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What #NoWomanEver Wants To Hear: The Social Construction of Corrective Facework After Street Harassment

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WHAT #NOWOMANEVER WANTS TO HEAR: THE SOCIAL
CONSTRUCTION OF CORRECTIVE FACEWORK AFTER
STREET HARASSMENT

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the social construction of women's corrective facework after experiencing gender based street harassment. A thematic analysis using open coding was used to explore, examine, and identify themes within the data. Three major themes were revealed in the data and they are 1) a resistance against a cycle of facework, 2) public spaces without accountability, and 4) disproportionate responses from men. In addition to the three themes, I will present an interpretation of Twitter as a public journal used to resist normative realities of gender based street harassment. These results are important to add to the limited research on the effects of gender based street harassment on women's lived experiences.

Dedication

This project is lovingly dedicated to every woman who has been followed, groped, spit on, cussed out, slut shamed, photographed without consent, and sexualized by a man. Your story is important and inspiring. Your feelings are valid. Together, we can change the narrative.

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

Violence against women is one of the most prevalent and complex social injustices our world faces today (García-Moreno, et al., 2015). The World Health Organization claims it is a "major public health problem" (WHO, 2017). Often times this seemingly innocuous behavior is belittled and dismissed in our culture because women's issues inherently have a lower importance and priority than men. Patriarchal societies put the needs of men before women (Dalla, 2015; García-Moreno et al., 2015[1]). While violence against women can manifest itself into many different forms (e.g., forcing sexual relations, controlling economic resources, manipulation, and physical beatings), this study will focus on gender based street harassment (GBSH) as one such manifestation (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998; Aghakhani et al. 2015).

Gender based street harassment is an understudied and ignored form of violence against women (Vera-Gray, 2016). Eighty -five percent of women report they have experienced GBSH (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008). Researchers propose a myriad of reasons why this kind of harassment has not been researched as much as other forms of violence against women, such as domestic violence. Some of the reasons are a lack of agreement on naming and conceptualizing the phenomenon, cultural normalization of the occurrence, trivialization, and an unequal distribution of power between men and women (Bowman, 1993; Gardner, 1995; Tuerkheimer, 1997; Lenton, Smith, Fox, & Morra, 1999; Vera-Gray, 2016). It is important to dedicate attention and resources to this injustice not only to grow the relatively minimal body of knowledge, but also to provide legitimacy for the individual women whose daily lives are affected by these seemingly small attacks on them. One study of 293 racially diverse women discovered 100% of the participants reported being the victim GBSH at one time (Gardner, 1995).

Occurrences of everyday sexism cannot be ignored or overlooked because when they are, women's issues become trivial (Sullivan, Lord & McHugh, 2010). Every person has the right to move freely through their lives without fear of rape, assault, harassment, or shame. Previous research across disciplines alludes to GBSH without labeling it as such, which leads to the assumption this form of violence has implications outside of feminist activism (Logan, 2015). GBSH inherently makes life more difficult for women, contributing to an already long list of inconveniences and objectifications women experience.

Through a critical feminist perspective and the social construction of language, this study examines the use of the Twitter hashtag #NoWomanEver as a coping strategy for women subjected to gender based street harassment. The paper proceeds with a discussion of gendered speech, online activism, and the role of facework in response to gender based street harassment. Finally, the paper ends with a discussion of the methods section, an analysis of the dataset (using a thematic analysis approach and open coding) and a discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

Critical Feminist Theory

Critical theory is an overarching school of thought in the social sciences with consideration of culture, power relations, and ideologies (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011). At its core, the critical tradition acknowledges the element of power relations and inequities in every interaction and moves in a direction towards equity (Craig, 1999). Critical theory challenges the validity of current social structures which have been long accepted as the norm. Some examples of these structures are institutional racism, patriarchy, and capitalism (Craig, 1999). Mumby (2013) suggests the critical tradition shifts attention toward power and control. One arm of critical theory is concerned specifically with a feminist perspective on social issues, requiring researchers to understand the perspective of the marginalized person and take into consideration their experience as the oppressed (Lenz, 2004). A feminist perspective prioritizes the belief that "systems of privilege and oppression profoundly shape individual lives and are internalized by individuals" (Launius & Hassel, 2014 p. 72). Members of the dominant culture are afforded certain unearned privileges. Privilege and oppression are manifested in several aspects of the way a patriarchal culture attempts to (often with success), exert control over women's choices and sexuality (Launius & Hassel, 2014).

A discussion of privilege is especially pertinent when investigating street harassment. The ability to walk around in a public space free from harassment is a privilege in and of itself. Feminist critical perspective facilitates the conversation of privilege as well as acknowledging its integral role in shaping an individual's experiences. Feminist scholars create strategic projects and movements that seek to eliminate the unequal gender system as well as other systems of oppression that intersect race, gender, class, and sexual orientation (Harding, 2004). In order to

understand more about how an individual's reality is shaped by their experience, the discussion of social constructionism is necessary.

Social Construction of Reality

Social constructionism provides a broad, overarching paradigm of how to view and understand the processes of communication across many disciplines (Pearce & Foss, 1987). Rooted in the belief that language will shape reality, social constructionism deviates from scientific and positivistic approaches to understanding communication (Pearce & Foss, 1987)**.** Under this paradigm, we actively construct our everyday life (Gubrium & Holstein, 2008). That being said, the words themselves are not enough to shape reality. Ongoing dialogue gives words their meanings and those meanings shape our reality (Shotter & Gergen, 1994). According to Rorty (1989), our interactions make our language. Rorty's (1989) perspective on language is empowering since individuals have more control over our reality than we realize, proving one person can make a difference. In order to make a difference, however, the distinct characteristics of language must be understood.

From a social constructionist's perspective, language gets its meaning from interactions (Rorty, 1989). Those interactions shape our understanding of the world and the words we use to describe it. Our current patriarchal society emphasizes the importance of the desirable figure for a woman. Her autonomy and individual value are diminished because men have the perceived right to speculate and judge her body. The foundation of our patriarchal society and its unequal distribution of rights, crafts an environment where unfair treatment of women in public space is accepted and encouraged (Vera-Gray, 2016).

Social constructionism has been applied to gendered language by a number of researchers (Dutta, 2015; Knudson- Martin & Mahoney, 1998;). Gendered language permeates through

every interaction and can have serious implications. Stereotypes and judgements are associated with gender because of the language used to describe it (Dutta, 2015). Another distinguishing feature of the social constructionist's perspective recognizes power differences, seeking to move towards a more equal society (Mckerrell, 2016). According to Stewart (1995), our social identities become real when we use language. For example, women who experience gender based street harassment are shaping their reality when they choose to respond to their harasser. Depending on the response, the implications can be face enhancing or diminishing, making the response of critical concern. Gender based street harassment continues to affect a majority of women with significant intended and unintended consequences, so it is valuable to turn our attention to how women are responding to it (Fairchild, Rudman, 2008; Vera-Gray, 2016). Social constructionism boils down to the willingness to question our current accepted ideology of reality. As sophist Gorgias says, "Nothing eternal and unchanging and objective exists".

