

Fanzine:
Transphobia, Sexism
& SUICMC
or why do we need a
meufs/trans/enby category*



SUMMARY

Where did the women/trans/non-binary* category go?	3
The need for a second category	4
Problems of a single category	4
It's cringe to be gender blind	4
A historical marginalization of women in sport	5
Answers to transphobic attacks	6
It's just a game bro', chill	6
Historical point	6
The rise of transphobic discourses	7
Thought exer-cis-e	7
Conclusion: stop fake queerfriendliness	8
The need to take a stand	8
Intersectional Openness	8

Where did the women/trans/non-binary*¹ category go?

This fanzine is written by bike messengers following the announcement of the SUIMC 23 race schedule. We are chicks, trans and/or enby people, and bike messengers who participate every year in different races (SUIMC, at EMWC, CMWC, etc.).

It was a little bit of a surprise when we found out that the organization of SUIMC 23 in Bern had chosen to remove the Women/Trans/Non-Binary* category. This fanzine is an urgent response to this political decision and a call to take a stand on transphobia and sexism in the bike messengers community.

Looking through the SUIMC23 fanzine, there are the usual reminders about respect, inclusion, systemic oppressions, a usual awariness team, but one detail made us cringe. No mention of the presence or absence of a "Women/Trans/non-binary" category. The organization decided to remove the category.

We don't understand this decision, as it wouldn't have cost any energy to keep the usual categories... These guidelines were voted as an amendment to the IFBMA statutes at the CMWC Riga, 2018 asked, among other things, "Use two gender categories for all events, one is "Open", which is open to people of all genders, the other is "Women/trans/non-binary" which is open to all but cis men."² These are guidelines that have already been discussed and collectively adopted. Challenging them is a political act that is not trivial. In symbolic terms, what does it mean? That people who are not cis men are not welcome.

Of course, this doesn't take away all the work that's been done around it, but reading them, it's as if it's just an individual issue: "be nice, respect pronouns, consent, your boundaries, etc." This is obviously important, but it is as if the race or the accommodation (and the whole organization) were not in themselves major points in the inclusiveness claimed by the event.

We know that such an event requires an enormous amount of organization, time, resources, etc. We also know that it's easier to use a model and guidelines that have been in place by the International Federation of Bikes Messengers since 2018, rather than reinventing everything. The organization probably had to spend time and energy in the removal of a second category that has existed for 4 years.

The organizing team's energy is not unlimited, which makes us more critical of the choice to spend energy on deleting the women/trans/non-binary category, rather than doing nothing. We interpret this change in status as a sexist and transphobic decision that has not been subject to consultation with those affected. This fanzine aims to alert us to this choice, which is not mentioned anywhere in the communication, and which, however, affects us and makes our participation in this event invisible.

¹ 1 "Woman/trans/non binary" is a category open to all but cis men

² https://www.starbma.com/?page_id=345

At the beginning we came to meet people who share the same passions, the same activities and the same experiences. Today we come to clarify things, occupy the space and claim our legitimacy. We come here out of habit, pleasure, but also out of disappointment. We write this fanzine out of conviction, waiting for you (the organization and the cis bike dudes) to take immediate steps to include us in these events.

The need for a second category

Problems of a single category

Access to spaces is unequally distributed according to gender. Therefore, it is not enough to declare that an event is open and opposed to discrimination for a safe space to emerge (performativity of language has its limits). You don't revolutionize politics by pointing out that a category that claims to be open to everyone/mixed is in fact not so open. In short, **what you cis men call "open", we call a boys club**. And just because the open category isn't exclusively composed of cis men doesn't mean it can't produce boy club dynamics. The male interiors of races make us uncomfortable to participate. Challenging the notion of using categories to separate people is not done magically from above by decreeing that these dynamics no longer exist by removing all categories, because in effect, that just brings us back to a big boys club. Ultimately, a single category will not put everyone back on the same level as the organization claims. We know the depth of the subject as we live it on a daily basis and they tell you it's just going to be an opportunity to go backwards.

It's cringe to be *gender blind*

You see the white color blind people who claim that they don't see color, that they are universalists and that they don't know the difference. We agree that it's cringeworthy/depoliticizing and that it just serves to avoid questioning their own racism. Well, take cis men and listen to them talk about one category, that we won't see the differences, that everyone will be on the same level etc. and you get the same thing³: not questioning cissexism⁴. Yet, you apparently have no problem seeing the differences to misgender us. So why don't you probe your practices, before proposing improvements that revolutionize the revolution (if ever, double negatives are still a reactionary thing).

