere or they just catch us. Or they just keep us in police [custody] like that and stay with us They have stayed with us, the police officers. The days we don't take [bribe] money, we suck.

Lahiru's example reflects multiple police abuses, including concurrently being identified as nachchi through his dress. Lahiru indicated that this also occurred when not working.

We can't go in the road, the police call us ponnaya. We do get caught to police sometimes, but if we stay [have sex] with people in the police we don't get

produced [to court]. It's as if the police are ashamed They hit the kollo [clients] two three times and send them off and take us in They take us and so we stay [have sex] with them and so they don't produce us to jails.

Respondents described having little alternative but to comply with a request for sexual services by the police. In some cases, refusal of sexual services resulted in false accusation, arrest, and rape. Mustafa exemplified this dynamic as follows:

So that SI mahaththaya [policeman], when I was coming back after going in the night told me to get in the jeep. I didn't get in. I told "Sir, did I do anything wrong? I didn't do a wrong; I can't get in the jeep like that." The police threatened me, "You will know, you are the only one who refused to get in to my jeep, you will know what I will do to you," he said. It is a week later only they took me during the day and did that thing [rape]. Doesn't know how to say, would you stay [have sex] with me, if he had said I want to stay with you, I would have got into the jeep with him and done that thing. I didn't know for what he called me. He didn't tell me . . .

Mustafa described getting written up and fined under a false accusation by this officer in addition to rape for refusal of services:

I went to boil some pickle and fish, while going to boil; halfway the jeep came and picked me up. Took me and later filed a case against me telling I was selling seal arrack, [liquor] and other things. Later I was fined 8000[rupees].

While female sex workers generally report sexual abuse and violence, Mustafa was not engaging in any sex work or illegal activity at that point, indicating that the profession is not the only source or justification by police for exploitation. Simply being identifiably effeminate increases vulnerability to victimization. In this way, nachchi's experiences with sexual abuse both parallel and differ from that of female sex workers.

In addition to acts of sexual coercion by individual officers, rape involving multiple officers was experienced by almost one third of those interviewed. Police engaged in group rape of nachchi, often referred to as "polin daanawa" or "polin gahanawa" by participants. Nalin described a situation involving rape by multiple police officers: "Three from the police did that one day, taking me. Yes, three of them stayed [rape] and each one stayed twice." Some of the respondents believed that female sex workers were less likely to have acts of sexual violence involving anal and oral sex perpetrated against them. Marcus suggested this dynamic in the following excerpt, where s/he described what happened after s/he was arrested and taken into remand:

Have stayed with 10, 15 of them. [They] torture us in every way and send us. That is, taking to the mouth, fucking the ass, do everything there is to do to us.

Those things they can't do to the women: fuck the ass, give it to the mouth. Give it the mouth, do various things like that and we escape. We can't say "Can't." . . . They strip us stark naked and about 15 people come and do to us. We just bear it up and wait . . .

In some cases it appears that rape of nachchi by police officers may be informally institutionalized. This interpretation is indicated by nachchi respondents who described places that are known to be specifically used for raping nachchi sex workers brought in on charges of prostitution or homosexuality. Lahiru stated that the room commonly used for strip searching arrestees in one police station is used for rape by multiple officers. When Lahiru was asked how the police raped nachchi in the station, s/he replied,

Inside the police [station] . . . They have these separate sections to remove clothes and all. So if there are five [officers on duty], all five won't come, some don't like no. So upstairs there is clothes room, so [they] take [us] to that. Sometimes [we] have to stay with two.

When asked what Lahiru meant by staying with two, s/he stated,

One's suck, the other's . . . [Interviewer: "Doing to-"] Yes. At such times we don't like to do, but by force, so they must have some desire no . . . At such times, go with fear in mind, and somehow only try to come out.

Lahiru also indicated that different police stations treated nachchi differently. Comparing two districts in Colombo, s/he stated,

Sometimes when they catch [us] they ask us to do some work, like sweep . . . Police [at this station] also stay [have sex] [but] not so much. If there are ten, all ten won't come. They understand the pain. About two would come and do. After that again in early morning. Like that, like that they do. Like that give [us] breaks and do. [The other station] is not like that, all come together. If there are 4, 3 come at the same time. Have to stay with two . . . Again another two would come.