Gendered speech

Language creates and reflects the human experience (Mercadal, 2017). As a result, it represents a society's ideological views on gender, class, and sexuality. Since language creates an individual's reality, stereotypes are internalized by members of certain marginalized populations. As our language creates a disadvantaged reality for certain people, oppression is consequently perpetuated and reinforced. Particularly relevant to this study, are gender role stereotypes which are defined as society's shared beliefs and expectations of a person based on their outward expression of gender identity (Eagly & Mladinic, 1989).

In order to begin to remedy a cycle of oppressive language, it is important to first discuss the socialized differences in communication between men and women. One explanation of these communication differences includes two main distinctions; agency and communion (Bakan,

1966). Agency refers to self-assertion and communion refers to connection with others. The difference between these two dimensions is revealed in their profitability; agency is focused on self-profit, while communion focuses on other- profit (Cisłak, 2014). Qualities such as competence, tenacity, and efficiency are often linked to agency, while warmth, trustworthiness, and interdependence are often linked to communion (Eisenchlas, 2013; Peeters, 1992). The language alone used to describe the stereotypical dimensions of gender communication reinforces the inherent superiority of men and the subordination of women (Eisenchlas, 2013). It is no surprise that the more these traits are used, the more individuals will internalize them and accept them as their truth and reality. This is because self- identity is shaped by how others see us and also shapes how an individual sees others (Davidson, et al., 2015; Kinch, 1963). Therefore, women who adopt a negative self-identity will suffer a negative impact on their view of other people and a general negative outlook on life (Davidson, et. al., 2015; Lindner, Tantleff-Dunn, & Jentsch, 2012).

In addition to a negative self- identity, agency versus communion reveals its pervasiveness in the ways it puts women at a disadvantage (e.g., home, workplace, conflict management). When participating in conflict with a man, a woman is at a disadvantage from the start as a result of her learned behaviors as well as her predisposition to use the acceptable communication style she was taught. Self-identity and conflict are not the only contexts where socialized language can negatively impact a woman's life. Language also constrains women in regards to what they may say, the way they may say it, and the consequences of what they say (Kramarae, 2005). Additionally, socially acceptable language practices were created and maintained by men in order to express their experiences and feelings; therefore, women are constrained by the language because it was created to serve a different community (Kramarae,

2005). The way the dominant community speaks about the marginalized community can shape society's views about the marginalized, making harassment especially pervasive. Gender based street harassment (GBSH) is one-way language is used to oppress certain communities.

Gender Based Street Harassment (GBSH).

Researchers and feminist activists have struggled to agree on a definition for GBSH (Vera-Gray, 2016). Although there are many differences in the definition, there are some key elements woven throughout the majority of definitions. Those key elements of GBSH are 1) unwanted attention, 2) verbal and nonverbal harassments, 3) the target of harassment is a woman, and 4) the interaction deviates from what a normal relationship between two strangers on the street is considered to be (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008; Gardner, 1995; Kearl, 2010; Vera-Gray, 2016). While harassment can and does happen to men, it is significantly underreported and undocumented. For the purposes of this paper, only women's experiences with GBSH and their coping will be explored. GBSH also consistently happens in a public space (Paludi, & Denmark, 2010). Finally, the nature of the harassment is degrading, humiliating, intimidating, and possibly threatening (Bowman, 1993). While one exact definition and conceptualization has not been agreed on, understanding these elements gives researchers, activists, and readers a strong foundation and framework to begin considering how complicated and multidimensional GBSH is. Other phrases used to refer to GBSH are street harassment and stranger harassment (Vera-Gray, 2016).

Types of gender based street harassment

GBSH can manifest itself in many forms. As previously mentioned, the severity and danger of these manifestations vary and fall somewhere on the continuum of violence against women. This paper will discuss the most prominent forms of street harassment that women

report. The most heavily reported non-verbal harassments are stares, whistles, being followed for an extended period of time, and groping (Davidson, et al, 2015; Fairchild & Rudman, 2008; Sullivan, Lord & McHugh, 2010; Vera-Gray, 2016). Sexual innuendos, catcalling, use of derogatory language, and comments about a woman's body and/or her body parts are all reported frequently as verbal harassments (Davidson, et al, 2015; Fairchild & Rudman, 2008; Sullivan, et al, 2010; Vera-Gray, 2016). Although there are many reports about the different types of street harassment, there are very few studies that aim to discover the reasons why men are participating in this type of violence against women. If we understand men's motivations, activists will be better prepared to create intervention and resistance messages. One barrier to acquiring this information is social desirability. In other words, people prefer not to self-report their negative actions because they want to appear socially desirable (Kahn, Ratan & Williams, 2014).

Justifications of GBSH according to men

The justifications men report for sexually harassing a woman on the street range from entertainment to human nature to a perception that they are giving the woman what she clearly wanted (Logan, 2015; Quinn, 2002). Overall, men's rationalizations can be categorized into two groups; male bonding and control (Logan, 2015). One landmark study found the majority of men reported participating in GBSH for comradery and a cure for boredom, while others, 15%, explicitly reported wanting to anger or humiliate the woman (Benard, & Schlaffer, 1981). Another study sought to discover the differences in men's and women's perceptions of street harassment and the perpetrator's intention (Packer, 1986). Their findings reveal both men and women overwhelmingly perceive the harasser's intentions are "complimentary."

This is interesting because even though women are angry and offended when a man calls out to them on the street, they still give their harasser the benefit of the doubt. This could be

explained by socially constructed attributes of the desirable woman, i.e. not getting angry, keeping the peace, not challenging the norm, and putting others' needs above their own (Vera-Gray, 2016). Men reported they believed women felt complimented after an unwanted comment, while women report almost never feeling complimented, rather they felt angry and offended. This reveals the disparity between men and women's perceptions of what women want.

In order to maintain a more powerful position in society, men objectify women and over sexualize parts of their body in order to reinforce the norm that women's bodies are created for men's pleasure and entertainment (Vera-Gray, 2016). Because women are being treated as entertainment and dehumanized, it is important to discover exactly how this is affecting women in their everyday lives. The implications are discussed in the next section.

Effects of gender based street harassment

The effects of gender based street harassment vary in the harm and severity it causes. These reactions can be classified into three main categories, physical, psychological, and societal. Most commonly, women report their physical reactions to GBSH are irregular breathing, shaking, dizziness, numbness, (Landrine, et al., 1995). Most women report feeling angry, uncomfortable, vulnerable, unsafe, humiliated, embarrassed, shame, objectified, and depressed after experiencing GBSH (Davidson, et al, 2016; Gardner, 1995; Lenton, Smith, Fox & Morra, 1999; Logan, 2015; Macmillan, Neirobisz & Welsh, 2000). Women also report having their movement in public restricted, because they choose a certain path in hopes of decreasing the chances of sexual violence or harassment (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008; Riger & Gordon, 1981). This is a result of a society which teaches women from a young age to adopt a constant fear of rape (Pryor & Hughes, 2013).

