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Development, Motivations and Affordances

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The Global Anti-Street Harassment Movement: Development, Motivations and Affordances

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements for award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law, School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies, June 2020.

Karen Desborough

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Abstract

My research examines the emergence, development and characteristic features of the global anti-street harassment movement. My primary interest is in exploring how both activists' motivations and digital technologies function in the evolution of the movement. The global anti-street harassment movement is a loose global feminist network of groups, individuals and organisations engaged in various forms of activism, on the basis of the shared ideal of ending street harassment. The movement deploys a diverse range of tactics and methods, targeted at multiple audiences, to pursue its long term aim of eradicating street harassment and its more immediate goals of creating dialogue on the issue, making street harassment visible as a social problem and reshaping social attitudes and behaviours.

Drawing upon a conceptual framework located at the intersections of feminist theory and social movement theory, and informed epistemologically by feminist standpoint theory, I use a qualitative mixed methods approach combining semi-structured interviews and document analysis to examine the evolution and characteristic features of the movement. By identifying the movement's defining characteristics – its structure, feminist ideological dimensions, goals and forms of activism – and illuminating the connections and commonalities between the diverse entities that make up the movement, I conceptualise and firmly establish the existence of the global anti-street harassment movement. In terms of the emergence and development of the movement, I argue that two interacting motivations: grievances, based on perceived gender injustice, and emotions, in particular, anger and empathy, are central contributory factors. At the same time, three technological affordances are relevant and necessary conditions: lowered participations costs for activists engaging in activism, the opportunity to create and maintain collective identities and the capacity to diffuse innovations across dispersed sites.

These findings are significant because of the absence of literature on this particular social movement – one that is resisting a pervasive gender oppression. Moreover, the research challenges prevailing assumptions held by dominant social movement frameworks that individual motivations have little explanatory power as regards movement emergence. I argue that motivation is a necessary factor for the evolution of the global anti-street harassment movement. In this regard, I draw on and extend previous feminist research which examines the relationship between feminist consciousness and women's motivations to engage in feminist activism. I integrate the concepts of feminist consciousness and grievances to explicate the motivational dimensions of anti-street harassment activism. Furthermore, while feminist social movement research has highlighted anger and empathy as motivators for feminist activism, existing research does not theorise the emotion of empathy. My study provides a conceptual analysis of empathy as a motivator for anti-street harassment activism. Finally, I apply the concept of technological affordances in an innovative way to analyse how digital technologies function in the evolution of the movement. No previous social movement research has used an affordances perspective to analyse digitally-enabled diffusion of innovations. Correspondingly, mine is the first study to apply this particular set of technological affordances to the analysis of a social movement.

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First and foremost, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all the inspiring feminist activists who participated in this research. This thesis is dedicated to you. It would not exist without your generous contributions. Thank you for giving up your time to share your knowledge, views and experiences with me. I hope that I have represented your words and meanings accurately and that you will forgive any misinterpretations. I would like to extend a special thanks to Holly Kearn for her enthusiasm and support for the research and for connecting me to other activists around the world and to Juliana de Faria, Juliana Santarosa Cobos and Rebecca Chiao for their prompt and very helpful responses to my persistent enquiries.

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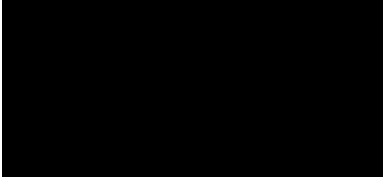
Last, but certainly not least, thanks from the bottom of my heart to my wonderful daughter, Maya. I am sorry for those moments when the thesis consumed much of my time and attention, and for being such a bore. I'm immensely proud that you've received offers from five universities to study Sociology and Politics! Thank you for reading the first draft of my introduction and for your helpful feedback. I wish I'd consulted you throughout the research process as you know so much more about the research topic than I ever realised. But I should have anticipated that being the savvy feminist that you are!

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Author's declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED:



DATE: 23 June 2020

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List of Abbreviations

ACT UP	AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power
BASH	BS5 Against Street Harassment
BSA	British Sociological Association
BSHP	Bristol Street Harassment Project
CAH	Cards Against Harassment
CASS	Collective Action for Safe Spaces
CNFL	Lebanese National Commission for Women
CR	Consciousness-raising
ES	Everyday Sexism project
EVAW	End Violence Against Women Coalition
FPW	Feminist Public Works
FSMO	Feminist social movement organisation
FTAA	Free Trade Area of the Americas
GBSH	Gender based street harassment
GGE	Girls for Gender Equity
GIS	Geographic information system
GNO	Good Night Out
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, plus
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NYC NOW	The New York City chapter of the National Organization for Women
OCAC	Observatorio contra el Acoso Callejero (Observatory Against Street Harassment)
OpAntiSH	Operation Anti Sexual Harassment
PAC	Paremos el Acoso Callejero (Let's End Street Harassment)
PPT	Political process theory
PSA	Public service announcement
RAINN	Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network
RM	Resource mobilization
SHP	The Street Harassment Project
SM	Social movement
SMO	Social movement organisation
SMS	Short message service
SMT	Social movement theory
SSH	Stop Street Harassment
STWTS	Stop Telling Women to Smile
TB	Tahrir Bodyguard
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
VAW	Violence against women
WLM	Women's liberation movement
WMATA	Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Chapter One: Introduction

Across the world feminist activists have been developing an anti-street harassment social movement to expose, resist and ultimately eradicate street harassment. While many and various anti-street harassment initiatives have emerged around the world in the last two decades with the shared ideal of ending street harassment, to date there is very little literature on the global anti-street harassment movement. None of this limited literature conceptualises the movement or examines its formation and global expansion. My thesis investigates the characteristic features and the emergence and development of the global anti-street harassment movement. More specifically, the research explores the roles of individual motivations and digital technologies (to be precise, their 'affordances', that is the actions a technology facilitates through its design (Earl and Kimport, 2011, p. 10)) in the emergence and development of the global movement.¹

Street harassment – sexual and 'gender-based harassment in public spaces' (Stop Street Harassment, 2020a) – is a pervasive global phenomenon, with academic and activist research estimating that as many as 80-100% of women have experienced some form of street harassment at least once during their lifetime (Kearl, 2010, p. 3; Fahmy *et al.*, 2014, p. 6; Livingston, Grillo and Paulauch, 2014; Johnson and Bennett, 2015, p. 1; Observatorio contra el Acoso Callejero, 2015c; see also Stop Street Harassment, 2020b). Several studies find that in most cases, women first experience street harassment during or before puberty (Fogg-Davis, 2006, p. 63; Livingston, Grillo and Paulauch, 2014; Kearl, 2015b, pp. 2–3; Logan, 2015, p. 201) and that it often becomes a frequent experience for particularly young women with negative ramifications for their wellbeing (Fairchild and Rudman, 2008; Dhillon and Bakaya, 2014; Livingston, Grillo and Paulauch, 2014). Street harassment is, put simply, 'the most ... commonly experienced [form] of violence against women' (VAW) (Vera-Gray, 2016, p. 9).

Actual practices of street harassment vary enormously and encompass a diverse range of non-consensual verbal and non-verbal actions. I locate street harassment in all its diverse forms on a 'continuum of sexual violence', a concept highlighting the interconnections and commonalities between all types of sexual violence experienced by women (Kelly, 1988, pp. 34, 74–137). The continuum of sexual violence emphasises how pervasive and everyday incidents, like street harassment, are connected to the forms of sexual violence legally defined as crimes (1988, p. 76). As

¹This thesis is based on the following research publications: Desborough, K. (2017) 'The Global Anti-Street Harassment Movement: A Digitally-Enabled Feminist Politics of Resistance' in *European Conference on Politics and Gender*. University of Lausanne, 8-10 June; Desborough, K. (2018) 'The Global Anti-Street Harassment Movement: Digitally Enabled Feminist Activism', in Vickery, J. R. and Everbach, T. (eds) *Mediating Misogyny: Gender, Technology, and Harassment*. Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 333–351; Desborough, K. and Weldes, J. (2017) 'Combating Insecurity in the Everyday: The Global Anti-Street Harassment Movement as Everyday Security Practitioners'. Unpublished.

such, it is a powerful conceptual resource that serves to contest misrepresentations of street harassment as harmless, inconsequential or even a compliment (Laniya, 2005, pp. 108–109, 110; Kearl, 2010, p. 5).

I conceptualise street harassment as a form of gender oppression, understood as an effect of unequal gender relations that ‘privilege the dominant group and marginalize, exclude, or cause other harm to the oppressed group’ (Ingrey, 2016, p. 1). I argue that women are oppressed by street harassment in three central ways: street harassment limits women’s mobility in public spaces (Bowman, 1993; Davis, 1994); it sexually objectifies women, undermining their ability to self-represent (Davis, 1994, p. 152); and it increases women’s sense of vulnerability in public spaces because it reinforces the threat of sexual violence (Bowman, 1993, p. 540; Davis, 1994, p. 140; Tuerkheimer, 1997, p. 187).

It is also the case that street harassment intersects with other identity characteristics and forms of oppression, such as race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, gender identification, age and dis/ableism. For example, research has shown that women of colour (Davis, 1994; Chen, 1997; Fogg-Davis, 2006; Miller, 2007; Ilahi, 2009) and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, plus (LGBTQ+) individuals (Fogg-Davis, 2006; McNeil, 2014) are disproportionately affected by street harassment.

The past two decades have witnessed a global proliferation in feminist grassroots activism to resist this gender oppression. Anti-street harassment initiatives are now active on every continent, with the exception of Antarctica, and employ myriad and innovative forms of online and offline activism. While there is a much longer history of aperiodic feminist resistance against sexual harassment in public spaces, it was not until the early 2000s that a plethora of feminist grassroots initiatives emerged with the explicit focus of tackling street harassment (Kearl, 2015b, p. xvi).² This burgeoning of anti-street harassment activism coexists with a resurgence in feminist activism in India, Latin America, the UK, the US and elsewhere over the past two decades (e.g., Redfern and Aune, 2011; Cochrane, 2013; Evans, 2015, 2016; Mackay, 2015; Kurian, 2018; Belotti, Comunello and Corradi, 2020; Serafini, 2020), in part facilitated by the affordances of digital technologies. The advent of the Internet and social media has enabled women to raise their voices, share their experiences of everyday sexism, make feminist issues visible to mainstream audiences and to organise across national borders (Cochrane, 2013, p. 603; Evans, 2015, pp. 73–78; Kurian, 2018; Belotti, Comunello and Corradi, 2020; Serafini, 2020, p. 292).

In this thesis, I am interested in investigating how digital technologies, understood as ‘combinations of information, computing, communication, and connectivity technologies’ (Bharadwaj *et al.*, 2013, p.

² Some non-single issue-based groups also emerged during this period focused on resisting and ending VAW more broadly. For these groups, tackling street harassment formed a core component of their campaigning work.

471), have enabled the formation and development of the global anti-street harassment movement. In examining this topic, I recognise the issue of a 'digital divide' and its attendant effects on the global movement in the form of digital inequalities between different actors resisting street harassment. Because the digital divide is affected by class and other forms of inequality, disadvantage and discrimination, as well as gender, privileged actors in the movement, i.e., affluent and educated women have more opportunities than economically disadvantaged women to benefit from technological affordances (Cummings and O'Neil, 2015, p. 7).³

I am also interested in exploring activists' motivations for engaging in anti-street harassment activism for what this tells us about the evolution of this particular social movement. Rather than beginning with dominant social movement (SM) theoretical explanations of movement emergence, i.e., resource mobilization theory and political process theory, which privilege meso- and macro-level 'structural' factors, i.e., organisations, resources, mobilisation and political opportunities (Pinard, 2011), I start my analysis at the micro-level by investigating grievances and motivating emotions.

Throughout the thesis, I make the claim that the diverse array of contemporary anti-street harassment initiatives form a global movement on account of its shared ideal of eradicating street harassment. Movement participants are further unified through common values, goals and forms of activism, and periodic collaborations. In chapters three and four, I set out my conceptualisation of the global anti-street harassment movement at length. In essence, I define it as the loose global feminist network of groups, individuals and organisations engaged in various forms of activism, on the basis of the shared ideal of ending street harassment. One of the aims of this thesis is to contribute to the global anti-street harassment movement by making explicit these connections between the components of the movement. The purpose of my research normatively is to support the advancement of the movement's agenda because of the oppressive and detrimental impact that street harassment has on women's and LGBTQ+ people's lives.

The global anti-street harassment movement has, thus far, not received the scholarly attention it deserves. Given the global scope and importance of the movement – one that is making visible, resisting and combating the most frequently experienced form of sexual violence against women (Vera-Gray, 2016, p. 9) – this is a serious oversight. Only three publications – two produced by activists in the movement (Kearl, 2015b; Keyhan, 2016) and one academic article (Logan, 2015) – include an explicit discussion of the global movement or the growth in anti-street harassment activism globally. There is no literature that conceptualises the global anti-street harassment movement, examines in

³ Those most marginalised and economically disadvantaged, in particular rural women in 'developing countries', are least likely to have access to the Internet (Jain, 2020, p. 8). It is not possible then for local, community-based groups in such localities to use digital technologies to resist street harassment or to establish online connections with the broader global movement or with elements of it.

any great depth the movement's characteristic features, except for its forms of activism (Kearl, 2015b; Keyhan, 2016), explores the role of motivations or provides a detailed exploration of how digital technologies function in the movement's evolution. This thesis makes a direct contribution to this very small body of research by providing a detailed empirical investigation of the emergence, development and defining characteristics of the global anti-street harassment movement.

Moreover, this thesis makes wider scholarly and interdisciplinary contributions. The research is relevant to a wide corpus of feminist theorisation and feminist activism, including a small body of feminist scholarship that examines the relationship between feminist consciousness – an awareness and repudiation of gender injustice (Hercus, 2005, pp. 10–11) – and women's motivations to engage in feminism (Hercus, 2005) and feminist activism (e.g., Klein, 1984; Bartky, 1990; Duncan, 1999; Hercus, 2005; Chen, 2014; Aronson, 2017; Swank and Fahs, 2017). My contribution also complements the burgeoning literature on feminist digital activism against sexual violence (Rentschler, 2014; Keller, Mendes and Ringrose, 2016; Gómez and Aden, 2017; Mendes, Ringrose and Keller, 2019) and a growing scholarship on contemporary feminist activism more broadly (e.g., Cochrane, 2013; Mackay, 2015; Kurian, 2018; Belotti, Comunello and Corradi, 2020). Furthermore, the thesis contributes to social movement (SM) research, including feminist SM research (e.g., Hercus, 2005; Eschle and Maiguashca, 2010) and SM emotions research (e.g., Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta, 2001b; Gould, 2009; Jasper, 2011) by examining the motivating role of emotions on the emergence and development of a global feminist movement and by theorising empathy as a motivator for feminist activism. Finally, this thesis makes a contribution to SM digital activism research (e.g., Earl, 2010; Earl and Kimport, 2011; Gerbaudo and Treré, 2015) in seeking to understand how a discreet set of technological affordances has enabled the evolution of a global social movement.

In the remainder of this brief introduction I outline the aims of the research and specify my research questions, provide information about the methodology and research methods employed, and outline the structure of the thesis chapters.

1.1 Research Aims and Questions

One aim of the research is to conceptualise and establish the existence of the global anti-street harassment movement through an empirical analysis of its characteristic features. Furthermore, I aim to investigate the emergence and development of the movement by analysing activists' motivations for engaging in activism and the role of digital technologies in enabling the formation and development of the global movement.

These aims translate into the following research questions:

1. What are the characteristic features of the global anti-street harassment movement? (RQ1)

2. How do motivations and digital technologies function in the emergence and development of the global anti-street harassment movement? (RQ2)

1.2 Methodology and Research Methods

I use a qualitative mixed methods methodology, comprising semi-structured interviews supplemented with document analysis. The adoption of a qualitative methodology is best suited to addressing my research questions since it allows for a comprehensive and contextual understanding of an unexplored topic, and it aims to privilege the perspectives and subjective understandings of research participants (Fossey et al 2002, 723).

Epistemologically, my research is informed by feminist standpoint theory, which interrogates the co-constitutive relationship between patriarchy and the production of knowledge and holds that starting research from women's lives can produce 'knowledge that is more useful for enabling women to improve the conditions of our lives' (Harding, 1997, pp. 382–383). In particular, I am influenced by later versions of feminist standpoint theory (e.g., Harding 1993, 2004; Stanley and Wise, 1993) premised on the assumption that women occupy multiple situated standpoints (Stanley and Wise, 1990, p. 10; Harding, 1993, p. 65, 2004, p. 10). Although there is no consensus over what constitutes 'feminist research' and no single specific model of what feminist research should look like (Maynard, 1994, p. 21), my study can be considered feminist because it is 'framed by feminist theory' and it seeks 'to produce knowledge that will be useful', for example to feminist anti-street harassment activists for the 'effective transformation of gendered injustice' (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002, p. 147). My research adheres to another key feminist methodological principle – an engagement with reflexivity and my positioning in the research process (Tickner, 2005). I discuss my positionality within the research later in chapter three.

Guided by my research questions and my epistemological stance, I selected semi-structured interviewing as my main data collection method for its propensity to yield rich, in-depth data from the perspective of research participants, thus providing insights into activists' views, beliefs, motivations and emotions. I interviewed 33 anti-street harassment activists from 25 initiatives based in 11 countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Egypt, Germany, India, Lebanon, Mexico, Peru, the UK and the US during three interview phases. The two main interview phases were conducted between 2014-2016 and the third, smaller interview phase took place in 2019, as outlined later in chapter three. I conducted the interviews largely via Skype or face to face and the rest through other media (email, WhatsApp and telephone). The questions focused on participants' motivations for politicisation, their goals, successes and challenges, participants' ideological beliefs and values, their use of and views on digital technologies and the influence of digital technologies on the movement's global development. I transcribed the interviews to identify emerging themes and then coded the transcripts using NVivo

to analyse the data more systematically through thematic analysis. I did not anonymise most of the interviewees (31/33) since research participants were generally accustomed to media interviews and all but two chose to have their names made public in the research. Additionally, I corresponded with another six anti-street harassment activists via email and social media from Chile, Costa Rica, Egypt, the UK and the US. I did not anonymise these participants as they all elected to retain their names in research outputs.

I supplemented the interview data with document analysis, analysing material produced by activists within the movement and newspaper articles, to corroborate and triangulate the interview data (Denzin, 1970; Bowen, 2009, p. 28) and to provide contextual richness. Document analysis allowed me to keep in touch with the latest movement activities, providing background information to the research and informing my empirical mapping of the movement's evolution and its characteristic features (RQ1). Analysis of activist websites and social media material also provided supplementary data to understanding how digital technologies function in the emergence and development of the global movement (part two of RQ2). I used content analysis to analyse the wide range of documents and social media material from which I extracted data, as described later in chapter three.

The majority of the empirical data discussed in this thesis was collected when the anti-street harassment movement was expanding most rapidly (between 2014-2016). I focus on this period because my question is concerned with movement growth and expansion. Since then, the movement has contracted to some extent for various reasons, as explored in the conclusion, but it is still active and new initiatives continue to emerge in different countries.

1.3 Chapter Structure

In Chapter Two, I review and critically assess existing literature pertinent to the emergence and development of the global anti-street harassment movement and, specifically, the contributory role played by motivations and digital technologies in the movement's evolution. The review is organised around three broad sets of literature relevant to my research questions: social movement scholarship, research on anti-street harassment activism and a very small literature on the global anti-street harassment movement. I situate my study within several bodies of relevant research, including feminist scholarship from diverse fields and social movement literature. Throughout the literature review, I indicate how my study contributes to, builds upon or addresses gaps in the current scholarship.

Chapter Three sets out the conceptual framework for my study, drawing upon feminist theories and social movement theoretical perspectives to shape my analysis. I situate my understanding of street harassment within feminist theorisations, locating the practice along a 'continuum of sexual violence' (Kelly 1988) and conceptualising street harassment as a form of gender oppression. I then outline

what is meant by the 'global anti-street harassment movement', 'anti-street harassment activism' and 'anti-street harassment activists' and 'participants'. Following this, I introduce my conceptual model for analysing motivational dimensions in the formation and development of the movement, integrating three motivational factors into a framework: grievances, feminist consciousness and emotions. Finally, I conceptualise 'affordances' for exploring how digital technologies, and activists' interactions with those technologies, have facilitated the movement's global development. I go on to discuss my methodological approach and epistemological position, detail the research methods and the data analysis procedures used, and discuss ethical considerations involved in the research.

Chapter Four maps out the global anti-street harassment movement, examining its origins, development and defining characteristics. These, I argue, include the movement's structure (organisational and relational), feminist ideological dimensions, goals and forms of activism. As regards the movement's organisational structure, I show that it is mostly composed of non-institutionalised grassroots groups and individual activists, as well as some not-for-profit non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In respect of its relational structure, or the relations between movement entities, as argued above, anti-street harassment initiatives are loosely networked through shared ideals, common goals and values, a diverse array of common tactics and methods, and (on occasion) joint activities. Feminist ideological dimensions refers to activists' common feminist values, such as their feminist leanings, activists' feminist beliefs and understandings of street harassment, and the shared feminist political project that, I claim, the movement advances. This is to resist, contest and end a form of gender oppression that intersects with other identity characteristics and power differentials. I contend that the movement pursues four overarching common goals: to create dialogue around street harassment, to raise awareness of the issue and make street harassment visible as an overt social problem, to reshape social attitudes and foster behavioural change, and ultimately to end street harassment. In pursuit of its goals, the global anti-street harassment movement deploys a diversity of tactics and methods, targeted at multiple audiences.

In Chapter Five, I investigate how motivations function in the formation and development of the global anti-street harassment movement by exploring participants' motivations for engaging in activism against street harassment. 'Motivation' is defined broadly as whatever moves individuals to initiate or continue activism against street harassment (Jasper 2006, 157). Here, I argue that the rise in anti-street harassment activism represents the manifestation of grievances – a sense of dissatisfaction about situations or conditions evaluated as unjust based on gender – and corresponding anger felt by activists in response to their own and other women's experiences of street harassment, and other forms of VAW. Empathy similarly drives anti-street harassment activism, as activists are moved to act on behalf of victims/survivors of street harassment and sexual assault. Put another way, I contend

that grievances and emotions are important motivational factors in the formation and development of the global anti-street harassment movement.

Chapter six adopts an affordance-based perspective to investigate how digital technologies function in the development of the movement. Such a perspective employs a relational approach to examining how actors interact with technologies and sees technologies as influencing, but not determining, opportunities for actors (Evans et al. 2017, 35, 37). Thus, while I see digital technologies as a necessary facilitative factor in the movement's evolution, I eschew a technological deterministic position. Rather, I argue that anti-street harassment activists have taken advantage of three key affordances offered by the Internet, which has had a profound influence on the birth and development of the global movement. These are lowered participation costs for activists devising, organising and engaging in activism, the possibility to forge and maintain collective identities, and the ability to diffuse innovations across geographically dispersed areas.

In the final chapter, I begin by restating the main question that this dissertation aims to address before providing a summary of the main research findings. I discuss the implications of my findings for feminist theory and social movement theory and make recommendations for future research. Finally, I summarise the contributions of the thesis to knowledge.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

There is an almost complete absence of literature on the global anti-street harassment movement and none that explores my specific research problem. The aim of this chapter is to examine existing scholarship relevant to the emergence and development of the global anti-street harassment movement and, specifically, the role played by individual motivations and digital technologies in contributing to the movement's formation and global growth. The principal question guiding this literature review is: what does the current literature indicate about how motivations and digital technologies function in the emergence and development of the global anti-street harassment movement? (RQ2). The secondary question, which informs the final section of the literature review, is: what are the characteristic features of the global anti-street harassment movement? (RQ1).

This review is structured around three broad sets of literature relevant to my research study: 1) social movement literature, 2) scholarship on anti-street harassment activism and 3) a sparse body of literature on the global anti-street harassment movement. In the first section, I review the social movement literature, synthesising and analysing it in relation to RQ2. I have divided the social movement literature into two subsections – motivational dimensions and digital activism – in order to adequately summarise and critically analyse related research in each of the two fields, and to address the two parts of the research question: how motivations function in the emergence and development of the global anti-street harassment movement and how digital technologies function in the movement's emergence and development.

In the second section, I review the literature on anti-street harassment activism, which also addresses RQ2. This literature is divided into three strands – feminist digital activism, Egyptian anti-street harassment activism and anti-street harassment activist literature. For each strand of the anti-street harassment literature, I first review and assess the scholarship relating to the digital technologies aspect of my enquiry and then review and assess the motivational component.

The third section examines a very small body of work investigating the global anti-street harassment movement (either explicitly so, or implicitly by examining the global growth in anti-street harassment activism). Here, I summarise and evaluate the limited available literature in relation to RQ1 and RQ2. Throughout the literature review, I situate my research project in relation to previous research and demonstrate how my study contributes to, extends or addresses gaps in the existing scholarship.

2.2 Social Movement Literature

In this section, I review two overarching fields of social movement scholarship⁴ concerned with movement emergence and development and questions of individual motivation. First, I review the literature on relevant social movement theories, in which I highlight the perspectives' different emphases on motivational factors in the generation and character of social movements, indicating how or to what extent they address the motivational aspect of my research question: 'How do motivations and digital technologies function in the emergence and development of the global anti-street harassment movement?' (RQ2). This subsection I have titled 'motivational dimensions.' Although not a neat fit, I have included literature on feminist consciousness and activism in this section in order to situate my research in relation to previous feminist scholarship as an alternative to predominant SM theories, which as I outline below, are less helpful in addressing this research question.

I review the second set of literature – digital activism – to critically assess how or to what extent it addresses the digital technologies aspect of RQ2 and to situate my research within the literature. I divide the scholarship into three strands – the first of which explores what, I argue, is the first of three central affordances offered by digital technologies with regard to social movement emergence and development: reduced participation costs for activists engaged in activism. Affordances refers to the actions a technology facilitates through its design (Earl and Kimport, 2011, p. 10). The second strand examines the second key affordance offered by digital technologies: the creation and maintenance of collective identity among activists, which is often considered central for social movement formation and development (Melucci, 1989; Taylor and Whittier, 1992; Polletta and Jasper, 2001). And the third strand is the social movement diffusion literature, which interrogates the diffusion of information and forms of activism between activists, and is important for understanding the evolution and expansion of social movements (Givan, Roberts and Soule, 2010, p. 1). Studies of particular pertinence are those that examine digitally-enabled diffusion of innovations among activists (e.g., Ayres 1999, 2005; Earl 2010; Earl and Kimport 2010). I argue that digitally-enabled diffusion of innovations represents the third key affordance relevant to social movement evolution.

2.2.1 Motivational dimensions

Since the 1950s, scholars have produced an abundance of theoretical and empirical research on social movement emergence and growth, with different theoretical traditions placing different emphases

⁴The literature is primarily from social movement studies; however, the 'feminist consciousness and activism', 'the role of emotions in motivating activism' and 'digital activism' scholarship is not exclusively so and encompasses literatures from other scholarly disciplines.

either on the centrality of individual motivations, notably grievances and emotional motives, or on 'structural' factors, such as resources, organisations, mobilisation and opportunities (Pinard, 2011) in the generation of collective action and social movements.

Classical approaches to social movements, for example collective behaviour theory (e.g., Smelser, 1963; Turner and Killian, 1972), mass society theory (e.g., Kornhauser, 1959) and relative deprivation theory (e.g., Gurr, 1970), posited psychological explanations for collective behaviour and movement emergence. Although there are differences among the collective behaviour approaches, in general these theories emphasised the motivations of individuals – the felt grievances and shared beliefs of participants – in analysing the emergence of social movements, which they contend arose during periods of social unrest (Staggenborg, 2012, pp. 13, 14, 18). I will not review this literature in detail because these early theories are no longer considered credible as they tended to view social movements as the products and outcomes of societal discontent, with discontent generally seen as abnormal. Today, by contrast, scholars view social movements as normal aspects of politics (Goodwin and Jasper, 2015b, p. 9).

2.2.1.1 Resource mobilization theory

One of the most influential theories in explaining social movement emergence is resource mobilization (RM) theory (e.g., McCarthy and Zald, 1973, 1977; Obershall, 1973; Gamson, 1975; Tilly, 1978). In response to earlier classical approaches, RM theorists shifted from 'a strong assumption' about the paramountcy of grievances and deprivation 'to a weak one', which makes grievances an element, and sometimes only a secondary element, in the formation of social movements (McCarthy and Zald, 1977, p. 1215). Put another way, mobilization theorists see grievances as pervasive and relatively constant in society, and therefore consider them to have limited explanatory power with respect to the birth of a social movement (Jenkins and Perrow, 1977, p. 266; Obershall, 1978, p. 298; Jenkins, 1983, pp. 528, 530; Pinard, 2011, p. 11). According to key proponents of the approach, such as John McCarthy and Mayer Zald, 'there is always enough discontent in any society to supply the grass-roots support for a movement' (McCarthy and Zald, 1977, p. 1215). Instead, mobilization theorists account for movement emergence at the meso- (organisational) level either in terms of 'long-term changes in group resources, organization, and opportunities for collective action' (Jenkins, 1983, p. 530) or by the availability and mobilisation of resources (McCarthy and Zald, 1973, 1977). Resources can mean material resources, including jobs, income and savings, or nonmaterial resources, including skills, trust, friendship, moral commitment, authority, etc. (Obershall, 1973, p. 28).

Thus, in privileging meso-level explanations of movement emergence, i.e., organisation and the mobilisation of resources, RM theory gives little explanatory relevance to the role of individual motivation (Buechler, 1993, p. 224). This is not to imply that mobilization theorists are indifferent to

motivations per se, but they do not accord them significant explanatory power when considering the emergence of a social movement. They are 'more interested in the "how" of organization-building, strategy, and tactics than in the "why" of motivation' (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta, 2001a, p. 5). Where questions of motivation and participation arise, it is in seeking to account for and overcome the free-rider problem (Olson, 1965). In line with rational choice assumptions, individuals are conceived as rational actors, who calculate the costs and benefits of participating in collective action. Although grievances are seemingly ubiquitous in society, i.e., there are always sufficient numbers of people to mobilise into action (McCarthy and Zald, 1977, p. 1215), not everyone will participate and it is assumed that actors will free ride on the efforts of others. Therefore, people require selective incentives in order to participate in collective action (Obershall, 1973; McCarthy and Zald, 1977, p. 1216). According to McCarthy and Zald whether or not social movements constitute the grievances of movement participants and adherents, it should be assumed 'that the costs and rewards of involvement', i.e., selective incentives, can explain individual participation (McCarthy and Zald, 1977, p. 1226).

Feminist scholars have rightly critiqued the rationalistic and economic assumptions underpinning RM theory, which presuppose a pseudo-universal actor operating on the basis of self-interest and incentives alone (Ferree, 1992, pp. 31–32; Hercus, 1999, p. 53). '[P]eople actually join social movements for a far wider range of reasons than pure self-interest or greed... [Motivations] may include values, friendship and other forms of solidarity, as well as, ... caring' (Hague, Mullender and Aris, 2003, p. 12). The assumptions of RM theory are fundamentally at odds with those underpinning much feminist activism, which appeal to more relational and communal qualities like connection, empathy and women's everyday experiences (Buechler, 1993, p. 227). This is true of the global anti-street harassment movement and in chapter five, I investigate, inter alia, the motivating role of empathy in considering factors inspiring activists.

RM theory not only downplays the role of grievances in the generation of social movements but also neglects the emotions, values, ideologies and identities of activists (McClurg Mueller, 1992, p. 5; Buechler, 1993; Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta, 2001a, pp. 5, 10; Crossley, 2002, p. 84), all of which I consider to be important dimensions in social movement activity. In chapter four, I examine anti-street harassment activists' ideological values and feminist beliefs (to partly answer RQ1: 'What are the characteristic features of the global anti-street harassment movement?'). And in chapter six, I investigate the construction of collective identity, facilitated by digital technologies, as a dimension in the movement's development (discussed further below). To return to the central point of this section, because of RM theory's focus on organisation, resources and mobilisation and its corresponding relegation of grievances and neglect of emotions in social movement analysis, the RM literature is

unhelpful in addressing my research question on how individual motivations function in the emergence and development of the global anti-street harassment movement.

2.2.1.2 Political process theory

Political process theory (PPT) (e.g., Tilly, 1978; McAdam, 1982; Tarrow, 1994; McAdam, McCarthy and Zald, 1996), considered by many to be the dominant paradigm in the study of social movements (Goodwin, Jasper and Khatta, 1999, p. 28; Edelman, 2001, p. 291; Giugni, 2009, p. 361; Pinard, 2011, p. 14) has incorporated the key insights of resource mobilization theory (Morris, 2000, p. 446). But while mobilization scholars seek to explain the emergence and evolution of social movements in terms of characteristics internal to the movements, such as resource availability and organisational aspects, political process scholars concentrate on external explanatory factors, notably changes or variations in the political and institutional contexts of social movements (van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2009, p. 25).

Political opportunity structure, a key theoretical component of PPT (Giugni, 2009, p. 361), refers to ‘consistent – but not necessarily formal or permanent – dimensions of the political environment that provides incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectation for success or failure’ (Tarrow, 1994, p. 85). According to this approach, social movements are likely to form only when changes occur in the institutionalised political system that are favourable to the challenging group (Morris, 2000, p. 446; Giugni, 2009, p. 361), including divisions among political elites, the presence of new elite allies, state weakness, the opening up of new space in the political system (Morris, 2000, p. 446), and low levels of state repression (Caruso, 2015, p. 3).

Similar to resource mobilization theory, PPT starts from the premise that grievances are ubiquitous in a society and thus have little explanatory power for the emergence of social movements (Klandermans, 2004; Simmons, 2014, p. 514). Instead, as outlined above, political process theorists emphasise macro-level structural factors as necessary for social movement formation and operation. Grievances are considered only in relation to and influenced by the political environment of the social movement. ‘[A]ctivists do not choose goals, strategies, and tactics in a vacuum. Rather, the political context, conceptualized fairly broadly, sets the grievances around which activists mobilize, advantaging some claims and disadvantaging others’ (Meyer, 2004, pp. 127–128). In other words, the PPT framework downplays the role of grievances in triggering collective action and social movements (Pinard, 2011, pp. 14–15) and it is similarly indifferent to the role of emotions in social movement formation and activity (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta, 2001a; Gould, 2004). As such, the political process literature is unhelpful in considering the motivational dimensions of anti-street harassment activism and how they function in the evolution of the global anti-street harassment movement.