Lahiru was also asked if women were treated like this as well, and s/he responded "I have not heard of them doing like that to women, of course." Sadun described a situation of a friend, also a nachchi, involving group rape by 37 officers—on the first day.

There are ones who are taken to the court no, those men's desires are more, [for] Mahaththaya [men, i.e., homosexual]. When their desires are more like that, now if it's a court house near Colombo area of course you get big toilets. Put you

in an uncomfortable situation like that, beat you and polin daawana [group rape]. A friend of mine called Aruna, got caught to the policeAruna got caught and now this. I'm telling something that happened. [Aruna] went to the prison and paid a 500 rupee fine and I took [Aruna] out. Then [Aruna] couldn't sit even on the ground Had tortured that much. First day, 37 people have come. All of them. So backside, had given to the backside only. Given to the mouth. When [Aruna] said can't, they had beaten. Lips were swollen, face was swollen.

The first line of Sadun's quote indicates that nachchi are specifically identified as homosexual and then particularly targeted for rape. Homosexuality appears to also be a source of victimization. Although female sex workers in general also report rape and group rape, nachchi may be experiencing rape directed at their homosexuality in addition to their lowered status as sex workers and feminine gender identity. Sadun also described that it is known that this type of activity occurs in the bathrooms at a Colombo court house, supporting the notion that this may be normative.

Discussion

The research findings illustrate the intersectional nature of victimization involving sexual orientation and gender. Although some abuses parallel that of female sex workers, the nature of the transgendered sex workers' abuses is in some cases directed at their transgender identity and homosexuality, and heightened in some instances. This claim is substantiated by two main points. First, findings show that nachchi experience police abuses both inside and outside of their sex work, suggesting transgender identity as a primary source of stigma. In addition, the violence directed at them due to their homosexuality does not occur in isolation; it occurs in tandem with their feminine gender identity. As such, the abuses transgendered sex workers face are unique and multifaceted. The nachchi are not victimized solely in the context of sex work or homosexuality, or even both of these elements combined. It is the addition of a feminine gender identity/transgender identity to these elements that precipitates their victimization by police. The victims specifically indicate being identified as nachchi by their feminine behavior, cross-dressing, and homosexuality while experiencing various abuses, which is consistent with previous research (Kulick, 1998; Wright & Wright, 1997) that finds transgender individuals are at a heightened risk of victimization due to the visibility of their stigmatized transgender identity.

Homosexuality, in isolation, is not condemned in nachchis' experiences with police. It is the *cultural construction* of homosexuality in Sri Lanka, in that male-to-male contact must be concurrent with femininity to equate nachchi identity and consequential victimization. While police are engaging in male-to-male sexual contact and men in general may engage in male-to-male contact in Sri Lanka (Miller, 2002; Silva et al., 1998), it is the feminine nachchi who are the targets of victimization by police—not clients, police, or other members of the community engaging in male-to-male sexual

behaviors. This contributes to and supports prior intersectional literature that explores how gender shapes violence directed at sexual orientation (Mason, 2002).

Moreover, the *nature* of the nachchis' abuse is distinct not only in that their gender identity is specifically addressed by the police in the course of their abuse but the abuses themselves are gendered. In the case of forced gendered behavior, for example, making nachchi sing, sweep, dance, cook, and serve tea in addition to cleaning shoes and uniforms—feminine behaviors in Sri Lanka—is a clear indication of the gendered nature of their victimization. It shows how intersections of gender and sexuality are combined in a particular manifestation of abuse. Prior literature does not show similar actions being inflicted on female or male sex workers. In fact, no academic articles on sex work could be located that referenced this type of abuse from police, suggesting a unique form of victimization experienced by transgender sex workers based on their feminine gender identity. They are reduced to the status of women and forced to do “women’s work” in a demeaning fashion. Yet some respondents stated that women do not experience this form of abuse. If this is the case, the nachchi are unique in that they are male bodied with a feminine gender identity and thus their experiences may be different from a female-bodied feminine individual.