Davidson and colleagues (2016) surveyed 500 undergraduate women to investigate if perceptions of safety can explain the link between street harassment and general anxiety. They found there was a negative correlation between a woman's perceived safety and her anxiety. In other words, when a woman perceives her safety as low, her anxiety increases. There is a clear demand for more research about this subject because women not only generally experience more anxiety than men, they internalize their anxiety at higher rates in order to avoid sounding like they are complaining (Davidson, et. al., 2016). Often accompanying anxiety is depression, self-harm, poor performance at work and home, and eating disorders (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008; Holman, Johnson & Lucier, 2013; Jackson, et al., 2014). It is clear the implications of GBSH are not isolated in one exact moment, but rather create a sustained stress that has negative health, both physical and mental, outcomes.

Finally, GBSH has societal repercussions as well. When a woman experiences street harassment of any kind, her natural response is to avoid challenging the perpetrator and rather passively ignore the incident, internalizing the objectification and self-blaming (Hill & Fischer, 2008). Once the woman accepts the objectification of her body, she will then begin to view her body as an object as well because self- identity is shaped by how others see us (Kinch, 1963; Davidson, et al, 2015). This negative view of self creates high body monitoring in women and hypersensitivity to comparing their bodies to another woman's (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008; Lindner, et al., 2012). Since our views of other people are impacted by our views of ourselves, women who adopt a negative self-identity will inevitably have negative, objectifying views of other women (Davidson, et al, 2015; Lindner, et al., 2012). In a culture where women are already pitted against each other on the media, competition between women is reinforced, perpetuating a culture even more unsupportive of women and their unique struggles.

Objectification Theory

Objectification theory can be used as a possible lens for understanding GBSH experiences. This theory guides many of the research studies mentioned in this paper. Developed in 1997, objectification theory provides a framework to understand the negative consequences of being a woman in a culture that over sexualizes female bodies and constantly objectifies them (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Notably, objectification theory strives to connect the experiences of women to a wide array of mental health issues in women and explains how internalizing sexual objectification and self- blame are the moderating factors (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). When a woman experiences an external sexual event such as catcalling, sexual suggestions, and comments about her body, she then internalizes the objectification, shaping the way she views her body and monitors it (Davidson, et. al., 2015). When a man sexually harasses a woman on the street, he is reinforcing a societal norm which says women's bodies and body parts are in existence for their enjoyment and take precedence over the woman's mind and sense of self (Davidson, et. al., 2015). Since sexual harassment on the street is strongly correlated with self-objectification, an extensive understanding of this theory is essential to any future research (Hill & Fischer, 2008). Objectification theory can also be used to explain an all too common manifestation of a larger scale societal problem known as internalized misogyny. It is a component of internalized misogyny because they both reflect a superficial, objectifying cultural view of a woman's body and her body parts.

Internalized misogyny

Misogyny is a hatred and devaluation of women. Internalized misogyny, like objectification theory, has limited research. It is a phenomenon where groups or individuals internalize negative stereotypes and hatred as a part of their identity (Daleo & Riggs, 1996).

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Similar to the internalization of an objectifying view of one's self, internalized misogyny is used to explain the internalization of stereotypes placed on a woman based on physical appearance and how women represent the stereotype after internalizing it. Cumulative sexist events, such as GBSH, are connected to internalized misogyny (Szymanski, Gupta, Carr & Stewart, 2009). One way to conceptualize internalized misogyny is to consider it a gendered form of hegemony. A common manifestation of internalized misogyny is a passive acceptance of one's traditional and socially acceptable gender roles coupled with a general denial or unawareness of sexist events that individual women experience (Bargad & Hyde, 1991). In order to spread awareness of internalized misogyny and everyday sexism, online activists have taken to social media address it.

Face and Facework

Goffman (1967) coined the term "face" when referring to one's situated public identity, or social value, during a face-to-face interaction. We can understand face in terms of one's public self-image, social desires, and attributes (Arundale, 2009). In other words, a person's face represents the public image they want to portray and influences every interpersonal encounter (Goffman, 1967). According to Cupach and Metts (1994), an individual's face can enhance and diminish. It enhances when a situation goes far better than expected and can diminish if the interaction goes worse than expected. An individual can also strategically employ communication tactics which challenge, support, or create someone's face (Holtgraves, 1992). These communication tactics refer to what Goffman (1967) describes as "facework" which can be preventive, such as avoiding an encounter which might threaten one's face, or corrective, which takes place after an event that threatens one's face (Holtgraves, 1992). There are two important qualifications of face. First, face exists within the encounter, not in the individuals

(Goffman, 1992). While a person's identity resides in the person outside of an interaction, face can only exist within an interaction. The whole idea behind face and facework emphasizes the responses of and reactions to another person.

The second qualification of face is that identity and face differ. Face represents a condition under which interaction takes place, while identity remains a constant condition of self (Goffman, 1967). Brown and Levinson extended Goffman's (1967) findings of face and facework. They reached beyond face as a linear concept, revealing two different types of face; positive face and negative face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Their argument posits that an individual claims certain desirable attributes or rights during an interaction. Negative face refers to an individual who wants to claim autonomy and freedom from imposition, while positive face refers to an individual who wishes to claim positive social attributes and approval of others (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In 2018, Hastings and Bell further extended Brown and Levinson's (1987) positive face typology with three additional component of positive face: character, social, and status face threat.

Character face refers to being perceived as someone who has high integrity. This can be threatened by calling someone's character into question through an accusation (Hastings & Bell, 2018, p. 100). The next type of positive face is social face which refers to a desire to demonstrate appropriate manners and social conduct. This positive face can be threatened by tripping while you walk down the street (Hastings & Bell, 2018 p. 102). Finally, status face refers to one's acknowledged status as a person and this can be threatened through dehumanization and defacement (Hastings & Bell, 2018 p. 103).

Negative face and street harassment

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), negative face refers to autonomy, rights as an individual, need for free access to their belongings and territory. In order for someone to accommodate another's negative face, they must avoid imposing on their resources, avoid intruding, protect their privacy, and overall actively try and support their independence and autonomy (Holtgraves, 1992). According to Cupach and Metts (1994), threats to an individual's negative face tend to be especially harmful when compared to threats to positive face. This can be due to the fact that threats to someone's privacy and independence will yield a stronger negative reaction than threats to their perceived public acceptance (i.e. positive face.)

A victim of street harassment will experience a negative face threat from a GBSH request such as, "Damn, girl why don't you come home with me tonight?" This request immediately restricts the victim's desire to be free of imposition and perceived control over her space. If the harasser follows the victim or blocks her path on the sidewalk, her negative face becomes threatened because her movement appears restricted and she will likely choose another path to lower the chance of sexual assault (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008; Riger & Gordon, 1981). Gender based street harassment remains among some of the most intimately offensive negative face threats women can experience. It strips a woman of her power and value as a person, reducing her to a sexual object which exists purely for the use of her body and body parts (Vera- Gray, 2016). A negative face threat, such as GBSH, has several implications to the victim as well (e.g., lower perceived safety, irregular breathing, shaking, dizziness, and increased heart rate) (Landrine, et al., 1995). The aforementioned psychological and physiological responses to GBSH are a result of threats to the victim's autonomy and privacy (i.e. negative face threats.)