2.2.1.3 *The framing perspective*

The framing perspective is a cultural approach to social movements, along with general social psychological approaches, social movement research on emotions and the new social movement approach, which emphasises the concept of collective identity. The 'cultural turn' in social movement theory, which developed in the late 1980s, (Jasper, 2010, p. 60), brought a renewed interest in motivational issues. Culturalists, influenced by social constructionism, assert the importance of ideas, perceptions, grievances and emotions of activists, all of which mobilization and political process theorists assumed were unimportant or could simply be taken as given (Goodwin and Jasper, 2015a, pp. 6, 12). Theorists in this camp examine how perceptions, emotions, identities, etc., influence and shape the motivation to participate in collective action (van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2009, p. 30).

The framing perspective on social movements seeks to understand the production, diffusion and functionality of mobilising beliefs and ideas (Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 612) and emphasises how injustices and grievances are constructed by movement leaders and interpreted by potential participants (e.g., Snow *et al.*, 1986; Snow and Benford, 1988; Gamson, 1992). Social movements are seen as 'signifying agents' actively involved in the production of ideas and meanings (Snow and Benford, 1988, p. 213). 'Framing', in this context, refers to the ways in which 'social movement organizations and their agents ... assign meaning to and interpret relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists' (Snow and Benford, 1988, p. 198). The outcomes of this framing process are collective action frames, 'action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate' the actions of a social movement organisation (SMO) (Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 614). Collective action frames help to render events or issues meaningful, simplifying and condensing them in ways that motivate action and support (Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 614).

Participation in social movement organisations is achieved through frame alignment processes which, according to David Snow *et al.* (1986, p. 464) are necessary conditions for movement participation. 'Frame alignment' refers to the connection of 'individual and SMO interpretive orientations', in that some assortment of individual interests, beliefs and values are congruous and compatible with SMO ideology, goals and activities (Snow *et al.*, 1986, p. 464). Participation in a social movement is, in part, then contingent on frame alignment, but once achieved, it cannot be taken for granted since framing is a continuous, dynamic process and frames are regularly subject to contestation, reproduction, transformation and/or replacement (Snow *et al.*, 1986, p. 476; Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 628).

According to this approach, three key framing tasks facilitate the successful mobilisation efforts of movement participants. The first, diagnostic framing, entails the identification of a particular event or social issue as problematic and the attribution of blame for that problem. The second task, prognostic framing, involves proposing solutions to the diagnosed problem and identifying strategies, tactics and targets (Snow and Benford, 1988, pp. 199–201). The final task, motivational framing, entails ‘a call to arms or rationale for engaging in ameliorative or corrective action’ (Snow and Benford, 1988, p. 199). The first two tasks – diagnosis and prognosis framing – are aimed at achieving agreement among movement adherents, whereas the latter task supplies the motivational catalyst for participation (Snow and Benford, 1988, p. 199). In a longitudinal participant observation study from 1982 to 1986, Robert Benford (1993) explored how motivational frames were constructed and nurtured within the nuclear disarmament movement. He found that disarmament groups promoted the intimation and affirmation of specific motives as a means of inciting collective action (Benford, 1993, pp. 195–196, 200–201).

Thus, the framing literature is attentive to motivational issues in the sense that it focuses attention on how social movements frame issues in specific ways to identify injustices, attribute blame for the situation, proffer solutions and motivate action (Staggenborg, 2012, p. 22), as well as investigating how grievances are interpreted by movement participants (Snow *et al.*, 1986). However, the focal concern of this perspective is centred on the actions of SMOs rather than the motivations of activists, emphasising how movement leaders and organisers construct meanings, frame injustices and recognise opportunities for collective action (Benford, 1993, p. 210; Staggenborg, 2012, p. 22). Put another way, the framing literature posits a top-down model: SMOs and leaders are considered ‘strategic actors who persuade, solicit and coax relatively passive individuals to adopt movement frames and participate in movement activities’ (Hercus, 2005, p. 8). But my interest is in uncovering the individual motivations of anti-street harassment activists, i.e., to understand and illuminate why individuals have become activists, and how such motivations function in the emergence and development of the global anti-street harassment movement. I am not investigating the construction of meaning by the movement and I do not view anti-street harassment activists as passive subjects whose participation in activism is the outcome of intentional manipulation by social movement organisers (Chen, 2014, p. 203). In these important respects, the framing scholarship is not germane to my research question.

2.2.1.4 General social psychological models

The social psychological literature on social movements (e.g., Klandermans, 1984, 1997, 2004; Simon *et al.*, 1998; van Zomeren *et al.*, 2004; Klandermans, van der Toorn and van Stekelenburg, 2008; van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2010, 2013) complements prominent structural theoretical

perspectives that emphasise the centrality of organisational aspects (resources, organisations, political opportunities and mobilisation (Pinard, 2011)) in explanations of social movement emergence, as discussed above. But the social psychological perspective takes the individual as the unit of analysis and asks why some people participate in protest or contentious collective action, while others seemingly in the same situation do not (Klandermans, 1997, p. 3; van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2010, p. 157).

Following Bert Klandermans' *The Social Psychology of Protest* (1997), which investigates social movements' micro-mobilising efforts and individuals' propensity for participation, social psychologists in this area have examined participation motives and, in turn, developed motivational models comprising multiple variables to explain why individuals engage in protest. Motives identified encompass instrumental reasoning, emotions, identification and ideological factors (van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2009, p. 34). For example, Simon *et al.* (1998) proffered a dual-pathway model to social movement participation in which people are motivated to participate through two independent pathways: an instrumental pathway that involves calculating 'the costs and benefits of participation and an identity pathway' that entails the adoption of an activist identity (Simon *et al.*, 1998, p. 656; van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2013, p. 896). van Zomeren *et al.* (2004) proposed a different dual-pathway model comprising a group-based efficacy path and a group-based anger path, thus highlighting the importance of efficacy and emotions in motivating protest action. Efficacy refers to an individual's expectations that their actions can make a difference and engender the desired change (Klandermans, van der Toorn and van Stekelenburg, 2008, p. 994). In more recent models (Klandermans, van der Toorn and van Stekelenburg, 2008; van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2010, 2013), researchers have combined instrumental motives like grievances and efficacy with a greater emphasis on identification, ideological and emotional motives, and social embeddedness, i.e., the idea that individuals have a propensity to participate in activism when they are closely embedded in social networks (Passy, 2003, p. 30; Klandermans and van Stekelenburg, 2010, p. 7).

Whilst this literature offers myriad social psychological insights into why people participate in contentious collective action (a detailed discussion of all such dimensions are beyond the scope of this literature review), these studies focus almost exclusively on protest movements. Put another way, the social psychological literature, while informative, essentially provides a theoretical and empirical understanding of why individuals engage in *protest* action. Since protest is a very marginal form of activism deployed by the global anti-street harassment movement, this literature is perhaps not directly applicable to the movement under study. Moreover, the social psychological literature concentrates on activism within already established protest movements. As such, it cannot help to elucidate how individuals come to form social movements. I am interested in understanding the motivations of anti-street harassment activists, including the motives of the movement's founders

and of individuals who established their own anti-street harassment initiative (25 out of 33 of my participants), i.e., those activists who were motivated to take action without being targeted by existing SMOs. In the following subsection, I discuss a small body of interdisciplinary feminist literature which is more pertinent because it focuses, broadly speaking, on the motivations of individuals to participate in feminist activism and it is less concerned with activism within already established social movements. This literature highlights the connection between the formation of feminist consciousness and political action, emphasising awareness of sexism and gender injustice as motivators for action.

2.2.1.5 Feminist consciousness and activism

A small cluster of feminist literature from a range of disciplines, including sociology, politics and psychology, examines, explicitly or implicitly, the relationship between feminist consciousness and women's motivations to participate in feminist activism (e.g., Klein, 1984; Bartky, 1990; Duncan, 1999; Hercus, 2005; Chen, 2014; Aronson, 2017; Swank and Fahs, 2017). Feminist consciousness can be defined most simply as an 'awareness and critique of gender inequalities and patriarchy' (Aronson, 2017, p. 2). More extensively, it refers to:

a shared understanding or *knowing* the world that includes an awareness of and rejection of gender inequality as being unjust, unnecessary, and worth fighting against ... This does not imply a lack of recognition of other axes of injustice, but to be feminist there must be awareness of gender-based injustice. (Hercus, 2005, pp. 10–11, original emphasis)

A few theorists, including the political scientist Ethel Klein (1984) and psychologists Patricia Gurin *et al.* (1980) have developed detailed theoretical frameworks to explain the formation of feminist consciousness and analyse the concept's key components. Klein described the development of feminist consciousness as a three stage process, beginning with 'affiliation' – first, women have to recognise themselves as members of a group with shared interests. Second, group members need to reject the rationale for the group's marginal status in society. Third, they need to recognise that personal problems are a consequence of social conditions, instead of personal failure, to blame the system, and begin to look for collective solutions. 'Women who reached this third stage, where they believed that they deserved equal treatment but were denied opportunities because of sex discrimination, had a feminist consciousness' (Klein, 1984, p. 3). In a similar manner, Gurin, Miller, and Gurin (1980) theorised four elements of group consciousness: identification with the group, power discontent, system blaming, and a collective orientation (Cook, 1993, p. 229).

Sandra Bartky's (1990) essay 'Toward a feminist phenomenology of feminist consciousness' takes a slightly different tack, drawing on women's everyday experiences to uncover the unsettling and, yet ultimately liberating, process involved in developing a feminist consciousness. She argued that the

process of becoming a feminist involves a 'profound personal transformation', which leads to changes in consciousness and behaviour (Bartky, 1990, p. 11). Bartky discusses the phenomenology of feminist consciousness in terms of three core aspects: consciousness of 'anguish' – the realisation by feminists that certain aspects of social reality are intolerable (1990, p. 14), of 'victimization' – an awareness of sexist social reality as a 'hostile force' (1990, p. 15) and of 'the double ontological shock' – when feminists first realise that what actually is happening is sexism, etc., but doubt their perception because others do not endorse their views (1990, p. 18). However, despite the disconcerting aspects involved in 'coming to see things differently', achieving feminist consciousness provides opportunities for feminist collective action to resist the 'deceptive sexist social reality' (1990, p. 21).

In line with these theorisations, which connect alterations in ways of knowing with changes in behaviour, although not necessarily in a linear sequence (Hercus, 2005, p. 12; Eschle and Maignashca, 2010, p. 177), several studies contend that feminist consciousness is a central motivating factor for feminist activism (e.g., Klein, 1984, p. 2; Bartky, 1990; Duncan, 1999; Hercus, 2005; Eschle and Maignashca, 2010, pp. 72–75; Aronson, 2017; Swank and Fahs, 2017). Consciousness, according to Klein 'is a critical precondition to political action' (1984, p. 2). Pamela Aronson similarly argues that '[t]he development of consciousness or an activist identity is a precursor to activism on behalf of women's issues' (2017, p. 1). Some studies (e.g., Duncan, 1999; Swank and Fahs, 2017) have used quantitative methods and large data sets to test multiple variables connected to women's feminist activism and have confirmed the influential role of feminist consciousness in motivating activism. For example, Lauren Duncan (1999) found that feminist consciousness correlated with greater levels of women's rights activism. In addition, the study demonstrated an association between educational attainment, experiences of sexual harassment, education about gender oppression, and elevated feminist consciousness and collective action (1999, pp. 623, 630).

Other studies have employed qualitative methods, including participant observation, interviewing and participatory methods (Klatch, 2001, p. 794; Eschle and Maignashca, 2010, p. 8; Chen, 2014, p. 187) to uncover women's motivations for engaging in feminist activism or for forming feminist social movements. From examining the development of feminist consciousness among women during the early stages of the US women's movement in the 1960s (Klatch, 2014), to exploring the origins of 'feminist antiglobalization activism' in the early 2000s (Eschle and Maignashca 2010, 4), to understanding the development of feminist identity and activism of today's younger women in Mexico City (Chen, 2014), a general pattern emerges across the different studies: awareness or knowledge of gender injustice, both personally experienced and learned from other women's experiences, often in the form of discrimination and sexism, provided the initial impetus for activism (Klatch, 2001, pp. 797–798; Eschle and Maignashca, 2010, pp. 72–75; Chen, 2014). However, the process of becoming involved in feminism/feminist activism is not always linear, beginning with changes in consciousness.

While feminist consciousness often comes first, on occasion, action or 'doing feminism' may precede and alter ways of knowing among women who do not possess a feminist consciousness (Hercus, 2005, p. 12).

This small body of literature provides a useful framework for investigating the motivational dimensions of the global anti-street harassment movement. Social movement perspectives, as reviewed above, tend to consider motivations in terms of 'a mobilization problematic', i.e., how do SMOs and leaders motivate individuals to participate? (Hercus, 2005, p. 110), for example, through selective incentives or framing grievances and injustices in certain ways. The feminist work reviewed here, by contrast, often focuses on the motivations of feminist activists from a bottom-up perspective, paying attention to an issue typically excluded from analysis by dominant SM models: the connection between gender injustice and the motivation to participate in feminist activism (Chen, 2014, p. 184). Thus, it takes seriously women's subjective understandings of their experiences and cognisance of injustice, and treats feminist activists as active agents rather than passive subjects ready to be motivated into action by social movement organisers.

My study engages with and builds on this literature by bringing together two concepts – feminist consciousness and grievances. I posit that grievances – a sense of dissatisfaction about situations or conditions evaluated as unjust based on gender – are a prime motivator of feminist activism, rather than *knowledge* of injustice per se. In other words, awareness of injustice is not sufficient on its own to stimulate action; the critical dimension is the sense of being aggrieved (Hardcastle, 2011, p. 342). I set out this conceptual model in more depth in the next chapter. In the following section, I review the relevant SM literature on emotions because grievances intertwined with emotions together motivate individuals to engage in activism.

2.2.1.6 The role of emotions in motivating activism

Until the 1990s, emotions were marginalised by dominant, structural approaches to social movement analysis (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta, 2000, p. 65, 2001a, pp. 1, 5, 10; Aminzade and McAdam, 2002; Jasper, 2011, p. 285). Since then, in response to influential feminist perspectives in social movement studies (Ruiz-Junco, 2013, p. 46), which rejected the gendered reason/emotion binary (e.g., Ferree, 1992; Taylor, 1995; Hercus, 1999), a growing body of SM research has demonstrated the influence of emotions on all aspects and phases of social movements, from emergence to spread and demise (Jasper, 1997, 1998, pp. 404–405, 2011, p. 286; Eyerman, 2005, pp. 42–43; Goodwin and Jasper, 2006). Theorists in the 'emotional turn' take as their starting point the assertion that emotion permeates all facets of social life (Gould, 2009, p. 17). As James Jasper (1998, p. 399) puts it '[e]motions do not merely accompany our deepest desires and satisfactions, they constitute them, permeating our ideas, identities and interests.' Accordingly, scholars in the emotional turn argue that a focus on emotions

provides greater insights into a range of social movement processes underexamined by predominant SM theories, and in particular into individual's motivations for participating in social movements (Gould, 2004, p. 157).

Much research in this area has concentrated on the influential role of mobilising emotions in recruiting and mobilising participants and motivating political action. '[T]he mobilization of emotions [is] a necessary and exceedingly important component of any significant instance of collective action' (Aminzade and McAdam, 2001, p. 14). Anger, indignation and outrage (in response to perceived injustices) (Jasper, 1998, 2011, 2014; Hercus, 1999; Gould, 2001; Holmes, 2004; Rodgers, 2010; van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2013), pride ('in one's identity' and or 'for one's group') (Jasper, 2011, pp. 289, 290) and hope (that action will produce positive effects) (Summers-Effler, 2002; Kleres and Wettergren, 2017) are emotions that have often been identified in prior research as inspiring activism, and that social movement organisers invoke, arouse and engineer to recruit and retain participants (Jasper, 1998, p. 405).

Social movements attempt to transform demobilising emotions, i.e., feelings that impede political action (Goodwin and Jasper, 2006, p. 619), such as shame, depression, cynicism and resignation, into mobilising emotions, like anger, indignation, outrage, pride and hope (Flam, 2005, p. 20; Goodwin and Jasper, 2006, p. 619). As Helena Flam (2005, p. 19) points out, one way that social movements try to transform emotions and mobilise people for collective action is by redefining or challenging 'feeling rules' (Hochschild, 1979) – social norms and expectations which govern appropriate feelings in given social situations and how to respond appropriately to those feelings (Hochschild, 1979, p. 552). For example, social movements have reversed an important feeling rule that designates anger as deviant when expressed by marginalised groups. Movements have sought to teach the marginalised to view the emotion of anger and its expression as legitimate, and to re-appropriate it for themselves (Flam, 2005, p. 26), replacing previously felt demobilising emotions with anger. For instance, in an analysis of the emergence of militant AIDS activism during the Reagan era, Deborah Gould (2001) found that when ACT UP (AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power) activists framed AIDS as a 'genocide – a worsening holocaust caused by institutionalised homophobia', they encouraged thousands of lesbians and gay men to transform feelings of shame about homosexuality and fears of social rejection into government- and institutional-directed anger and indignation (Gould, 2001, pp. 135, 152–153).

In a similar manner, feminist social movement scholarship (Taylor and Whittier, 1995; Taylor, 1996; Hercus, 1999) highlights the role of feminist movements and organisations in transforming 'destructive feelings' such as depression, fear, guilt and shame – i.e., passive emotions frequently attributed to women and which inhibit political action – into 'active emotions' conducive to activism (Guenther, 2009, p. 341). This feminist research highlights, in particular, the transformative,

motivating emotion of anger when appropriated by activists for collective action. For example, in Verta Taylor's (1996) study of the US post-partum depression movement, the movement encouraged women to convert self-destructive feelings of guilt, shame and depression into anger towards and resistance against the 'the injustices of motherhood' (Taylor, 1996, p. 54). In a slightly different vein, Jo Reger showed that through consciousness-raising (CR) within a feminist organisation, NYC NOW,⁵ movement organisers were able to transform women's personal feelings of anger, alienation, hopelessness and frustration into a collective sense of injustice and action-orientated anger (Reger, 2004, p. 205). In this study, whilst women were *already* angry when they entered CR, their anger was initially intertwined with a sense of hopelessness and frustration, rendering it unfocused and immobilised. Subsequently, through CR, NOW activists generated a collective validation to the women's anger, which they harnessed and redirected towards political activism (Reger, 2004, pp. 214–216).

In sum, much of this scholarship investigates the mobilising potential of emotions in recruiting and motivating people to participate in political action, specifically the work of social movements in transforming the feelings of movement members to encourage activism. Hence, the literature tends to be concerned with how social movements and organisations evoke and (re)frame emotions to mobilise participants and motivate activism. More relevant to my study is a small cluster of feminist social movement research which explores emotions as a motivator for 'becoming and being feminists' (Hercus, 2005, pp. 12, 48) and for engaging in feminist activism (e.g., Hercus, 1999; Eschle and Manguashca, 2010) from the perspective of individual women/feminist activists.

Like the feminist SM scholarship reviewed above, this cluster of feminist SM research similarly highlights anger as a prominent motivator for activism, generated by awareness of gender injustice and oppression. But the studies also draw attention to the interplay of both 'negative' and 'positive' emotions that characterise feminist collective action. In her analysis of the processes of becoming involved in feminist activism in North Queensland, Australia, for example, Cheryl Hercus (1999) found that many of her interviewees were motivated into activism by anger, both in response to personal experience of gender injustice and in response to instances of sexist oppression that impact women in general (Hercus, 1999, pp. 39–40). However, their emotional energy was often restored through 'enthusiasm and joy' associated with participating in feminist events and feeling connected to a wider group (1999, p. 49). Not dissimilarly, in Eschle and Manguashca's (2010) study on feminist anti-globalization activism, whilst anger at injustices was the most commonly cited emotional trigger for

⁵The New York City chapter of the National Organization for Women.

activism according to their participants, affection for and empathy with other women were also important motivators (2010, pp. 76-77).

My study contributes to this literature by presenting empirical data from a feminist social movement hitherto unresearched by feminist social movement scholars, or indeed by SM scholars more broadly. Further, I aim to address an omission in the current literature, in that previous studies (Hercus, 2005; Eschle and Manguashca, 2010) have not theorised empathy – an emotion⁶ I examine in chapter five. I draw on literatures from moral and social psychology (e.g., Hoffman, 2000, 2016; Håkansson and Montgomery, 2003; Fleckenstein, 2014) to offer a conceptual understanding of empathy as a motivator for anti-street harassment activism.

In recent years there has been a proliferation of scholarship on affect and emotion in relation to feminist mobilisation (e.g., Cvetkovich, 2003, 2012; Ahmed, 2004, 2010; Hemmings, 2005, 2012; Pedwell and Whitehead, 2012; Åhäll, 2018). Regardless of their different theoretical perspectives, feminist (and queer) affect theorists are concerned with ‘how power circulates through feeling and how politically salient ways of being and knowing are produced through affective relations and discourses’ (Pedwell and Whitehead, 2012, p. 116). Within the broader literature on affect, scholars argue that emotions are difficult to define (Greyser, 2012, p. 86), often distinguishing ‘affect’ from ‘emotions’ (Greyser, 2012, p. 86; Åhäll, 2018, p. 39). In these accounts, affect is seen as nonconscious, non-subjective or pre-personal and is contrasted with conscious, personal, emotional experiences, frequently identified as ‘feelings’ (Åhäll, 2018, p. 39).

The separation between affect and emotion, however, reinforces a gendered binary logic: a masculinised affect vs a feminised emotion (Åhäll, 2018, p. 40). Even more troublesome with viewing affect as somehow pre-personal and nonconscious is that it neglects an account of the social world (Hemmings, 2005; Åhäll, 2018, p. 40). What matters more to feminists is what emotions do politically than whether affective mechanisms are characterised as emotions, feelings, or affect. Similarly, whether people experience emotions unconsciously or consciously is secondary to the political effects of affective processes (Åhäll, 2018, p. 38, 43).

Feminist affect studies complements the feminist social movement scholarship through its interrogation of the gendered reason/emotion dualism (e.g., Ahmed, 2004; Pedwell and Whitehead, 2012, p. 119; Åhäll, 2018, p. 37). Emotion has a long association with the feminine, the body and the personal (Åhäll, 2018, p. 37). But this understanding needs to be contested ‘as “the unthought” ... [along with] the assumption that “rational thought” is unemotional, or that it does not involve being moved by others’ (Ahmed, 2004, p. 170). Clare Hemmings’ study of ‘affective solidarity’ and ‘affective

⁶I frame empathy more as an ‘emotional response’, as discussed later in chapter five.

dissonance' demonstrates the interplay of cognition and emotion: 'in order to know differently we have to feel differently' (Hemmings, 2012, p. 150). Hemmings argues that a range of affects, including anger, frustration, rage 'and the desire for connection', are important for transformative ways of knowing and may inspire feminist political action (Hemmings, 2012, pp. 148, 157).

Feminist and queer affect studies supplements the feminist SM scholarship through its interrogation of 'affect as liberation and promise' (Bargetz, 2015, p. 580). The literature asks what emotions *do*, how they circulate, how they are read and how they (re)produce dominant power relations. For example, in *The Promise of Happiness* (2010), Sara Ahmed shows how happiness operates as a technique of governance that fosters inequality and oppression, excluding certain (gendered, raced, classed and sexualised) subjects who do not follow particular social norms and particular forms of behaviour (Lloyd, 2013, p. 201). Unhappiness, Ahmed suggests, can function as a form of political action to resist the oppressive effects of happiness: 'the act of saying no or of pointing out injuries as an ongoing present affirms something, right from the beginning' (Ahmed, 2010, p. 207).

Feminist and queer affect scholars, therefore, emphasise the potentialities of affect for producing new forms of political agency and action (Bargetz, 2015, pp. 581, 584). They challenge the distinction between so-called negative and positive emotions, focusing on the transformative possibilities of purportedly negative emotions like depression, unhappiness, guilt, shame and fear (e.g., Cvetkovich, 2003, 2012; Ahmed, 2004, 2010; Love, 2009). These types of emotion are often excluded from social movement analysis or are otherwise labelled 'demobilising' or 'destructive' feelings. Feminist SM scholarship would do well to embrace this approach. Abandoning the idea that depression, unhappiness, guilt, shame and fear etc., are necessarily negative, destructive or demobilising feelings would allow an exploration of the capacity of these emotions, and others, to mobilise feminist activism. In addition, the feminist SM literature would gain from paying attention to the gendered, racialised, sexualised and classed dimensions of emotion, brought to light by feminist and queer affect scholars. While affect may uncover new emancipatory possibilities, some affects are not always accessible to certain subjects (Bargetz, 2015, p. 584).

2.2.2 Digital activism

The past two decades have witnessed considerable scholarly interest from social movement scholars and others in the role played by digital technologies in enabling social movement emergence, development and activity (e.g., Ayres, 1999; Pickerill, 2003; van de Donk *et al.*, 2004; Kahn and Kellner, 2004; Della Porta and Mosca, 2005; Garrett, 2006; Shirky, 2009; Earl and Kimport, 2011; Lim, 2012; Castells, 2012; Gerbaudo, 2012; Harlow, 2012; Beyer, 2014; Earl *et al.*, 2015). This coincides with ongoing debate concerning the direct influence of digital technologies on social movement formation and outcomes, with some commentators (e.g., Shirky, 2009, 2011) viewing people's growing access

to information in the digital age as entailing more opportunities for public dialogue and activism, whilst other commentators and scholars (e.g., Morozov, 2009, 2011; Gladwell, 2010) remaining less optimistic about the Internet's ability to facilitate collective action. According to Evgenyi Morozov (2009), for example, such Internet-enabled efforts amount to 'slacktivism', i.e., 'feel-good online activism that has zero political or social impact.' Several proponents of digital activism, however, acknowledge the importance of digital technologies but recognise that such technologies do not determine social movements (van de Donk *et al.*, 2004, p. 6; Castells, 2012, p. 103; Gerbaudo, 2012, p. 8; Lim, 2012, p. 232). Rather, the Internet offers affordances for activists creating, organising and participating in activism (Earl and Kimport, 2011, p. 10). More specifically, 'technological affordance' refers to 'the special technological capacities' of digital technologies and describes those 'actions or uses a technology makes easier (and therefore facilitates)' (Earl and Kimport 2011, p. 32). When affordances are leveraged effectively, or used to maximum advantage, new activist campaigns and even social movements might emerge (Earl and Kimport, 2011, p. 10).

The literature points to two key affordances offered by digital technologies in relation to social movement emergence and development. These are a reduction in participation costs for activists engaged in collective action and the facilitation and maintenance of collective identity among activists. As discussed below, most of the literature has focused on the first affordance, which benefits social movements in instrumental ways (Della Porta and Mosca, 2005, pp. 165, 167; Tindall and Groenewegen, 2014, p. 4). However, an emergent body of work is also examining the symbolic and expressive function of digital technologies by exploring the Internet and social media as communicative processes facilitating collective identification (Della Porta and Mosca, 2005; Tindall and Groenewegen, 2014, p. 4; Gerbaudo and Treré, 2015, pp. 865, 867; Treré, 2015, p. 906). In addition, I argue that an affordances perspective can serve as a helpful conceptual lens through which to understand a third affordance relevant to social movement growth in the digital age: the diffusion of innovations. I discuss each of these three affordances for social movement development in turn.

2.2.2.1 Reduction in participation costs

Digital technologies afford activists significantly lowered participation costs for creating, organising and engaging in activism (Van Aelst and Walgrave, 2004; Flanagin, Stohl and Bimber, 2006; Van Laer, 2007; Shirky, 2009; Van Laer and Van Aelst, 2009; Earl and Kimport, 2011). Participation costs refer to the amount of resources required to carry out a particular action, or anything expended in creating a new activist group or campaign, or joining an existing one, such as time, money, skills or attention (Shirky, 2009, p. 18; Van Laer and Van Aelst, 2009, p. 235). While only Jennifer Earl and Katrina Kimport (2011) explicitly use an affordance-based approach in discussing reduced participation costs, much social movement research uses the concept of affordances implicitly by investigating the possibilities

afforded by the Internet for lowering participation costs. Hence, previous research highlights activists' usage of and the potential of digital technologies to reduce the financial, temporal and spatial barriers that commonly impede political participation (Van Laer, 2007, p. 5) and the attendant outcomes for activists and social movements.

Now that people are less constrained by participation costs, thanks to the affordances of digital technologies, 'group-forming has gone from hard to ridiculously easy, [and] we are seeing an explosion of experiments with new groups and new kinds of groups' (Shirky, 2009, p. 54). For example, in an early study of seven social movement cases, Mark Bonchek (1995) found that the speed, asynchronicity and inexpensiveness of the Internet, and its capacity for many-to-many communication, reduced 'communication, coordination and information costs', and therefore facilitated group formation, efficiency, recruitment and retention (Bonchek, 1995, p. 2). More recently, in their study of *Digitally Enabled Social Change* (2011), Earl and Kimport similarly argued that digital technologies or, as they put it, 'Internet-enabled technologies generally and the Web specifically' (Earl and Kimport, 2011, p. 32)⁷ can facilitate:

communication, coordination, and information sharing at very low initial costs. The costs of scaling up communication, coordination and information to larger and larger groups are also low, meaning that communication grows exponentially while expenses increase slowly. In the real world of action, this means that protest campaigns and even entire movements that leverage this affordance can fully emerge as well as thrive at low cost points. (Earl and Kimport, 2011, p. 10)

In other words, digital technologies offer the possibility of reduced participation costs to activism, making it easier for activists to initiate campaigns, groups and social movements, to coordinate their actions, recruit participants and expand their initiatives and/or movements. My research contributes to the digital activism scholarship in this field through empirical analysis of a global feminist social movement that has not been examined in the existing literature. However, unlike the current literature, which tends to emphasise online forms of activism that very closely match offline forms of activism (Beyer, 2014, p. 143), such as petitions (Earl and Schussman, 2003, 2004; Gurak and Logie, 2003; Bimber, Flanagin and Stohl, 2005; Earl, 2006; Flanagin, Stohl and Bimber, 2006), boycotts (Leizerov, 2000; Earl, 2006; Earl and Kimport, 2009, 2011) and letter-writing and email campaigns (Carty and Onyett, 2006; Earl and Kimport, 2009, 2011), my thesis explores how digital technologies

⁷The authors distinguish between the Internet and the Web, where 'Web' is used to denote 'content located on the World Wide Web' and 'Internet' to mean 'the underlying protocols and processes that connect computers to one another globally' (Earl and Kimport, 2011, p. 24).

afford lower participation costs for activists engaging in online actions that have been neglected by SM scholars, such as anti-street harassment story-sharing blogs and websites.⁸

The research discussed above contends that digital technologies offer opportunities for individual activists and groups to create, organise and engage in activism and to expand their activities at low cost. Related research highlights the role of the Internet in facilitating transnational mobilisations and movement building by reducing information, communication and coordination costs (Bonchek, 1995) across disparate geographical areas (Carty, 2002; Van Aelst and Walgrave, 2004; van de Donk *et al.*, 2004, pp. 15, 17–18; Della Porta and Mosca, 2005; Kavada, 2010, p. 43; Earl *et al.*, 2015). My research also adds to this cluster of literature by investigating the ways in which anti-street harassment activists use digital technologies to organise actions, coordinate activities, mobilise adherents and collaborate on a common cause across and within national borders. Further, I contribute to this literature by offering a more expansive understanding of transnational networking, as facilitated by digital technologies. The current SM literature adopts a narrowly political view of transnational networking, focusing on Internet usage by activists to communicate information about conventional protest campaigns and to coordinate transnational activism that targets state authorities, for example transnational communication and networking by the global justice movement during the anti-G8 protest in 2001 and the European Social Forum in 2002 (Della Porta and Mosca, 2005), and digitally-enabled activism against the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) initiative coordinated by the Hemispheric Social Alliance (Ayres, 2005). My study, by contrast, examines digitally-enabled transnational networking among anti-street harassment activists that generally does not take place in protest settings or necessarily involve institutional change tactics. Instead, as chapters four and six explore, anti-street harassment transnational networked-actions typically target the general public and (inter)national media through awareness raising strategies in a range of arenas, as well as seeking to foster and strengthen solidarity among movement participants.

2.2.2.2 Collective identity formation

As noted above, the social movement literature on digital activism largely focuses on the ‘cost-reducing affordance’ of digital technologies (Earl and Kimport, 2011, p. 15) and the instrumental outcomes for social movements and activists. Less attention is paid to the affordances such technologies offer for activists in the construction and maintenance of collective identities (Tindall and Groenewegen, 2014, p. 4; Gerbaudo and Treré, 2015, p. 865; Treré, 2015, p. 906). This is somewhat surprising given that collective identity has been understood by many social movement

⁸ For studies on the Internet’s facilitation of other novel forms of activism, such as hacktivism, see Rolfe (2005) and Van Laer and Van Aelst (2009).

scholars as essential for the formation and evolution of movements (Melucci, 1989; Taylor and Whittier, 1992; Polletta and Jasper, 2001), although as discussed below, the symbolic contribution of digital technologies with respect to social movement activity is more controversial (Tindall and Groenewegen, 2014, p. 4).

As a concept, collective identity is ‘notoriously “slippery”’ and lacks an agreed definition (Flesher Fominaya, 2010, p. 394). SM scholars have offered many different interpretations of the concept, connecting collective identity to, for example, the ‘creation of connectedness’ (Diani and Bison, 2004, p. 94), ‘relationships of trust’ (Della Porta and Diani, 2006, p. 94), a shared definition (Melucci, 1989, p. 34; Taylor and Whittier, 1992) and solidarity among movement actors (Hirsch, 1986; Hunt and Benford, 2004). Despite the varying interpretations of collective identity, their common characteristic is a sort of ‘collapsing of the “I” into the “we”, through which the individual recognizes him or herself in some sort of “we-ness” (real or imagined) that stands for collective agency’ (Milan, 2013, p. 68). Thus, collective identity, can be defined most simply as a shared sentiment of ‘we-ness’ and ‘collective agency’ (Snow, 2001).

The role that digital technologies play in the formation and sustainment of collective identities is a contentious issue (Kavada, 2015, p. 873; Milan, 2015, p. 888; Treré, 2015, p. 904), which is only to be expected given the lack of consensus in the SM literature over the meaning and use of the collective identity concept. Some scholars argue that digital technologies do not have significant effects on the construction of identities (Diani, 2000; Ayers, 2003); others suggest that different digital media practices have different effects on collective identity formation (Fenton and Barassi, 2011); still others argue that digital technologies facilitate some elements of collective identification but not others (Nip, 2004; Wall, 2007). For example, Joyce Nip (2004) used participant observation methods to examine identity formation on the online bulletin board of the Queer Sisters – a lesbian/queer group in Hong Kong – and found that the activists exhibited two of the three elements conceptualised by Taylor and Whittier (1992) – a ‘sense of we’ and an ‘oppositional culture’, but not a collective consciousness. Meanwhile, a few scholars, most notably Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg (2012), question the necessity of collective identity for explaining the emergence and activity of contemporary movements, such as the Arab spring, Occupy Wall Street and the Spanish indignados. Their ‘logic of connective action’ envisages digital media as ‘organizing agents’, in place of formal social movement organisations, and public action is conceived as ‘an act of personal expression and recognition or self-validation’ accomplished through the sharing of ideas and actions in networks of trust (Bennett and Segerberg, 2012, pp. 752–753). Connective action, they argue, reflects the shift towards much more individualised, personalised and technologically organised forms of activism, without the necessity of collective identity framing (2012, p. 750).