When trans people run away from the orga because it's wrong to remove categories, thinking that it will remove inequalities at the same time, it gives us a good red flag.

³ what is being compared here is the universalist discourse that ignores its own position but there is no equivalence between the two phenomena.

⁴ cissexism is an oppression system that views all people as their assigned gender or view trans people as inferior to cis people.

We take the liberty of softening our discourse with these terms to make it more understandable, but behind the cringe/laim, there are very real material conditions of existence at stake.

So the question arises, what do we do?

In other years there was the **Women/Trans/Non-Binary category**. **What people in this category have in common is that they are not welcome in the main category**. The strength of the Women/Trans/non-binary category is that it gives us the opportunity (but not the obligation) to be in a space that doesn't exclude us (or tries not to). Moreover, this category is not a simple supplement. Getting together with other chicks, trans and/or enby people has a special importance for us. When you break out of the current social norms, it's an opportunity to feel like a community.

We will now go through the different sexist or transphobic attacks/counter-arguments that would justify this lack of category.

Of course, this second category is not perfect, and there are other problems with it. But we will develop why the existence of the Women/Trans/non-binary category is better than nothing. In short, if you want to do better, then you have to do better, which means include people better. Removing a category doesn't help, on the contrary, it smoothes, homogenizes, and ultimately denies differences. The pseudo promises of the universalism of a single category are, for the moment, only a way of denying the problems of inclusiveness - all the more so when this choice is not made by the main people concerned.

A historical marginalization of women in sport

Today, according to a binary model, it is the gender or sex that separates the sports categories, but this was not always the case. The presence of women in sports competitions is recent. It is necessary to remember that before, we simply did not have the right to participate. The first modern womens' Olympic Games date from 1922. In cycling, the womens' Tour de France has only existed since 2022, and its route is much more modest than the one of men... not for lack of physical ability, but for lack of budget! "When women were accepted into competitive sport in the early 20th century, those who rivaled men in athletic ability or those whose appearance was too masculine were disqualified as threats to the gender order."⁵ In short, we see that the markers of what is accepted or not in sport have evolved and apparently, the Bernies want to evolve the sport of tomorrow by (re)making it a cis-male sport...

⁵ Athlètes transgenres féminines et sport d'élite : examen scientifique. Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (2021), p. 2.

Answers to transphobic attacks

What about trans people ? Don't panic (except for TERFs⁶), we are also here to educate and dispel doubts. So what could be the problem behind the fact that chicks/trans/non-binary people are grouped under the same category? None at first glance. Indeed, as the scientific literature explains, "since the early 20th century, policies in elite sport have contributed to the pathologization and control of women's bodies and the imposition of sexual dimorphism. There is, however, significant overlap across gender characteristics."⁷ But a reactionary wave of transphobia is now attacking trans women in sport, continuing the long tradition of controlling women's bodies in competitive sport. For example, at the WCMC, following the victory of a trans chick, transphobic comments were circulated. It is important here to respond to them, first by recalling the context in which the SUICMC takes place, the general context, as well as a thought exercise.

It's just a game bro', chill

First of all, it is important to remember that the people who participate in the event as well as the races themselves evolve in so-called "alternative" spheres, self-managed, etc. We are not at the Olympic Games, nor at the UCI, and not many people come in full lycra with a 15'000 bucks bike and a teambus to change the wheel in case of puncture. So here it is, we have a blast and we relax, ok we race if we like, but we are not doing urine tests before getting on our bikes (unless it's your kink). We're not here (at least not just) to be Swiss champions, but to share a space (even the roadies know we're here for fun, which is why they don't come). Please don't feel obliged to keep their state of mind alive in their absence). In short, given the setting where everyone is partying, whether or not there are physical differences does not seem to us to be a relevant element to exclude trans people.