Positive face and attacking the attacker

Positive face needs refer to a person's valued social image and acceptance (Cupach & Metts, 1994). Combining Tracy and Tracy's (1998), Lim and Bowers' (1991), and Hastings and Bell's (2018) concepts of face and face attacking, sarcastic and ironic responses made on Twitter are one way of manifesting their findings. For example, a woman will describe the type of harassment she experienced and follow it with some kind of romantic relationship proposal to ironically point out that a harassment will not get a woman to fall in love with you. By doing this, the women are threatening the harasser's competence as well as their social and character face since they do not appear socially desirable after the humiliation of their undesirable character and actions. In order to manage these two situated identities (i.e. positive face and negative face), one must participate in corrective facework (e.g., excuses, justifications, downplaying the threat).

Politeness Theory

Politeness theory extends facework, maintaining that impolite speech can potentially threaten someone's face (Chen & Abedin, 2014). When someone does not accommodate or show regard for someone's face, they are participating in face threatening acts (FTA) (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Cupach & Metts, 1994). These FTAs can vary in severity and consequence and can be measured by 'weightiness' which attempts to determine the severity of the threat to face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). For example, a friend asking for money is considered a negative FTA. The amount of money they request can determine how threatening it is to an individual's negative face. According to the weightiness scale, the social distance between the interactants, the power difference between listener and speaker, and the ranking of the face threat will determine the severity of a FTA (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Weightiness may assist in

discovering the level of the threat to face; however, O'Driscoll (2007) argues the weightiness formula does not work and the threat to face should be measured solely by the participants' reactions. Regardless of such skepticism, Brown and Levinson's (1987) concept of weightiness remains a widely accepted measure of FTA.

Mock politeness as a means of corrective facework

Mock politeness refers to one of Culpeper's (1996) strategies to attack face and disrupt social harmony. Some researchers equate mock politeness to sarcasm, however, Taylor (2015) posits mock im/politeness cannot be equated to sarcasm/irony "because the label of sarcasm is simultaneously too broad, because behaviours labelled as sarcastic do not always perform mock politeness, and too narrow because there are mock polite behaviours which would not be labelled as sarcastic in either the lay or academic/theoretical senses" (p. 1).

There is an important distinction to be made between mock politeness and mock impoliteness. Leech (1983), the father of mock im/politeness, states mock politeness is a friendly way of being intentionally offensive (irony) while mock impoliteness is an offensive way of being intentionally friendly (banter). Specifically, when expressing mock politeness, there is an attitude of disdainful contempt (Wilson, 2013). Mock politeness serves a dual purpose of defense and attack in order to correct one's face. It can also provide an efficient and effective tool for attacking someone's positive face by belittling and humiliating them. Since face is the chief driving force behind im/politeness, the relationship between mock politeness and face threatening acts is significant (Brown & Levinson, 1987). As a result of the relationship between face and politeness, face enhancement and face saving (also known as facework) are particularly important when understanding why an individual chooses to use mock politeness (Taylor, 2015).

Gender Differences in Facework

Chen and Abedin (2014) sought to investigate the gender differences between men and women and how they respond to threats to positive face on social media. They found when men's positive face was threatened, their retaliation was heightened compared to women's responses. They also found there was a difference in how men and women responded to different types of positive face threats (i.e. rejection and criticism). Rejection and criticism are both considered threats to positive face because they challenge a person's public image, therefore, making them appear less desirable (Chen & Abedin, 2014). These results reflect a larger societal pattern of men reacting more aggressively to threats, confirming that people internalize their gender and tailor their facework to it. Literature on face threatening gender differences is few and far between, which reveals a gap in the literature. More work needs to be done in this area of rich, unexplored data. Now that I have elaborated my theoretical apparatus, I will now move on to the online context for this study.

Online Activism

Today's current dependence on and access to internet technology (IT) permeates through just about every aspect of life, introducing a myriad of new opportunities to reach mass audiences for social participation (Rotman, et al., 2011). Due to the advent of IT, a new wave of contemporary social movements are being generated (Carty, 2010). When it comes to activism, IT has provided new capabilities for organizations to reach their target audience as well as share information, mobilize groups of people, increase engagement, and create highly effective, large-scale grassroot movements (Bennett & Segerberg, 2011; Brunsting & Postmes, 2001; Carty, 2010).

Online activism, sometimes referred to as cyberactivism, is any social activism which relies on the use of the internet (McCaughy & Ayers, 2003). Current research reveals the relationship between online activism literature and new social movement (NSM) literature. Like online activism, NSM are noteworthy for their unique ability to "organize informally, develop and use non-conventional methods and update pre-existing networks to channel emerging ideas" (Morador & Vásquez, 2016 p. 404). NSM and online activism create a space where the mediation of the internet allows members of a social movement to detach from their previously limiting and predictable demographic behaviors and expand their involvement with different social movements (Brunsting & Postmes, 2001; Johnston, Gusfield, Johnston & Laraña, 1994). For example, as a result of their lower power status in American culture, women tend to shy away from face to face confrontational situations and garner their social media anonymity (Eisenchlas, 2013).

Online activism and NSM challenge the restrictive dominant culture's voice and norms (Carty, 2010). From a critical theory perspective, online activism inherently focuses on strategic ways to extend the invitation to minorities and understands social movements in terms of power and control. Although online activism has paved the way for grassroots movements to experience unprecedented reach as well as an inclusive approach to social movements, some researchers and activists question its effectiveness (Cabrera, Matias & Montoya, 2017). While the opinions of the effectiveness of online activism remain divided, online activism has undeniably paved the way for social justice activists to raise awareness and create a space where engagement and involvement is not only encouraged, but inevitable (Biddix, 2010). Fostering a new, diverse generation of activists, online activism extends the invitation to groups of people who have previously been disenfranchised such as women, minorities, and people with disabilities.

(Cabrera, Matias & Montoya, 2017). On its own, online activism may fall short in certain arenas, however if coupled with actionable strategies it can create a powerhouse of change and involvement (Biddix, 2010). Sasha Weiss, a story editor at *New York Times* magazine, says this about Twitter:

> "There is something about the fact that Twitter is primarily
>
> designed for speech- for short strong, declarative utterance- that
>
> makes it an especially powerful vehicle for activism, a place of
>
> liberation. Short and strong messages found on Twitter create
>
> meaningful conversations. Ironically, Twitter was not created with
>
> the intention to create meaningful conversations. Rather it was
>
> created for the simple purpose of sharing social messages."

Twitter

Founded in 2006, Twitter is a worldwide microblogging social media platform. Twitter has over 330 million active users each month, according to the Twitter "about" page as of April 2017 (Twitter, 2017). With over 330 million monthly active users, Twitter has rapidly transformed from a quick way to disseminate short messages to friends and family to a worldwide powerhouse platform that has profound consequences. The game was truly changed in August of 2006 when Twitter played a crucial role in the San Francisco earthquake. Users were accessing Twitter for real time updates and have two-way conversations about the natural disaster (Skemp, 2017). Before this event, people relied solely on the news and word of mouth to acquire this kind of important information. Over the past decade, Twitter has revolutionized the way people use and interact with each other on social media, serving as socio-cultural touchstones for news and messaging (Skemp, 2017).