The continuing relevance of collective identity in the analysis of contemporary movements, however, is being highlighted by a small but growing number of researchers who are also mapping its evolution 'in the digital age' (Gerbaudo and Treré, 2015, pp. 866, 868). For example, research has analysed social movements' website content and hyperlinking practices to explore their potential for collective identity building (Van Aelst and Walgrave, 2004; Ackland and O'Neil, 2011). In their study of the emergence of the 'anti-globalization' movement, for instance, Peter Van Aelst and Stefaan Walgrave examined 'shared "frames of reference"' of different activist groups by analysing how the groups' websites defined and conceived 'globalisation' as an indicator of collective identity (2004, p. 106). They found a general consensus between the different groups in terms of how they contested and framed 'globalisation' and that all of the 17 websites analysed were 'hyperlinked' to each other (2004, p. 120), which indicates a sense of 'we-ness' among the different groups. More recently, scholars have focused on social media as spaces for forging and shaping collective identities (e.g., Gerbaudo, 2015; Kavada, 2015; Milan, 2015; Monterde *et al.*, 2015; Treré, 2015; Khazraee and Novak, 2018) through, for example, interactive features, including profile images and status updates, or metrics such as likes and comments, which have been appropriated as expressions of collective identity (Gerbaudo and Treré, 2015, p. 868).

The SM literature on the nexus between digital activism and collective identity construction is pertinent to my study since, as mentioned above, collective identity is often considered critical for the emergence and development of social movements (Melucci, 1989; Taylor and Whittier, 1992; Polletta and Jasper, 2001). However, as with much SM scholarship, this research largely concentrates on processes of digitally-enabled collective identification within protest movements, such as Occupy Wall Street and the indignados, which operate in the political and economic arenas. My study takes a different approach by examining how digital technologies facilitate collective identity creation and maintenance within a feminist movement, which operates primarily in the cultural arena (see Taylor, 1998, p. 378).

Furthermore, I examine both the instrumental and symbolic affordances of digital technologies as applied to the same social movement, unlike the current literature which is increasingly divided into two camps focusing either on the Internet's cost-lowering affordance and organisational dynamics or on its ability to build and maintain collective identities (Treré, 2015). Additionally, as noted above, I contend that a third affordance offered by the Internet – that of diffusion of innovations – is relevant to understanding the development of the global anti-street harassment movement and it is to the SM literature on diffusion that I now turn.

2.2.2.3 *Diffusion of innovations*

The third strand of literature relevant to my study is the SM diffusion scholarship (e.g., McAdam and Rucht, 1993; Ayres, 1999; Soule, 2004; Earl, 2010; Earl and Kimport, 2010; Givan, Roberts and Soule, 2010), which is concerned with asking how social movements (or some component thereof, such as a form of activism, issue or outcome) spread from one locale to another. 'One cannot understand social movements – how they evolve, how they expand, how they engage the political arena – without understanding the dynamics of diffusion' (Givan, Roberts and Soule, 2010, p. 1). Diffusion refers to the spread of an innovation through certain channels 'across members of a social system' (Givan, Roberts and Soule, 2010, p. 1; Rogers, 2010, p. 5).

Models of diffusion generally distinguish between relational (or direct) and non-relational (or indirect) channels of diffusion (McAdam and Rucht, 1993, p. 59). Relational diffusion means the spread and emulation of ideas and forms of activism as mediated by interpersonal interaction (McAdam and Rucht, 1993, p. 73). Nonrelational diffusion is the spread and emulation of ideas and forms of activism learned through impersonal means, such as the media or the Internet (Tarrow, 2010, p. 209). While traditionally there has been a tendency to focus on relational diffusion since innovations circulate most effortlessly along established lines of communication, 'in this age of almost instant communication new forms of [activism] often spread among people who have never met' (Tarrow, 2010, p. 209). Digital technologies, then, can facilitate the spread and adoption of ideas and tactics between activists in different sites even in the absence of direct interpersonal ties.

While I agree that digital technologies can enable the diffusion and adoption of innovations between actors who may not know one another in different locales, I do not conceive of Internet usage as 'nonrelational'. On the contrary, an affordances perspective, sees Internet usage as relational since it focuses on how people interact with technologies (Evans *et al.*, 2017, p. 35). With this in mind, and although not conceptualised elsewhere in the literature as an 'affordance', digitally-enabled diffusion of innovations is consistent with my conceptual understanding of affordances, as defined earlier (and as explicated in more depth in the conceptual framework). I therefore organise and review the literature on digitally-enabled diffusion of innovations, amalgamating diffusion theory and an affordances perspective.

The literature examining online diffusion and social movements is relatively small and most studies have explored activists' usage of the Internet and its ability to diffuse information efficiently across time and space within online mobilisations or networks (e.g., Cleaver, Jr, 1998; Ayres, 1999; Liben-Nowell and Kleinberg, 2008). In a different manner, Halim Rane and Sumra Salem (2012) used diffusion theory to analyse activists' interactions with social media and its potential to facilitate information dissemination among activists agitating on the ground. They found that during the 2011 Arab uprisings, social media played significant facilitation roles in diffusing ideas among actors from Tunisia

to Egypt and subsequently elsewhere in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region (Rane and Salem, 2012, pp. 97, 109). Put another way, and using the conceptual lens of affordances, social media offered activists the opportunity to spread information broadly and rapidly.

While the affordances of the Internet to diffuse information quickly is underscored in this small body of literature (even though scholars may not use this terminology), far less attention has been paid to the affordances of the Internet to diffuse tactics across sites (Earl, 2010, p. 210; Earl and Kimport, 2010, p. 125). Earl (2010, p. 210) argued that specific online forms of activism, such as e-petitions, were spreading and that activism was spreading to different types of actors, i.e., those not conventionally considered politically active. However, distinct from Earl's research, which focuses on diffusion of innovations between discrete movements and between populations, I examine digitally-enabled diffusion of anti-street harassment tactics and information (both off- and online) between actors within the same social movement. In doing so, I seek to understand how the spread and adoption of anti-street harassment innovations, afforded by digital technologies, has contributed to the movement's global growth.

2.3 Literature on Anti-Street Harassment Activism

There is a small but growing literature on anti-street harassment activism, which comprises three main strands. The first – feminist digital activism – examines online feminist resistance against street harassment or rape culture more broadly, particularly from a US perspective. The second strand – Egyptian anti-street harassment activism – investigates the evolution and practices of anti-street harassment groups in Egypt that emerged and/or intensified just after the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. And the third – anti-street harassment activist literature – is produced by activists and centres on resistance campaigns and tactics, but more importantly, provides some insight into activists' motivations for engaging in activism and their perspectives on the role of digital technologies in facilitating the emergence and development of anti-street harassment initiatives and campaigns. I consider each of these strands of literature in turn to assess what might be learned from the existing scholarship and what my study can contribute to the literature.

2.3.1 Feminist digital activism

The literature on feminist digital activism is cross-disciplinary – from communication studies, computing, criminology, education, feminist media studies and sociology – and interrogates digital feminist resistance to street harassment and other forms of sexual violence (e.g., Dimond *et al.*, 2013; Schuster, 2013; Fileborn, 2014, 2017; Rentschler, 2014, 2017; Keller, Mendes and Ringrose, 2016). While the feminist digital activism literature does not examine the concept of the global anti-street harassment movement, it reveals aspects about how digital technologies function in the movement's

emergence and development, namely in relation to the rise of digital story-sharing platforms resisting street harassment, such as websites, social media applications and mobile phone apps. Most studies examine the practice and effects of collective storytelling within the main Hollaback! website (Dimond *et al.*, 2013; Keller, Mendes and Ringrose, 2016; Gómez and Aden, 2017), or with reference to a specific 'local' Hollaback! chapter (Fileborn, 2014; Wånggren, 2016), or by focusing on Hollaback's mobile phone app (Rentschler, 2014; Weiss, 2016).

Digital technologies afford women and girls new opportunities to share their experiences of harassment and sexual violence often in ways previously not possible (Rentschler, 2014; Keller, Mendes and Ringrose, 2016, p. 6; Phipps *et al.*, 2018, p. 2). Through the provision of online spaces for street harassment victims/survivors to share their experiences, digital story-sharing sites 'provide a counter-narrative to the mainstream silencing and exclusion of women's experiences of street harassment' (Fileborn, 2014, p. 33). For example, through content and discursive textual analysis of 159 posts to the main Hollaback! website between 2006 to 2015, Jessalynn Keller, Kaitlynn Mendes and Jessica Ringrose, (2016) found that anonymous posting empowered women to speak about and make visible oft-silenced experiences of street harassment. In this regard, social networking tools can act as 'safe spaces' to speak out about and resist street harassment and sexual assault (Schuster, 2013, p. 18; Fileborn, 2014, pp. 33–34, 45; Gómez and Aden, 2017, pp. 161–63, 168–169, 173–174) in the sense that online spaces offer the possibility of retaining ones anonymity, providing women with powerful platforms to share their experiences of sexual violence in ways they often cannot do offline (Schuster, 2013, p. 18). In the North African context, anti-street harassment digital platforms, such as HarassMap, offer a safe space for harassment victims/survivors to vent their frustrations about street harassment free from the fear of judgement by family and friends or dismissal by police authorities (Skalli, 2014, p. 251). However, the idea that social media facilitates safe spaces for women to report and share their harassment experiences is complicated by the reality that the Internet can also operate as 'a site of harm to women' (Fileborn, 2014, p. 45; see also Mantilla, 2013; Jane, 2017; Ging and Siapera, 2018; Vickery and Everbach, 2018a).

Current research shows that digital story-sharing platforms are building communities among women who share their personal experiences of street harassment and other forms of sexual violence (Dimond *et al.*, 2013, p. 483; Schuster, 2013, pp. 16–18; Rentschler, 2014, pp. 71, 76, 78; Keller, Mendes and Ringrose, 2016, pp. 7, 12; Wånggren, 2016, p. 406; Gómez and Aden, 2017, pp. 161, 169, 173; Mendes, Ringrose and Keller, 2018). Such online cultures of support perform three important functions. First, they can provide validation of harassment experiences, enabling street harassment victims/survivors 'to make ontological claims' concerning their disclosures (Fileborn, 2017, p. 1491), to feel supported and believed (Wånggren, 2016, p. 406), and to feel that they are part of a wider, collective phenomenon that warrants change (Dimond *et al.*, 2013, p. 483). Hence, in the case of

Hollaback!, street harassment victims and survivors can go online, tell their story and get support from readers who may have faced similar experiences (Wånggren, 2016, p. 407), or respond affirmatively to other people's experiences by posting responses or clicking on an 'I've got your back!' button (Gómez and Aden, 2017, p. 173).

Second, such online communities serve as consciousness-raising and pedagogical platforms (Wånggren, 2016, pp. 405–408; Fileborn, 2017, pp. 1492–1493; Flores, 2017, p. 123). For example, in Bianca Fileborn's (2017) mixed-methods research conducted in Melbourne, Australia, she found that for some participants, sharing their harassment experiences online was an overt political act. Online disclosure helped to raise awareness of the issue and to situate their individual experiences within wider patterns and within gendered power relations (Fileborn, 2017, p. 1492). Similarly, Lena Wånggren (2016) highlights Hollaback! Edinburgh's practice of storytelling 'as a pedagogical and consciousness-raising practice' (Wånggren, 2016, p. 405). Feminist online communities serve a broader educative function by acknowledging street harassment as a type of structural violence and providing a 'platform to enlighten and educate the public' (Laniya, 2005, quoted in Wånggren, 2016, p. 406). Third, and relatedly, these communities of support may augment site visitors' own capacities for reporting and responding to street harassment and assault as the 'online testimonial culture' around sexual violence encourages others to disclose their experiences (Rentschler, 2014, p. 76), as the recent #MeToo movement has demonstrated.

In sum, the feminist digital activism literature contends that digital technologies offer unprecedented opportunities for women to share their experiences of street harassment and stories of resistance. Digital story-sharing sites can serve as safe spaces for women to speak out about street harassment and sexual assault and to challenge the mainstream silencing of women's experiences of street harassment. Relatedly, digital technologies have enabled the formation of feminist online communities resisting street harassment. Composed primarily of women, these communities of support may provide validation of harassment experiences, perform a consciousness-raising and pedagogical function, and encourage others to disclose and respond to street harassment. However, while the literature illustrates the opportunities that digital technologies afford feminist women and girls for resisting street harassment and rape culture, it does not explore the opportunities afforded by such technologies for feminist anti-street harassment activists to create, organise and participate in anti-street harassment activism. The ease with which women can initiate online story-sharing platforms and subsequently share their harassment experiences, as the activist literature below attests, no doubt accounts for the proliferation in such sites since 2005, when Hollaback! launched their initial blog. Kearl (2015, pp. 21–22) estimated that there were approximately 100 active blogs and websites worldwide dedicated to reporting and sharing experiences of street harassment. My thesis contributes to the growing literature on feminist digital activism through an examination of

anti-street harassment activists' usage of technological affordances to expose, resist and combat street harassment.

Moreover, while some studies (Rentschler, 2014, p. 72; Wånggren, 2016, p. 403; Gómez and Aden, 2017, pp. 161, 174) note the movement building and emancipatory potential of Hollaback!'s digital story-sharing technologies, there is no explicit examination of how the Hollaback! network has grown into a 'new worldwide movement' (Wånggren, 2016, p. 403). To address this gap in the literature, I provide key empirical data about how digital technologies have facilitated the formation and development of the global Hollaback! network as a component group of the wider anti-street harassment movement.

The literature on feminist digital activism has largely ignored the motivational dimensions of anti-street harassment activism. Only one publication, as far as I know, explores this theme: a chapter in Mendes, Ringrose and Keller's book *Digital Feminist Activism: Girls and Women Fight Back against Rape Culture* (2019), which sheds light on activists' motivations for initiating and maintaining feminist online campaigns and the affective dimensions of feminist digital activism. However, this work presents a broader exploration of the motivations and experiences of activists involved in three digital feminist campaigns: Hollaback!, the Everyday Sexism Project and Who Needs Feminism?. It is not, therefore, a study of the motivational dimensions of anti-street harassment activism per se.⁹ Mendes, Ringrose and Keller interviewed 18 activists from Australia, Canada, India, Kenya, the UK, the US and Venezuela (Mendes, Ringrose and Keller, 2019, p. 74), yet the data presented represent mostly the perceptions and experiences of activists from the global North. The study found that activists were motivated to become involved in digital activism after hearing about a campaign through social media or recruitment through pre-existing social ties. Most activists had studied or been involved with women's issues for several years (Mendes, Ringrose and Keller, 2019, p. 76) and many, but not all, identified as feminists prior to becoming involved in activism (2019, pp. 77–78). But because these topics were prompted during the interview process (Kaitlynn Mendes, personal communication, 2019), it is difficult to assess how accurately the study's findings represent activists' actual motivations for initiating or joining campaigns. I investigate, in an open-ended manner, the motivations of 26 anti-street harassment activists across multiple sites in both the global South and the global North. In so doing, I provide a much more global analysis of the motivational dimensions of anti-street harassment activism.

⁹ While Hollaback! and the Everyday Sexism Project can be considered central components of the global anti-street harassment movement, Who Needs Feminism? is not an anti-street harassment group. It is a Tumblr site where users upload images and testimonies explaining why feminism is still relevant and necessary (Mendes, Ringrose and Keller, 2019, p. 3).

2.3.2 Egyptian anti-street harassment activism

The Egyptian anti-street harassment activism literature examines the evolution, composition, strategies and tactics of anti-street harassment groups in Egypt that formed immediately prior to or just after the 2011 Egyptian Revolution (e.g., Langohr, 2013, 2015; Ahmad Zaki and Abd Alhamid, 2014; Peuchaud, 2014; Skalli, 2014; Tadros, 2014; Abdelmonem, 2015b; Abdelmonem and Galán, 2017). While this small body of work does not investigate the global anti-street harassment movement, it provides insights into how motivations and digital technologies functioned in the emergence of what several researchers considered to be a burgeoning national social movement against street harassment following the Egyptian Revolution (Ahmad Zaki and Abd Alhamid, 2014, p. 2; ElSayed and Rizzo, 2014; Tadros, 2015, pp. 1358–1359) and, as I discuss in chapter four, what I consider to be an important hub, or former hub, of the global anti-street harassment movement.

For several researchers, the 2011 uprising provided a political opportunity for the emergence and evolution of novel forms of grassroots activism against public sexual harassment and assault (ElSayed and Rizzo, 2014; Abdelmonem, 2015b, pp. 94, 97; Tadros, 2015, p. 1352; Abdelmonem and Galán, 2017, p. 155).¹⁰ While the uprising generated a climate in which women could claim public spaces hitherto denied to them (Ahmad Zaki and Abd Alhamid, 2014, p. 2; ElSayed and Rizzo, 2014; Tadros, 2014, p. 23; Tadros, 2015, p. 1348), it simultaneously resulted in a rapid increase in violent sexual harassment and assault against women protestors and activists, as well as an escalation in everyday sexual harassment and assault against women in other public places (Langohr, 2013; Ahmad Zaki and Abd Alhamid, 2014, p. 2; Skalli, 2014, p. 244; Tadros, 2015, p. 1348; Galán, 2016, p. 209). This prompted the emergence of a number of street-level grassroots initiatives that focused on bystander intervention and self-defence and which sought to change people's attitudes and behaviours around street harassment and sexual assault (Abdelmonem and Galán, 2017, p. 155).

Whether working to combat violent sexual harassment and assault in protest settings or to resist 'everyday' harassment and assault on the street, all the Egyptian anti-street harassment initiatives depended on a large volunteer base and utilised social media for mobilisation (Langohr, 2013, pp. 19, 20; ElSayed and Rizzo, 2014; Peuchaud, 2014, p. i118; Skalli, 2014, p. 251; Galán, 2016, p. 218; Abdelmonem and Galán, 2017, p. 155). For instance, the initial members of Tahrir Bodyguard (TB) joined the group in response to tweets sent out by TB Founder, Soraya Bahgat in 2012. An early tweet read: 'We are a collective effort and we want to grow. Please tweet @ us if u want to join or if u have ideas. We are just starting #TahrirBodyguard' (Langohr, 2013, p. 20). Similarly, the founders of

¹⁰ With the notable exception of Nadia Ilahi (2009), the existing literature does not use the term 'street harassment' to describe the sexual harassment and assault of women in public spaces in Egypt. While there are variations in terminology, the most common terms used are 'public sexual harassment' or 'sexual harassment.'

Operation Anti Sexual Harassment (OpAntiSH) took to Facebook in 2012 to ask for volunteers to join the initiative, which generated 80 recruits, many of whom were already active in existing anti-street harassment efforts, such as HarassMap (Galán, 2016, pp. 217–218). Hence, the emergence of anti-street harassment efforts in post-2011 Egypt was facilitated by the ease of mobilising online to recruit volunteers.¹¹ My study builds on these findings by providing empirical data from three different anti-street harassment initiatives in Egypt, and it extends the analysis by investigating the role of digital technologies in enabling volunteer recruitment and organisation across the global anti-street harassment movement.

In terms of explaining individual motivations, Egyptian activists were compelled to respond to the escalation and proliferation of public sexual violence during protests and in daily life (Galán, 2016, p. 217). Through a somewhat cursory examination of the motivations of four anti-street harassment activists, Angie Abdelmonem and Susana Galán (2017, p. 163) argue that such motivations demonstrate a desire to respond immediately to events and centre on activists' personal experiences of harassment/assault in relation to the Revolution. Similarly, Vickie Langohr (2015, p. 133) found that some men joined Egyptian anti-street harassment groups because of the negative consequences of sexual harassment for family members or close friends. In this respect, these studies shed some light on how motivations functioned in the emergence of anti-street harassment initiatives in Egypt post-2011. However, this topic remains underexamined in the literature. I contribute to this limited literature by broadening the analysis to examine the motivational dimensions of anti-street harassment activism globally.

2.3.3 Anti-street harassment activist literature

A small but growing body of activist literature explores the gendered dynamics of street harassment and illuminates tactics and campaigns to tackle sexual harassment on the street and other public spaces. In addition to Kearl (2015) and Keyhan (2016) (discussed below), only six books have been published in this area (Langelan, 1993; Kearl, 2010, 2013; Smith, Van Deven and Huppuch, 2011; Bates, 2014; Fazlalizadeh, 2019) as well as a book chapter (May and Carter, 2016).

In considering how digital technologies function in the emergence and development of the global anti-street harassment movement, three studies (Kearl, 2010; Bates, 2014; May and Carter, 2016) note the opportunities afforded by the Internet for resisting street harassment and other forms of sexism,

¹¹ In addition, anti-street harassment initiatives were facilitated by increased mainstream media attention to sexual harassment, which condemned officials for failing to address public sexual violence, while portraying the work of these groups in a favourable light (Langohr, 2013, p. 132), and by pre-existing contacts and friendships among activists, and the formation of alliances between groups (ElSayed and Rizzo, 2014; Tadros, 2014, pp. 21–22, 2015, pp. 1356–1358).

pointing out that their projects all began as simple websites (Kearl, 2010, p. xx; Bates, 2014, pp. 15-16; May and Carter, 2016, p. 15). For example, Emily May and Sam Carter (2016, pp. 12-13) highlight how the seven Hollaback! founders were inspired by Thao Nguyen who, in 2005, shared a mobile phone image to Flickr of a man who had exposed himself and masturbated while on a New York subway train, which generated significant social media and press attention. They explain:

Essentially, Thao had taken an action against her harasser using a digital tool that we all carry in our pockets, and then proceeded to share it with her broader community. It had sparked public debate. As we went through the timeline of the media story, we found ourselves revisiting familiar ground: use of this new personal technology, the power of the Internet and emerging social media, the rise of blogs, and, of course, gender. At that moment we realized that it was completely within our power to keep this conversation alive in New York City. We could start a new site dedicated to sharing the kinds of stories that Thao Nguyen had, and make it open to everyone in New York to talk about. (May and Carter, 2016, p. 13)

In a similar vein, Laura Bates (2014, p. 15) realised the potential of the Internet to ‘bring together all those women’s stories in one place, [thus] testifying to the sheer scale and breadth of the problem ... [and] that there was, in fact, a problem to be solved.’ Thus, for these activists, digital technologies have facilitated the formation of Hollaback!, Stop Street Harassment and the Everyday Sexism (ES) Project, which are among the most significant and active anti-street harassment initiatives worldwide. After launching websites for women to share their stories of harassment and sexism, Bates (2014, pp. 16, 18) and May and Carter (2016, pp. 17-18) illustrate how their initially small-scale projects quickly expanded into different global movements as the stories poured in from around the world, generating national and international media attention, and leading to requests from women in different countries and cities to establish their own ES or Hollaback! site. Within 18 months of launching in 2012, the ES Project had expanded to 18 countries, and five years after its inception as a blog in New York in 2005, Hollaback! launched 45 sites across the globe.

Although very few in number, these studies provide useful empirical insights into the formation and growth of prominent anti-street harassment initiatives. My thesis draws on this literature to provide a detailed empirical and conceptual investigation of activists’ use of the affordances of digital technologies and the impact of this on the global anti-street harassment movement. I also show that these movements are in fact constituents of a larger, networked global movement against street harassment.

The literature touches on activists’ motivations for becoming involved in activism to resist street harassment and, in the case of Bates, other forms of everyday sexism. Studies indicate that the central motivating factor in prompting individuals to launch an activist group or campaign was

discontentment and frustration with personal experience of verbal and physical harassment in public spaces and with the prevalence of street harassment in women's and girls' daily lives more broadly (Langelan, 1993, p. 331; Kearl, 2010, pp. xix–xx; Smith, Van Deven and Huppuch, 2011, p. 51; Bates, 2014, pp. 11–13; May and Carter, 2016, p. 12; Fazlalizadeh, 2019, pp. viii–xi).¹² For example, according to Tatyana Fazlalizadeh, who created her 'Stop Telling Women to Smile' street art project in 2012 as a means to respond to and reclaim power back from street harassers:

People have asked if one particular movement or incident sparked this project, and my answer has always been no. There was not *one* moment, there were *hundreds*, cumulating over the years; the project grew out of the utter enormity of experienced street harassment. It arose from the exhaustion and frustration of enduring years of sexual harassment and abuse from strange men. No, not just one moment. Rather, the simple fact that it happens all of the time (Fazlalizadeh, 2019, p. x, original emphasis).

In short, activists were motivated by grievances concerning street harassment. The anti-street harassment activist literature is instructive in illuminating why these particular individuals became active but it is 1) limited to a handful of studies, 2) Western-centric and 3) with the exception of Bates (2014), who initiated the Everyday Sexism Project in the UK, entirely US-focused.

My thesis builds on this literature by providing a more global perspective on the motivational dimensions of anti-street harassment activism through interview analysis with activists across 11 different sites globally. Further, whilst Kearl (2010, xix–xx) reflects on the emotions evoked by particular street harassment experiences, including disgust, anger and humiliation, there is no existing study that explores the motivating role of emotions for propelling anti-street harassment activism. In chapter five, I investigate this topic to uncover whether, and in what ways, motivating emotions have inspired activism against street harassment.

2.4 Literature on the Global Anti-Street Harassment Movement

There is very little literature on the global anti-street harassment movement itself. To date, only one academic journal article (Logan, 2015) and two activist publications (Kearl, 2015b; Keyhan, 2016) include an explicit discussion of the global movement or the global growth in anti-street harassment activism.¹³ None of these studies have attempted to conceptualise the global anti-street harassment

¹² For Laura Bates, the motivator was personal experience of street harassment as well as other forms of normalised everyday sexism.

¹³ Three further journal articles (Dimond *et al.*, 2013; Roenius, 2016; Flores, 2017) make fleeting references to an 'anti-street harassment movement', and another article (Weiss, 2016) refers to a 'GBSH (gender based street harassment) movement'. However, these four articles simply mention the movement's existence.

social movement and sparse attention is given to the movement's characteristic features, except for its forms of activism. Kearl (2015) examined thoroughly and in great detail the increasing number of anti-street harassment groups and campaigns operating around the world, covering over 40 countries, catalogued by action form (research and personal stories, local community activism, technology-fueled efforts, global campaigns, government initiatives, and Egypt and India case studies), whilst Keyhan (2016) briefly overviewed the global scope of anti-street harassment activism by action form (community groups and safe spaces, art and public education, academic research and community-based responses, government responses, and global activism in a digital age). Yet, other central characteristics of the global anti-street harassment movement remain understudied as do the motivational dimensions of anti-street harassment activism, i.e., the literature does not address activists' motivations for engaging in activism. In short, there is no existing literature on how motivations function in the emergence and development of the global anti-street harassment movement or on the defining characteristics of the movement.

While the focus of these three studies is not to interrogate the role of digital technologies in enabling the movement's formation and growth, this small literature indicates that such technologies have had a profound influence on the evolution of the global anti-street harassment movement: technological advances have enabled activists and participants to speak out, share stories and information, organise and engage in activism, connect and join forces, and collaborate at the local and global level (Kearl, 2015b, pp. 21–22; 56–68; Logan, 2015, p. 199; Keyhan, 2016, pp. 71, 76). However, what is missing is a detailed exploration of the enabling factors of digital technologies and their influence on anti-street harassment activism. This thesis addresses these gaps in the literature through an empirical investigation of how digital technologies and motivations function in the emergence and development of the global anti-street harassment movement and through an examination of the movement's characteristic features.

2.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to review and critically assess current literature relevant to the emergence and development of the global anti-street harassment movement and, specifically, the contributory role played by motivations and digital technologies in the movement's evolution and expansion. As I have argued, there is a paucity of literature investigating the global anti-street harassment movement, none of which explores my specific research questions. My thesis addresses these gaps in previous studies through an extensive empirical analysis of the ways in which motivations and digital technologies function in the formation and development of the global anti-street harassment movement and an analysis of the movement's characteristic features. In doing so, I also contribute to and extend feminist scholarship on feminist consciousness and activism, feminist

social movement literature, social movement scholarship on emotions and digital activism, and the literature on anti-street harassment activism, by presenting empirical data from a global feminist social movement that remains unexamined. In this process, and as outlined throughout this chapter, I employ and interrelate a panoply of concepts for understanding the research problem, including feminist consciousness, motivation, grievances, emotions, collective identity, affordances and diffusion. In the next chapter, I discuss the overall conceptual underpinnings of my study in more depth along with my methodological approach.

Chapter Three: Conceptual Framework and Methodology

In this chapter, I first set out the conceptual framework of my study, which draws on a range of feminist theories and on social movement theory. Next, I discuss and justify the methodological approach of the research. I outline the research methods and procedures employed to obtain my data as well as the research sample, and explain the reasons for their choice. I then outline the procedures used to analyse the data. Finally, I discuss ethical considerations involved in the research and the strategies I put in place to anticipate and manage potential ethical concerns.

3.1 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this thesis is located at the intersections of feminist theory and social movement theory (SMT). Together, these perspectives provide a conceptual basis for framing and understanding the gendered dynamics of street harassment, defining the global anti-street harassment movement, and exploring how motivations and digital technologies function in the emergence and development of movement.

3.1.1 Street harassment

Since I am investigating the evolution and characteristic features of a feminist movement resisting street harassment, I set out my understanding of street harassment and illustrate how I frame and position the issue using a feminist lens. Drawing primarily on radical feminist literature (e.g., Kelly, 1988), I situate street harassment on a 'continuum of sexual violence'. For me, radical feminism offers the most convincing analysis of violence against women because of its understanding of structure and social organisation as inherently patriarchal. Sexism, which underpins women's oppression, therefore prevails to preserve male privilege and the patriarchal status quo (Gerassi, 2015, p. 2). Relatedly, I go on to conceptualise street harassment as a form of gender oppression, drawing upon feminist legal scholarship (e.g., Bowman, 1993; Davis, 1994; Tuerkheimer, 1997) and gender studies literature (e.g., Kissling, 1991; Gardner, 1995), which highlight the oppressive, gender-based harms of street harassment.

3.1.1.1 The continuum of sexual violence

I locate street harassment on a 'continuum of sexual violence', a concept devised by Liz Kelly (1988) which emphasises the interconnections between all types of sexual violence and sexual harassment as experienced by women (Kelly, 1988, pp. 34, 74–96). That is, it is inclusive of all such behaviour that women experience as sexual violence, ranging from what are often deemed 'minor' incidents (or not acknowledged as sexual violence at all) through to behaviours that are legally defined as sexual assault and rape (Fileborn, 2013, p. 10). A continuum is 'a continuous series of elements or events, which pass

into each other and have a common character, even though they are often understood as disparate phenomena' (Fletcher *et al.*, 2017, p. 4). Underlying the multiple forms of violence is the 'basic common character ... [of] *abuse, intimidation, coercion, intrusion, threat and force [that] men use to control women*' (Kelly, 1988, p. 76, original emphasis).¹⁴ The concept of a continuum therefore facilitates an understanding of street harassment as one form of sexual violence connected to a range of other such forms, in terms of a commonality in dynamics.

The continuum of sexual violence does not imply a straight line connecting different incidents or a 'hierarchy of abuse', in which the relative seriousness of different types of sexual violence is assumed. One cannot simplistically infer the degree of impact women (or others) experience from the form of sexual violence or its position on a continuum. Instead, the concept assumes the seriousness of all forms of sexual violence (Kelly, 1988, p. 76). The continuum of sexual violence takes account of the full range of sexual violence as experienced by many women, illustrating how pervasive and everyday incidents are connected to the forms of violence legally defined as crimes (1988, p. 76). More common forms of sexual violence, like street harassment, 'which most women experience in their lives' and which are often not accounted for in legal doctrines (1988, p. 76),¹⁵ are therefore taken seriously. This matters because street harassment is often brushed off by male harassers and wider society as trivial, as harmless or even as complimentary (Laniya, 2005, pp. 108–109; Kearl, 2010, p. 5). The media is often complicit in this trivialisation, perpetuating stereotypical tropes of street harassment that objectify women, which in turn fosters an environment that reinforces and legitimates the practice (Laniya, 2005, p. 110).

The continuum of sexual violence is therefore a powerful conceptual device that allows us to understand sexual violence as experienced by women and to contest misrepresentations and misunderstandings of street harassment. As I discuss in the next chapter, anti-street harassment activists frame street harassment as a form of sexual violence, and by extension a VAW or gender-based violence, along a continuum, in order to disrupt and counter prevalent understandings of the practice and to label street harassment as an overt social problem requiring a solution. The continuum of sexual violence serves, then, to illuminate the commonalities and connections between street

¹⁴ The concept of 'sexual violence' per se, or the continuum of it, does not assume that only women can be the victims and survivors of it. However, it reflects the understanding that most women have experienced some form of sexual violence at some point in their lives, that there is a range of behaviour associated mostly with (cisgender, heterosexual) men that many women experience as abusive, and that sexual violence involves unequal power relations between men and women (Kelly, 1988, p. 1). Put differently, these definitions are concerned with 'women' as the victims/survivors of sexual violence empirically, but they are not conceptually limited to women.

¹⁵ As I argue in chapter four, this situation is beginning to change, thanks in large part to the advocacy efforts of anti-street harassment activists. More than 20 laws criminalising street harassment at the national and local level were enacted globally between 2012–2018 (Kearl, 2018) and several more bills are currently being considered for enactment by legislators around the world.

harassment and other forms of sexual violence, thus functioning as a conceptual resource to make visible street harassment as a serious form of sexual violence and to challenge and contest its trivialisation and normalisation.

3.1.1.2 Gender oppression

I conceptualise street harassment as a form of gender oppression, which I understand as a manifestation of unequal gender relations that 'privilege the dominant group and marginalize, exclude, or cause other harm to the oppressed group' (Ingrey, 2016, p. 1). Women are oppressed by street harassment in three main ways: the practice limits women's mobility in public spaces (Bowman, 1993, p. 539; Davis, 1994, p. 144); it sexually objectifies them, undermining their ability to self-represent (Davis, 1994, p. 152); and through the threat of sexual violence, street harassment makes women feel vulnerable in public spaces (Bowman, 1993, p. 540; Davis, 1994, p. 140; Tuerkheimer, 1997, p. 187).