In addition, homosexuality and gender as a dual source of victimization is indicated by widespread use of the insult “ponnaya,” which references both nachchis' gender and sexuality simultaneously. Herek (2004) maintains that the rejection of anything feminine is a defining factor of masculinity. For example, McCann, Minichiello, and Plummer (2009) point out that homophobic language and misogynistic language are intertwined with names that are used to label homosexual men. The research findings in the current study support this claim and demonstrate the intersectional nature of verbal abuse used against the transgendered nachchi through the use of the insult “ponnaya.” While prior research indicated male and female sex workers also experience verbal abuse, the verbal abuse transgendered individuals experience directly targets both their sexuality and feminine gender identity.

Physical abuse of the nachchi by police generally paralleled the abuse inflicted on female and male sex workers (Sangram, 2002; Thukral & Dittmore, 2003) although the interviews did not reveal any reports of gunshot or knife wounds or other assaults with weapons found in prior research on female sex workers (Sangram, 2002) and transgendered sex workers (Kulick, 1998). The current findings did reveal that verbal abuse was frequently concurrent with physical abuse that insulted the victim’s transgender identity. The interviews also demonstrated that victims experienced physical abuse by police outside of their sex work. Respondents specifically reported being identified as transgendered by police, and police physically abusing them for that reason. These findings are parallel to female sex workers with regard to physical abuse although the nachchi also reported additional physical abuse that targeted their transgender identity both in the course of and outside of their sex work.

Inequality in the client–sex worker relationship is primarily parallel to that of female sex workers. Prior research finds that clients are generally not charged, whereas sex workers are (Carmen & Moody, 1985; Kempadoo & Doezema, 1998;

Maher, 1997; Miller, 1997). The current study of transgendered sex workers shows this pattern as well; although, findings suggest that inequality in arrest patterns may be heightened by a transgender identity and homosexuality because if the nachchi are caught in the course of their sex work or outside of their sex work, they may be charged not just with prostitution but homosexuality as well. Homosexuality, transgender identity, and sex work all shape the nachchi's experiences with arrest patterns. The main premise of the intersectional literature is supported by the current research findings: that multiple identities intersect to inform individual experiences.

Police officers' failure to protect the nachchi is parallel to that of male (Scott et al., 2005) and female sex workers (Fairstein, 1993; Sanchez, 2001) in that complaints to police related to the nachchi's sex work were generally dismissed. The finding of police ignoring the nachchi's complaints also parallels the experiences of other stigmatized groups, such as drug dealers (Wright, 2002); however, this dynamic may be heightened for the nachchi. The nachchi are refused help because they are sex workers, but the current research findings show their complaints outside of the sex industry are also ignored and condemned, in part, because the nachchi are easily recognized outside of their sex work by their feminine attire and accessories. The findings also indicate that the nachchi's lack of recourse goes further in some cases, including instances of rape and other forms of victimization. Research does not indicate that police victimization against other stigmatized groups, such as drug dealers, results in rape by police, although the rape of female sex workers and coerced sex acts by police are noted in prior research (Carmen & Moody, 1985; Kempadoo & Doezema, 1998; Miller, 1997). However, the nachchi are recognized and victimized even when they are not working and their complaints have nothing to do with the sex industry. As such, findings indicate the nachchi's transgender identity *as well as* their illegal sex work is a basis for victimization. Findings support the notion that gender, in this case *transgendering*, is a basis for victimization.