In addition to providing easily accessible, real time updates to large publics, Twitter is used in public education across the world. Students and teachers consider Twitter to have educational benefits (Tur, Marín & Carpenter, 2017). Twitter is an exceptional tool for collecting data with an average of 6,000 Tweets per second, over 500 million Tweets per day, and the accessibility of data is unmatched (Sayce, 2016). There are millions of answers to our everyday questions that can be found on Twitter. For example, Wang, Chen, Thirunarayan, and Sheth, (2012) harnessed the power of Twitter to investigate users' emotion identification by analyzing over 2.5 million Tweets using algorithms and hashtags. Without Twitter, collecting that amount of data would be near impossible and very costly. Therefore, it is apparent how Twitter can be used for much more than creating short messages to friends and family. One significant way Twitter could be used is for social activism, referred to as "hashtivism."

Hashtivism

Hashtivism is online activism through the use of hashtags (Blanco & Metcalfe 2017). It provides a platform and a vehicle for activist groups and movements to gain traction, build, and voice their grievances to broad audiences. Most recently, the response to systemic racism and police brutality has created the world wide movement Black Lives Matter. One component of this movement is the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter which has resonated with millions of people. Through the use of hashtivism, online movements are able to create a public discourse that reaches audiences across state and national boundaries (Blanco & Metcalfe, 2017). Particularly useful for grassroots campaigns, hashtivism can be a no cost, low barrier alternative to traditional print and media material (Castro, 2016). Skeptical activists have spoken out against hashtivism, claiming it is a lazy form of activism with no real, substantive change (Boykoff, 2012). These skeptics have coined the term "slacktivism" to refer to online activists.

Slacktivism

 In reference to Millennial activists' use of online activism, Malcolm Gladwell (2010) penned his argument against online activism in an article in *The New Yorker* claiming it "makes it easier for activists to express themselves, and harder for that expression to have any impact" (paragraph 32). The term slacktivism has become popular in recent years, referring to the seemingly passive approach to online activism. Some argue that online activism provides a lackluster response to social injustices. As Christensen (2011) argues, slacktivism includes online political activities that have no significant or tangible impact on actual political outcomes, rather they simply serve the user by making them feel good about what they are sharing on social media.

The hashtag #NoWomanEver is an example of hashtivism. Users tweet out their GBSH experiences by recalling the event followed by a sarcastic, snarky love story or mock politeness.

RQ 1: In what ways is #NoWomanEver used as form of resisting normative realities?

RQ 2: How are women using Twitter to socially construct corrective facework after gender based street harassment?

CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Method

Qualitative methodology is a non-linear and reflexive approach to data analysis which seeks to understand phenomena within a certain context (Hoepfl, 1997; Khandkar, 2009). It refers to any kind of research findings derived from a method without using statistical procedures (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Providing the researcher with rich data to describe a phenomenon, qualitative methodology should be employed in order to gather the richest possible meaning behind the data. While quantitative methods test for reliability and validity, qualitative methodology tests trustworthiness through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Otani, 2017). Qualitative methodology is appropriate for this study because the analysis of the Tweets requires a holistic approach in order to understand themes and interpret what they mean. A quantitative method might count the presence or absence of certain words/ criteria; however, it would not be able to grasp the overall themes and interpret those results appropriately. The qualitative method that is used in this study is a thematic analysis.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a qualitative method used to find patterns or themes within a certain data set and translate those patterns to the lay audience (Boyatzis, 2017; Miller, 2016). Unique to thematic analysis is its independence from any one theoretical framework which provides researchers with the flexibility to apply whatever paradigm they see fit in their study. The first step in any thematic analysis regardless of paradigm is to immerse yourself in the data. For this study, I read and reread the Tweets from women using #NoWomanEver multiple times and gave

myself time to mull over what I had read in order to feel comfortable with the data before making any assumptions. Once the data is fully understood and internalized by the researcher, themes and categories will begin to reveal themselves from the data through annotation and highlighting specific aspects of the data and drawing conclusions. There are two levels at which themes can be identified. The first level is the manifest level which refers to themes found by directly observing the data, and the second level is the latent level which refers to the underlying phenomena (Boyatzis, 1998). This study employs the manifest level of thematic analysis. Once the level of thematic analysis is identified and the data is familiar, the researcher may begin the coding process. There are different kinds of coding processes, but this study uses the open coding process.

Open coding

One way to accomplish a thematic analysis is through open coding which refers to labeling different concepts and developing categories based on the properties and dimensions of the data (Khandkar, 2009). During the open coding stage of the analysis, researchers are required to ask questions such as what, where, when, how, etc. and make comparisons in order to develop categories that are exhaustive (Pandit, 1996). Essentially, open coding breaks down the data into mutually exclusive units of meaning so that they can be organized and categorized properly to reveal the overarching meaning (Moghaddam, 2006).

Tweet mining

Text mining is a research technique used to extract information from large sets of data in order to answer questions and find similar concepts (Al-Daihani & Abrahams, 2016). Employing the text mining technique is becoming increasingly popular especially when working with a

dataset extracted from Twitter in industries such as health science, education, and business (Sarker, et al., 2015).

Dataset

Twitter's algorithm yielded the top results from the specified criteria of the search. From that initial search of #NoWomanEver, a sample of 250 tweets between 2016 and 2017 of were selected, screen shot, and pasted into a word document. After 250 Tweets, there were more news articles and secondary sources covering the same handful of Tweets which were not considered part of the dataset. There were multiple Twitter searches that took place over the period of three months. This will aggregate experiences from a diverse population which would be limited if there were more conditions in the sampling process. The only criteria for the population was that the Twitter users must be women referring to harassment by a man, and they must use the hashtag #NoWomanEver. The hashtag has been sporadically used over the past three years according to a CBS news report (Gunaratna, 2016).

The summer of 2016 presented a spike in engagement with the hashtag #NoWomanEver after a woman from Atlanta began using the Tweet in response to her experiences and the experiences of other women on her social media. After seeing how dismissive the men were towards women who spoke out against street harassment, she felt compelled to do something. Her response served as a springboard for the #NoWomanEver movement. A movement, or social movement, can be understood as a social process that includes social actors that have a shared identity and engage in collective action to accomplish goal that is in clear opposition of another entity (Diani & Ron, 1992). While it is difficult to pinpoint the exact genesis of the hashtag, it was summer of 2016 when it gained influential traction. Since then, the hashtag has proven a valuable predecessor to the continued revival of other campaigns such as the #MeToo hashtivism

which brings awareness to the frequency of sexual assault as well as the #EverdaySexism movement which sought to bring awareness to the normalized and mundane acts of sexism women experience every day.

Process of Analysis

The current study employs a thematic analysis to analyze 250 Tweets containing the hashtag #NoWomanEver resulting in 56 pages of data. Braun and Clarke (2006) reveal inductive thematic analyses provide the researcher with the luxury of not forcing the data into preexisting categories. By employing an inductive approach, I allowed the data to reveal the themes. This thematic analysis offers the most appropriate lens to analyze the data set because if I were to have preexisting categories or themes, the richness of the data would be compromised since I would be forcing them into categories that may not be as appropriate. After deciding what my data set would be and my method to analyze it, I began collecting the Tweets and putting them into a word document. I collected 250 Tweets that included the hashtag #NoWomanEver. Even though the responses are limited to 140 characters, there are a variety of themes which can be drawn from this data set.