The first way that street harassment oppresses women is through restricting their physical and geographical mobility (Bowman, 1993, p. 539; Davis, 1994, p. 144). Street harassment effectively 'genderizes the street' (Davis, 1994, p. 142), constituting public spaces as fundamentally unequal and unwelcoming for women. It thus functions as a form of social control (Kissling, 1991, p. 454), which can undermine women's sense of safety and wellbeing in public spaces and denies them their liberty or freedom (Bowman, 1993, p. 539; Davis, 1994, p. 144). Many women who are harassed change their lives in some ways in order to avoid harassment. A 2015 policy brief by the Australian Institute, for instance, found that 93% of women aged 18-24 years and 88% of women aged 25 to 34 years altered their behaviour to prevent harassment or assault: they avoided walking alone at night; they held their keys in their hand as a weapon; they pretended to be having a conversation on their phone, etc. (Johnson and Bennett, 2015, pp. 8, 10). Similarly, 97% of women surveyed in Brazil said they always or sometimes altered their route to avoid street harassment and violence (ActionAid International, 2015). Thus, street harassment further oppresses women by forcing them to change their behaviour and preventing them from making an 'authentic choice of self' (Davis, 1994, p. 145).

The second central way that street harassment oppresses women is through sexual objectification. When a person is sexually objectified her body parts and sexuality are extracted from the rest of her personality and relegated to simple instruments or otherwise assumed to represent her (Bartky, 1990, p. 26). So when women are harassed in public spaces they are passive, viewed as mere bodies, or a collection of body parts, to gratify the male gaze. Regardless of the content of the harassment comment or nature of the gesture, the harasser assumes that he is entitled to judge a woman's body and by extension, her worth as a woman and as a human being (Tuerkheimer, 1997, p. 184). As Sandra Bartky (1990) explains:

there is more involved in this encounter than their mere fragmented perception of me. They could, after all, have enjoyed me in silence ... But I must be *made* to know that I am a 'nice piece of ass': I must be made to see myself as they see me. (Bartky, 1990, p. 27, original emphasis)

Thus, street harassment as an expression of sexual objectification serves to reinforce male dominance through the power to appraise women's body parts and their wider worth as human beings. In turn, women may begin to associate their bodies and sexuality in negative terms, with feelings of disempowerment, humiliation, shame and fear (Tuerkheimer, 1997, p. 187). And when women interpret street harassment as innocuous or even a compliment, it is likely that self-objectification has occurred, having internalised societal norms and gendered beliefs about street harassment, which can lead to poor emotional and psychological outcomes (Fairchild and Rudman, 2008, pp. 344–345, 354).

Street harassment oppresses women in a third prominent way: through the threat of sexual violence because the practice acts as a reminder of women's vulnerability to sexual and physical attack (Bowman, 1994, p. 540; Davis, 1994, p. 140; Tuerkheimer, 1997, p. 187). Because street harassment resides on a continuum that can culminate in sexual assault, rape and murder (Gardner, 1995, p. 4), any form of street harassment, however seemingly innocuous, often evokes fear of more extreme sexual assault. Stop Street Harassment found that more women (68%) than men (48%) who reported being street harassed were concerned that harassment would escalate, and nearly twice as many women (25%) than men (13%) were very concerned about escalation (Kearl, 2014, p. 20). But even when women do not fear imminent physical danger, street harassment occurs in a context in which they are conscious of the possibility of rape and, when a man invades a woman's privacy by harassing her, it is a reminder of her vulnerability to harm (Bowman, 1994, p. 440; Tuerkheimer, 1997, p. 189).

Street harassment can as such usefully be thought of as a form of gender oppression since the practice excludes, marginalises and harms many women. Gender oppression intersects with other oppressions and inequalities derived from ethnicity, race, class, sexual orientation, gender identity, dis/ability, age and so on. Any discussion of gender oppression, like gender in/equality, therefore risks essentialising and homogenising the plurality of women's experiences and consequently masking differences and divisions among women based upon class, race, sexual/gender identity, and other structures of privilege (Verloo and Lombardo, 2007, p. 24). Recognising the commonality of street harassment in most women's lives necessitates an understanding that not all women are harassed in the same way (Fileborn and Vera-Gray, 2017, p. 205). For instance, research has found that women of colour often experience street harassment as both racism and sexism (Davis, 1996, pp. 162–178; Chen, 1997; Fogg-Davis, 2006, pp. 62, 64–65). Moreover, the concept of gender oppression assumes a gender binary of women/men that cannot adequately address the social, political and material realities of gender fluidity and queer/transgender/intersex individuals (INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, 2005), calling into question the utility of the concept for analysing LGBTQ+ harassment.

Notwithstanding these important debates, research has shown that the majority of street harassment victims/survivors are women and girls,¹⁶ and the perpetrators of harassment are almost always men (e.g., Kearl, 2010; Wesselmann and Kelly, 2010; Logan, 2015, pp. 203–204; Fileborn and Vera-Gray, 2017, p. 205). I therefore deploy the concept of gender oppression since most, if not all, women are subjected to and subordinated by street harassment (Davis, 1994, p. 162), whether they are conscious of their subordination or not. And while some women do harass men in public spaces, the gendered dynamics and effects are rarely comparable with regard to the frequency and intensity of harassment, the underlying power dynamics, the threat of rape and the impact upon the victim's/survivor's life (Stop Street Harassment, 2019b). Ultimately, despite the different motives for street harassment identified by male harassers, underlying the practice is a 'pervasive notion of male dominance and power' (Laniya, 2005, p. 109), which has the effect (intended or not) of marginalising and excluding women in public spaces and inflicting emotional and psychological harms on them.

3.1.2 The global anti-street harassment movement

Social movements encompass a wide range of collective ventures including feminism or the women's movement, nationalist movements, the environmental movement and trade union movements (Crossley, 2002, pp. 1–2). Because of such diversity, difficulties arise when considering the shared characteristic features of such movements, thus precluding a precise definition of the concept. Not all social movements hold the same features in common and yet those characteristics that are commonly shared by movements also tend to be shared with entities that are not social movements (Crossley, 2002, p. 2). Some social movement theorists have proposed definitions which, they argue, incorporate many existing definitions of social movement and the main properties of a movement. Mario Diani, for example, integrated existing definitions of 'social movement', defining movements as 'networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups, or associations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity' (Diani, 1992, p. 13). David Snow and Sarah Soule conceptualised movements in terms of five central elements: 1) social movements challenge or defend 'existing structures or systems of authority', 2) they are collective, not individual endeavours, 3) they are extra-institutional actors, 4) they are to some extent organised and 5) they act 'with some degree of continuity' (Snow and Soule, 2010, p. 6). Snow and Soule claim that their conceptualisation of social movements is 'sufficiently broad' to include a wide array of movements

¹⁶ Much of the existing research on street harassment, however, only focuses on the experiences of women and much of this is inattentive to the ways in which sexual identity intersects with gender, thereby assuming or implying that street harassment affects heterosexual women exclusively (Logan, 2015, p. 202). Recent research on street harassment has begun to examine LGBTQ+ individual's experiences of street harassment and such studies show that LGBTQ+ people are particularly prone to harassment (e.g., FRA, 2013; McNeil, 2014).

while sufficiently delimited to distinguish social movements from other similar social phenomena, e.g., crowds and interest groups (Snow and Soule, 2010, p. 6). But, all definitions are problematic in some way; either they are too broad, or efforts to narrow down definitions tend to exclude certain movements or at least their practices or forms (Crossley, 2002, p. 2).

As stated in the introduction, I refer to the global anti-street harassment movement as the loose global feminist network of groups, individuals and organisations engaged in various forms of activism, on the basis of the shared ideal of ending street harassment. I expand on this conceptualisation in the following chapter but, for now, I wish to highlight that this is a global feminist networked movement, in that the diverse anti-street harassment initiatives that constitute the movement are not disconnected from each other. Rather, they comprise a loose but 'integrated network or reticulate structure through nonhierarchical social linkages' among movement participants (Gerlach, 2001, p. 295) and through the ideals, values and goals they share or have in common.

Networking across the global anti-street harassment movement, as I show in chapters four and six, allows movement participants to exchange ideas and information and to coordinate (occasional) joint actions against street harassment (Gerlach, 2001, p. 295). Networking takes place at all levels of movement activity – local (city or state), national, regional and transnational. This is also a global networked movement in the sense that 'global' denotes 'the transnational connections of people and places that were formerly seen as distant or separate' (O'Brien *et al.*, 2000, p. 13). Transnational networking among anti-street harassment activists – actions and events that seek to raise awareness of street harassment and to foster and reinforce solidarity among movement participants – has been greatly facilitated by activists' use of digital technologies, as I argue in chapter six.

3.1.2.1 Anti-street harassment activism

I operationalise activism and specifically, anti-street harassment activism, to include a diverse range of tactics and methods that activists engage in collectively and individually to expose, resist and ultimately combat street harassment. In analysing the plurality and diversity of tactics used by anti-street harassment activists (chapter four), I have been influenced by feminist social movement scholars (e.g., Hercus, 2005; Eschle and Maiguashca, 2007, 2010; Maiguashca, 2011) and anti-street harassment activist writers (Langelan, 1993; Kearl, 2015b; Keyhan, 2016). This feminist social movement and activist scholarship is helpful for considering and reconceptualising conventional ideas of what constitutes feminist political action, reminding us that feminist activism takes many different forms, happens in multiple sites and has different target audiences (Eschle and Maiguashca, 2010, p. 131).

Activism in social movement theory emphasises 'collective action', which traditionally (in SMT) refers to the coordinated efforts of large numbers of people coming together in time and space around the same cause, usually to participate in protest events and formal organisations (Hercus, 2005, p. 132; Earl and Kimport, 2011, pp. 124, 125). However, a feminist conceptualisation of collective action is much broader, including 'less publicly visible' and more fluid forms of political action taken in daily life, sometimes individually by women (Hercus, 2005, pp. 132–133). Much anti-street harassment activism comprises actions taken by individual activists or small groups; however, I consider such actions as a form of collective action because activists are advancing a common cause.

3.1.2.2 Anti-street harassment activists and participants

I define anti-street harassment activists as those individuals who are initiators or members of a group, campaign or social movement organisation against street harassment, and who are actively engaged in resisting and combating street harassment. Yet, the global anti-street harassment movement, like many feminist movements, is much broader than its composition of activists understood narrowly 'as active participation in a political group' (Bereni and Revillard, 2012, p. xi). Rather, the movement encompasses a multitude of actors who share and advance its aims but who are not necessarily aligned with a particular social movement organisation (or group or campaign) (Staggenborg, 1998, p. 182).

I use the term 'participant' to refer to anyone who is involved in advancing the aims of the global anti-street harassment movement, but who is not an active member of an anti-street harassment initiative. People participate in the global anti-street harassment movement in a multitude of ways, for example by sharing their experiences of street harassment, participating in workshops, responding to harassers in the street and so on. While I have not collected data on how individuals think of themselves as they participate in such activities (Earl and Kimport, 2011, p. 92), I suggest that the individual who, for example shares their story of street harassment online, is less politically engaged on the issue than the activist who partakes in sustained activism against street harassment.

This is not to suggest that disclosing and sharing experiences of street harassment in the online environment equates to 'slacktivism' (Morozov, 2009). As I argue in chapters four and six, the practice of digital story-sharing performs several important functions for street harassment victims/survivors (or participants) and for anti-street harassment activists. Moreover, accusations of slacktivism assume that actors lack the appetite to commit themselves more fully to a cause (Christensen, 2011). But once an individual has participated in a movement, regardless of the size of the contribution, their sense of commitment and obligation to the cause is likely to increase, as well as their sense of community belonging. This may, in turn, induce more sustained political action on the issue (Garrett, 2006, pp.

206–207; Harlow and Harp, 2012, p. 200). A few of my interviewees explained that their activism was born out of sharing their personal experiences of harassment online. Thus, I differentiate between an ‘activist’ and a ‘participant’ with caution. It remains an undecided matter ‘whether there is a meaningful difference’ between these actors (Earl and Kimport, 2011, p. 93). In my view, though the point at which a participant becomes an anti-street harassment activist is when the individual consciously decides to become actively involved in resisting street harassment and initiates or joins a group, campaign or SMO to pursue this aim.

In this section, I defined the global anti-street harassment movement, anti-street harassment activism, anti-street harassment activists and participants. The remainder of the conceptual framework is devoted to defining and operationalising the concepts I will use to address RQ2. I begin by exploring the concept of ‘motivation’ as applied in this study.

3.1.3 Motivation

I interpret motivation broadly as whatever moves individuals to initiate or continue activism against street harassment (Jasper, 2006, p. 157). I have used an iterative and inductive approach to develop my conceptual model for analysing principal motivating factors in the emergence and development of the global anti-street harassment movement. These motivating factors are grievances, feminist consciousness and emotions, which have, in part, derived from the empirical analysis. But I am not ‘theory building’ in the grounded theory sense, i.e., the theory has not wholly emerged from the data (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p. 12) because I began my research and analysis with an explicit feminist and social movement theoretical framework. To interpret my data, I have drawn on aspects of the cultural social movement literature, which demonstrates the importance of ideational and other cultural factors, including grievances and emotions, in motivating people to engage in activism (van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2009, p. 30; Goodwin and Jasper, 2015b, p. 12). I similarly draw upon feminist social movement scholarship, which is compatible with such an approach as it takes into account the motivations of feminist activists for participating in activism, focusing on questions of feminist consciousness, gender injustice and emotions (e.g., Klatch, 2001; Hercus, 2005; Eschle and Maignashca, 2010).

3.1.3.1 Grievances and feminist consciousness

Grievances are conceptualised by social movement scholars variously as experience of unacceptable inequality, feelings or perceptions of injustice, moral indignation about a particular set of circumstances, sentiments of relative deprivation – unfavourable comparison of one’s circumstances with a norm – or a ‘suddenly imposed grievance’ – an unexpected threat or infringement of people’s rights or state of affairs (van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2013, pp. 887–888). As a primary

motivator of collective action, then, grievances are generally understood as sentiments of discontent about situations or conditions evaluated as unjust or illegitimate (Pinard, 2011, p. 5). In this analysis of a feminist social movement, I construe grievances more specifically as a sense of dissatisfaction about situations or conditions evaluated as unjust based on gender.

Unjust, illegitimate or differential treatment of people does not necessarily produce grievances. Rather, grievances are the outcome of some sort of evaluation (Klandermans, Roefs and Oliver, 2001, p. 42). I contend that feminist consciousness – ‘the recognition and rejection of unequal and unfair treatment of women’ (Klatch, 2001, p. 792) – is very important for the generation of grievances concerning street harassment. The appraisal of everyday experiences of sexism, like street harassment, through the lens of gender injustice – a lack of fairness or justice due to the imbalanced power relationships between women and men – may produce grievances among feminist women.

Feminist consciousness is the state of being aware of gender inequality and involves transformations in seeing problems as personal in nature to perceiving and framing problems in structural terms as a form of gender injustice, requiring political solutions (Klatch, 2001, p. 792; Hercus, 2005, pp. 11, 49). Feminist consciousness, and the recognition that political action is required, can often result from women’s personal experience of gender-based injustices encountered in daily life (Klein, 1984, p. 105), such as street harassment. The development of consciousness is also often promoted through exposure to and interactions with other women via feminist organisations and groups, who share similar stories of everyday oppression (Chen, 2014, p. 185; Aronson, 2017, p. 5). The acquisition of feminist consciousness enables feminists to see things differently about themselves and about their societies, things that the ‘deceptive sexist social reality’ had previously hidden or made seem inevitable and natural. A raised feminist consciousness results in envisaging possibilities for liberating feminist resistance (Bartky, 1990, p. 21).

In much of the literature on feminist consciousness and feminist activism, as noted in the previous chapter, feminist consciousness or awareness of gender injustice is seen as a central motivating factor for feminist activism (e.g., Klein, 1984, p. 2; Bartky, 1990; Duncan, 1999; Hercus, 2005; Eschle and Maiguashca, 2010, pp. 72–75; Aronson, 2017; Swank and Fahs, 2017). However, cognisance of gender injustice by itself is insufficient to motivate feminist action. Rather, awareness of social reality as sexist, unequal and unjust channels and generates discontent, thus providing the impetus for feminist activism. In other words, it is the sense of feeling aggrieved, based on perceived gender injustice, that is the critical motivating factor for feminist political action.

In short, I bring together feminist and SM literatures, underlining the interconnectedness of feminist consciousness and grievances in motivating anti-street harassment activism. While the literature on feminist consciousness either overlooks the concept of grievances or implicitly recognises grievances

as a motivator for becoming feminist (Hercus, 2005) or engaging in feminist activism (Klatch, 2001), I make these conceptual connections explicit. In my research, I posit that awareness of gender injustice, derived mostly from women's personal experience of street harassment, directs and simultaneously generates grievances which, in turn, motivate women to engage in anti-street harassment activism.

3.1.3.2 Emotions

Although the task of defining 'emotion' is notoriously difficult, in the absence of universal concepts and operationalisation of such concepts (Scherer, 2005, p. 695), I understand emotions as feelings generated in response to experiences and events, or that arise from affective bonds (Pinard, 2011, p. 5). I see emotions as socially or culturally constructed, in that emotions are linked to cognitive assessment and constituted more by social norms and meanings than by automatic physiological responses (Jasper, 1998, pp. 399–400). Those emotions that are most relevant to politics are at the social construction end of the dimension, entailing more cognitive processing (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta, 2001a, p. 13). For example, the indignation of perceived infringement of rights, moral outrage over egregious practices, hope and joy in envisaging a better society and participating in a social movement to achieve that ideal are all related to moral judgements, felt obligations and rights, and information about anticipated outcomes, all of which are historically and culturally contingent (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta, 2001a, p. 13).

I conceptualise emotions as playing an influential role in motivating individuals to engage in anti-street harassment activism. In this regard, I align myself with feminist social movement scholars (e.g., Ferree, 1992; Taylor, 1995; Hercus, 1999, 2005) and scholars in the SM cultural/emotional turn (e.g., Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta, 2000; Calhoun, 2001; Gould, 2009; Jasper, 2011) who reject dualisms like reason-emotion and rationality-emotionality that are implicit in dominant social movement paradigms. Insofar as emotions are collectively shaped, contingent on context and derive from cognitions, which are themselves alterable through learning, it seems clear that emotions are not irrational (Jasper, 1998, p. 403). Instead, feminist social movement and cultural/emotional turn literatures argue that people are both rational and emotional, possessing the ability to reason, to think and plan strategically, to appraise and pursue their interests, and to feel and express emotion (Gould, 2009, p. 17). Emotions, both consciously and unconsciously, inform and motivate decision-making processes and rational action (Kleres and Wettergren, 2017, p. 508). Because thinking and feeling are complementary, interrelating processes of assessing and engaging with our worlds (Jasper, 2011, p. 286), '[t]here is no cognition without feeling and no meaning without emotion' (Melucci, 1996, p. 71). Thus, emotions interlaced with cognitive appraisal together generate the energy and motivation of political action (Kleres and Wettergren, 2017, p. 508). I employ the concept of 'motivating emotions' to analyse emotion as a motivator for anti-street harassment activism from the perspective of

individual activists. In this way, my study differs from much of the existing SM research which often explores how social movement organisers evoke and manipulate ‘mobilising emotions’ to recruit people and motivate activism.

3.1.4 Affordances

An ‘affordance’ is the type of actions that a technology facilitates through its design (Earl and Kimport, 2011, p. 10). An affordance-based perspective takes a relational approach to understanding actors’ interactions with technologies, focusing on the ‘mutuality between those using technologies, the material features of those technologies and the situated nature of use’ (Evans *et al.*, 2017, pp. 35, 36). Thus, the materiality of technology is seen to influence, but not determine, the opportunities for actors (Evans *et al.*, 2017, p. 37). Adopting an affordances perspective allows me to investigate how digital technologies function in the evolution of the global anti-street harassment movement – more specifically, how such technologies have enabled the movement’s emergence and growth – while rejecting a technological deterministic position. Accordingly, I see digital technologies as affording opportunities for anti-street harassment activists to create, organise and engage in activism, but I do not assert that such technologies actively caused the movement’s formation and growth.

To shape my analysis, I draw loosely on Jennifer Earl and Katrina Kimport’s (2011) ‘leveraged affordances’ approach, which holds that in order to take advantage of technological affordances, activists need to use digital technologies in innovative ways. The term ‘technological affordance’ refers to ‘the special technological capacities’ of digital technologies and describes those ‘actions or uses a technology makes easier (and therefore facilitates)’ (Earl and Kimport, 2011, p. 32). Different activists may be more or less adept at taking advantage of technological affordances but where these affordances are leveraged most effectively, new types of movements might emerge (Earl and Kimport, 2010, pp. 10, 33).

My conceptualisation of technological affordances is broader than Earl and Kimport’s (2011), which focuses only on the instrumental benefits and effects of digital technologies – their ability to lower the material and practical costs of participation and to enable collective action without co-presence (Earl and Kimport, 2011, pp. 10-11, 37). Digital technologies offer three central affordances for anti-street harassment activists: reduced participation costs for creating, organising and engaging in activism (Earl and Kimport, 2011, pp. 10-11, 37), the opportunity to create collective identities, and the ability to diffuse innovations (information and tactics) efficiently between activists and across sites.

While previous social movement research has taken an affordances perspective to investigate the potential for reduced participation costs (Earl and Kimport, 2011) and the opportunity for collective identity creation (e.g., Gerbaudo, 2015; Gerbaudo and Treré, 2015; Kavada, 2015; Milan, 2015;

Khazraee and Novak, 2018), as mentioned in the literature review, no existing study has employed an affordances perspective to analyse the diffusion of innovations via the Internet. This is because diffusion scholars categorise the Internet and social media like the traditional media: as an 'indirect' and 'nonrelational' mechanism of diffusion, where ideas are spread and emulated through impersonal means (McAdam and Rucht, 1993; Tarrow, 2010, p. 209). However, people are not passive users of digital technologies. Rather, they interact with these technologies and with other people online. Thus, I employ an affordance-based perspective, which takes a relational approach (Evans *et al.*, 2017, p. 35) to understanding how anti-street harassment activists interact with digital technologies and the effects of these interactions on the emergence and growth of the global movement.

3.2 Methodology

I adopt a qualitative mixed methods approach, encompassing semi-structured interviews as my primary data collection method, supplemented with document analysis. I have selected a qualitative approach because it seeks to privilege the perspectives, or subjective understandings, of the researched (Fossey *et al.*, 2002, p. 723), thereby acknowledging the theories held by research participants, (their knowledge, views, beliefs and experiences), as an important source of knowledge (Maxwell, 2013, p. 52).

My epistemological position is informed by more recent variants of feminist standpoint theory (e.g., Harding, 1993, 2004; Stanley and Wise, 1993), which hold that knowledge is situated, that the experiences of women represent a central focus of research, which can produce less partial accounts of the social world, and that women inhabit multiple situated standpoints rather than an essential 'women's standpoint' (Harding, 1993, p. 65, 2004, p. 10; Hekman, 1997, p. 349; Fawcett and Hearn, 2004, p. 206; Doucet and Mauthner, 2006, p. 36). The feminist activists in this study are based in 11 countries, with eight of these located in the 'global South', and thus occupy many different standpoints reflecting the diversity of women's lives and experiences.

In my research I have not taken the position of a detached, impartial and objective observer, waiting to discover a single, essential truth. Instead, I reject positivist claims, which hold that research methods traditionally used in the natural sciences should be applied to the study of the social world, and that researchers must conduct research that is value-free (Bryman, 2012, p. 28). By describing 'social reality as objectively constituted, and ... accept[ing] that there is one true "real" reality [positivism] ... suggests that researchers can objectively find out this real reality – they can stand back from, remove themselves from emotional involvements in, what they study' (Stanley and Wise, 1993, p. 117). But, 'no research is carried out in a vacuum' (McRobbie, 1982, p. 48) – researchers cannot separate themselves from the questions they ask and the inquiries they conduct. I do not believe that

it is desirable or even possible to remain neutral and objective when conducting research and I do not espouse such a position in my project.

Instead, as a 'corrective to "pseudo-objectivity"' (Tickner, 2005, p. 28), I adopt a reflexive approach to the research, which most feminists agree is necessary for conducting valid and ethical research (Fonow and Cook, 1991; Taylor, 1998; Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002; Tickner, 2005; Ackerly and True, 2008). Reflexivity involves critical reflection of the self during the research process to understand how one's own position or social location may influence the production and interpretation of knowledge (Taylor, 1998, p. 368; Sultana, 2007, p. 376). As Brooke Ackerly and Jacqui True (2008, p. 695) opine, '[w]e need to be aware of how our own basket of privileges and experiences conditions our knowledge and research.' Reflexivity further entails making explicit the power dynamics at play in the research process and how these may impact research relationships (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002, pp. 158–159), something I discuss later in the chapter.

Thus, before I continue I position myself in relation to the research, locating myself 'in the same critical plane as the overt subject matter' (Harding, 1987, p. 31), that is, making explicit my beliefs, assumptions and practices. I identify as a white, cisgender, heterosexual woman, who is educated (I am a mature, first generation university student) and relatively economically privileged, although financially dependent on precarious employment within the higher education sector. I position myself as a feminist scholar who is sympathetic with the aims of the global anti-street harassment movement, especially as a victim/survivor of street harassment and sexual assault. In part, personal experiences of street harassment, which were an everyday occurrence throughout my 20s to mid-30s, motivated me to research the rise of the global anti-street harassment movement. This is common to much feminist research, which is motivated by a desire to understand social phenomena that resonate with the researcher's own life and personal experiences (Tickner, 2005, p. 8).

I have periodically participated in movement activities. For example, I volunteered for Hollaback! Bristol from its launch in July 2014 until the site closed in July 2015 (when the former site leader relocated) and I have worked from time to time with two other Bristol-based groups documenting and resisting street harassment: BS5 Against Street Harassment and Bristol Zero Tolerance. Additionally, I have participated in online campaigns and Twitter discussions with the global anti-street harassment community. I also interact with key members of the movement, such as Holly Kearl, Founder and Executive Director of Stop Street Harassment, and I have participated in activist-led events, including the first global street harassment conference hosted by Hollaback! in Italy in March 2016. Moreover, anti-street harassment groups have granted me access to their digital communications networks, such as Hollaback!'s internal email list, and in 2016 Hollaback! London invited me to access their online decision-making group, Loomio. Despite such interactions, my project is far from insider research – when researchers conduct research with communities of which they are also members (Kanuha, 2000,

440). I am not an activist within the movement, but rather a participant and ally, and like Myra Marx-Ferree, who has researched several social movements, I am inclined 'to stay on the margins of the fray' (quoted in Green, Erensu and Lageson, 2012). While sitting on the margins does not entail active and sustained engagement in activism, it certainly does not imply detached neutrality.

Indeed, my research is informed by the assumption long held by many feminist researchers that feminist research has a political commitment to improving or engendering change in women's lives (Fonow and Cook, 1991; Mies, 1991; Reinharz, 1992; Stanley and Wise, 1993; Maynard, 1994; Devault, 1996; Taylor, 1998; Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002; Tickner, 2005; Ackerly and True, 2010). As such, I have sought to produce 'useful' knowledge – knowledge that may, for instance, be utilised by anti-street harassment activists for movement building purposes. For example, a goal of my research is to investigate the key characteristics of the global anti-street harassment movement and, in so doing, to assist in the constitution of this feminist social movement by highlighting the ideological and structural commonalities of the composite initiatives, and analysing the movement's shared aims, common goals, values and forms of activism.

My research is political because, as Catherine Eschle (2004, p. 66) argues '[i]n taking the possibility of a particular movement seriously, social movement scholars are helping to call it into existence. They are using the label persuasively, to give scholarly and political legitimacy to their research and its subject matter.' The vast majority of my interviewees conceive of themselves as part of an anti-street harassment movement with shared aims and political struggles (as discussed in the next chapter), and several noted the importance of my research in terms of its potential to make explicit the connections between the diverse efforts to resist street harassment. This, they suggested, might result in increased learning and diffusion of anti-street harassment information and tactics, and more effective collaboration among the groups. I hope the knowledge generated by my research project, which gives prominence to activists' interpretations and agency, will be utilised by these actors (and others) to inform activist practices and movement building activities.

3.2.1 Data collection and analysis

This section describes the methods of data collection used and explains the reasons for their choice, delineates how the research was conducted and the practicalities involved, and outlines the procedures used for analysing the data collected. I sought to foreground participants' interpretations through original interview data produced with anti-street harassment activists. I also made use of a wide range of documentary data (material produced by the movement and news articles) to enable some triangulation of the data.

3.2.1.1 Semi-structured interviewing

It was essential, both in terms of answering my research questions and in accordance with my epistemological position, that the perspectives and voices of anti-street harassment activists were an integral part of the research. I therefore selected semi-structured interviewing as the primary method of data collection. The flexible format of the semi-structured interview and its ability to provide insight into participants' perspectives of social phenomena, allowed me to explore in-depth activists' beliefs and understandings regarding their motivations, emotions, experiences, identities, values, goals and objectives, as well as their opinions and understandings concerning the structure and rise of the global anti-street harassment movement and the role played by digital technologies in the movement's evolution.

I also chose the semi-structured interview method because it coheres with my epistemological stance and with feminist research principles, namely it enables women to describe their thoughts and experiences in their own words rather than those of the researcher; it allows for more egalitarian research relationships; and it encourages new research themes to emerge from interviewees' own lived experiences (Reinharz, 1992, p. 19; Taylor, 1998, p. 36).

To facilitate rapport and trust, which is thought to encourage non-exploitative research relationships and lead to good quality data, I allowed myself to become personally involved in the interviews (Maynard 1994, p. 16; Taylor 1998, p. 366) by sharing my views and experiences of street harassment. As Anne Oakley argues (1981, 41), 'the goal of finding out about people through interviewing is best achieved when the relationship of interviewer and interviewee is non-hierarchical and when the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her own personal identity in the relationship.' I did not dominate discussions, but rather chose on occasion to share my views and stories to aid the conversational flow and to try to establish a relationship of trust and rapport with my interviewees.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with 33 anti-street harassment activists, based in 11 countries – Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Egypt, Germany, India, Lebanon, Mexico, Peru, the UK and the US – representing 25 anti-street harassment initiatives (see Appendices I and II).¹⁷ Given the scale of the global anti-street harassment movement, it is beyond the scope of this project to analyse the evolution and key characteristics of each constituent grassroots initiative. It was not my intention though to provide a representative sample of the movement. Rather, I purposefully selected key informants within the global anti-street harassment movement for their expertise on anti-street harassment activism and the movement's development. Key informants possess insider knowledge or information about a phenomenon that the researcher is investigating (Cossham and Johanson, 2019). 24 of the 33 activists selected (73%) are co-/founders of prominent anti-street harassment

¹⁷ In addition, I had personal correspondence with another six activists, one of whom is active in a different country to those in my interview sample, Costa Rica, representing a total of 39 participants from 27 initiatives based in 12 countries.

organisations or campaigns, and nine (27%) hold or formerly held a key role in the organisation, e.g., as Director, Deputy Director, International Articulation Director, etc.

Initially, I selected key informants from a sample of activist groups concentrated in what I identified as three 'hubs' of anti-street harassment activism: Egypt, India and the US, as described in the next chapter. I extended the sample as more initiatives gained prominence within the movement, in particular, Latin American activism, and as key informants opened up new connections for me in other contexts. The sample includes many of the most prominent and active anti-street harassment groups around the world, with the exception of RightRides for Women's Safety and Hollaback! Bristol. (RightRides was selected because it was one of the first (and very successful) contemporary initiatives resisting street harassment and sexual assault, and Hollaback! Bristol was chosen because, at the time of selection, the site had just launched and I was interested in investigating the evolution of a new anti-street harassment group, particularly one to which I had easy access). In short, the sample was primarily selected on the grounds of expertise, prominence and active engagement in anti-street harassment activism.

The sample also represents a diversity of women's perspectives and voices on the issue of street harassment and activism against it. For example, Feminista Jones' #YouOkSis campaign emphasises Black women's experiences of street harassment, in response to what Jones perceives to be the movement's prevailing focus on white women's experiences (Berlatsky, 2014). And more than half the sample (13/25) comprises initiatives from the global South, which represents the global composition of the movement. (Much of the existing, albeit limited, research on anti-street harassment activism emanating from the global North, with the notable exception of Kearl (2015) and Keyhan (2016), tends to ignore Southern activism, as I critiqued in the literature review). Moreover, by being inclusive of diverse perspectives, I seek to avoid a pitfall of global social movement analysis, one which assumes a common identity of interests or aims is shared between components of the movement located in different areas of the world by generalising from the experience of the global North (O'Brien *et al.*, 2000, p. 14).

A number of the selected groups, such as Blank Noise, Hollaback! and OCAC Chile, have contributed significantly to the movement's growth by establishing networks of local or regional chapters. Blank Noise, which originated in Bangalore in 2003, has since spread across India and is now active in five other countries, as I discuss in chapter six. The global network of Hollaback! chapters has 49 active sites in 25 cities (Jae Cameron, personal communication, 2016) and the Observatories against Street Harassment, which began in Chile in 2013, are operating in seven Latin American countries (Observatorio contra el Acoso Callejero, 2015b).

Finally, the anti-street harassment initiatives selected use a diversity of tactics and methods, encompassing online as well as offline activism. Still, as I explore in chapter six, the majority of the research participants (29/33) established online initiatives or joined groups that originated on the Internet. Partly due to practical necessity and to address RQ2, which examines the influence of digital technologies on the movement's development, the sample is limited to groups, campaigns and initiatives that are visible online. The sampling inevitably excludes grassroots groups that are unable to access and benefit from technological affordances in their efforts against street harassment. This poses a difficulty for the research in terms of an underrepresentation of non-digitally connected anti-street harassment initiatives and the perspectives of those activists within them, for example, local, community-based initiatives working in 'developing countries'. In the next chapter I supplement the interview data with documentary and secondary data to map out a more comprehensive picture of anti-street harassment activism, including examples of on-the-ground community-based activism. Nonetheless, my knowledge of particular (digitally privileged) groups and activists, largely acquired via digital channels and, concomitantly, my access to interviewees through email and social media networks, undoubtedly influenced my perspective on the global anti-street harassment movement. This, in turn, may have reproduced the exclusions, marginalisations and invisibilities in the movement caused by the digital divide.

I became aware of both emerging and more established initiatives through regular online interaction with key informants in the global anti-street harassment, in particular with Holly Kearn of Stop Street Harassment (SSH), and through online material produced by activists within the movement. As discussed later in chapters four and six, SSH plays a pivotal role in documenting topical issues related to street harassment, including information about new initiatives and activities around the world, and in encouraging collaboration among movement participants. I was also able to quickly identify emerging groups and campaigns through subscribing to online newsletters produced by the movement, following activist Facebook pages and Twitter feeds and by setting up Google Alerts. The Google Alerts regularly monitored the web for newspaper articles and other online activity on anti-street harassment activism and then emailed me the results, as described further below.