The nachchi are seen as "fair game" because of their stigmatized status; therefore, they are vulnerable in terms of rape and forced sex acts. There is some evidence that male sex workers are not as likely to be victimized as transgender or female sex workers (Dennison-Hunt, 2007; Farley & Barkan, 1998). Group rape of female prostitutes by police has been documented (Jenkins, 2000) but group rape of male sex workers has not although it may be due to the overall lack of research in this area. The current findings document group rape of transgendered sex workers by police. Notably, the cultural construction of homosexuality includes femininity, or transgendering, in Sri Lanka. Nachchi are raped because they are similar in status to female prostitutes in their feminine gender identity and embodiment combined with their sex work. Findings show that nachchi are identified as homosexual and they are raped for this reason as well, indicating a form of abuse directed at nachchi's multiple identities as sex workers, homosexuals, and transgender identity. This finding is consistent with Mason's (2002) claim that multiple identities interact to produce unique victimization targeting those identities.

The aim of this research was to explore the intersections of gender and sexual orientation in victimization. The findings suggest that victimization based on homosexuality does not occur in a vacuum. The nature of the nachchi's abuses often directly target their feminine gender identity, and their experiences differ from those of male sex workers who are not transgendered (Kinnell, 2008; Scott et al, 2005; Wright & Wright, 1997) as well as men who engage in male-to-male sexual contact that is not viewed as a feminine act in Sri Lanka. In turn, the nachchi experiences did not occur in a "gender vacuum" as their victimization was related to homosexuality in tandem with femininity as well. Findings show both parallels to the abuses male and female sex workers experience as well as unique abuses of transgender sex workers. The parallels of nachchi sex workers' experiences to both male and female sex workers show how status as a sex worker shapes victimization. The parallels to female sex workers illustrate how gender shapes victimization. The differences show how sexual orientation *and* transgendering shapes their victimization. These findings support the concept that homophobia and misogyny are tied to patriarchy, as both the components of femininity and homosexuality in tandem are stigmatized in Sri Lanka and the resulting victimization by police parallels this relationship.

The current study only included male-to-female transgendered individuals and does not reflect the experiences of female-to-male transgendered individuals. Prior research (Blackwood, 2005) indicates that female-to-male transgendered individuals experience heightened status and more freedoms than women in West Sumatra, which is in direct contrast to the nachchi. Further research is needed to explore the intersectional nature of victimization of female-to-male transgendered individuals as this would contribute significantly to intersectional feminist theories of victimization.

While the current study has contributed to feminist theory in its intersectional focus, it should be noted that this research did not include dynamics of race or social class. Further research is needed to better understand the experiences of transgendered individuals within these and other social contexts. Comparative work within other cultural contexts is needed as well.

Conclusion

Feminist scholarship has focused on the gendered nature of victimization, primarily focusing on violence against women. Gender violence and gendered victimization have been frequently used in the feminist literature as synonymous with violence against women. Victimization, however, is experienced in different ways and is influenced by the intersections of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, racial/ethnic background, class background, and other social factors (Connell, 1992; Halberstam, 1998). Defining oppression within a vacuum of only gender, or sexual orientation, or embodiment is too simplistic. Within each of these "categories" there is variation and consequently oppression is experienced differently.

Expanding on research related to the facets of power and inequality present in the sex industry, the current research has illustrated the gendered nature of victimization in the context of intersections of gender and sexual orientation. Excerpts

from interviews with transgender sex workers show how constructions of gender and sexuality in Sri Lanka interact to produce police abuses that parallel that of female sex workers as well as unique configurations of abuses. The current study contributes to a growing body of research and theories of gendered victimization in which the violence is directly misogynistic *and* homophobic in nature. Findings contribute to feminist theory and research by bringing intersections of gender and sexuality to the forefront, to gay/lesbian victimization theories by situating their victimization within a gendered context.

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Notes

1. Transgender individuals should not be confused with homosexuals or transvestites in isolation, or transsexuals.
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2. This method was preferred to the traditional approach of back translating because the initial PI (Dr. Miller) was most interested in colloquial language usage and meaning for narrative analysis purposes, which would be lost with a technical focus on formal direct translation. I worked closely with Dr. Miller to clarify language usage/ translations.
3. The exchange rate to US dollars was approximately 80 rupees to one USD.
4. Sex and violence were often discussed in somewhat vague terms, in keeping with colloquial Sinhala speech patterns. This is a common feature of Sanskrit and Pali derived South Asian languages (Puri, 1999).

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Bio

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