Once I obtained the data, I spent a considerable amount of time engaged in a close reading taking notes in the margin of the word document. I looked for any recurring themes or repetitive words and marked them as such (Owen, 1984). After annotating the data, I went through and re read the Tweets for a quality check to make sure the themes I chose were inclusive and exhaustive.

CHAPTER FOUR ANALYSIS

The purpose of this thesis was to explore how women socially construct corrective facework after experiencing gender based street harassment. A thematic analysis using open coding was used to explore, examine, and identify themes within the data. This approach to the data analysis afforded me the opportunity to understand the rich and complex experiences of every day women who experience GBSH. Through their stories on Twitter, women were able to share their experiences and begin to create a shared meaning and socially construct corrective facework. The thematic analysis resulted in three major themes. These major themes included a resistance against cycle of facework, public spaces without accountability, and disproportionate responses from men. In the following sections, I will discuss each major theme and provide examples to contextualize them.

Major Themes

After analyzing the data, several themes were identified. The first theme is a resistance against a cycle of facework which explains the cyclical cause and effect relationship between face threatening acts and corrective facework during and after street harassment. The second theme is the lack of accountability in public spaces. Next, public journal used by women as a means of coping with their street harassment experiences. The final major theme that emerged from data was disproportionate responses from men when they were rejected by the women being harassed.

Resistance against cycle of facework

The first major theme from the tweets was a resistence against a cycle of facework that revealed itself in the data**.** Each part of the cycle has a cause and effect relationship with the

subsequent stage, ending where it began. Only when harassment is non-existent, which is not

likely, will the cycle end. Another way the cycle may end, or possibly change, is if women

employ other corrective facework actions other than non- face-to-face, which might interrupt the

cycle. I will use the following example from Steph to explain the cycle of facework in more

detail.

> "When you walked by me and "accidently" grope my chest and
>
> then pull a creepy smile, I knew you had to be mine
>
> #NoWomanEver"

Beginning with the act of harassment, the 'accidental' groping, Steph's negative face is

threatened because her freedom from imposition is compromised. After that experience she

tweets out, recalling the event in a public forum seeking social support, raising awareness and

demonstrating resistance towards normative realities. Her tweets consist of an account of the

harassment followed by some sarcastic, snarky "love story" that came from their sexual

harassment experience. She claims he had to be hers, insinuating that his groping her chest made

her realize that they were clearly meant to be in a relationship. Since there is usually no response

from women, possibly due to the disproportionate responses from men (see theme 3), the societal

norm of a man's need to protect his masculinity is reinforced, which leads back to the

harassment. Although she does threaten his positive face, it is not face to face.

In an attempt to combat the continuous cycle of facework, women tweet out their

experience threaten men's positive face and take action as opposed to passively accepting this

treatment. As mentioned before, GBSH is a threat to women's negative face since it is imposing

on their freedom to move around a public space without imposition. As a result, they respond

with mock approval and mock politeness. This sarcastic response is a form of resistance against

the patriarchy, interrupting the damaging cycle of facework. Her corrective facework (tweeting the experience) after the harassment threatens the man's positive face, which is concerned with acceptable social behaviors. As opposed to a traditional confrontation where a woman responds to the harasser face to face, threatening their positive face discredits men, minimizing their power. For example, Rebecca sarcastically recalls how she feels safe when she is being screamed at from cars when she is trying to get home. When men do that she is ironically reminded that men care.

> "Being screamed at from cars while I walk home has always made
>
> me feel safe, it's nice to know there are men that care. Said
>
> #NoWomanEver" - Rebecca, 2016

By responding with sarcasm and mock politeness, Rebecca is expressing her disdainful contempt (Wilson, 2013). Since mock politeness serves a dual purpose of both defense and attack, Rebecca is minimizing the harasser's power and maximizing her own through humiliating him. Refer to figure 1 which visually explains the resistance against the cycle of facework.
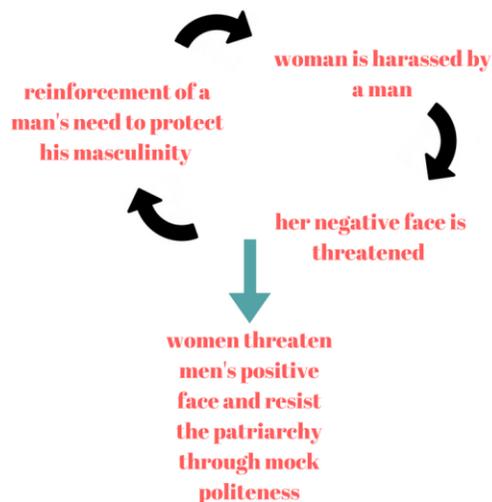
Figure 1 Cycle of Facework

Public spaces without accountability

Another major theme that was revealed from the data was that the harassment occurred in public spaces where there are virtually no gatekeepers deciding who is allowed to be there or not. Unlike a private setting such as a party, anyone and everyone is allowed to be in public spaces. The harasser has every right to be there. In addition, there is not much policing happening in public spaces, so subtle crimes like sexual harassment can easily take place without any repercussions. There is a severe lack of accountability in public spaces. Two types of accountability were identified in the data; external and internal. Not one tweet in the data revealed any bystander intervention when the women were being harassed, this is an example of external accountability. Since this type of harassment is so widely accepted and belittled, most people who witness it might overlook it and not feel compelled to intervene.

Moreover, there is internal accountability which is women engaging in face-to-face confrontation with their perpetrator. Many women had a difficult time holding their harassers accountable, possibly due to the shocking nature of the event catching them off guard. Another possible explanation for a lack of accountability can be attributed to what objectification theory calls internalized misogyny. A gendered form of hegemony, internalized misogyny posits that certain groups learn to accept stereotypes as part of their identity (Daleo & Riggs, 1996). As a result, marginalized groups passively accept their traditional role in society (Bargad & Hyde, 1991). For example, Cecilia recalls an instance when a man made sexual comments about her body and she ignores him.

> "When he shouted at me angry for ignoring his opinion of my ass, I
>
> knew we would be together 4ever. Said #NoWomanEver"

According to the objectification theory, it can be inferred that Cecilia has internalized this treatment and become accustomed to it based on her gender socialization. Therefore, ignoring someone who is harassing her is a way of passively accepting her traditional gender role of a quiet, non-confrontational woman.

Certain behaviors are expected as part of the basic social contract, between two strangers using public transportation, and when a behavior like sexual harassment occurs, the victim is caught flustered since her expectations were sharply violated (Vera-Grey, 2016). The harasser has the power in that situation because the victim is in shock, unable to respond. Perceptions of danger and responses to danger are impacted by the gender of the victim and the perpetrator (Harris & Miller, 2000). Responses to potentially dangerous situations are stereotypical in terms of gender roles. For instance, males tend to exhibit more aggressiveness while women demonstrate more fearfulness (Harris & Miller, 2000). A common demonstration of fearfulness in the case of street harassment is when a victim pretends they did not hear the perpetrator. This can be accomplished through wearing headphones. Unfortunately, due to the lack of boundaries, men found ways to get past that barrier. While on a bus, Eva's headphones were pulled out of her ears after she ignored a man's sexual advances.