I did not collect specific demographic information from the participants with regards to age, ethnicity and race, class identity, gender identity, sexual orientation, (dis)ability status or education. However, it was evident from the document analysis and secondary data analysis, and from discussions that arose during the interviews, that all the participants were women and, as I return to in the next chapter, all self-identified as feminist. It was similarly evident from the interviews and document analysis that the majority of the interviewees were young women (in their 20s-30s), and that they were generally middle-class, educated professionals. Several interviewees indicated that they had completed higher education. While I did not collect data on the participants' race and ethnicity, I

estimate that the sample consisted of an approximately equal number of women of colour and white women.

At this point, I briefly reflect on my own positionality in relation to the research participants and how this might have influenced the research process and outcomes. Qualitative research is recognised as being 'co-constituted, a joint product of the participants, researcher and their relationship' (Finlay, 2002, p. 212). Meanings and understandings are 'negotiated within particular social contexts so that another researcher will unfold a different story' (Finlay, 2002, p. 212). In other words, knowledge is situated, i.e., partial, produced in specific circumstances, and those circumstances shape knowledge in particular ways (Rose, 1997, p. 305). Certain aspects of the researcher's identity may inhibit understanding of differently situated participants and thus it is important to examine 'how the researcher's positionality facilitates specific forms of understanding and impedes others' (McCorkel and Myers, 2003, p. 228).

My whiteness and Englishness were undoubtedly salient features of my identity in the interview setting, perhaps marking me as an 'outsider' in some contexts. For instance, as an external researcher conducting interviews in Cairo, I was an outsider in terms of my race/ethnicity, nationality and geopolitical context. However, it is difficult to evaluate precisely how these aspects of my identity influenced particular forms of understanding and knowledge production. Certainly, as a white, western feminist from the UK, I was unable to directly relate to the oppression faced by Egyptian feminist activists living under the dictatorial rule of Abdel Fatah el-Sisi. My different ethnic and geopolitical positionality vis-à-vis the Egyptian interviewees was not though a barrier to effective communication. The Egyptian participants talked openly about their opinions and experiences of the repression they and other activists faced under the authoritarian regime, and they answered all the interview questions in an equally unguarded manner.

Similarly, as a white woman, my ability to truly understand Black women's experiences and struggles is inhibited, not because race and ethnicity (or gender) are inherent characteristics that provide an essentialist view of the world, but because my distinctive standpoint impacts on how I view and interpret the world (Collins, 2000, p. 270; Thwaites, 2017, p. 6). However, my whiteness did not inhibit communication in the interview setting. Indeed, the Black women participants in my study spoke openly about their experiences of street harassment and other sensitive issues (unprompted), including racism and discrimination, and one participant talked candidly about her experiences of racism within the movement.

It is of course possible and quite likely that a different interviewer, those that shared the same identity with these participants would 'unfold a different story' (Finlay, 2002, p. 212). But, this does not necessarily imply the unravelling of a more meaningful or valid story. The merits of 'matching'

interviewer and interviewee in terms of social background or demographic categories is a matter of debate. It is often assumed that interviewees feel more comfortable talking to interviewers who share similar social locations and, as a consequence, are more likely to divulge information (Thwaites, 2017, p. 6). However, it is also argued that in settings where interviewer and interviewee are not 'matched', 'the position of the researcher as being outside of the experience of the person being researched may bring something new and different to the interview' because taken-for-granted assumptions 'are likely to be made more explicit' (Carter, 2004, p. 347).

Ultimately, it is difficult to evaluate how I was perceived by the participants in the different interview settings. Yet, with the exception of one interviewee, who seemed fairly guarded in her responses to some of my questions, I generally found the participants warm, friendly and eager to talk to me. Hence, overall, I did not encounter difficulties establishing rapport with them. By identifying points of connection and mutual understanding, I invested some of my own identity in the interviewer-interviewee relationship to encourage non-hierarchical relationships (Oakley, 1981, p. 41). This included disclosing personal experiences of street harassment, as discussed earlier, and making explicit my feminist political commitments. And in the interviews with Latin American participants, I signalled awareness of language and socio-cultural references. (I have travelled, studied, lived and worked in Mexico for extended periods of time and my daughter has dual British Mexican heritage). Making parts of my own identity visible in the interview setting helped to establish rapport with the participants.

Equally, I am aware that I analysed the data, including participants' accounts of their feminist leanings and ideologies, from my own political and intellectual perspective. I believe it is not possible for social researchers to insulate themselves from the political/value positions that shape us as human beings. But, I recognise that the researcher holds a privileged position vis-à-vis the researched in that she has 'the final say' over decisions made in the research and knowledge production process (Letherby, 2002). Taking that into account, I attempted to be alert to issues of power throughout the research process, discussed later on.

Furthermore, I am conscious that certain aspects of my identity, such as my class position¹⁸ and feminist beliefs may have influenced my perspective on the global anti-street harassment movement – one composed of middle-class, educated, feminist women – which, in turn, serves to marginalise other activist groups. Relatedly, given that I accessed interviewees through digital channels and conducted the interviews in English, in several locations where English is not the first language and

¹⁸ It is difficult to define my social class identity; I grew-up in a working-class to lower middle-class neighbourhood with parents who were middle-class in terms of their cultural knowledge, if not their educational aspirations. I left school aged 16 with no ambition to further my education and with no family tradition of higher education. I have since acquired sufficient 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1986) to 'achieve' middle-class status and now benefit from many middle-class privileges.

without experiencing any language barriers, suggests that the participants are themselves in a position of privilege. The likely privileges held by the interviewees, therefore, also shaped the data I collected and interpreted as knowledge.

In terms of the interviews themselves, I formulated a flexible interview schedule in order to maintain a loose structure while allowing for new themes to emerge. Thus, I did not ask the questions rigidly in the order listed and I did not necessarily ask all the questions. Instead, the interviews were more like conversations in which the participants could introduce ideas and explore issues important to them (Longhurst, 2016, p. 147). The interview schedule was informed by my research questions and modified from a schedule designed by Catherine Eschle and Bice Maiguashca (2008) for their study on feminist activism within the 'anti-globalisation movement' (or 'global justice movement' (Eschle and Maiguashca, 2010)).¹⁹ The interview questions were revised in accordance with the study's research questions. Initially, my study had a different research focus, examining the goals and outcomes of the anti-street harassment movement. Following the first interview phase, I decided to re-orientate the focus of the research after performing preliminary data analysis. An important new theme emerged at this point – the role played by motivations and digital technologies in contributing to the movement's evolution. I considered this a more imperative topic to explore, based on my data and the existing literature, and revised RQ2 accordingly.

In total, I conducted 35 interviews with 33 participants between March 2014 and January 2019, including four follow-up interviews. Three of the interviews were group interviews, each comprising two participants, the remainder were individual interviews. There were two main phases of interviewing: between March 2014 and June 2014, and December 2015 to May 2016.²⁰ During the first interview phase, I recruited participants via email and they were invited to be interviewed for both my PhD project and a related research project on which I was employed as a research assistant.²¹ During the second phase, I similarly recruited participants via email but, in this instance, they were only invited to participate in my PhD study (the research project had ended at that point). Holly Kearn acted as a gatekeeper in a few instances, putting me in touch with four potential interviewees, all of whom accepted my requests for interview.

The overall response rate was very high with 92% of invitees responding to my initial request for interview and 89% consequently participating in the study – two people initially expressed an interest in being interviewed, but one did not respond to follow-up correspondence and the other person,

¹⁹ See Appendix III for the most current interview schedule and Appendix IV for the initial schedule of questions.

²⁰ See Appendix V for the interview timeline.

²¹ Transforming Insecurity through nonviolent Grassroots Networks (TRINSEC) (June 2013 – (June 2016). ESRC, Project reference: ES/L003171/1, <https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=ES%2FL003171%2F1>.

while not initially responding to follow-up requests in 2016, offered to be interviewed in late 2018 when I approached the group on social media requesting specific information around their anti-street harassment advocacy strategies. This resulted in a third phase of interviewing in January 2019, consisting of one interview. During the interviews, several participants articulated their enthusiasm for being interviewed and stressed the importance of making the movement more visible within the academy.

I conducted fieldwork in three countries – the US, Egypt and Germany – to carry out face to face interviews, in addition to conducting many further interviews with activists in different sites via online and other media.²² My choice of fieldwork sites, as regards the US and Egypt, was influenced by my initial attention to key movement ‘hubs’, as described earlier, and because of my access through two research projects on which I was working – the Transforming Insecurity (TRINSEC) project and the Transnational Anti-Street Harassment Movement project.²³ The TRINSEC project provided me the opportunity to conduct face to face interviews in the US, which was selected as a fieldwork site because it was arguably the largest hub of movement activity at the time of data collection (April 2014). I was able to interview the same group of research participants from the following anti-street harassment initiatives for both sets of research: Collective Action for Safe Spaces, Stop Street Harassment, Feminist Public Works, Girls for Gender Equity, Right Rides for Women’s Safety and Hollaback! These were among the most important and active initiatives in the US at the time.

The Transnational Anti-Street Harassment Movement project involved a participatory workshop in April 2016 with Hollaback! London and HarassMap (Cairo) activists to compare the tactics these groups used to resist street harassment in different contexts. I accessed research participants through our interactions during the workshop planning stage, which I co-organised and co-facilitated, and interviewed participants following the workshop. My involvement in the project also enabled me to interview activists from two other prominent Cairo-based grassroots groups, namely Bassma and I Saw Harassment, who were still active during this period although operating under ever repressive measures imposed by the el-Sisi regime.

I undertook fieldwork in Germany because a modest sum of funding from the University of Bristol enabled me to conduct fieldwork in one European site. I selected Hollaback! Berlin because it was a particularly active group in the movement and one of the earliest chapters within the global Hollaback!

²² The majority of the interviews (18/35) were conducted via Skype, 12 were face to face interviews, three were conducted via email, one through WhatsApp and one on the telephone.

²³ Transnational Anti-Street Harassment Movement: Everyday insecurities and security practitioners from London to Cairo (May 2015 – April 2016). ISRF Flexible Grant for Small Groups Award. <https://www.isrf.org/2015/04/08/first-flexible-grants-for-small-groups-competition-awards-made/>

network. Moreover, the Hollaback! site leader, Julia Brilling, was at that point in time (2014) attracting positive media attention for her activism²⁴ and as a key informant in the movement, I was keen to interview her.

Although face to face interviews are often considered optimal for establishing trust and building rapport between the researcher and the research participants (Taylor, 1998, p. 366; Mertens, 2005, p. 173), I found that participants were equally willing to open-up and divulge personal, and sometimes sensitive, information in non-face to face interview settings. I discuss the ethical considerations around sensitive data later in this chapter. The face to face, online and telephone interviews lasted between one to two hours and were recorded on two digital recording devices to mitigate potential technological issues or battery failure.

With the exception of one interview, which took place in the participant's office, face to face interviews were conducted in public venues, such as cafés and restaurants, suggested by the research participants. All of the interviewees consented to the interviews being recorded; however, one participant in Cairo was uncomfortable with the recording device being visible (we were in a café) and I concealed it as best I could with paper napkins. These precautions were understandable given the contemporary crackdown on civil society and activist groups imposed by the el-Sisi regime in 2013 (Younes and Allahoum, 2019).

The majority of the interviews were conducted via Skype (18/35), which allowed me to communicate with participants across the globe efficiently and at low cost (Iacono, Symonds and Brown, 2016). Despite this advantage, I experienced some communication difficulties, most commonly resulting from problematic Internet connections, which on occasion disrupted the conversational flow. A further disadvantage to conducting online interviews and indeed inviting interviewees to participate in the research via email is the issue of digital exclusion. As discussed above, while these methodological decisions were made largely on pragmatic grounds, in order to access a broad and diverse sample of participants, they may have had the unintended effect of recreating inequalities in the movement caused by the digital divide.

During the transcription process, I listened to each interview recording twice and read each transcript at least three times. This helped me to familiarise myself with the data and I began to identify emerging themes. If I could not decipher certain words or phrases from the audio recording, I marked the section as 'inaudible' and sought clarification on the meaning from participants. I sent copies of

²⁴ For example, Brilling featured in Lisa Magazine's 'Women of the Week' section in July 2014 (Lisa Magazin, 2014).

the transcript to all participants requesting them to correct any errors and to make any additions or deletions they wished to make.

After transcribing the interviews, I began in a more systematic way the process of interpretation and data analysis. In order to make sense of, give shape to and identify patterns in the interview data (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002, p. 160), I made use of qualitative data analysis software, NVivo, to code sections of the transcripts by commonly recurring 'themes, concepts and emergent categories' (Ritchie, Spencer and O'Connor, 2003, p. 220). The decision to use NVivo was influenced by the volume and complexity of the data – the electronic coding process is much more efficient than manually cutting and pasting sections of text (Welsh, 2002).

Moreover, electronically coding data easily enables the researcher to code the same pieces of text in multiple and overlapping ways which means that the data can be organised and analysed in multiple ways. For example, I found that activists were frequently motivated into action over discontent with experiences of street harassment, which they evaluated as unjust based on gender. In such instances, the software allowed me to code the data three ways: under the nodes 'motivations inspiring activism', 'grievances' and 'gender injustice'. This coding process would have been extremely laborious had I attempted to perform it manually, and it may have yielded less accurate and transparent data analysis (Welsh, 2002). The initial interview themes I identified are listed in Table 1 (below) by order of frequency, with the most frequently occurring themes at the top.

Table 1: Initial interview themes, concepts and categories

Nodes coded in NVivo	No. of interview sources
Collaborations and solidarity	33
Role of digital technologies	32
Feminisms	31
Structure of anti-street harassment group/initiative	27
Motivations inspiring activism	26
Goals and objectives	26
Successes and impact	25
Reasons for spread of global activism	25
Origins of group/initiative	22
Emotions	22
Grievances	21
Gender injustice	21
Forms of activism/anti-street harassment actions	21
VAW, continuum of sexual violence	21
Conception of 'global anti-street harassment movement'	21
Collective identity	20
Challenges to sustaining activism	19
Concept of 'insecurity'	15
Motivations sustaining activism	15
Development of group/initiative	14
Barriers to achieving goals	14
Digitally-enabled diffusion	13
Intersectionality	13
Future plans	12
Media attention	11
Patriarchy	10
Responses to anti-street harassment actions	9
Human rights framework	9
Anti-street harassment legislation	8
Advocacy/policy makers	8
Grassroots activism	7
Male allies	5
Gender oppression	5
'Relational' diffusion	4

Table 2: Reduction of initial interview themes into overarching themes

Research question	Overarching themes	Initial themes
RQ1	Origins and development	Origins of group/initiative Development of group/initiative Future plans of group/initiative * Reasons for spread of anti-street harassment activism 'Relational' diffusion Conception of 'global anti-street harassment movement'
	Structure of the movement	Structure of group/initiative Grassroots activism Collaborations and solidarity
	Feminist ideological dimensions	Feminisms (personal ideology) Intersectionality Gender injustice VAW, continuum of sexual violence Patriarchy Gender oppression Male allies * Other conceptions of street harassment (in/security/human rights) *
	Goals	Goals and objectives Barriers to achieving goals Successes and impact Media attention *
	Forms of activism	Anti-street harassment actions Advocacy/policy makers Anti-street harassment legislation Responses to anti-street harassment actions *
RQ2	Motivations	Motivations inspiring activism Challenges to sustaining activism Motivations sustaining activism Grievances Emotions
	Digital technologies	Role of digital technologies Digitally-enabled diffusion Collective identity

In the next chapter, I explore most of the themes relating to RQ1 (with the exception of those marked with an asterisk as these particular themes are not directly pertinent to my research questions) and in chapters five and six, I examine the themes corresponding to RQ2.

3.2.1.2 Document analysis

I used qualitative document analysis as a supplementary and complementary data collection method to interviewing in order to support some triangulation (Bowen, 2009, p. 35). I regularly monitored,

read and interpreted documents including online material produced by activists within the movement, such as organisational websites, online newsletters, emails, tweets and Facebook posts, as well as newspaper articles, to keep up to date with the latest movement activities. This material provided generic background information to the research and informed my empirical mapping of the movement's origins, developments and characteristic features (RQ1). For instance, to keep track of new initiatives, campaigns and issues being discussed, I scanned organisational websites and subscribed to several newsletters produced by the movement. Some anti-street harassment groups, including Collective Action for Safe Spaces, HarassMap, Hollaback!, Safecity and Stop Street Harassment (SSH), disseminate regular newsletters on street harassment-related issues and their efforts to combat harassment and other forms of sexual violence. SSH has a wider remit by collating and disseminating monthly newsletters and information on street harassment and resistance efforts across the world. SSH's news updates were a particularly valuable resource for keeping track of global developments. I also had access to some internal group email lists and online project management platforms, as discussed earlier, which allowed me to track current developments. In addition, I signed up to a large number of activist Facebook pages and followed numerous anti-street harassment Twitter accounts and hashtags to keep abreast of current debates and activities.

Through the Internet I also regularly surveyed the mainstream media, feminist magazines and grey literature produced by larger, formalised NGOs, e.g., ActionAid, for news articles on street harassment and resistance against it. This material similarly provided background information and topical data for my mapping exercise, particularly in terms of new initiatives and innovative forms of activism. Locating sources was greatly facilitated by setting up Google Alerts on the following key phrases: 'street harassment', 'harassment in public spaces' and 'feminist activism', which notified me on a weekly basis of media activity in this area. Most of the documentary data provided background information and insight into the mapping of the movement. I also reviewed and analysed organisational websites and social media material to supplement the interview data in order to understand how digital technologies function in the emergence and development of the global movement (part two of RQ2).

I used content analysis throughout the research process, as opposed to a definitive data collection period, to analyse the documents and social media material, which involved an iterative process of skimming, reading and interpreting the material (Bowen, 2009, p. 32). I did not select a specific sample of documents to analyse but instead, scanned, read and interpreted thousands of documents during the research. This involved a 'first-pass document review' of materials, in which I identified meaningful and pertinent passages of text or other data relevant to my research questions (Bowen, 2009, p. 32). I extracted but did not code the pertinent information due to the sheer number of documents reviewed. I culled relevant data from the materials to augment the interview data and to corroborate the claims and observations made by the research participants.

The documents from which I elicited data were uneven (Bowen, 2009, p. 35), with voluminous information on some aspects of the research; for example, the different forms of activism used by the movement, and very little or no information on other aspects, notably how motivations function in the emergence and development of the movement (part one of RQ2). Nonetheless, documents were useful in illustrating, contextualising and verifying the interview data.

3.2.2 Ethical considerations

Throughout the research process, I had an ethical obligation to ensure the rights, privacy and wellbeing of the research participants and the wider community (Berg, 2007, p. 53). I discuss each of these ethical obligations in turn.

3.2.2.1 Gaining informed consent

An important ethical requirement of the research was gaining the research participants' informed consent – a concept 'understood to exemplify an appropriate relationship between researcher and research participant, and the importance of gaining the voluntary and fully informed consent of the research participants' (Aaltonen, 2017, p. 329). This entails a responsibility on the part of the researcher to explain in a comprehensive and meaningful way the purpose and intentions of the research (Corti, Day and Backhouse, 2000). While all the interviewees signed a consent form prior to participating in the research (after I had provided background information on the research and explained the aims of the study) it was impossible to predict all potential consequences of participating in the study before it had commenced (Wiles *et al.*, 2005).

This reveals the complexity of gaining informed consent from participants and suggests that genuine informed consent 'exists more in rhetoric than reality' (Wiles *et al.*, 2005). Nevertheless, I did not anticipate (or experience) any major ethical issues when carrying out the interviews and I provided participants with as much information as possible about the research by explaining the purpose and aims of the study at the beginning of each interview. I similarly provided my participants the opportunity to ask any questions they had about the study at the start of the interview process. The opportunity to be kept informed about the research and to comment on the materials produced as a result of it was printed on the consent forms, which each participant signed.

3.2.2.2 Assuring confidentiality and anonymity

Assuring confidentiality and anonymity of research participants (at least those participants who wish to retain their anonymity) are considered key ethical requirements in social research (Crow and Wiles, 2008). Underlying the notion of confidentiality is the idea of 'respect for autonomy', which, in practice, means that identifiable information about participants will not be made known without their

permission (Wiles *et al.* 2008, p. 217). One way of protecting participants' identities is through anonymity, that is, concealing the names of research participants or sites and removing any information that might result in the identification of participants or research sites (Walford, 2005, p. 84). However, in assuring research participants' anonymity, I encountered an ethical dilemma: the desire to protect individuals from harm by concealing their identities while, at the same time, conveying and disseminating rich accounts of participants' perceptions and experiences (Kaiser, 2009, p. 11).

Moreover, the principle of anonymity conflicts with the idea that participants should be able to choose how their data is used, 'enabling them to retain ownership of their stories' (Grinyer, 2002, pp. 1, 5; Wiles *et al.*, 2008, p. 427). It is indisputable that in many instances the assurance of anonymity to participants is an ethical prerequisite (Grinyer, 2002, p. 2). However, while codes of ethical conduct make assumptions about the desirability of anonymity, the prevailing orthodoxy is beginning to be challenged by a growing number of researchers (Grinyer, 2002, p. 1; Tilley and Woodthorpe, 2011, p. 202). There is also recognition that participants increasingly wish to be identified in research outputs (Grinyer, 2002, p. 1; Wiles *et al.*, 2008, p. 422). The research participants in this study are public figures who are accustomed to being interviewed, primarily for media outlets, and whose names generally are not concealed.

As a consequence of the participants' public status, I decided to employ an alternative informed consent process which would respect individual participants and provide them with greater choice over the use of their data (Kaiser, 2009, p. 11). I introduced a graduated system of consent, in which participants could select whether their personal data should be anonymised or whether they wished their names to appear in research outputs. All but two of the 33 interviewees chose to have their names made public in the research. The two participants who chose to retain their anonymity were asked to indicate how they wished to be referred to using a form of words which they selected. I decided that the use of pseudonyms – a conventional practice in qualitative research for assuring anonymity – would be inappropriate in this context since the vast majority of my participants had elected to use their real names. As such, these two activists used a form of words which described their role and/or how they positioned themselves. Furthermore, in accordance with the British Sociological Association (BSA) Code of Ethical Practice, I gave participants the option 'to reject the use of data gathering devices such as tape recorders and video cameras' (BSA, 2002) should they so wish. Despite providing participants with this option, all consented to the production of audio-recordings.

As discussed above, interactions with participants frequently resulted in sensitive data being gathered. For example, in investigating participants' motivations for becoming activists, interviewees often disclosed experiences of street harassment and sexual assault. I did not prompt such disclosures. To ensure that private and confidential information was protected, I asked each participant at the

outset of the interview process to confirm the level of attribution they had indicated on the consent form. During the interviews, if a participant stated that what they were about to say, or had already discussed, was confidential, I ensured that this material was clearly highlighted on the interview transcript and that the data was not input into NVivo for analysis. In addition, as mentioned above, I provided all participants with a copy of the transcript for review and asked individuals to highlight any confidential information. Again, I ensured that any such data was marked as confidential on the edited version of the transcript and was disregarded from data analysis. I also gave assurances to participants that confidential information would not be reproduced in any research outputs. In fact, the amount of confidential data was minimal.

3.2.2.3 Considering the impact of my research

The consideration of ethical issues is essential throughout the study to weigh up the potential risks to the research participants and the anticipated benefits of the research (Arifin, 2018, p. 30). While it is impossible to eliminate the possibility that my research might produce unintended negative outcomes, being reflexive throughout the research process enabled me to consider how as a researcher I might affect the participants (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004, pp. 276–277). In the interview process, for instance, I was aware of the potential sensitivity of the topic and how I might avert any ethical problems should they arise (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004, p. 276). As previously discussed, several participants articulated personal experiences of street harassment and other forms of VAW. I attempted to respond in an ethically appropriate manner to such disclosures by actively listening to participants and signalling empathy and engagement.

A second ethical concern I had anticipated occurred during fieldwork in Cairo, which I did my best to manage. At the time of the interviews in 2016, Egypt was undergoing, and continues to endure, a relentless government crackdown on civil society and grassroots activist groups. I was conscious that participants might be at risk in discussing the country's security situation and, thus, did not pursue this topic. However, when participants themselves broached the subject, I asked if they would prefer me to stop recording the interview and I spoke in a very low voice. Throughout the interview process, I was continuously aware of my body language and the tone of my voice, and I interacted with participants in an open and friendly manner in an attempt to put them at ease. My positionality as a feminist, studying women with similar experiences to mine, was also beneficial. My analysis of gender-based oppression and injustice, which constitutes much of the study's conceptual framework, enhanced my awareness and sensitivity during the interviews, and enabled an attempt to foster empathetic interactions (Acker, Barry and Esseveld, 1991, p. 146).

Considering the impact of my research also required me to be receptive to the imbalance of power inherent in the research process. Feminist scholars acknowledge that researchers and the researched

possess a 'different and unequal relation to knowledge' (Glucksmann, 1994, p. 150) and that a key way in which power is exercised is through the process of interpretation (Rose, 1997; Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002, p. 116). As Sara McLafferty (1995, p. 437) contends, 'except in rare cases, the researcher holds a "privileged" position – by deciding what questions to ask, directing the flow of discourse, interpreting interview and observational material, and deciding where and in what form it should be presented.' Being reflexive during the interview process allowed me to reflect on my privileged position vis-à-vis the research participants.

Accordingly, I made efforts to minimise power disparities during the interviews by sharing personal experiences of street harassment, which helped in establishing relations of trust. Another strategy to reduce power differentials was to include the research participants in the knowledge production process. For instance, I sought their feedback on various aspects of the study, including my interpretation of the data. Additionally, by providing participants with copies of the interview transcripts, they were able to check and re-interpret the interview data and, thus, 'controlled the content of their interview' (Kelly, 1988, p. 13). Moreover, I have made my research findings freely available to all research participants by providing them with a PDF copy of Desborough (2018) 'The Global Anti-Street Harassment Movement: Digitally Enabled Feminist Activism', which Hollaback! has uploaded to their website. Stop Street Harassment has similarly disseminated the details of this publication via their online newsletter and uploaded the citation to their website. Although power differentials in social research cannot be entirely erased (Acker, Barry and Esseveld, 1991, p. 141), I have attempted to acknowledge and minimise their effects and, ultimately, to avoid exploitative research practices. In the next three chapters, the perspectives and voices of the research participants are brought to the fore.

Chapter Four: Mapping the Global Anti-Street Harassment Movement

The purpose of this chapter is to map out the origins, development and defining characteristics of the global anti-street harassment movement²⁵ in order to address the study's first research question, which asks: 'What are the characteristic features of the global anti-street harassment movement?'. In so doing, this will firmly establish the existence of the movement and provide a precursor to an in-depth examination of the study's central research problem. I begin by outlining the origins of anti-street harassment activism and the development of the contemporary global anti-street harassment movement. I then examine the movement's structure, feminist ideological dimensions, goals and forms of activism. Much of this chapter is necessarily descriptive as it is the first time that a comprehensive mapping exercise of the global movement has been undertaken.²⁶

4.1 Origins and Development

As outlined in the introduction, the past 10-20 years have witnessed a proliferation in grassroots anti-street harassment activism in many countries around the world. Understanding the role that certain factors contribute to this growing global resistance against street harassment is the focus of my project, which I examine in subsequent chapters. In this section, I am interested in outlining the origins and development of the global anti-street harassment movement. I locate contemporary anti-street harassment activism in a longer history of feminist resistance against harassment in public spaces to reveal that whilst the contemporary movement is associated, to a great extent, with digital activism, it has not emerged in isolation from previous feminist efforts to resist public space harassment. For example, some contemporary anti-street harassment initiatives have learned from, borrowed and adapted earlier feminist political practices, as I show later in this chapter.

4.1.1 Historical background

Women have been confronting street harassment since at least the period of first wave feminism. Prominent pockets of resistance coincided with the Suffrage movement in the early 1900s and, much

²⁵ I draw loosely on Eschle and Maiguashca (2007) in this endeavour as they conducted a similar mapping exercise in respect of feminist antiglobalization activism, which provided a helpful analytical framework for examining my case. While Eschle and Maiguashca's (2007) study entailed an exploration of 'emergence or origins, structure, beliefs and aspirations, identity claims and practices' of feminist antiglobalization activists and activism (Eschle and Maiguashca, 2007, p. 288), I have modified their framework to examine the origins and development, structure, feminist ideological dimensions, goals and forms of activism of the global anti-street harassment movement. In chapter six, I examine identity, specifically the role of digital technologies in enabling activists to forge a collective identity.

²⁶ Kearl (2015b) has undertaken a partial mapping of global anti-street harassment activism, with a focus on efforts deployed by activists to resist and confront street harassment around the world.

later, with second wave feminism during the 1960s and early 1980s (Kearl, 2015b, pp. xiii–xv). In the United States, for instance, both Estelle Freedman (2013) and Kerry Segrave (2014) have documented the early twentieth century ‘revolt against the masher’ (Freedman, 2013, p. 191)²⁷ whereby women responded verbally and fought back against male harassers using physical force and a variety of everyday weapons, such as hatpins and umbrellas, and in some cases, instigated the arrest of harassers (Freedman, 2013, pp. 191, 200; Segrave, 2014, pp. 54, 76, 87).

In addition to individual interventions against harassment in public spaces, collective forms of resistance were present in the early 1920s. For example, the Washington DC-based ‘Anti-Flirt Club’, ‘composed of young women and girls who have been embarrassed by men in automobiles and on street corners’ (Library of Congress, 1923), launched an ‘Anti-Flirt Week’ in March 1923 to deter harassers (Coe, 2013). During this period (and long before), Black women in the US experienced pervasive harassment from white men, particularly in the segregated South. From the 1940s to the 1960s, large numbers of Black women came together to resist the long-established practice of sexual violence and harassment of Black women committed by white men with impunity (Kearl, 2015b, p. xiv).

In the 1970s and early 1980s, the Women’s Liberation Movement on occasion addressed street harassment in its campaigning against violence against women (VAW) as women’s stories of harassment started to be published in popular journals (Kearl, 2015b, p. xiv; Roenius, 2016, p. 839). For example, women marched in areas with high incidents of sexual violence, distributed flyers and held demonstrations, such as the Wall Street ‘Ogle-in’, organised by feminist activist, Karla Jay in 1970, which involved women gathering on the street to turn the tables on male harassers. The Ogle-In tactic was aimed at teaching particular groups of men, who were well known for harassing women, how it felt to be sexually objectified and at reversing the power dynamics underlying street harassment: ‘It was incredibly liberating to reverse the wolf whistles, animal noises, and body-parts appraisals that customarily flowed in our direction’ (Brownmiller, 1999, pp. 195–196). Feminists in the UK initiated similar satirical awareness raising actions against street harassment in the 1970s. As one women activist explained ‘we’d all wander out behind men in the streets and pinch their bums and say: give us a smile darling’ (Mackay, 2015, p. 146).

In the 1970s a similarly innovative and, it seems, effective form of direct action was devised by Catharine MacKinnon while at law school in the US. ‘After trying everything else’ to deter harassers, Mackinnon ‘made up yellow cards that stated, in English and Spanish: “You have just offended a woman. This card has been chemically treated. Your prick will fall off in three days”’ (quoted in

²⁷ In the US during the late 1800s and early 1900s, sexual harassers in public spaces were called ‘mashers’ (Segrave, 2014, p. 1).

Langelan, 1993, p. 15). MacKinnon noted the remarkable impact of her campaign: upon handing each man a card, some mumbled ‘thank you’, others shook her hand, but all of them avoided her for years (in Langelan, 1993, p. 15). Humour is a common component in the above campaigns, despite the persistent stereotype that feminists are devoid of a sense of humour (Franzini, 1996, p. 811). And humour is being used by some contemporary anti-street harassment initiatives as a response to questions of street harassment, while also calling for more serious political responses to street harassment, as I discuss later in the chapter.

Anti-street harassment activism was not limited to West Europe and the United States. In India, for example, feminist activism against VAW, while influenced by Western feminist debates, emerged out of anti-colonial movements in the 1970s (Gangoli, 2007, pp. 6, 15). In the late 1970s and early 1980s, autonomous women’s groups and grassroots organisations began to address street harassment in combination with other forms of VAW. For example, in 1981 the Forum Against the Oppression of Women organised in Bombay to campaign against rape, dowry murders and harassment of women passengers on public transport, and in Delhi in 1982 Stree Sangharsh performed street plays about rape, dowry deaths and street harassment (Katzenstein, 1989, pp. 56, 57). But even earlier, in the early 1970s in Hyderabad, female students executed one of the first campaigns in the country against ‘eve-teasing’,²⁸ exposing the ‘hostile and sexually threatening conditions’ faced by women every day (Tharu and Niranjana, 1994, p. 94). It is possible that grassroots activists were operating in other places around the world at this time or perhaps earlier, but because the history of anti-street harassment activism is largely written from a Western perspective, such cases are difficult to trace.

In the 1980s a small number of community-based initiatives were launched in the US, most notably the ‘Hassle-Free Zone’ campaign run by Washington DC women from 1985 to 1986. With the goal of ending harassment in the area, a coalition of women’s groups organised numerous street events, public ‘speak outs’ and marches, provided harassment-confrontation training, distributed leaflets and reclaimed public spaces (Langelan, 1993, pp. 331–333). One of the campaign’s organisers, Martha Langelan, published recommendations for tackling street harassment through confrontational techniques in her 1993 book *Back off! How to Confront and Stop Sexual Harassment and Harassers*, discussed later in this chapter (Collective Action for Safe Spaces, 2010).

4.1.2 The contemporary global anti-street harassment movement

While there is a long history of sporadic feminist resistance against sexual harassment in public spaces, it was not until the 2000s that multifarious grassroots efforts emerged with the specific aim of tackling

²⁸ This seemingly innocuous term is used for pervasive forms of street harassment in South Asian countries (Misri, 2017, p. 305).

street harassment (Kearl, 2015b, p. xvi).²⁹ As I argue in chapter six, this is, in part, because many anti-street harassment activists took advantage of the affordances of new digital technologies, which enabled them to create, organise and engage in activism against street harassment, construct an emergent collective identity among geographically dispersed actors, and diffuse ideas and tactics between movement participants. This burgeoning of anti-street harassment activism coincides with a resurgence in feminist activism in various countries and regions over the past two decades, including in India, Latin America, the UK and the US (e.g., Redfern and Aune, 2011; Cochrane, 2013; Evans, 2015; Mackay, 2015; Serrano-Puche, 2015; Kurian, 2018; Belotti, Comunello and Corradi, 2020).

Whilst anti-street harassment initiatives have sprung up in many countries over the last two decades, three central ‘hubs’ of activism have emerged at different points in the movement’s recent development. These are Egypt, India and the United States. I conceive a ‘hub’ as a central country for movement activity in the sense that it comprises a wide variety of anti-street harassment initiatives, some of which expanded or inspired the creation of other anti-street harassment initiatives elsewhere.