Historical point

Beyond this point, one might ask what might be a relevant marker for separating people on a purely competitive level in a sports competition⁸. Before women entered competition, there were not the same social issues surrounding sport. Indeed, not so long ago, in the days of Pierre de Coubertin (an admirer of the Nazi regime), training was considered an artificial means of improving performance⁹. As such, it could be called doping. At the time, people did not want rich people to be beaten by people who could afford to train more than they could. That's why training was seen as a form of doping/cheating. It may sound completely ridiculous to us, but the

⁶ acronym of Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminist that are bastard and excluded trans woman from feminist struggles

⁷ Athlètes transgenres féminines et sport d'élite : examen scientifique. Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (2021), p. 6.

⁸ For more info check the Fanzine "Les arrières pensées réactionnaires du sport" de Frédéric Baillette.

⁹ Pociello C. (1999) Sport et sciences sociales. Paris, Vigot, p. 189

definition of doping is still nebulous in the 21st century. Patrick Laure, a physician specializing in doping, confirms that "there is no widely accepted definition of doping to date"¹⁰.

The rise of transphobic discourses

Today, transphobes are afraid that trans women will "steal" the place of cis women, doesn't that remind you a bit of the bourgeois of the end of the 19th century? In concrete terms, the extreme right actively relays transphobic moral panics under the guise of defending "real cis women", who would be victims of trans women; the participation of trans women representing in their eyes a form of cheating/doping. This is done, among other things, by over-mediating the victories of trans women, and by making their failures invisible. The height of hypocrisy, reactionaries are willing to be indignant if a trans woman is 1m90 tall compared to a cis woman of 1m60 to play basketball for example. On the other hand, for the same situation with the same height difference, they will not be indignant in the same way if it is two cis women. There are differences in judgment depending on whether the people are trans or not. A difference that translates into suspicion of cheating.

It is important to emphasize that the suspicion surrounding the participation of trans women and transfeminine people is not a simple biological question, nor is it a question of doping. **It is a deeply social and political issue. And like any social issue, the way we frame it is a determining factor in the analysis we propose, just as it reflects our political values/positionings.** Framing the issue of trans/enby girls' participation without ever taking into account their experiences and what they undergo is already transphobic in itself. Like training, transitions are now seen as illegitimate ways to increase one's chances in the event. However, one must be deeply ignorant of our transitions¹¹ (which are multiple!), and rely on transphobic framing to defend this kind of statement. What about cis chicks who have an "advantage" with higher testosterone levels (polycystic ovary syndrome)? There is no controversy about them. Why not? Precisely because of the transphobic framing, which considers trans people, and especially trans women as less legitimate than cis women.

Thought exer-cis-e¹²

Ok, a little thought exercise for people who are still holding out. Let's admit, even if it's false and a transphobic right-wing moral panic, that trans chicks are going to win everything in the female sports categories. We then accept that "males" have better abilities than "females". So if we don't create female categories, we accept that all women will lose. Following this reasoning, not creating a category even for cis women would be at least sexist. In this imaginary, by removing the

¹⁰ Déroche, S. & Bilard, J. (2008). Le dopage ou le sport sans corps. *Champ psychosomatique*, 51, 147-163. <https://doi.org/10.3917/cpsy.051.0147>

¹¹ For more info go check the Fanzine on cissexual privilege of Serano 2011.

¹² joke works better in french, sorry

Women/Trans/non-binary category, dear messenger, you are more likely to be beaten by a trans chick, are you willing to risk that? In short, it's a good way to eat your own tail or dick for cishet'.

All the more reason to defend an additional category. This is an issue that affects cis women as much as trans or non-binary people.

Conclusion: stop fake *queerfriendliness*

Stop the hypocrisy. Stop painting your fingernails and wearing fag earrings if it's to exclude us. Stop playing the profem' if it's just about racing among cis men. This community is just starting to open up and include chicks and trans/enby people and already the cis-sexist voices are starting to be heard.

Stop coming to our parties, and dancing to our music and dj sets if you exclude us from your events. No dolls¹³, no parties. You'll look pretty smart without anyone to set the mood in your boys club.

The need to take a stand

This appeal is not only addressed to trans people and/or chicks, it involves the whole community. Ignoring it, neglecting it, or acting as if it doesn't concern you IS a transphobic and misogynistic stance.

Intersectional Openness

The community is opening up a bit and that's good, but like other punk and anarchist communities, it's still very white and male. Hence the need to broaden the critique of inclusivity to include issues of race.

¹³ gorgeous trans woman

Anyway, feel free to remove this women/trans/enby category when you've overturned the gender order, but until then, and despite the problems it may have, thanks for reinstating it. <3