> "On the train wearing earbuds trying to ignore the guy. He kept
>
> talking. Turned music up. He yanked a bud out of my ear. Swoon!
>
> #NoWomanEver"

According to Harris and Miller (2000), because of their socialization, women are less likely to react and hold that person accountable for their behavior and they are more likely to perceive the situation as dangerous and ignore it. Her passive reaction to his inappropriate

behavior speaks to the larger societal structures that she is living in. That man on the bus has just violated many social conduct rules and deviated from proper ways of behaving towards Eva.

The majority of the stories shared by the women on Twitter specified a geographic location where the harassment took place. Navigating public space without harassment proved to be incredibly difficult for the women in the sample. This became particularly heinous when the scene was an underground subway station where the exits are limited. For example, Brittany recalls an incident where she encountered two men who cornered her and tried to convince her to cheat on her boyfriend with one of the guys. When considering the lack of accountability in public transportation, Brittany's perception of fear in this situation could possibly be heightened due to the fact that she was trapped in the subway car with these two men. It is unclear if there were bystanders in the train car, but assuming it was just the three of them, her response is most likely a passive one.

> "I met my husband when he & his boy cornered me
>
> on the Q train & he explained in detail why I should
>
> cheat on my bf w/ him" #NoWomanEver

Here, you can visualize the situation taking place underground in an ill lit subway where there is seldom adequate security. Public transportation was notoriously brought up by the women as the scene for their harassment. This may be due to lack of security or possibly because of the easy access of the space to the general public. Another example of harassment on public transportation embodies how technology has enabled more discrete sexual harassment. Ann-Kathrin recalls a time when she had pictures taken of her without her consent when she was sitting on a train.

"Feeling really good about the guy sitting opposite me on the train

taking pictures of me on his phone. So flattered. #NoWomanEver"

The man who was taking non-consensual photos of Ann-Kathrin threatened his character face

since he was not demonstrating high integrity (Hastings & Bell, 2018). Ann-Kathrin's negative

face was threatened because her privacy was undermined (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Additionally, her status face was threatened because her status as a human was also undermined

since this man reduced her to a sexual object (Hastings & Bell, 2018). All of the elements of

face threats, perceived danger, and internalized misogyny play out in the victim's mind

simultaneously.

Disproportionate responses from men

The fourth major theme revealed is a disproportionate retaliation from men when women

deny them what they are requesting, which is usually something sexual. After they are harassed,

some of the women participate in a face to face confrontation with their harassers. At times it is a

simple "calm down" while others retaliate with anger. Regardless of how the women denied their

harassers requests for sex, the harasser disproportionately responded to her. According to Emily,

when she told the man to calm down after he catcalled her aggressively, he yelled, cussed her

out, slut-shamed her, and labeled her as hoe.

"Man on street trying to grab me: Good GOD! I just wanna fuck a

WHITE WOMAN! Me: WTF?! Calm down! Him: FUCK YOU,

HOE! #NoWomanEver #funtimes

This is decidedly a disproportionate response from the man who is engaging in the

original harassment. The inferred expectation of a polite reaction from the woman

speaks to the larger social expectations of feminine communication behavior even under threat.

After their positive face is threatened, men might experience embarrassment and be concerned with correcting their face. That response, however, would reflect a level of perceiving the woman as a human fully worthy of consideration. Disproportionate responses might be due to a man's societal pressure to protect their masculinity (Messner, 1997) and/or to their perceptions of women as people. Men have access to language in order to express their emotions; however, they are less likely to express their emotions due to a fear of threats to masculinity (Kramarae, 2005; Messner, 1997). Outward emotional expression is viewed as a feminine activity and men may want to avoid being perceived as feminine in any way possible (Simpson & Stroh, 2004).

Facework is gendered. Gendered speech communities influence how individuals correct their face and how they go about attacking someone else's face (Chen & Abedin, 2014). In the case of street harassment, the data confirmed Chen and Abedin's findings that men tend to respond more aggressively to face threats when compared to women. Eva recalls a time when she was walking and a man told her to smile. When she did not comply with his request, he followed her for an extended period of time and called her a crazy bitch. His positive face was threatened when Eva did not comply with his request (her negative face threat).

> "Was walking down a city street. He told me to smile. I didn't. But
>
> when he followed me for blocks & called me a crazy bitch… <3
>
> Said #NoWomanEver"

Disproportionate responses were a part of the man's response to their positive face attack, or attack on their social desirability. An interesting thing to note is that the disproportionate

responses were consistent regardless if the woman ignored them or if they had a face to face confrontation. For example, in the previous example, Eva ignored the request which resulted in his aggressive corrective facework. Jamilah, on the other hand, verbally denied the man's request and his response was still aggressive corrective facework. She recalls the situation where she politely declined his number and he disproportionately responded by following her off the bus, threatening her negative face.

> "I wasn't attracted to him. I politely declined his number. But
>
> when he followed me off the bus? <3 <3 <3 #NoWomanEver"

Jamilah's experience speaks to the need for women to justify their behavior after they're harassed. She specifically describes her refusal to take his number as 'polite'. Women are socialized to be polite even when they are in an uncomfortable or even dangerous situation. Language is gendered and reflects power differences in an individual's culture (Pearce & Foss, 1987; Rorty's, 1989). By describing her denial as polite, Jamilah suggested the disproportionate response was not justified, revealing the internalized victim blaming she might have experienced Victim blaming is common after street harassment because some people will say the woman brought it on herself in some way by wearing certain clothes or asking for it in some other way. In terms of types of disproportionate responses, men responded both verbally and nonverbally to women who refused them. Francesca remembers a time when she was spat on because she refused to talk to a man on the bus.

> "He spat on me when I refused to talk to him on the bus, and that's
>
> how I got my first boyfriend...said #NoWomanEver"

When you think of the act of spitting and what it represents, you begin to see how it can dehumanize a person. Francesca did not want to talk to this man on the bus, so he deemed it

necessary to spit on her, attacking her status face and stripping her of her power (Hastings &

Bell, 2018). According to Hastings and Bell (2018), stripping a woman of her power would be

classified as a threat to her status face since it deals with the dehumanization of a woman.

CONCLUSION

Women all over the world experience violence at alarming rates (WHO, 2017). Violence against women manifests itself in a myriad of ways. This exploratory study investigated gender based street harassment as one such form of violence against women. Sexual harassment on the streets is often belittled and underreported. Instead of being encouraged to report and resist the harassment, women are victim blamed and ignored. The hashtag #NoWomanEver illuminates women's experiences with street harassment in a unique, humorous way. As a result of a patriarchal society which allows men to exert ownership and entitlement over public spaces, women are beginning to resist in unorthodox ways. No longer are women forced to passively accept this behavior and internalize the misogyny (Daleo & Riggs 1996). Hashtivisim such as #NoWomanEver creates a platform for women to cope and create a sense of social support with other victims of street harassment. It also represents resistance against the patriarchal social norms which allow the harassment to continue. To further explore this form of resistance, I will present an analysis of twitter as a public journal resisting normative realities.