The United States is the largest hub of movement activity. Much contemporary anti-street harassment activism originated in the US, with the launch in 2000 of the Street Harassment Project in New York – the first (known) website for women to share their experiences of street harassment and stories of resistance, and to organise on-the-ground actions (The Street Harassment Project, 2003). A diverse range of anti-street harassment initiatives are currently active in the country. The two main anti-street harassment groups in the US hub (and most often referred to by my research participants and by many media outlets) are Hollaback! and Stop Street Harassment.

In 2005, Hollaback! launched in New York City as a story-sharing blog website, *HollabackNYC*, where women and LGBTQ+ individuals could share their street harassment stories. Emily May, Co-founder and Executive Director of Hollaback!, launched the initiative with six friends following a conversation between May and her female friends about their innumerable street harassment experiences. The men in the group listened with incredulity and responded, ‘you guys live in this completely different city than we do’ (Emily May, interview 2016). The friends were determined to change that by reversing the gendered power dynamics of street harassment. They were inspired by Thao Nguyen, who had taken a photograph of a man publicly masturbating in front of her on the subway, which she posted to Flickr, and which then appeared on the front page of the *New York Daily News* (Emily May, interview 2016; Ashoka, no date; Prime Movers, 2016).

²⁹ Some non-single issue-based groups also emerged during this period focused on resisting and ending VAW more broadly. For these groups, tackling street harassment formed a core component of their campaigning work.

Hollaback! is both a central actor in the US and a global network within the movement. Since launching in 2005, the story-sharing blog generated significant national and international media attention, which led to requests from people around the world to establish Hollaback! sites in their own communities. In 2010, Hollaback! was officially incorporated as a not-for-profit NGO and the organisation applied for funding to expand the model. Hollaback! had intended to launch five sites, but the demand was so great that they instead launched 45 (Debjani Roy, former Deputy Director of Hollaback!, US, interview 2014). Since then, Hollaback! has created a web platform to launch and support local Hollaback! chapters, and developed iPhone and Android apps for women to collect and share stories of street harassment and to document incidents on a map (Hollaback!, no date c; Dimond *et al.*, 2013, p. 478). The global Hollaback! network comprises 49 active chapters in 25 countries.³⁰ The expansion of the Hollaback! network through activists' innovative usage of digital technologies to create anti-street harassment platforms, mobilise people quickly and organise efficiently is explored more thoroughly in the next chapter. Whilst Hollaback!'s original goal was to end street harassment, in the past three years the organisation has extended its ambitions to combat both street and online harassment. In 2016, Hollaback! launched HeartMob, an online platform based on its street harassment digital story-sharing model, which enables users to provide support and show solidarity to victims of online harassment (HeartMob, 2017).

Stop Street Harassment (SSH) – another major actor in the wider US hub and perhaps the key actor in the global movement – is a prominent non-profit organisation based in Washington DC. SSH began operating as a website in 2008 and is 'dedicated to documenting and ending gender-based street harassment worldwide' (Stop Street Harassment, 2018a). Holly Kearn, Founder and Chief Executive of SSH, launched the website to provide information and resources on street harassment and as a place for people to share stories of harassment. The organisation's remit expanded from there with SSH becoming actively involved in idea sharing and fostering collaboration among movement participants through the website and social media (Holly Kearn, interview 2014). For example, using digital technologies, each spring SSH organises, coordinates and promotes International Anti-Street Harassment Week, bringing together hundreds of groups from approximately 25-40 countries to raise awareness about the problem and seek solutions within their communities (Kearn, 2015b, p. 88; Stop Street Harassment, 2018d). I discuss the online coordination of this transnational event in more detail in chapter six. In addition to its online work, SSH engages in community mobilisation locally (Stop Street Harassment, 2018a), often participating in joint activities with other Washington DC-based anti-street harassment activists and anti-sexual violence advocates. In 2016, in collaboration with Defend Yourself and Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN), SSH launched the US's first national

³⁰ Representing approximately 240 people, in addition to a wider network of less active sites totalling 560 people (Jae Cameron, personal communication, 2016). This number is constantly in flux as new sites emerge and others disband.

gender-based street harassment hotline, providing a safe space and confidential support to victims and survivors of street harassment and sexual assault (Stop Street Harassment, 2018e).

In addition to Hollaback! and Stop Street Harassment, there are more than 30 active anti-street harassment grassroots groups and campaigns in the United States (Stop Street Harassment, 2018b). Other salient initiatives in the US include Washington DC-based Collective Action for Safe Spaces (CASS), which began operating in 2009; Feminist Public Works, which started in Philadelphia in 2011 (originally as HollabackPHILLY); Tatyana Fazlalizadeh's Brooklyn-based 'Stop Telling Women to Smile' street art project in 2012; and Feminista Jones' twitter hashtag #YouOkSis, which went viral in 2014. I discuss these initiatives in the final section of this chapter, when I examine the movement's activism in detail.

India constitutes the second largest hub of movement activity. The two major groups in this country hub are Blank Noise and Safecity. As I discuss in the next chapter, personal experience of street harassment, its normalisation and the recognition and rejection of the practice as a gendered injustice prompted Jasmeen Patheja to establish the Blank Noise project in Bangalore in 2003. Patheja recognised the need to start a conversation about street harassment and to 'call it what it is', instead of trivialising harassment as 'eve teasing' (interview 2015). The project has evolved from a personal response to harassment through to a series of strategies and activities, such as workshops, street interventions, blogging and installations, into a community art collective seeking to tackle street harassment (Blank Noise, 2005). At present Blank Noise is entirely volunteer-run³¹ by 'Action S/heroes' – volunteers who work across India to create dialogue in their communities and to take action against sexual and gender-based violence (Jasmeen Patheja, interview 2015). In chapter six, I show how Patheja has utilised digital technologies to co-ordinate Blank Noise activities and to expand the project beyond India, by mobilising volunteers in Canada, Colombia, Japan, Pakistan and the US (Blank Noise, 2018), to reclaim public spaces in order to highlight the problem of street harassment and to challenge conceptions of safety and vulnerability (Kaur, 2018).

Other anti-street harassment groups and campaigns operating in India include Safe Delhi campaign, which launched in 2004, Freeze the Tease (2011), Safe Safar auto rickshaw campaign (2011), Tumblr *GotStaredAt* (2012), Safecity (2012) and She's Not #AskingForIt campaign (2015). The brutal mass rape and murder of 23-year-old medical student, Jyoti Singh Pandey in Delhi, in 2012 triggered a surge in action against street harassment and sexual violence more broadly (Kearl, 2015b, pp. 122–125). For example, Safecity was established by Elsa D'Silva in December 2012 following the Delhi rape, which marked a turning point for her:

³¹ The organisation is in the process of transitioning to NGO status, with some paid staff.

That was when everything lined up and I said to myself: Safety and security need to be urgently addressed. Until then, not many of us were even talking about it actively or openly enough, including me. It was that rape that really got me thinking more actively ... And then I started to remember the various incidents that had taken place in my own life. (in Bramley, 2015)

Linking the horrific rape and murder of Jyoti Singh Pandey with other women's accounts of street harassment and sexual assault, and with her own experiences of sexual violence, D'Silva began to locate these experiences within wider social structures. Inspired by HarassMap's digital crowdmapping platform (discussed below), D'Silva adapted the model to the Indian context (Elsa D'Silva, interview 2015). By combining crowdsourced data and technology with offline community campaigning and action, Safecity seeks to create awareness about sexual harassment and abuse in public spaces and ultimately to make cities safer for women by fostering equal access to public space. The data collected from stories is aggregated as 'harassment hotspots' on a map and utilised to encourage community engagement and reporting, including advocating for local administrations to create solutions at the local level (Safecity, no date a).

Egypt was a central hub of movement activity from 2011 until approximately 2013/2014. From 2010, the country witnessed the rise of a number of grassroots efforts tackling street harassment³² immediately prior to and especially just after the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. HarassMap, the first grassroots initiative in the country to work on the issue arose in December 2010 'with the mission of ending the social acceptability of sexual harassment in Egypt' (Fahmy *et al.*, 2014, p. 11). HarassMap is the main anti-street harassment group in Egypt. It combines online reporting and mapping technology, communications campaigns and research to support a vast community mobilisation effort across Egypt 'to create an environment that does not tolerate sexual harassment' (HarassMap, no date d). Although the organisation is perhaps most well-known for its digital harassment crowdmap and reporting system, since its inception HarassMap recognised the importance of incorporating offline components into their work in order to challenge the widespread social acceptability of street harassment. Since launching in December 2010, HarassMap has received requests and provided guidance to other activist groups around the world seeking to initiate their version of a digital harassment map. In chapter six, I discuss the diffusion and emulation of the HarassMap model beyond Egypt.

Many other anti-street harassment groups sprung up in Egypt after the launch of HarassMap and in response to the January 2011 uprising, which provided a political opportunity for the emergence of

³² As noted in chapter two, with the exception of Ilahi (2009), the literature on public space sexual harassment in Egypt does not tend to use the term 'street harassment'. Instead, authors and Egyptian anti-street harassment activists typically refer to 'public sexual harassment' or simply 'sexual harassment'. I retain the term 'street harassment' in the thesis for the sake of consistency.

novel forms of grassroots activism (ElSayed and Rizzo, 2014; Abdelmonem, 2015b, pp. 94, 97; Tadros, 2015, p. 1352; Abdelmonem and Galán, 2017, p. 155). Sexual Harassment Action Group commenced in 2011 and groups, including Bassma (meaning Imprint), Ded el-Taharrush (Anti Sexual Harassment Movement), Didd al-Taharrush (Against Harassment), Harass the Harasser, Operation Anti Sexual Harassment (OpAntiSH), Shoft Taharrush (I Saw Harassment) and Tahrir Bodyguard all started in 2012. A number of initiatives, including OpAntiSH and Tahrir BodyGuard, began operating in Tahrir Square and other protest spaces as a reaction to the brutal mass harassment and sexual assault of women protestors. Several of these grassroots efforts combined awareness raising with direct action strategies, such as forming security patrols to protect women and intervening to rescue women from mob sexual harassment and assault (Langohr, 2013, p. 23).

In 2013 anti-street harassment initiatives were restricted by the el-Sisi regime and several ceased operating when it imposed stringent controls on street activism (Tadros, 2015, p. 1364; Abdelmonem and Galán, 2017, p. 163), essentially enforcing a crackdown on civil society organisations and human rights NGOs and activists (Naber and Abd El-Hameed, 2016, p. 520). The Egyptian regime's 'militarization of public space' has rendered ineffective, or less effective, many anti-street harassment activities and obstructed activists' campaigning efforts because operating in the public arena now necessitates obtaining permission from the Ministry of Interior, which is often denied (Naber and Abd El-Hameed, 2016, p. 524). According to Nihal Saad Zaghoul, Founder of Bassma, Egypt, and Hala Mostafa, Coordinator of I Saw Harassment, Egypt, these repressive measures by the Egyptian government have significantly hampered the groups' efforts to engage directly with people in public spaces as it is no longer possible to work directly on the ground. As such the groups' objectives to create a public debate on street harassment and to mobilise the community against sexual violence (Nihal Saad Zaghoul, interview 2016) as well as to provide safe streets for women and to encourage them to resist harassment (Hala Mostafa, interview 2016) are increasingly obstructed by the restrictive policies introduced by the el-Sisi administration.

Very few anti-street harassment initiatives continue to operate in Egypt, so the notion of a country hub is not applicable to the present day context. However, for a few years in the development of the global movement, Egypt was certainly a major site of movement activity, not only in terms of quantity and variety of anti-street harassment initiatives, but also because the groups were highly active and frequently interacted with each other on the ground. I have also included Egypt here because, whilst it is no longer a hub, it is interesting to show how elements of the global movement have developed, both in terms of growth and decline, and how the development of the movement is influenced by distinct local specificities. Egyptian anti-street harassment activism was first shaped by political opportunities and then undermined by political repression.

I have so far discussed three country hubs of anti-street harassment activism, or two hubs and a former hub, but there is also significant movement activity in other parts of the world. In Europe, for example, groups such as Stop Harcèlement de Rue (Stop Street Harassment), which started in Paris in 2014 is now active in 15 cities across France (Info Tours.fr, 2017) and the Everyday Sexism project, launched by Laura Bates in the UK in 2012, initially as a Facebook page for her female friends to share stories of street harassment and other forms of daily sexism, was rolled out to 17 countries within a year (Cochrane, 2013). Less than 18 months after its launch, Everyday Sexism had received 50,000 submissions from women globally and had almost 100,000 Twitter followers (Cochrane, 2013).

In Latin America, several anti-street harassment groups and campaigns have emerged since 2012. Some prominent initiatives in the region include Paremos el Acoso Callejero (PAC) (Let's End Street Harassment), which launched in Peru in 2012 and soon inspired the emergence of other regional initiatives, including el Observatorio contra el Acoso Callejero (OCAC) (Observatory Against Street Harassment) chapters in Chile and Colombia. OCAC initially launched in Chile in 2013 and has since spread to Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Uruguay (Alice Junquera, OCAC Chile, interview 2016; Observatorio contra el Acoso Callejero, 2015b). Other important regional groups are the Chega de Fiu Fiu (Enough with the Cat Calls) campaign created by the Brazilian NGO Think Olga in 2013, which was partly inspired by the Everyday Sexism Project and Hollaback!, and Acción Respeto: por un calle libre de acoso (Action for Respect: for harassment-free streets), which launched in Argentina in 2014 and has since inspired chapters in Costa Rica and Mexico. As I discuss later in the chapter, there is a growing regional trend within activist circles to advocate for anti-street harassment legislation at both the national and local level. Developments in this area have resulted in the enactment of two national laws against street harassment in Peru and Chile and the passage of local legislation in Argentina and Chile, as well as further bills being presented to national parliaments for consideration. This development, I will argue, is significant in making street harassment clearly visible as a social problem since it signals to society that the state no longer tolerates street harassment, however difficult such laws are to enforce.

It is beyond the scope of this project to provide a comprehensive geographical mapping of the movement's development simply because of its scale – anti-street harassment initiatives operate on every continent, with the exception of Antarctica (see for example, Stop Street Harassment, 2018b). Instead, I have limited my analysis to three central hubs of movement activity and indicated two other regions where the movement is particularly active. Since 2010, the global anti-street harassment movement expanded rapidly, peaking between 2014-2016. To some extent the movement developed in a spontaneous manner, with several groups emerging independently of each other. At the same time, the diffusion and emulation of activist practices across geographic locations, facilitated by digital technologies, and the expansion of existing anti-street harassment initiatives at the local, national,

regional and global levels significantly influenced the movement's global growth. I return to this point briefly in the next section where I examine the movement's organisational and relational structure, and more fully in chapter six.

4.2 Structure of the Movement

In this section, I explore the structure of the global anti-street harassment movement, by which I mean the composition of and relations between the various components of the movement. This topic is important because there is no existing literature that explicitly examines the different entities that are involved in the global anti-street harassment movement and how they interact with each other.³³ My examination of the structure of the global anti-street harassment movement helps to provide an analytical understanding of how the different and diverse anti-street harassment initiatives that might, at first glance, appear disconnected and disorganised, are in fact components in a global social movement that is a loose but integrated and decentralised network (Gerlach, 2001, pp. 289–290).

4.2.1 Movement composition

The global anti-street harassment movement comprises various organisational forms. It is mainly composed of non-institutionalised grassroots groups and individual activists, as well as not-for-profit NGOs, or hybrid feminist social movement organisations (FSMOs) – those that began as and retain some of the characteristics of voluntary grassroots organisations but that changed over time, notably by adopting 'more formal and bureaucratic' organisational structures and employing more paid staff members (Hyde, 2000, pp. 46–47, 56). The majority of anti-street harassment initiatives are volunteer-led and volunteer-run grassroots groups that are self-financed. These initiatives range in size from an individual activist, such as Feminista Jones, to Blank Noise, comprising thousands of 'Action S/hero' volunteers organising online and offline actions across and beyond India.

As I have stressed throughout this thesis and will emphasise further in the next two chapters, the global anti-street movement comprises feminist activists – predominantly women, who work on this issue at the grassroots because of grievances concerning street harassment, stemming principally from personal lived experience; because they care about and empathise with street harassment victims/survivors; and because they are committed to finding solutions at the community (and sometimes global) level. Furthermore, many movement participants are committed to sharing experiences, ideas and information with each other. Julia Gray, co-founder of Hollaback! London explains:

³³ Kearl (2015b) documented anti-street harassment actions and campaigns globally, noting collaborations between activists on specific campaigns and Keyhan (2016, pp. 76-82, 84-85) discussed the benefits and drawbacks of Hollaback!'s organisational structure.

apart from New York, everybody that runs a Hollaback site is an unpaid volunteer, they do it because they really care, they care about their city, they care about the people who live there, they care about women, they care about people who are harassed, they care about insecurity, they care about challenging male violence and I think that's a really important thing to stress with the grassroots nature of this work is what's brilliant about it is it's real people who've lived the experience and want to share it and want to do something. ... All these people that are doing this, we're doing it because it's work that the government should be doing but they're not. (Julia Gray, Hollaback London!, UK, interview 2014)

While the movement is largely grassroots-based, a growing number of anti-street harassment initiatives that were founded as grassroots groups – that is, as 'locally based and basically autonomous, volunteer-run nonprofit groups' (Smith, 1997, p. 269) – have become not-for-profit NGOs, e.g., HarassMap, the Hollaback! headquarters in New York, Safecity and SSH. These hybrid FSMOs exist on a continuum between formal paid staff NGOs and grassroots organisations, exhibiting characteristics of each (Hyde, 2000, p. 59). Groups in receipt of funding differ in their funding sources; for example, Hollaback! NYC is mostly foundation-funded. In addition, the organisation receives government financing (approximately 10% of their income) and individual donations (also approximately 10%) (Emily May, interview 2016). Initial funding for Hollaback's online platform to combat online harassment, HeartMob, was provided by the Knight Foundation and Digital Trust Foundation (Hollaback!, no date b). Most of HarassMap's funding comes from international donors; however, the organisation is investigating alternative funding sources to prevent a reliance on foreign funding, which is perceived as restrictive by the organisation (Noora Flinkman, interview 2016). Safecity in India receives revenue from providing fee-based workshops to businesses and offering training, technology and data support to NGOs (Elsa D'Silva, interview 2015). Some initiatives have launched crowdfunding campaigns to develop and expand their work, e.g. Safecity and HarassMap, or to pay for specific anti-street harassment projects, campaigns and research.³⁴

While the hybrid FSMOs in my study began operating as volunteer-led grassroots groups, over time they found that the volunteer-based model was unsustainable. According to Rebecca Chiao, co-founder of HarassMap, for the first two years the group was self-funded (with Chiao in fulltime employment periodically in order to fund HarassMap's work). She elaborates:

We started out like that but then it came to a point where we were so overwhelmed ... we were faced with a choice: either we go home and stop putting in all of this time and effort into

³⁴ For example, Hollaback! crowdsourced to develop a phone app, Hollaback! London to launch their 'Good Night Out' campaign and Stop Street Harassment to conduct a national US survey on street harassment in 2014.

something that we don't have the ability to do well or we work even harder as volunteers, which I don't think was physically possible for us at that point; we were exhausted and sick all the time, or we get funding and a staff ... to [work] on [HarassMap] every day. (Rebecca Chiao, interview 2014)

The HarassMap co-founders decided to secure funding from Canada's International Development Research Center and within two years, HarassMap had expanded to include 10 paid members of staff and approximately 500 volunteers in nine governorates throughout Egypt (Tavaana, 2018). Similarly, for Elsa D'Silva, co-founder of Safecity, who launched a digital anti-street harassment crowdmap based on the HarassMap model:

For me the first year was just understanding the space, understanding the issue and if it was even useful, the crowdmap that we had put together, and then I realised that if I really wanted to make a difference, I would have to treat it as a fulltime job. So, starting in January 2014, I decided to focus all my energy and effort on this issue, and we registered the organisation. (Elsa D'Silva, interview 2015)

Thus, whilst the mainstay of the global anti-street harassment movement is made up of a diverse range of grassroots groups, there is a move towards further bureaucratisation and organisation within the movement due to the financial difficulties involved in undertaking grassroots activist work and the effects of such financial limitations on creating sustainable change. More grassroots anti-street harassment initiatives, including OCAC Chile and Blank Noise are in the process of transitioning to NGO status as they contend that sustainability is only possible through formal organisational structures. For instance, Jasmeen Patheja, founder of Blank Noise told me: 'as we get more and more structured, I'd like for Blank Noise to retain its spontaneous organic and Action Heroes [platform];³⁵ however, we need a fulltime team that can be accountable for projects from beginning to end' (interview 2015). This shows the challenge of seeking bureaucratisation and increased efficiency on the one hand whilst maintaining decentralised, participatory, organisational structures on the other.³⁶

4.2.2 Relations between the components of the movement

The diverse anti-street harassment initiatives that make up the movement are networked in the sense that they form a 'loose, reticulate, integrated network' (Gerlach, 2001, p. 289) with multifarious links

³⁵ This is a volunteer model, whereby BlankNoise mobilise people across and beyond India via its website to participate in actions against street harassment and other forms of sexual violence. It is spontaneous because a project or intervention might be promoted online with short notice, sometimes in response to a particular event, and word may quickly spread.

³⁶ See Keyhan (2016) for an analysis of structural challenges within the Hollaback! network.

at different levels of the network through shared ideals and aims, common goals and values, a diverse but common repertoire of tactics and methods, and (on occasion) joint activities. At one end of the spectrum are highly networked groups, most notably SSH, Hollaback!, OCAC Chile and Safecity, with strong linkages to other activists in the movement. At the other end of the spectrum are groups who are minimally connected with movement members more through a sense of common cause and solidarity, facilitated by digital technologies.

Networking occurs at all levels – local (city or state), national, regional and transnational. In the US, local alliances among anti-street harassment activists have typically formed on a city-wide or regional basis, e.g. SSH and CASS in Washington DC, and Hollaback! Baltimore and Feminist Public Works, Philadelphia. In Latin America, regional alliances have been forged among initiatives in the Latin American Network against Street Harassment, which has been growing since 2014. The network comprises seven Observatories against Street Harassment, coordinated by OCAC Chile's International Articulation team, as well as several other anti-street harassment initiatives in the region. In Egypt, prior to the el-Sisi regime's crackdown on street activism in 2013, anti-street harassment groups often coordinated joint actions during times of protest and religious festivals when mass sexual harassment and assaults were highest, but groups also participated together on specific projects. For example, Bassma worked with HarassMap and Nazra for Feminist Studies through Cairo University's anti-street harassment workshops for students (Nihal Saad Zaghloul, interview 2016). However, for the most part, anti-street harassment activism across the movement is localised, and coordinated, collective action is somewhat sporadic (Holly Kearl, interview 2015).

Anti-street harassment activists occasionally network transnationally, most notably during the annual International Anti-Street Harassment Week, coordinated online by Stop Street Harassment. For example, in April 2016 hundreds of groups in 36 countries mobilised against street harassment in their communities (Stop Street Harassment, 2016). I discuss the online coordination of this transnational event in more depth in chapter six. A further example of Internet-enabled transnational collaboration is HarassMap's attempts to build 'a global movement of HarassMap-inspired initiatives against sexual harassment' (HarassMap, no date a). As I argue in chapter six, this involved developing an updated platform to make replication and adaptation of the HarassMap crowdmap model easier for other activists (Angie Abdelmonem, personal communication, 2017). HarassMap has been contacted by over 100 activists from approximately 40 countries who are keen to adopt and adapt the model (Rebecca Chiao, personal communication, 2016).

A small minority of my interviewees said they felt only loosely connected with the wider movement, largely because they are focused on work specific to their contexts. But while there is little coordination between some groups in terms of joint actions, they nevertheless tend to feel motivated

by a sense of collective belonging and solidarity. Jasmeen Patheja explained that ‘there’s definitely a sense of a community but there’s not been any ... formal project together yet ... but there’s this great sense of solidarity’ (interview 2015). I return to this topic in chapter six, exploring how digital technologies have enabled the forging of collective identification and solidarity among some movement members.

Interestingly, although networked relations vary among movement participants in frequency and intensity, the vast majority of the interviewees who were asked whether they thought there was a ‘global anti-street harassment movement’ answered in the affirmative (15/19), two were unsure and two answered in the negative. And 15 of the 17 participants who were asked whether they felt part of the movement said that they did. Participants’ responses were shaped by their conceptions of ‘social movement’ and ‘global social movement’, their knowledge and awareness of other anti-street harassment initiatives beyond their geographic region, how they situated their group/campaign alongside other initiatives and the broader movement, and how inclusive they felt the movement was of other women’s experiences, voices and perspectives.

Several participants unambiguously and unequivocally asserted the existence of a global anti-street harassment movement on the basis of the movement’s global scope and its shared aims and goals. For example, Holly Kearl, Founder of SSH in the US, who coordinates the annual International Anti-Street Harassment Week, as outlined earlier, unsurprisingly concurred with the existence of a global movement and defined the movement in terms of its scope and diversity of action type: ‘Yes. In the past few years, there have been at least 100 campaigns and groups internationally working on this issue ... There are also many high school and college age people who are writing, creating art, spoken word and videos about it.’ She went on to say that movement participants all ‘have a shared goal of ending sexual harassment and violence against women and men in public spaces’ (interview 2016). Jasmeen Patheja, Founder of Blank Noise in India, similarly agreed with the premise of a global anti-street harassment movement in terms of its increasing global breadth and shared aims: ‘yeah there is [a global movement], the fact that in the last decade there have been so many initiatives to tackle street harassment that have emerged, that have grown. ... There is a growing global dialogue which is resonating on tackling victim blame’³⁷ (interview 2015).

Other participants, while agreeing in principle with the existence of a global anti-street harassment movement and perceiving themselves members of the movement, were more cautious in their evaluations for varying reasons. Feminista Jones, creator of #YouOKSis, for example, agreed that the

³⁷ One of the movement’s shared aims and goals is to influence societal perceptions around victim blaming, as discussed in the ‘Goals’ section below.

movement was becoming global but stressed that it needed to be more inclusive of Black women and of their views and experiences of street harassment in other parts of the globe:

it's getting there ... it's really becoming a major thing in India and Egypt and here in New York because I still think New York is one of the worst places for [street harassment]. I think that it's spreading and I think that at some point it will be completely global but again, there's identity politics involved. It's like okay, is it going to the Black spaces? Like is it really moving in the Black spaces in the same way that it's moving in other spaces? ... But I think it's getting to the place where it's global but there's still some pockets that we have to reach. (interview 2016)

Hollaback! London co-founders, Bryony Beynon and Julia Gray concurred with the notion of a global collective endeavour against street harassment, which they felt part of, but the co-founders critiqued the term 'movement', associating it with a tendency in the social media age for 'everything to get a bit meta' (Bryony Beynon, interview 2016). After reflecting on this observation, Beynon concluded: 'But yeah, I definitely think that we're part of something but saying like "I'm part of a movement" is like a very difficult thing to get out of one's mouth without feeling like "eurgh"' (Bryony Beynon, interview 2016). Gray stressed their efforts were concentrated at the local level and consequently, they were often unaware of the bigger picture and that, in fact, this lack of awareness was, to an extent, a purposeful and necessary self-care strategy: 'I think you're so busy and focused on what you're doing in your communities and your specific locales. It takes such a lot of energy and when it's something that affects you so personally as well, I think that there is a degree of having to be able to switch off from it' (Julia Gray, interview 2016).

The four participants who were unsure or did not think there was a global anti-street harassment movement based their assessment on a particular conceptual understanding of 'social movement', one that is centralised and highly organised involving coordinated, strategic collective action. For example, according to Nay El Rahi, co-founder of HarassTracker, Lebanon:

initiatives exist and are present and are active in different parts of the world – in Cairo, in Lebanon, in the UK, in Nicaragua, in Latin America – I hear about a lot of initiatives happening here and there, but there isn't any explicit link between all of these initiatives under one umbrella ... and that's why I'm saying I cannot assume that it is a so-called global movement against anything. Locally people work in different ways, with different tools and different tactics but there is no specific link between them. [The work is] very, very contextualised and it's very localised, and I think it should stay that way. I see little value in taking change to the very macro-level UN style. (interview 2016)

Julia Brillig, Director of Hollaback! Berlin, Germany, answered in a similar manner. Yet her response was somewhat ambiguous:

that would be yes and no; I mean I guess Hollaback! defines itself as a global movement against street harassment ..., but when I hear the word 'global movement against a common cause', I would think of like many, many groups and many, many people coming together to actually fight the same thing ... there are movements and there are groups and there's work, but there's not this one big – it's not like the United Nations against Street Harassment. ... What's missing is a common organisation or yeah, actually being organised or getting organised. ... The common cause is definitely something we share, say fight[ing] against sexism, sexual harassment, that's definitely something you share but we don't work together, there's no common effort. That's why I'm like hesitating to call it a movement. (interview 2016)

Noora Flinkman, of HarassMap in Egypt, on the other hand, was more certain in her appraisal, while noting it was not a topic she had previously reflected on:

my initial reaction to that whole concept is no there isn't because in my mind a movement is something somehow more coordinated, or yeah, I don't know, like before we started having this discussion, I hadn't really thought about it. But I know there is a lot of movement on this issue, like in a lot of countries in a lot of places. ... So yeah, I guess there is movement on the issue but not a global movement, in my opinion. (interview 2016)

So while these participants were attentive to the rise in global anti-street harassment activism, in their view it was difficult to conceive of the different and diverse anti-street harassment initiatives as constituting a global movement in the absence of an explicit connection between them, i.e., without a central bureaucratic organisational structure or without engaging in coordinated, strategic, collective action. Clearly, based on these parameters, one would be hard pressed to define the global-anti-street harassment movement as a social movement. However, as discussed in the previous chapter and fleshed out in this section, my conception of the global anti-street harassment movement is broader. I do not assume that the various component groups, individuals and organisations are overtly linked under a centralised organisation (or leadership), or engaged in sustained coordinated, collective efforts to resist and combat street harassment. Rather, to reiterate, the global anti-street harassment movement is a networked global feminist movement in the sense that its participants are connected through non-hierarchical social linkages (Gerlach, 2001, p. 295) and through shared ideals and aims, common values and goals, a diverse array of common tactics and periodic participation in joint activities. While some of these links are perhaps not overtly obvious to all activists, they exist nonetheless and one of the aims of my project is to make these connections more visible.

As noted above, the vast majority of research participants felt they belonged to the global anti-street harassment movement. Furthermore, several activists reported that networking across the movement enabled them to share knowledge and learning, gain new insights, acquire evidence of success, exchange and replicate ideas and practices and foster solidarity and a sense of community, which helps to create and sustain collective identity. As Juliana de Faria of Chega de Fiu Fiu in Brazil put it:

It is like doing a brainstorm but with hundreds of people all around the world. So, people with different backgrounds, experiences and influences are there willing to give ideas and [search] for solution[s] together. We are not alone anymore. (interview 2015)

As I have argued, the global anti-street harassment movement is composed of different organisational types, primarily grassroots initiatives but also hybrid feminist SMOs. To an extent, the movement is moving towards increased bureaucratisation and organisation as a few initiatives that launched as grassroots groups have become not-for-profit NGOs, or FSMOs. At the same time, the global movement is dynamic and increased bureaucratisation is not inevitable. The movement expands, changes and sometimes contracts as anti-street harassment initiatives spring up, divide and integrate, wither away or re-emerge in different forms. While this type of movement structure might, at first glance, appear disorganised or poorly organised in that it lacks a central bureaucracy and central leadership (Gerlach, 2001, pp. 302–303), in fact, the polycentric, decentralised, networked structure (Gerlach, 2001, p. 289), facilitated by digital technologies, enables anti-street harassment activists from a multiplicity of sites to share ideas and information, emulate and adapt practices, organise joint actions (even if only on an infrequent basis) and foster a sense of solidarity between and among movement participants. The structure of the global movement is a loose but integrated and non-hierarchical network (Gerlach, 2001, pp. 289–290) that enables initiatives to act autonomously, using localised and context-specific approaches to tackle street harassment. At the same time, this networked structure also circulates the flow of ideas and information among movement participants, facilitating new and more nuanced understandings of street harassment and its effects, and promoting shared aims and tactics to resist and combat street harassment. Relatedly, as I will argue in the next section, movement participants are further connected through shared feminist beliefs and ideological viewpoints.

4.3 Feminist Ideological Dimensions

In order to interrogate and illuminate the movement's shared ideological characteristics, in this section I explore the feminist ideological dimensions of anti-street harassment activism – that is the

feminist leanings of anti-street harassment activists, participants' feminist understandings of street harassment and the feminist political project that the movement advances. I begin by exploring the different types of feminism with which anti-street harassment activists most closely identify, to consider whether the movement is ideologically aligned to a particular feminist strand or a diversity of feminisms. I then examine participants' understandings, conceptions and views of street harassment and the oppressions they are resisting, in order to reveal how activists are united in a shared political project to resist and end a gendered oppression, along with other intersecting oppressions.

During the three interview phases, I asked the majority of participants (31/33) whether they were feminists; all self-identified as feminist, variously defined.³⁸ I asked 16 out of 19 activists during the second and third phases of interviews whether they identified with a particular type of feminism.³⁹ I asked my participants this question in an open-ended manner, without prompting them or suggesting specific 'types' of feminism to choose from. Over half of those who expressed an alignment with a specific ideological strand (7/13) identified as intersectional feminists,⁴⁰ reflecting the 'turn towards intersectionality' (Evans, 2015, p. 198) within the contemporary feminist movement. Intersectionality refers to the recognition of multiple and overlapping, or intersecting, forms of oppression (Crenshaw, 1989), including sexism, racism, classism, ableism, ageism, homophobia and transphobia. Julia Brilling, Director of Hollaback! Berlin, for instance, described her feminism as being influenced by intersectional feminist scholars, such as bell hooks. She elaborates:

for me, feminism is a movement against oppression, so all the questions are interconnected. While for me my position as a woman is really important, I also try and always think of everything together – gender, race, class, sex – and that basically informs my everyday choices – my work, my activism, my friends. (interview 2016)

Other interviewees, whilst not identifying as intersectional feminists, nevertheless expressed concurrence with the principles of intersectionality. In fact, for Rochelle Keyhan of Feminist Public Works in the US, being feminist necessarily entails a commitment to intersectionality and therefore the term 'intersectional feminist' is a misnomer.

I wouldn't call myself 'intersectional feminist' necessarily because I think you're not feminist if you're not intersectional ... it shouldn't have that definition before it because don't even call yourself feminist if it's not going there because you'll never achieve anything if you're not having

³⁸ In the other two interviews I did not enquire about activists' political ideology because the line of enquiry focused very narrowly on the global diffusion of an anti-street harassment strategies.

³⁹ This specific line of enquiry was not pursued during the first round of interviews.

⁴⁰ Interviewees defining as 'intersectional feminists' were from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Germany, the UK and the US.

that focus on all the different intersections and all the ways these oppressions overlap each other.
(interview 2016)

My interview data reveals that most participants espouse a commitment to intersectionality even if they do not use the label to define themselves. This echoes developments within the broader feminist movement where activists have integrated intersectional frameworks and understandings within their political praxes (e.g., Evans, 2016; Brown *et al.*, 2017; Ross, 2017).

The other strands of feminism that interviewees most closely identified with were Black feminism, anti-capitalist/anarcha-feminism, third world/post-colonial feminism and liberal feminism. Three of my interviewees chose not to identify with any particular type of feminism either because they were not well versed on the various ideological strands, were reluctant to place themselves in an ideological box, or because their feminism was informed more by everyday experiences of sexism rather than by theory.

In sum, all the interviewees who were asked whether they were feminists, self-identified as such and most said they were intersectional feminists or advocated for an intersectional approach to activism. This suggests that whilst the global anti-street harassment movement reflects a diversity of feminisms, as might be expected given its global scale, activists within the movement align most closely with intersectional feminism.

Despite an avowed ideological identification with feminism, some of my participants articulated a reluctance to use feminist frames with regard to their public-facing campaigning work. For instance, a handful of activists from Chile, Egypt, India and the US chose not to expressly use the label 'feminism' because they were conscious of how the term was stigmatised in the broader society and activists were motivated by a desire to be inclusive of those who might feel alienated by the term:

So, feminism can to the majority of the population who don't know the definition, [they] will think you're working on a women's issue and, therefore we exclude them even before we've started the conversation. So, we've been very conscious not to overly talk about feminism and all those things ... because we don't want to give the impression that we're excluding men and boys. (Elsa D'Silva, Safecity, India, interview 2015)

Yeah, we talk very specifically about sexual harassment, ... very basic, very specific to this issue because we feel this is the best way that we have an impact. If we start talking too much about feminism, women's rights and all that, this is going to alienate a lot of people because this, unfortunately still, I mean everywhere in the world, if you start talking about it you alienate.
(Noora Flinkman, HarassMap, Egypt, interview 2016)

While such pragmatism is understandable in terms of activists' goals to engage with multiple audiences and effect widespread social change, such hesitancy to articulate an unambiguous feminist position means that 'feminist organizing is often hidden in plain sight' (Ewig and Ferree, 2013, p. 450). Most anti-street harassment activists, however, explicitly use the term 'feminism' and overtly pursue a feminist agenda. Certainly, those groups that consciously avoid using the term 'feminism' in their official discourse and campaigning efforts nevertheless advance a feminist political project. As I discuss in the 'Goals' section below, anti-street harassment activists are committed to making visible the gendered power dynamics and gendered harms of street harassment, to challenge its normalisation, to counter victim-blaming narratives that blame women for its occurrence, and ultimately to end street harassment so that women and LGBTQ+ people can access and participate in public spaces on the same terms as straight cisgender men can.

While all the interviewees who were asked if they were feminists self-identified as such, according to Noora Flinkman, some activists working at HarassMap rejected feminist identities for themselves: 'in the team some people identify as feminists and some people are like "yeah, I don't know if I'd call myself a feminist because I don't hate men"' (interview 2016). This apparent contradiction between working to advance women's rights whilst simultaneously rejecting feminist identities can be explained by the "'I'm not a feminist but ..." phenomenon' (Hercus, 2005, p. 11). Many women take on board elements of feminist consciousness – a way of knowing the world, including a recognition of and repudiation of gender inequality – into their understandings of the world without explicitly defining themselves as feminists, in part, due to the stigma attached to the feminist label (Hercus, 2005, pp. 11), or because of a misunderstanding of what it means. In other words, as others have argued elsewhere (Aronson, 2017, p. 2) even the Egyptian anti-street harassment activists who do not expressly embrace a feminist label are implicitly feminist because they exhibit feminist consciousness⁴¹ and are working to advance feminist goals.

Since all my participants self-identified as feminists, it is unsurprising that they view street harassment through a feminist lens, including conceiving of the practice as an explicit expression of male dominance and defining street harassment as a form of gender-based violence or violence against women. For example, over two thirds of interviewees (23/33), unprompted by any question or cue, located street harassment on a 'continuum of sexual violence' (Kelly, 1988) and/or talked about their collaborations with sexual violence organisations as a vital component of their work to have street harassment recognised as VAW:

⁴¹ HarassMap staff provide trainings to volunteers on gender inequality, stereotypes around street harassment and countering victim blaming, etc., thus it can be inferred that these activists possess a feminist consciousness even if they do not embrace a feminist identity.

... because [street harassment is] part of a spectrum of gender-based violence and that's something that even I didn't see a couple of years ago. I always brushed it off as like 'this is something that is just part of my life, this is everyday and there's nothing I can do about it.' But when you recognise it as a form of gender-based violence then you see a link ... and you see how, for many people, it quickly escalates to assault or even to murder in some cases. (Jessica Raven, CASS, US, interview 2016)

... street harassment is just one part of it, it's on a spectrum of violence against women so when you think about what motivates somebody to be a street harasser that same thing can motivate them to be a domestic abuser or a rapist or somebody who would kill women for whatever reason, so I really think about expanding beyond that and I'm really just trying to make the world safer for women and girls to live in. (Feminista Jones, #YouOkSis, US, interview 2016)

One of our biggest challenges I've seen – I come from a domestic violence/sexual assault background ... and what I have found is that people who work in the field don't necessarily see street harassment as a form of gender-based violence, so we absolutely have to keep on collaborating and working together in order to get it on the spectrum. (Debjani Roy, Hollaback!, US, interview 2014)

The concept of a continuum of sexual violence (Kelly, 1988) is also deployed across the definitions used by several anti-street harassment initiatives and the types of practices or categories of harassment listed on their websites. For Stop Street Harassment, for example, gender-based street harassment encompasses 'catcalls, sexually explicit comments, sexist remarks, homophobic slurs, groping, leering, stalking, flashing, and assault' (Stop Street Harassment, 2018c). Similarly, Safecity's crowdmap for reporting sexual harassment/abuse in public spaces lists the following categories: 'ogling/facial expressions/staring, stalking, taking pictures, catcalls/whistles, commenting, indecent exposure, touching/groping, sexual invites, and rape/sexual assault' (Safecity, 2017).⁴² On this view, street harassment includes sexual assault, which echoes Kelly's (1988) research findings that the dividing line between sexual harassment and sexual assault is ambiguous, at least in terms of how women self-define their experiences of sexual violence (Kelly 1988, p. 103).⁴³ Hollaback! similarly refers to a spectrum of sexual violence, locating 'mild verbal harassment' on one end and 'sexual assault and rape' on the other, and highlighting the similar shared traits and psychological harms

⁴² While many anti-street harassment activists employ a broader conception of street harassment, which includes sexual assault, the academic literature tends to assume a narrower definition, focusing on the 'minor intrusions' often associated with the practice (Fileborn, 2017, p. 1482). That said, there is a lack of conceptual clarity regarding what constitutes street harassment in the scholarly literature (Vera-Gray, 2016). Both the activist and scholarly literatures tend to adopt the continuum concept.

⁴³ In different legal contexts, the line between harassment and assault will be clear and specific, if also not identical.

produced by different but interconnecting forms of sexual violence (Hollaback!, no date b). In this way, in line with Kelly's conceptualisation, by focusing on women's (and LGBTQ+ people's) lived experiences, the severity of street harassment is underscored.

By deploying the concept of a continuum of sexual violence, anti-street harassment activists seek to counter misconceptions that street harassment is harmless and inconsequential to women and other targets. Further, activists highlight how street harassment, such as sexually suggestive comments or 'catcalls', can be particularly traumatic for survivors of sexual violence because the practice can trigger emotional responses related to the original abuse (Hollaback!, no date b; Stop Street Harassment, 2019c).

Moreover, some interviewees offered feminist analyses of the oppressions they are contesting, noting, for example, that 'patriarchy and structural masculinity are key causes of the street harassment that both women and men face' (Holly Kearn, interview 2015). Similarly, Joanne Smith, founder and Executive Director of Girls for Gender Equity in the US, explained that 'the majority of violence we know is coming from hyper-masculinity, and is coming from a patriarchal space, a hetero-normative space of thinking and living and that is the space that we need to attack' (interview 2014). Relatedly, several participants commented on the ways in which street harassment functions as a tool of social control, noting that men practise harassment to assert their power and dominance over women and others to recreate and preserve the status quo, i.e., male dominance of public spaces (Lenton *et al.*, 1999, p. 520):

The whole point of street harassment and everyday harassment is about power. It's a communication, it's language and the interesting part of it is that it's not only language and words, but it's body language. And it's really about who owns the streets, who owns spaces, who is allowed in a space and who isn't and whose body is allowed to be harassment-free and whose body isn't. This is about power of knowledge and this is about power of governing ... It's owning spaces, owning bodies and policing bodies. (Julia Brilling, Hollaback! Berlin, Germany, interview 2014)

I think that yeah, recognising that [street harassment is] not a compliment ... because that's one of the ways I explained it away by saying 'boys will be boys, they can't help themselves.' And then you learn that we're living in the context of a rape culture; we're living in the context of where one in four women will be victims of domestic violence and one in five women will be victims of sexual assault. I think when you recognise it's about power and control, I think that changes your perception of your experience and definitely, it changed mine. (Jessica Raven, CASS, US, interview 2016)

... we know this is part and parcel of the lives of women everywhere. ... [Street harassment] has to do with our power relations, and patriarchy is omnipresent basically and it's everywhere. It's about uneven power relations and the reinforcement of these power relations to the disadvantage of women and this disadvantage comes from insecurity in the form of bullying ... and the threatening of physical space and the threatening of bodily integrity. (Nay El Rahi, HarassTracker, Lebanon, interview 2016)

Thus, street harassment as a consequence of inequitable power relations entrenched in gender hierarchy involves the exercise of power over (predominantly) female bodies. The practice is one of the most pervasive forms of sexual violence that the majority of women experience at some point in their lives (Fileborn, 2014, p. 33). It seems reasonable to suggest that, along with other types of sexual violence, it is best conceived of as a form of gender oppression. As I argued in the previous chapter, street harassment oppresses women, by which I mean it excludes, marginalises and harms them by limiting their mobility in public spaces (Bowman, 1993, p. 539; Davis, 1994, p. 144), by sexually objectifying them (Davis, 1994, p. 152) and by reminding women of their vulnerability through the threat of more extreme sexual violence (Bowman, 1993, p. 540; Davis, 1994, p. 140; Tuerkheimer, 1997, p. 187). Simultaneously, the practice asserts and reinforces male dominance in public spaces.

Several research participants highlighted the gendered dynamics of street harassment, based on their own experiences of street harassment and on reading numerous accounts of other women's experiences of sexual violence, and interpreting the commonalities and connections among these experiences:

... the empathy that people, mainly women feel with other women, because everyone feels the same and it's every day ... sexual street harassment, I don't know, 90% maybe, 100% of women have, because it's not about – also what we try to make visible – it's not about like how you look, it's just because you're a woman. You can be tall, short, thin, fat, Black, white, indigenous, a person with disabilities, old, young. (Alice Junquera, OCAC Chile, interview 2016)

People are starting to see that it's all kinds of women: all ages, all orientations, all races, all marital statuses, who are all saying the exact same thing, 'this happens to me too', and you can't really deny that. ... That is straight, hard facts. These are all of these testimonies from all of these women from all around the world who are all saying the exact same thing. Clearly this is a global epidemic and it has existed for as long as anyone can remember so now what do we do about it? (Feminista Jones, #YouOkSis, US, interview 2016)

We developed our campaigns starting from commonly experienced situations for most women, with which practically the whole gender could relate to, to give a glance of just how many women were affected. (Juliana Santarosa Cobos, Acción Respeto, Argentina, interview 2019)

Research produced by activists within the movement draws further attention to the gendered dimensions and harms of street harassment, as illuminated by interviewees' testimonies and the scholarly research – not only that most street harassment victims are women and girls and that harassers are overwhelmingly men (regardless of the target of harassment) (Logan, 2015, pp. 202, 203), but that women often experience negative emotions associated with street harassment, and are forced to change their lives in some way as a result of harassment experiences. The studies reveal that women, in particular, were fearful of street harassment escalating to sexual or physical violence (Vallejo and Rivarola, 2013; Fahmy *et al.*, 2014, pp. 7, 33, 72; Kearl, 2014, p. 20; Livingston, Grillo and Paulauch, 2014; Observatorio contra el Acoso Callejero, 2015a), which supports the idea that street harassment exists on a continuum of sexual violence (Kelly, 1988) or a spectrum of possible events, which can culminate in violent crime, including murder (Gardner, 1995, p. 4). As a consequence of often ubiquitous street harassment and its oppressive effects, the studies highlight that women frequently made lifestyle changes in an attempt to avoid harassment and to minimise its impacts. Such avoidance tactics included constantly monitoring their surroundings, changing their routes, refraining from travelling at night, using alternative modes of transport, avoiding particular areas of towns/cities, moderating their dress or requesting male company to feel secure (Vallejo and Rivarola, 2013; Fahmy *et al.*, 2014, pp. 7, 33, 72; Kearl, 2014, p. 10; Livingston, Grillo and Paulauch, 2014; Observatorio contra el Acoso Callejero, 2015a).

However, in highlighting the gendered nature of street harassment, activists do not suggest that all women *experience* street harassment in the same way. Consequently, alongside patriarchy and sexism, they critically interrogate other forms of oppressions, such as racism, homophobia and transphobia, which are mutually constitutive of each other (Joseph, 2015, p. 15). As Emily May put it: 'street harassment impacts people differently, especially trans folks, especially women of colour experience street harassment that not only looks different but also tends to be far more severe and far more dangerous' (interview 2016). So while street harassment can usefully be conceptualised as a form of gender oppression, it is also enmeshed within oppressive power structures (Fileborn, 2019, p. 224) based on, for example, race (Davis, 1994; Chen, 1997; Fogg-Davis, 2006; Miller, 2007; Ilahi, 2009), sexuality (Fogg-Davis, 2006; McNeil, 2014), class (Gardner, 1995; Miller, 2007; Phadke, 2007) and dis/ability (Gardner 1995). Increasingly, anti-street harassment activists are concerned with understanding the nature and effects of these and other interlocking oppressions, which, as I highlight later in this chapter, is often reflected in their campaigning efforts.

This section set out to investigate the ideological dimensions of anti-street harassment activism. All of the interviewees who were asked whether they were feminists, self-identified as such and more than half called themselves intersectional feminists, which echoes developments in contemporary feminism where intersectionality is becoming normalised as an approach. While defining themselves

as feminists, a few of my participants expressed a reluctance to use the label 'feminism' with regard to their external campaigning work because of the stigma attached to the term. However, despite eschewing the 'f word' (Redfern and Aune, 2011) from their official discourse and campaign materials, these anti-street harassment activists nonetheless advance a feminist political project. In a different vein, some Egyptian activists do not themselves embrace a feminist identity but are implicitly feminist because they possess a feminist consciousness and are working to advance feminist goals. Participants, unsurprisingly, hold feminist beliefs around street harassment and several provided analyses of the oppressions they are contesting, highlighting that street harassment entails the exercise of power over female bodies and other targets. Ultimately, then, anti-street harassment activists are involved in a global feminist political project to resist, contest and end a form of gender-based oppression that interlocks with other social identities and power differentials. In the next section, I examine the specific goals and objectives of anti-street harassment activists.

4.4 Goals

It is important to investigate the aims and goals of this networked movement because there is no existing research on this topic and since I have defined the movement partly in terms of its common goals, it is essential to specify the nature of these. I asked the majority of my participants (25/33) what their principal goals and objectives were, whilst one other participant offered this information unprompted. From my interview data, four overarching goals emerged: to create dialogue around street harassment, to raise awareness of the issue and to redefine street harassment explicitly as a social problem, to foster attitudinal and behavioural change in order to make the practice socially unacceptable, and ultimately, to end street harassment. Additionally, participants identified two further goals: to empower or amplify the voices of those who report incidents of street harassment and to lobby for policy change. In what follows, I discuss the four overarching goals advanced across the movement.

The importance of creating dialogue around street harassment, in the absence of public debate, was expressed by several interviewees as an impetus behind their activism, at least at the outset of their work:

One of my main objectives when we started [was] to get people discussing this. I knew that it was affecting people and they just weren't talking about it. They weren't telling their boyfriends, they weren't telling their partners or their friends because it was just something that you had to put up with and I wanted to really bring it into the public realm. (Julia Gray, Hollaback! London, UK, interview 2014)

So, the basic goal, especially in the beginning was to just have this space where you can actually talk about street harassment. There was *nothing* in Germany. The word did not exist. We don't even have a proper translation. The concept didn't exist and there was obviously no sort of activism against it. Of course, there was no policy against it, and it was just this thing that nobody talked about. So the initial goal, and it was really just a self-care goal, was to have a community as well to talk about it and not feel alone. (Julia Brilling, Hollaback! Berlin, Germany, interview 2014)

Ending street harassment [is the main goal] ... I guess the stepping-stones to that would be starting conversations about it and getting people to understand that it is a thing that happens and there's a name for it, and that it's something that's not just a normal part of life. (Anna Kegler, Feminist Public Works, US, interview 2014)

An initial goal, then, of my participants was to create spaces to foster discussions about street harassment so that harassment victims/survivors would recognise that they were not alone, and that street harassment was not an inevitable consequence of womanhood. For many activists, this objective was driven by their own everyday experiences of street harassment and the desire to learn more about street harassment and to connect with other people who had similar experiences.

A second goal for many activists is to raise awareness of street harassment by making visible 'the harm that has no name' (Davis, 1994) to the media, policy makers and the general public, and to redefine that harm overtly as a social problem. For Alice Junquera of OCAC Chile, 'the ... goal is to make the problem visible, for people to understand it is a problem because it's a challenge, because a lot of people ... just don't consider this a problem' (interview 2016). As feminist legal scholar, Robin West (1987, 85) argues '[a]n injury uniquely sustained by a disempowered group will lack a name, a history, and in general a linguistic reality.' Therefore, naming street harassment and labelling it overtly as a problem requiring a solution is a necessary first step towards validating the experiences of women and LGBTQ+ individuals, and exposing those realities to mainstream consciousness (Keyhan, 2016, p. 77).

A third, related goal for several anti-street harassment initiatives is to influence societal attitudes, perceptions and, ultimately, behaviours by debunking myths around street harassment, which hold that women are to blame for their harassment, for example, because of their clothing or for accessing public spaces at certain times of the day. Nay El Rahi, co-founder of HarassTracker, Lebanon, for instance, stated that 'the ultimate goal is to basically break this cycle of questioning and this cycle of victim-blaming and the cycle of acceptance and normalising of something that is actually a crime'⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Here, 'crime' is meant in the sense of atrocity rather than criminal offence. However, in recent years activists, including El Rahi, have advocated the criminalisation of sexual harassment in Lebanon. In response to

(interview 2016). By challenging victim-blaming narratives and changing social perceptions of street harassment, many groups aspire to create community accountability and bystander action against harassment. According to Noora Flinkman, for example, HarassMap's 'main goal ... is to create an environment where sexual harassment is not tolerated because now it is tolerated ... So, we want ... to change these perceptions that kind of reinforce this problem about blame ... but then change the behaviour of people' (interview 2016). In other words, as I discuss further below, the objective is to make street harassment socially unacceptable by achieving a 'critical mass of society to speak out when they're bystanders' (Rebecca Chiao, HarassMap, Egypt, interview 2014). In short, several anti-street harassment activists aim to challenge prevailing social perceptions and myths regarding street harassment and influence people's behaviour, encouraging bystander intervention, which in turn, they hope, will establish a social norm that street harassment is unacceptable.

The objective of making street harassment socially unacceptable was articulated by a number of activists, which is perceived as a more realisable objective, at least in the medium to long term, than eradicating street harassment.

There's still so much more awareness that needs to be created. I think what we need is to make it totally unacceptable to have people behave in this manner, make it inappropriate. Then the social norm dictates that it's inappropriate for anyone to be subjected to this kind of harassment, it's going to change, but until then it's not going to. (Elsa D'Silva, Safecity, India, interview 2015)

Well, I guess there's like the ultimate long-term goal which is to ... end the certainly, social acceptability of street harassment, and that is what feels like a more achievable goal than the even further term goal, which is to end street harassment all together. (Julia Gray, Hollaback! London, UK, interview 2016)

Ultimately though, the absolute aim of anti-street harassment activism is to end the gender-based oppression of street harassment, as several of the above quotations from the interviewees make clear. Those anti-street harassment activists advocating for an intersectional approach to their activism recognise that street harassment must be contested alongside intersecting oppressions. Emily May, for example, describes the intertwined and mutually reinforcing oppressions of sexism, racism and homophobia as 'the big ball of shit,' which simultaneously needs to be contested, gradually and relentlessly, in order to end street harassment (interview 2016). Concomitantly, anti-street harassment activists are cognisant of the need to tackle all forms of VAW in order to end street harassment:

recent street protests by feminists, on 3 March 2020 the Lebanese National Commission for Women (CNFL) presented a bill to parliament criminalising sexual harassment (in both the workplace and public places) (El-Hage, 2020).

I don't think you can stop street harassment without focusing on all of the other [forms of sexual violence]. Street harassment is one point on a continuum of the way we treat people who are not white cis-gendered men ... and because it's completely interrelated with the rest of that continuum, none of those other things will be solved either. (Rochelle Keyhan, Feminist Public Works, US, interview 2014)

My interviewees were generally optimistic about the possibility of engendering such a transformation, whilst acknowledging the slow pace of social change. According to Jessica Raven of CASS, US: 'I think that we can accomplish all of our goals, even cultural change, that's slow, but it's winnable; this issue is winnable, so I want to win it!' (interview 2016). Similarly, Elizabeth Bolton of Stop Street Harassment, US asked:

Why would [I engage in activism] if I really didn't think that we could stop it? Is it going to be easy? Is it going to happen when I'm alive? Probably not but, yeah, I believe in a world without sexual violence ... It's a long hill but I'm not going to stop walking up it. (interview 2014)

The ultimate goal of ending street harassment was, then, seen as realisable by most interviewees, even though they argued it needed to be contested alongside intersecting oppressions and other forms of sexual violence, which they acknowledged would likely produce slow, incremental change. In this sense, participants' sense of efficacy – the 'feeling that political and social change is possible, and that the individual citizen can play a part in bringing about this change' (Cambell, Gurin and Miller, 1954, p. 187) – was clearly present in the interview data.

To sum up, the four key goals of anti-street harassment activists, as articulated by my participants, are: to create spaces to open up dialogue about street harassment, to raise awareness of the issue and to label it overtly as a social problem, to reshape societal attitudes that street harassment is socially unacceptable by countering victim blaming myths and in turn, influence behavioural change, and eventually, to eradicate street harassment.

While I have established four overarching movement goals, the objectives of anti-street harassment activists are not static, but rather they evolve over time as activists' priorities change and/or they believe they have accomplished their goals. For example, according to Emily May, because street harassment has come to be accepted as a term and as a problem, at least fairly broadly in the US, the goal of US Hollaback! activists has changed from educating people that street harassment is a problem to educating them about how it impacts people differently, especially women of colour and trans individuals (interview 2016). In the next section, I outline the myriad forms of activism devised and implemented by the movement to advance its goals.

4.5 Forms of Activism

The global anti-street harassment movement makes use of a diverse repertoire of myriad activist tactics and methods to pursue its different but complementary goals and to engage with and influence a range of target audiences, including victims and perpetrators of harassment, bystanders, policy makers, the media and the general public. The diversity and plurality of activist tactics and methods prevents precise classification. However, I have identified three overarching forms of anti-street harassment activism: digital activism, on-the-ground actions and advocacy. The first two categories are very broad, encompassing several sub-categories. It is therefore beyond the scope of this thesis to provide an extensive overview of anti-street harassment activism.⁴⁵ In what follows, I discuss some of the most prominent forms of activism employed by anti-street harassment activists, starting with digital activism because, as outlined above, much of the contemporary movement began online and anti-street harassment activism continues to be ‘heavily internet based’ (Keyhan, 2016, p. 72). Although, in practice, the distinction between digital activism and on-the-ground actions is not sharply defined because, as I will demonstrate, some activism that began online has developed to sustain offline actions. Moreover, as I argue in chapter six, anti-street harassment activists often use the affordances of digital technologies to coordinate offline campaigns, including transnational actions.

4.5.1 Digital activism

Anti-street harassment activists have devised a diversity of online platforms and tools to report, document and resist street harassment. I discuss the most prevalent forms of digital activism used by the movement: digital story-sharing and reporting sites, mobile phone apps, twitter hashtags and online videos. These are also the most important forms of digital activism in terms of movement emergence and development, as I discuss in chapter six.

4.5.1.1 *Digital story-sharing and reporting sites*

Digital story-sharing and reporting harassment online are amongst the earliest and most enduring forms of anti-street harassment activism and the practice reflects the initial goal of several activists – to create dialogue around street harassment. In the absence of any institutional channels through which women could express their grievances about street harassment, digital story-sharing platforms were conceived as spaces for street harassment victims and survivors to share their stories, to connect with other people who had experienced street harassment and as platforms to make visible the gender injustices experienced by women and LGBTQ+ individuals in public spaces. Thousands of (primarily) women have shared their personal experiences of harassment via the approximately 100

⁴⁵ For a comprehensive account of anti-street harassment activism (and government initiatives) in a global context, see Kearl (2015b).

anti-street harassment online platforms in operation around the world (Kearl, 2015b, p. 21), including Blank Noise, the Everyday Sexism Project, HarassMap, Hollaback!, Safecity and SSH.

Research has found that posting and sharing stories on digital story-sharing sites has positive psychological effects for users; for instance, it enables street harassment victims/survivors to validate their personal experiences as legitimate and elicits collective feelings of community (Dimond *et al.*, 2013, p. 483; Wånggren, 2016, p. 406; Fileborn, 2017, p. 1491). Sharing stories also allows people to transfer blame from themselves onto the problem of street harassment, thereby reclaiming some power back from the harasser (Dimond *et al.*, 2013, pp. 483, 485). In addition, online story-sharing and reporting forums are an important alternative to official reporting procedures where they exist, because women are often reluctant to file police reports. They fear that they will be blamed for causing the incident or that no action will be taken against the perpetrators (Carr, 2015). As well as benefiting street harassment victims/survivors, stories act as important sources of data for anti-street harassment activists, enabling an understanding of the different ways that street harassment manifests itself globally and how it intersects with other forms of oppression (Kearl, 2015b, p. 22).

Some anti-street harassment story-sharing and reporting sites include crowdsourcing/crowdmapping technology, enabling street harassment victims/survivors to anonymously report street harassment, pin incidents to an online map and share the experience via the site and on social media. In addition, people can report, map and share cases of bystander intervention. A renowned example is HarassMap, which utilises geographic information system (GIS) and short message service (SMS) technologies to document incidents of street harassment across Egypt. People who experience or witness street harassment can submit their reports anonymously to HarassMap.com, through Facebook or Twitter, or via an SMS message. Upon submitting a report, users receive information on legal and psychological support (Fahmy *et al.*, 2014, p. 11). Reported incidents are mapped as a red dot and clicking on them brings up the original story submitted. The map serves multiple purposes beyond providing psychological benefits to street harassment victims, as outlined above. In addition, the stories compiled on the map testify to the prevalence and seriousness of the problem, serving as data on the evolving nature of street harassment in Egypt; they provide HarassMap activists with relevant information to inform their communication campaigns; and they support community outreach teams in their efforts to encourage the public to speak up against harassment (Fahmy *et al.*, 2014, p. 11). Rebecca Chiao, co-founder of HarassMap, illustrates these multiple functions of the online reporting platform:

[Initially] we were just using the reporting system as a way for people who are harassed to express themselves ... It's like a psychological benefit of being able to speak out anonymously and say what happened to you and break the silence and tell other people this is happening ... That was originally what we had envisioned as the use of it, rather than data production, but then as we

grew ... we learned that ... these stories are very moving. They really illustrate the problem in a way that people understand a lot of times in the streets here ... People have a lot of misconceptions about how serious it is, where it happens, what it's like. So, when they read the reports that people send, in the first person, they're really intense and it shocks people into understanding the issue in a non-theoretical way. (interview 2014)

For HarassMap activists, part of helping to reshape people's beliefs about street harassment is to encourage bystanders to speak out against harassment and to provide assistance and support to street harassment victims/survivors (Abdelmonem, 2015b, p. 102). HarassMap community outreach teams utilise data from the crowdmap in their efforts to convince bystanders to intervene when they witness harassment. Elsa D'Silva, co-founder of Safecity, India, who adapted the HarassMap model to the Indian context, similarly emphasised the important role of collecting and analysing stories reported on the map to inform their offline work: 'we want to say "share your story" because it goes into a larger trend and we can work on the larger trend.' Data is used, amongst other purposes, to demonstrate to local authorities and the police the prevalence of sexual violence, to highlight 'harassment hotspots' – the provinces in which street harassment and other forms of sexual violence most frequently occur – and to lobby for safer infrastructure and policies against sexual violence (interview 2015).

I have argued that anti-street harassment digital story-sharing sites perform a variety of functions for street harassment victims and activists: they allow women to validate their experiences of street harassment as authentic and legitimate and to feel a sense of collective belonging. Correspondingly, story-sharing sites enable users to air their grievances about street harassment, thus acting as consciousness-raising platforms, and they help street harassment victims shift the blame away from themselves onto the perpetrators of harassment. Beyond these benefits for site users, street harassment stories act as meaningful sources of data for activists to understand the complexities of the issue, to dispel misconceptions about street harassment, which perpetuate the normalisation and toleration of the practice, to encourage bystander intervention, and to engage local authorities on the issue in order to lobby for safer infrastructure and anti-street harassment policies.

4.5.1.2 Mobile phone apps

In order for street harassment victims/survivors to share their stories quickly and to support one another, Hollaback! developed updated iPhone and Android mobile phone apps in 2013.⁴⁶ The app allows users to document incidents of street harassment, to visualise them on a map and to share the information on social media (Hollaback!, 2015). As explained above and in chapter two, the inspiration

⁴⁶ The original app, launched in 2010 was essentially an extension of the website whereas the updated version functions as a tool to report, map and share street harassment incidents (Ohikuare, 2013).

behind the app and for Hollaback! more broadly came from Thao Nguyen, who took a photograph of her harasser and posted it to Flickr. Originally, the Hollaback! app was conceived in the same vein, as a tool for women to replicate Nguyen's tactic of documenting the experience of harassment, visually capturing the harasser and the location of the event, and then sharing the incident on social media (Gómez and Aden, 2017, p. 161). In fact, Hollaback!'s motto used to be 'If you can't slap 'em, snap 'em' (Valenti, 2014, p. 83). But in the last few years, Hollaback! has placed less emphasis on responding directly to harassers through visual documentation, most likely because of the risk of escalation. On their website, the organisation advises 'taking a photo is not right for every situation. If you don't feel safe, don't do it' (Hollaback!, no date b). Correspondingly, there has been a dramatic decrease in stories accompanied by photographs of harassers since the organisation launched (Gómez and Aden, 2017, p. 161).

The Hollaback! app is targeted primarily at 'young women armed with mobile phones as ready-made tools of activist documentation and social media networks of dissemination' (Rentschler, 2014, p. 74). This is evident in some of the organisation's campaigning materials which feature young women of colour standing defiantly in the street brandishing their mobile phones as if they were a weapon. Indeed, research in the US found that young women conceived of their mobile phones as more effective weapons of self-defence than more traditional weapons, like pepper spray (Cumiskey and Brewster, 2012, p. 590). The idea that mobile phone usage promotes personal safety (Cumiskey and Brewster, 2012, p. 597) has informed the creation of several anti-sexual harassment and assault apps in recent years, including Protibadi (meaning 'one who protests') in Bangladesh. Features include a rape alarm button, which when pressed sends SMS messages to the user's emergency contacts indicating her location and that she needs help, and a map showing harassment hotspots (Marks, 2014).

The SafetiPin mobile app was launched in India in November 2013 'to collect data about safety and the lack of it in cities, and to raise awareness and combat street harassment in particular' (Viswanath and Basu, 2015, p. 45). Like Protibadi, SafetiPin has a personal safety tracker, enabling contacts to track the person's location. In addition, the crowdsourced app allows users to rate and check the safety of a neighbourhood based on safety audits conducted by app users. Safety scores are generated on the basis of certain parameters that contribute to perceptions of safety, including street lighting and visibility, security and gender diversity in the locality (SafetiPin, no date; Sekhar, 2014). SafetiPin operates in eight cities across India and since its creation, it has expanded to four countries: Colombia, Indonesia, Kenya and the Philippines. Moreover, governmental bodies and NGOs expressed interest in developing and translating the app for their cities, including in Durban and Johannesburg, South Africa, Mexico City and in some Caribbean cities (Kalpana Viswanath, co-founder and CEO of SafetiPin, India, interview 2016).

4.5.1.3 Twitter hashtags

In addition to the dedicated anti-street harassment story-sharing sites, discussed above, thousands of women around the world use Twitter to share their experiences of street harassment, to make visible gender injustices associated with the practice and to foster community building with other harassment victims and survivors. Among the many examples of anti-street harassment hashtags are Chega de Fiu Fiu's #primeiroassedio (#firstharassment), Everyday Sexism's #WhenIWas and #ShoutingBack, and Feminista Jones' #YouOkSis hashtags, which all 'went viral' – spread quickly and widely among Internet users. In 2015, Brazilian initiative Chega de Fiu Fiu created the hashtag #primeiroassedio to encourage women to share stories about the first time they were sexually harassed or assaulted in response to the online sexual harassment of a 12-year-old girl after she had appeared on a television programme. Stories of sexual and street harassment, abuse and rape were quickly shared on Twitter, generating more than 82,000 tweets and retweets in just five days. Chega de Fiu Fiu analysed a sample of 3,111 stories and found that the average age women, or girls, are first harassed in Brazil is 9.7 years old (Gross, 2015; Think Olga, 2017).

In a similar vein, Laura Bates, founder of the Everyday Sexism Project, launched the hashtag #WhenIWas in 2016 for women to share their stories of sexual harassment experienced as children. For example, @BananaSandwich0 wrote '#WhenIWas 10 the comments about my body started, and they haven't stopped and I am 21' (Telegraph Reporters, 2016). Earlier, in 2013, Everyday Sexism invited women to tweet their harassment experiences using the hashtag #FightingBack. Within the first few days, some 3,500 women had shared their stories (Bates, 2013). The project has also used hashtags such as #Followed and #Grabbed to prompt discussions around specific types of street harassment (Kearl, 2015b, p. 58) and, more importantly, to challenge misconceptions that street harassment is trivial, harmless and complimentary. On the contrary, #Followed and #Grabbed demonstrate that street harassment often instils fear and vulnerability in women and girls. For example, Everyday Sexism collected 2,825 entries from women about their experiences of being followed by men or groups of men, with many stories documenting verbal threats of sexual and physical violence from male harassers and, in some instances, women and girls running away to escape their stalkers (@EverydaySexism, 2016).