Twitter as a space for resistance through public journaling

Power and passion emanated from the experiences of these women and are empowering other women to speak up and no longer passively accept GBSH as a normal thing. Speaking out against this form of sexism invites both the author and reader of the tweets to acknowledge any jaded attitude they may have towards GBSH and ask questions, challenging the status quo. This can lead to revolutions for women around the world. For example, social movements such as #MeToo and #TimesUp have been built on the backs of smaller social movements like #NoWomanEver. Social movements have the potential to set foundations for new, innovative

ways women can respond to and cope with street harassment. Public journaling is one such

innovation, which leads me to my third major theme.

Journaling is a way to record "personal thoughts, daily experiences, and evolving

insights" (Hiemstra, 2001, p. 19). There are many health benefits to journaling (Hiemstra, 2001).

Some key health benefits of journaling are stress relief, well-being, and a feeling of social

support when shared with others (Piotrowski, 2014). Particularly relevant to the current study is

the feeling of social support when diary entries are shared with others. Social support can be

understood as receiving information and validation that an individual is cared for, valued, and

has a sense of belonging to supportive social networks (Cobb, 1976). When women shared their

harassment stories on Twitter, they were participating in a public journal as a means of achieving

social support. Tweeting about their harassment experiences gave women a sense of solidarity

and assurance they were not alone. They essentially shared a journal entry. Historically, Twitter

was used to share news and personal thoughts, in this case, women are using it as a platform to

share their experiences and attempt to win back some of their power that was lost after being

harassed. Participating in a public journal may not have been a conscious thought for the women;

however, they may still reap the benefits of it. Reality is socially constructed; therefore, if we

conceptualize Twitter as a public journal, the users can begin to shape and co-construct new

realities for themselves, particularly when they have been victims of harassment (Pearce & Foss,

1987).

Interactions create our reality, so if the women in the data did not publicize their

experiences using Twitter, their reality might be left negatively impacted. However, they are

making an effort to not simply accept the reality they have, but rather make some tangible

change in how they view the world. #NoWomanEver is rich in emotional capital. Through their

stories, women are creating a safe community where their experiences are cherished and have power. In addition to creating new realities, women are deviating from the potential internalized misogyny, a gendered form of hegemony. Internalized misogyny is the passive acceptance of the traditional way women are treated in society; therefore, by speaking out through the use of this public journal, women are communicating they are no longer passively accepting this treatment (Bargad & Hyde, 1991; Daleo & Riggs, 1996).

The data showed they were able to employ corrective facework measures and begin to internalize parts of their identity that have power and efficacy. GBSH public journal threatens gender based power inequity by challenging its legitimacy and humiliating the men who perpetuate it through mock politeness (Wilson, 2013). Imani recalls her harassment experience where she was honked at and yelled at from a guy in a car. She responds with mock approval.

> "He honked at me while I was walking & yelled out
>
> the window. I like the way he wasn't afraid to tell
>
> the world about our love."

According to the current research about social support, if Imani came across another story of similar harassment, she would experience reduced stress and a sense of belonging (Piotrowski, 2014). Street harassment is often accompanied with depression and anxiety which can be isolating (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008; Holman, Johnson & Lucier, 2013; Jackson, et al.,2014). This can significantly impact an individual's success with coping. In addition to social support, individuals who share their harassment stories on Twitter are experiencing emotional regulation and depression prevention (Suhr, Risch & Wilz, 2017). In fact, Suhr, Risch, and Wilz (2017) recommend journaling as part of a mental health patient aftercare program. Twitter may be an

unconventional mode for such a practice but has potential to be part of wellness in ways that have not previously been considered.

Discussion

This study employed a thematic analysis of 250 tweets using the hashtag #NoWomanEver. The purpose of this investigation was to understand women's corrective facework after gender based street harassment using the hashtag. Through open coding, several themes emerged from the data. The first theme was a resistance against a cycle of facework which began with the street harassment. As a result of the harassment, her negative face is threatened causing her to tweet out her experience using the hashtag #NoWomanEver. Through mock politeness, the women in turn threatened the harassers' positive face by belittling their harassment. Finally, the need to remain masculine is reinforced since the corrective facework was not done face-to-face.

The second major theme revealed in the data was public spaces that have no accountability for the harasser. In most cases, the lack of accountability was most prominent with public transportation. One explanation for the lack of accountability could be the socialization of women to perform their gender roles as agreeable. Another possible explanation could be internalized misogyny, which is the passive acceptance of the way an individual is (mis)treated. Internalized misogyny suggests the women would not retaliate and hold men accountable because they are accustomed to this treatment and have passively accepted this is part of their everyday lives.

The final major theme revealed from the data is disproportionate responses from men. Whether the victim chose to ignore her harasser or tell him to leave her alone, his response was disproportionate to hers. This may be due in part by a man's societal pressure to protect his

masculinity (Messner, 1997). One interesting thing to note is the politeness of women's responses to their harassers. Even though their perceived safety is low, they remain polite and generally non-confrontational. This response could be due in part by women's tendency to respond to dangerous situations with more fear than aggressiveness, when compared to men (Harris & Miller, 2000). Men responded both verbally and non-verbally to the women. While attempting to correct their own positive face, they attacked the women's negative face through screaming, cussing them out, following them, calling them names, or spitting on them.

Previous research indicates that research should address harassment experiences where men sexualized women's race or ridiculed them for being LGBTQ+. In this particular study, these tweets were not frequent enough to qualify as a major theme; however, they add a layer of significance for identity negotiation. The race and sexuality or gender performance of the women can put them at higher risk for GBSH or even greater disproportionate response. The race and sexuality or gender performance of the women can put them at higher risk for GBSH or possibly even greater disproportionate response. This is something to consider for future research on this topic.

Limitations and future research

This study is not without its limitations. For starters, there was a limited amount of time to complete the data. For future research, a longitudinal approach to the #NoWomanEver movement would address this shortcoming. Additionally, the analysis did not include the demographic information of the women in the data. This information could be useful to see which women are more likely to come forward and talk about their street harassment experiences. Future research might consider a more specific approach to data analysis and focus on particular groups of women who are experiencing street harassment and how they describe

their experiences. Another possibility for future research is to conduct in-depth interviews with users who tweeted using the hashtag #NoWomanEver. Such a study could reveal the user's interpretation of the tweet as opposed to one researcher's interpretation.

As a woman in my mid-twenties, I have experienced gender based street harassment more times than I can count. Beginning as early as eleven years old, I have been sexualized by men and blamed for it. Anger, fear, shame, and embarrassment are just some of the emotions I have felt after being sexually harassed. I have been told to ignore my harassers, to be quiet, and not to care. "At least they did not rape you" is a common silver lining people offer me. This study is my personal resistance against the patriarchy that has told me sexual harassment on the street is normal and men are entitled to comment on my body and control public spaces Like the women using the hashtag #NoWomanEver, I am not remaining silent about this heinous form of sexism and violence against women. The women in the data are my heroes and inspire me to continue this conversation.

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