The aggressiveness of a particular street harassment encounter in 2014 prompted Feminista Jones' #YouOkSis hashtag. Jones witnessed a young mother being street harassed in New York City and intervened by asking the woman 'Are you okay, sis?' She then decided to tweet her story, which quickly went viral (interview 2016). The intention behind #YouOkSis was twofold: first Jones wanted 'to create this conversation and this movement of support to centre Black women and women of colour' because their voices had largely been neglected by the mainstream media, and to some extent by anti-street harassment groups in the US. Second, she wanted to start a movement, encouraging

bystanders to intervene when they witnessed street harassment by offering assistance and solidarity to the victim.

I tweeted about this particular incident and I just kind of said to people, 'listen we need to do something ... this summer can we all just commit and agree that we are going to offer people help and support if we see these kinds of things, we're not going to be silent?' And then a couple of tweeters responded, they said 'can we make this a movement? Can we make this a thing?' And I said, 'yes, we need to make this a thing' and it became a hashtag. (Feminista Jones, #YouOkSis, US, interview 2016)

Jones' Twitter followers adopted the hashtag to post stories about their own interventions to combat harassment as well as encouraging others to intervene in street harassment situations. Hence, Jones' aim was not simply to create a viral hashtag, but rather, it was to create a space of solidarity for Black women and women of colour, and to produce tangible effects on the ground.

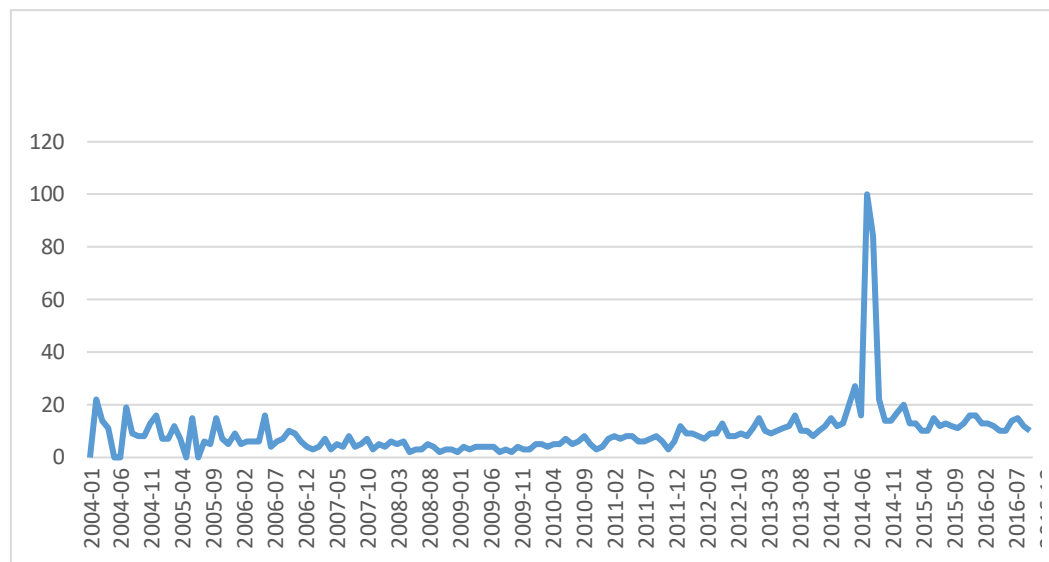
4.5.1.4 Online videos

The forms of digital activism discussed so far predominantly target street harassment victims/survivors. They function as tools and spaces for women and LGBTQ+ individuals to report, map and share their experiences of street harassment, to forge online communities that allow site users to support and validate others' experiences, and to encourage people to resist street harassment when they experience or witness it. Online videos, on the other hand, have been created by anti-street harassment activists and some bystanders as a means to demonstrate to much wider audiences that street harassment exists and that it is a social problem for women. The most effective videos at depicting the everyday realities of women's street harassment experiences are hidden camera videos and those filmed by bystanders as harassment occurs. A number of such films capture women being street harassed and assaulted by men or groups of men, while often ignored by onlookers, as they navigate public spaces in various cities across the globe, including Brussels, Cairo, Guwahati, (India), Jeddah, Minneapolis (Kearl, 2015b, pp. 61–63; Nabbout, 2018), and more recently in Paris, showing how street harassment can quickly escalate into physical assault (Timist, 2018).

The most influential online video to raise awareness about street harassment, at least in the US, was the online hidden camera video '10 Hours of Walking in NYC as a Woman', produced by Rob Bliss Creative, originally in association with Hollaback! The video, which depicts a young woman being verbally harassed more than 100 times over 10 hours (in an edited one minute 56 second compilation video), went viral on 28 October 2014, with over one million views in a day (Bailey, 2016, p. 594). It created an unprecedented amount of online interest around street harassment, as the graphic below demonstrates, with interest peaking in November 2014 just after the video's release, thus generating awareness on an issue typically marginalised in the mass media. As Kearl (2015b, 65) observes, [the]

video ‘has done more than anything else to spark discussions about street harassment in the United States’ and elsewhere. This online interest has, in turn, inspired other activists in several countries to adapt the video to raise awareness in their local contexts, as I explore in chapter six.

Figure 1: Street harassment (worldwide) interest over time



Source: (Google Trends, no date)

At the same time, ‘10 Hours of Walking’ prompted a backlash in the media and within the Hollaback! community over racial bias – all the harassers depicted in the video were men of colour despite the fact that there was also footage of white men harassing the actor, Shoshanna Roberts. Robert Bliss posted online, ‘[w]e got a fair amount of white guys, but for whatever reason, a lot of what they said was in passing, or off camera,’ or obscured by a siren (quoted in Rosin, 2014). ‘That may be true’, Hannah Rosin observed, ‘but if you find yourself editing out all the catcalling white guys, maybe you should try another take’ (2014). The problematic nature of the video also provoked debate over unequal power structures within the Hollaback! network. Hollaback! sites were asked to share the video that they had no part in making but when it began to attract criticism on the ground, local sites were expected to respond to concerns from their communities with little directive from the New York office (Wånggren 2016, 410). The fallout from this resulted in six chapters disbanding from the global network to adopt more localised, grassroots and overtly intersectional feminist frameworks for resisting street harassment (Wånggren, 2016, p. 411; Rentschler, 2017, p. 567).⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Four of these were in North America: Feminist Public Works (formerly the Philadelphia site), the People’s Justice League in Ohio, the Safe Hub Collective in Boston and Safer Spaces in Winnipeg, Canada. And Hollaback! Brussels and Ghent sites left the Hollaback! network to instead form rebel.lieux, a multi-lingual Belgian grassroots, collective initiative focusing on public space harassment more broadly (rebel.lieux, 2015; Wånggren, 2016, p. 411).

'10 Hours of Walking in NYC as a Woman' has, then, produced contradictory effects with regards to awareness raising and in terms of the movement's global development. The video generated extensive online and traditional media coverage, stimulating debate on what constitutes street harassment and women's rights to public spaces. Online and media interest concomitantly inspired other activists to adapt the video to raise awareness in their locales. But, at the same time, it generated backlash in the media over racial bias and provoked debate over problematic power structures within the Hollaback! community, causing fragmentation within the global network. Nonetheless, those sites that left Hollaback! rebranded under different names and continue to resist street harassment using more explicit feminist intersectional political platforms, although some groups, such as Feminist Public Works (FPW) scaled back their work, feeling 'burned-out' as a result of Hollaback!'s mishandling of 'that video' (Rochelle Keyhan, FPW, US, interview 2016).

4.5.2 On-the-ground actions

While the global anti-street harassment is most well-known for its digital activism, a vast amount of anti-street harassment actions take place on-the-ground, encompassing activities such as public awareness transit campaigns, community education, creating safe spaces for street harassment victims/survivors and potential targets of harassment, forming safety patrols for victims/survivors of mob sexual harassment and assault, and confronting harassers directly through performance art and distributing anti-street harassment cards, or indirectly by creating street art. In this section, I discuss each of these activities in turn, starting with awareness raising targeted at multiple audiences, moving towards actions aimed at narrower audiences. Hence, I begin with public awareness transit campaigns, which are directed towards victims and perpetrators of harassment as well as potential bystanders, and end with actions that are specifically aimed at targeting harassers on the street.

4.5.2.1 Public awareness transit campaigns

Harassment on public transportation is a pervasive problem that occurs across the globe. Findings from the many studies conducted on this issue include the following: 82% of women in Egypt have frequently experienced transit harassment (El Deeb, 2013, p. 7); 90% of women in Mexico City have experienced sexual violence on the city's transit system (Dunckel-Graglia, 2013, p. 288); and a staggering 100% of women surveyed in Paris (600) reported having experienced sexual harassment on public transport (Sabin, 2015).

In order to raise awareness of transit harassment and to encourage reporting and bystander intervention, several anti-street harassment groups have devised public awareness campaigns. A few groups in the US have created and/or sponsored public service announcements (PSAs) on various metro systems, including in Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia and Washington DC, often using bold

slogans to draw the attention of perpetrators as well as victims of harassment. The evolving goals of activists – from defining street harassment as a social problem to showing how the practice impacts people differently, especially people of colour and LGBTQ+ individuals, and encouraging bystander intervention – are reflected in the campaigns’ developing messaging.

For example, in 2012, in collaboration with Collective Action for Safe Spaces (CASS) and SSH, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) displayed PSAs at 18 metro stations instructing metro users, primarily street harassment victims, to report incidents of harassment. The advertisement depicted a man pressed up against a woman in a crowded metro scene, with the slogan ‘Rub against me and I’ll expose you’ (Collective Action for Safe Spaces, no date). In 2015, the second round of adverts adopted more gender-neutral messaging, ‘If it’s unwanted it’s harassment’, in part to address the perpetrators as well as victims of harassment (Collective Action for Safe Spaces, no date). And in 2016, in response to increased reports of harassment, especially against people of colour and LGBTQ+ people, a series of adverts portrayed young women of colour with the headline ‘YOU DESERVE TO BE TREATED WITH RESPECT’ and the subhead ‘Report sexual harassment’. Other PSAs in the series captured headshots of men and women with the headline ‘YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO SPEAK UP. ‘Report sexual harassment’. The advertising was targeted at victims and bystanders, encouraging people to support victims of harassment with messages of solidarity and to foster ‘a culture of bystander intervention, where everyone is responsible for speaking out’ (Collective Action for Safe Spaces, no date).

HollabackPHILLY (now Feminist Public Works) similarly sponsored and displayed a series of anti-street harassment PSAs, the messaging changing in line with activists’ developing understanding of the issue and how it needed to be resisted. In 2013 HollabackPHILLY displayed their first set of posters in the Philadelphia subway system that focused expressly on familiarising the public with the term ‘street harassment’. Posters explained, for instance, that ‘NICE A** IS NOT A COMPLIMENT’. Although the campaign was small, comprising only six posters, it went viral online and attracted the attention of civic leaders and the press (Feminist Public Works, no date). The larger follow-up campaign in 2014 expanded the goal beyond defining the problem to providing solutions and engaging the wider community to take action (Rochelle Keyhan, interview 2014). The follow-up PSAs were also inclusive and representative of people of colour, trans people and people who identify as homosexual, with one of the three designs specifically focusing on LGBTQ+ harassment (Anna Kegler, interview 2014). Thus, through the use of bold, eye-catching slogans, both WMATA/CASS/SSH, and HollabackPHILLY initially sought to generate awareness among street harassment victims and perpetrators that harassment on the metro system was a problem that would be taken seriously. Over time, both campaigns adopted more intersectional approaches in their messaging and designs, and advocated bystander intervention.

Other awareness raising efforts to combat harassment on public transportation include the following campaigns in Asia: 'Whistle for Help' in Myanmar, 'SHOW You Care' in Sri Lanka and the Safe Safar campaign in India. Whistle for Help, which launched in Myanmar in 2012, aimed to advance women's understanding of harassment, encourage street harassment victims to seek assistance and to promote a culture of bystander intervention. The campaign initially involved 150 volunteers distributing whistles and leaflets to female commuters at busy bus stops in Yangon, instructing them to blow the whistle when they experienced harassment on the bus and to help other street harassment victims. Whistle for Help was very popular with female commuters, with many requesting extra whistles to distribute to family, friends and colleagues, and the campaign attracted the support of bus drivers, conductors and politicians with requests to extend the efforts beyond Yangon (Thein, 2012).

The SHOW You Care and Safe Safar campaigns sought to generate awareness among men about transit harassment and to encourage men to take steps to combat it. In 2012, Sri Lanka Unites launched their SHOW You Care campaign, educating hundreds of young men about street harassment. Over the course of a week the men boarded 1,225 buses in Colombo to apologise to women for any previous harassment they had suffered and to provide information on possible legal recourse available to women. They also told male passengers to not harass women (Kearl, 2015b, p. 47). Safe Safar similarly engaged men in its efforts to end transit harassment. The campaign launched in 2010 to combat the pervasive harassment of women riding in auto-rickshaws where drivers typically failed to speak out against harassment. Safe Safar provided awareness training to male drivers, promoting a proactive stance towards securing the safety of women passengers (Mohapatra, 2014; Kearl, 2015b, p. 47).

Anti-street harassment activists have devised a range of awareness raising strategies in various modes of transport, including buses, metro trains and auto-rickshaws, targeting victims and perpetrators of harassment, as well as bystanders, and training male allies and drivers to make public transportation safer for women.

4.5.2.2 Community education

Hosting anti-street harassment workshops in schools, universities, community groups and organisations is a widespread practice across the movement. Educational programmes are targeted at students and the general public to raise awareness about street harassment, to encourage victims/survivors to resist it and bystanders to intervene, and to prevent harassment from occurring in the first place. Groups and individuals, such as Acción Respeto in Argentina, Bassma and I Saw Harassment in Egypt, Safecity in India, Hollaback! London, and CASS, Feminista Jones, Girls for Gender Equity (GGE) and Hollaback! in the US all regularly provide awareness raising workshops and trainings and offer practical advice on tackling street harassment. In addition, Hollaback! has a 'How to Hold a

Hollaback! Workshop' page on their website to enable groups and individuals to deliver workshops in their communities (Hollaback!, no date f).

As campaigns such as #primeiroassedio and #WhenIWas reveal, many women start to encounter street harassment from a very young age. Some anti-street harassment groups have recognised the importance of creating safe spaces for adolescents to discuss their experiences and to strategise forms of resistance (Kearl, 2015b, p. 51). Staff and youth organisers from GGE, for instance, run a number of free trainings for school staff, parents and students. The student-designed 'Hey, Shorty! Workshop', for example, explores street harassment, sexual harassment in school and gender stereotypes, and methods for combatting these problems (Girls for Gender Equity, 2018). Acción Respeto in Argentina tailor their educational campaigns around prevention, as Juliana Santarosa Cobos, Director of the initiative explains:

We strive to prevent, sanction and eradicate street harassment. We believe the main tool to do so is education, especially education from a young age, through which we can prevent harassers from being raised as such, instead of having to punish them once they've grown accustomed to harassing. That's why we've given talks in schools, colleges, helped with thesis and grades, with school projects and every educational opportunity that knocked on our door. (interview 2019)

At the same time, while recognising that educative strategies are the most effective means in the long run at combatting street harassment, some anti-street harassment activists, like Santarosa Cobos argue that these measures are by themselves insufficient. And, as discussed later in the chapter, these activists advocate for the introduction of anti-street harassment legislation as a strategy to work in tandem with community education.

4.5.2.3 Creating safe spaces

As Desborough and Weldes (2017) highlight, a prominent strategy adopted in the movement involves on-the-ground community mobilisation campaigns to create 'safe spaces' for street harassment victims/survivors and potential targets of harassment. Anti-street harassment activists have devised two different types of on-the-ground safe spaces. The first focuses on those who are already being harassed on the street and offers them shelter in an emergency situation. The second is designed to offer spaces in which harassment is unacceptable and actively not tolerated. HarassMap's work with small businesses in Cairo and other Egyptian cities – and the creation of 'zero-tolerance zones' – is an example of the former, 'Good Night Out', created by Hollaback! London, but now an independent campaign, is an example of the latter.

The first strategy was exemplified by HarassMap's Safe Areas programme (HarassMap, no date c). In this campaign, community mobilisation volunteers sought to persuade shopkeepers, taxi drivers, doormen, café and restaurant owners in Cairo and other Egyptian cities to create safe spaces and zero-tolerance policies where women being harassed on the street could seek shelter and safety (HarassMap, no date c; Fahmy *et al.*, 2014). When people agreed to intervene to stop harassment, HarassMap volunteers gave them 'harassment-free zone' stickers to display in their window, shop or kiosk etc., to show that their business represented a refuge from harassment (Peuchaud, 2014, pp. i116–i117). The strategy not only provided physical security to women being harassed, it also encouraged small businesses 'to serve as positive role models' to other local businesses to adopt anti-street harassment policies (Abdelmonem, 2015b, p. 106) and to take an active interventionist stance against harassment. This is in line with HarassMap's mission to reduce the social acceptance of street harassment through convincing bystanders to speak up when they witness harassment. As Rebecca Chiao explains:

Our theory of change is that in order to reduce harassment, we have to reduce the social acceptability, and in order to reduce [this], we have to be able to recruit a critical mass of society to speak out when they're bystanders ... and say that this isn't acceptable, that this is not tolerated and it's not going to happen in my neighbourhood. (interview 2014)

HarassMap's Safe Areas programme, then, offered physical shelter to women in an emergency situation as part of HarassMap's central aim to end the social acceptability of street harassment by promoting widespread bystander intolerance of the practice (Abdelmonem, 2015b, p. 108).

The second safe spaces strategy is exemplified by the 'Good Night Out' (GNO) campaign, initiated by Hollaback! London in 2014. Now an independent campaign (GNO, 2018a), Good Night Out tackles harassment in music and drinking venues, such as pubs, bars and clubs, where sexual and gendered harassment is both endemic and normalised. The campaign attempts to persuade venue management and staff to create safe spaces for women and LGBTQ+ customers. Venues that sign up to the GNO campaign display the Good Night Out safety pledge in their venues and adopt an informed approach to all forms of sexual and gendered harassment (GNO, 2016).

The Good Night Out teams provide training to venue staff, as well as support and resources, to tackle and prevent harassment, and ultimately to ensure that customers experience a good night out, free from harassment (Hollaback London!, no date). This strategy affords women and others access to spaces that might otherwise be dangerous or unpleasant, thus providing safety in a frequently unwelcoming everyday setting. As I demonstrate in chapter six, since its inception in London, GNO has spread to 19 cities across the UK and Ireland, and internationally, e.g., in Chicago and Vancouver (GNO, 2018b).

Anti-street harassment activists have devised different types of safe space campaigns for street harassment victims and potential targets of harassment. I have discussed two different types here; the first exemplified by HarassMap's Safe Spaces programme, which focused on providing safety and shelter to street harassment victims, and the second type exemplified by the Good Night Out campaign, which offers spaces in which harassment is not accepted or tolerated. In both types of safe spaces campaigns, anti-street harassment activists have enlisted the support of crucial allies through targeted awareness raising: HarassMap encouraged small business owners to provide safe spaces to those who are harassed on the street and to intervene to stop it and GNO seeks to convince management and staff working in the night time economy to provide harassment-free drinking spaces to women and LGBTQ+ customers, and similarly, to intervene if they witness harassment occurring in those spaces.

4.5.2.4 Forming security patrols

Another way the movement has sought to ensure the physical safety of women is through the creation of security patrols or volunteer escort services. In recent years, such patrols have been established in response to high profile attacks on women in public spaces in various countries, including Egypt, Norway and the United States (Kearl 2015b, 45). This type of activity, however, is most commonly associated with Egyptian anti-street harassment initiatives active in protest spaces and other crowded areas in the post-Egyptian revolutionary era from 2012, when mass sexual attacks against women were endemic, including Bassma, I Saw Harassment, Operation Anti Sexual Harassment (OpAntiSH) and Tahrir Bodyguard.

Two influential groups during this time were OpAntiSH and Tahrir Bodyguard, composed of female and male activists and volunteers, who worked in highly synchronised operations to intervene and extract women from mass sexual attacks (Abdelmonem, 2015a, p. 27; Tadros, 2015, p. 1356). OpAntiSH volunteers distributed cards in Tahrir Square with hotline numbers for people to report sexual violence and flyers advising what to do upon witnessing an assault. Other members of the group operated the hotlines and relayed the information to rescue teams in Tahrir Square (Langohr, 2013, p. 20). OpAntiSH activists wore white T-shirts with the wording 'Against Harassment' on the front and 'A Square Safe for All' on the reverse. Like OpAntiSH, Tahrir Bodyguard received calls reporting sexual attacks and sent intervention teams dressed in high-visibility vests and helmets to rescue women (Langohr, 2013, pp. 20, 21).

While rescue operations were highly coordinated affairs, with information provided on the precise locations of women at risk and the quickest routes to the locations, the setting in Tahrir Square was often violent. Members of the intervention teams were themselves sometimes sexually and physically assaulted during the rescue operations (Tadros, 2015, p. 1358). Because of the risk of female

volunteers being exposed to sexual assault, Tahrir Bodyguard and Bassma implemented a gendered division of labour, insisting on all-male rescue missions (Langohr, 2013, p. 23; Tadros, 2015, p. 1360). OpAntiSH, on the other hand, contended from the outset that intervening to rescue women from sexual assault needed to take place without perpetuating notions about male 'protection' (Langohr, 2013, p. 23).

Some Egyptian anti-street harassment initiatives, like Bassma and I Saw Harassment, combined direct intervention with awareness raising strategies, engaging members of the public in discussions about sexual harassment and assault on the street, in metro stations and university campuses (Langohr 2015, pp. 131–32). Bassma carried out patrols in both protest spaces and crowded areas during Eid when street harassment and sexual assault is rampant (Tadros, 2015, p. 1365). During Bassma operations, volunteers formed security patrols to prevent attacks and intervened in incidents of sexual violence through highly organised and regimented rescue operations (Tadros 2015, 1355). Bassma's interventions were often extremely effective; according to founder, Nihal Saad Zaghloul 'during one Eid, we stopped [around] 200 sexual harassment incidents and one sexual assault' (interview 2016).

Volunteers from I Saw Harassment similarly patrolled Cairo's harassment hotspots during Eid-al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha, until 2015, when the Egyptian government denied them permission. Volunteers dressed in white and red T-shirts, extracted women from violent attacks and attempted to open up a dialogue with harassers in order to understand the rationale behind their actions and change their behaviour (Hala Mostafa, interview 2016; Daily News Egypt, 2013). Awareness raising efforts also extended to victims/survivors of harassment and assault in an attempt to educate women about their rights to access public spaces free from harassment. As Hala Mostafa, coordinator of I Saw Harassment, explained:

We go to the streets as a group and we try to provide safe streets for women, we try to save them. We try to talk to people who's doing [these] horrible acts and try to convince [them] that this is not good, this is a crime. We are trying to talk to women that – because some women here in Egypt think that if they get harassed it's their own fault – so we try to convince them that, no it's not. You should walk in a safe place; you should have your safety zone. (interview 2016)

Thus, I Saw Harassment combined rescue operations with awareness raising in an attempt to change perceptions and behaviours around street harassment. According to Mostafa, although in the beginning phases of the campaign, it was difficult to convince women to take a stand against street harassment, eventually their awareness campaigns met with 'huge success' in terms of reshaping women's perceptions of harassment. They were less successful, however, at altering male harassers' attitudes because of persistent victim-blaming attitudes prevalent in Egyptian society centring on

street harassment victims' clothing, appearance and behaviour (Hala Mostafa, I Saw Harassment, Egypt, interview 2016).

4.5.2.5 Targeting harassers on the street

Some activists have devised on-the-ground tactics explicitly to confront and educate male harassers that their actions constitute harassment, that harassing behaviour is unwanted and that it should stop. I focus on three strategy types here: anti-street harassment performance art, distributing anti-street harassment cards, and creating street art, to show how activists have confronted male harassers, either directly or indirectly in order to fight back against street harassment and to influence harassers' perceptions and behaviours. The first two types of strategies involve direct confrontation, to varying degrees, and are a form of nonviolent direct action (Langelan, 1993, p. 35). 'Confrontation is a way to name the behaviour, hold the harasser accountable for his actions, and disrupt the power dynamics of harassment' (Langelan, 1993, p. 32). These two direct-action strategies vary in the degree of confrontation deployed. In the first type (anti-street harassment performance art), activists directly confront male harassers using provocative tactics to resist street harassment, challenge gender stereotypes and shift the balance of power from perpetrators towards victims of harassment. The second action form (distributing anti-street harassment cards) allows women to confront harassers without having to converse with them, but it still necessitates an interaction between the victim and perpetrator of harassment. The third type of strategy (creating street art) enables women to confront harassers indirectly, anonymously and safely without the fear of potential escalation.

The first strategy is exemplified by *las Hijas de Violencia*, meaning Daughters of Violence, a Mexican feminist performance art collective inspired by Pussy Riot. In 2016 the group directly confronted male harassers in the streets of Mexico City by brandishing confetti pistols and singing punk songs. Each time a member of the group was harassed, the women chased after the man/men, shot him/them with the confetti pistols, turned on a set of portable speakers and performed their anthem 'Sexista Punk'. The women sought to challenge gender stereotypes and perceptions around street harassment with defiant and empowering lyrics, such as 'you talk to me as if you are going to rape me. If you do this to me, I will respond' (Moran, 2016). By naming the harassers' behaviour through their lyrics, these women made the injustice explicit. And by following this up by holding the harassers accountable for their actions ('If you do this to me, I will respond') meant that the women articulated a clear moral position: their right to respect and equality. According to Martha Langelan (1993), author of *Back Off! How to Confront and Stop Sexual Harassment and Harassers*, effective nonviolent resistance entails, inter alia, 'expressing a clear moral or ethical position' (1993, p. 86).⁴⁸

⁴⁸ This could be achieved through more conventional direct-action techniques, i.e., by simply stating disapproval of a harasser's behaviour and labelling that behaviour (Langelan 1993, pp. 86, 87).

The provocative direct-action tactic performed by las Hijas de Violencia (hereafter 'las Hijas') proved highly effective, attracting the attention of its target audiences, male harassers, who responded as anticipated by its creators. One of the group members, Ana Beatiz, explains, '[t]he fear is subverted because we switch the roles and they are the ones who are startled. It's only for a second because they see that it's just confetti, but it's subversive' (Resto-Montero, 2016). This echoes Langelan's assertion that women benefit by deploying confrontational techniques because they reverse the power dynamics between themselves and their harasser: '[e]motionally, a good confrontation allows a woman to be done with him and go about her business (instead of simmering with anger all day), while it leaves the harasser unsettled and disorientated' (Langelan, 1993, p. 85). Las Hijas stressed the importance of responding to street harassers and encouraged other women to similarly stand up to perpetrators of harassment in order to avoid feeling violated by the encounter (Moran, 2016). Hence, resisting street harassment by directly confronting harassers on the street enables women to reclaim power and dignity from male harassers. And in the age of social media when activists like las Hijas share their defiant acts of resistance online, they serve as an inspiration for other women to similarly take a stand against street harassers.⁴⁹

A less conspicuous, but no less creative, way of confronting street harassers is the tactic of handing them anti-street harassment cards. Distributing cards allows individuals to confront harassers about their behaviour directly, but without placing the onus on women to engage in conversation with them. This has been a popular tactic since the early 2000s when it became easy for activists to post card designs online for others to download and use. As Kearl (2015b, 39) pointed out, New York based-group, The Street Harassment Project (SHP) has offered cards on its website since that time and SSH has made a range of designs available to download since 2008. One of SHP's designs, 'the poisoned penis card', was adapted from the card that Catharine MacKinnon distributed to her harassers in the 1970s, as described at the outset of this chapter, which shows how earlier activism against public space harassment has influenced the contemporary movement. The text reads:

WARNING!! You are guilty of harassing and insulting a woman! This card has been treated with an invisible poisonous ink and within six hours your penis will fall off. * penile reattachment may not be covered by your insurance plan. To avoid reoccurrence STOP HARASSING WOMEN!!! (The Street Harassment Project, no date)

Perhaps the most well-known example of this approach in recent years is the Cards Against Harassment (CAH) project, created by Lindsey Middlecamp in 2014 to confront and educate harassers

⁴⁹ One of the group's street confrontations was recorded in early 2016 and it soon went viral with over nine million views on Facebook (Delgadillo, 2016). The video, along with the '10 Hours of Walking in NYC as a Woman' video inspired Las Morras (The Girls) to secretly film the harassment they experienced daily on the streets of Mexico City (Mulato, 2016). Las Morras' video, filmed in May 2016, captures the activists directly responding to their harassers to shift the balance of power in their favour (El Comercio, 2016).

in Minneapolis, US, '[a]fter years of experiencing or witnessing street harassment' (Cards Against Harassment, no date a). Prior to the project's inception, Middlecamp had confronted harassers on the street verbally to explain why street harassment was inappropriate, which met with varying degrees of success, but one interaction made her cognisant of the risk of verbal/physical escalation. 'I decided that a card would be the ideal middle ground, allowing me to provide feedback that harassment is unwanted without necessarily sticking around for an extended encounter' (quoted in Stop Street Harassment, 2014). A range of 10 printable card designs is available for download on the project's website with messages in English and Spanish, educating harassers that their behaviour is unacceptable and unwanted (Cards Against Harassment, no date b). For instance, the text of one card reads:

I know you may think you just paid me a compliment, but unwanted commentary on my appearance by strangers on the street makes me feel self-conscious and objectified. So if you really want to make me feel good, don't treat me like a piece of meat. (Cards Against Harassment, no date b)

All the designs carry the tagline: 'It's not a compliment. It's harassment' and by including the project's website address on the cards, CAH actively invites harassers to 'learn more' about street harassment. As well as enabling women to confront and educate their harassers, anti-street harassment cards, which on first glance look like small business cards, may act as a decoy if a victim of harassment wishes to escape from an intimidating, unpleasant or generally unwelcome harassment situation. For instance, US activist Mirabelle Jones created 'catcalling cards' in 2012 with a false telephone number printed on them. They were designed for women who were being followed or persistently harassed to distribute to harassers so that the perpetrator would leave them alone (the assumption on the part of the 'catcaller' is that he had received a business card from the woman containing her telephone number). The cards were available for order via the website and women were invited to leave messages on Jones' Tumblr *I Am Not an Object* 'telling catcallers exactly what you think of them.' Jones then formatted the messages into the voicemail message that harassers received when they called the number on the card (Jones, 2012). Thus, as well as helping women to flee from harassment situations, women also got the opportunity to reverse the power dynamics of the encounter by confronting their harassers indirectly through the recorded telephone message.

While this anti-street harassment tactic is designed to allow street harassment victims the opportunity to confront harassers quickly without necessarily having to engage in direct conversation with them, and while some cards may enable women to escape intimidating, unpleasant and unwelcome encounters, distributing cards nonetheless entails an interaction between the victim and perpetrator of harassment. For some women, although handing out cards to street harassers is, in principle, a good idea, in practice, they are fearful that an interaction could escalate into verbal abuse and/or

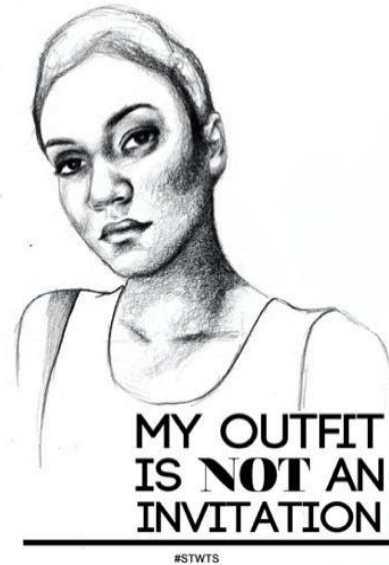
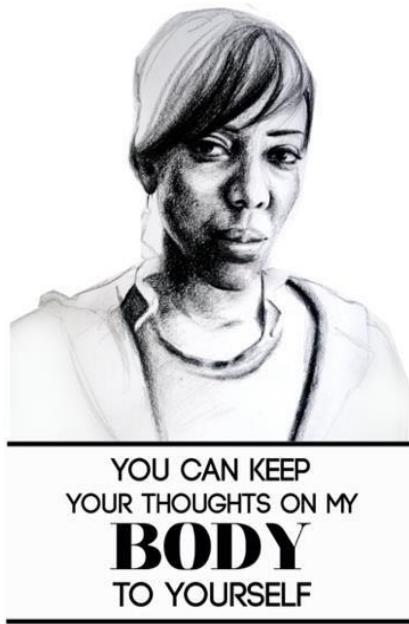
physical aggression. For example, the Bristol Street Harassment Project (BSHP) conducted an online survey to investigate people's knowledge of and intentions to use 'Call Out Cards'.⁵⁰ Of 100 respondents who had not previously seen the cards, 33 said they would like to use them, 26 would not and 41 might do so in the future. However, when asked 'Why would you not want to use the Call Out Cards?', the majority of respondents to this question (38/58) said they felt unsafe, or that handing out the card might inflame or escalate the situation (Charlotte Gage, BSHP, UK, personal communication, 2019).

These two types of strategies – anti-street harassment performance art and distributing anti-street harassment cards – involve varying degrees of direct confrontation, whereas street art initiatives enable women to confront harassers indirectly about their behaviour. These initiatives afford women the opportunity to respond to harassers from a distance and to demand that women are not objectified but treated equally and with dignity in public spaces. Tatyana Fazlalizadeh's now famous 'Stop Telling Women to Smile' (STWTS) project, for instance, seeks to resist street harassment by placing drawn portraits of women in public spaces with captions that speak directly to harassers (Stop Telling Women To Smile, no date a), e.g., 'Women are not outside for your entertainment', 'My outfit is not an invitation' and 'My name is not baby' (Stop Telling Women To Smile, no date b).

Brooklyn-based artist Fazlalizadeh was inspired to create a work in public that reflected her own experiences of street harassment and those of her female friends and acquaintances, to show 'how we were treated, catcalling, just the violence and abuse and everyday oppression that we experience' (Tavangar, 2018). She designs the portraits from sketches and interviews with female victims/survivors of street harassment. Initially they were friends and colleagues but after a successful Kickstarter campaign, Fazlalizadeh extended her project across several US cities (Beebe, 2015). She has also toured internationally, including to Berlin, Mexico City and Paris (Julia Brilling, interview 2014; Kale, 2016). The portraits of the women she depicts are intentionally eye-catching, drawn in strong, confrontational poses and the captions beneath the images are similarly confrontational. The objective of STWTS is 'to humanise these objectified women' (Shearman, 2014), in essence, to reclaim power and dignity back from street harassers through the faces and voices of women. The captions are usually direct quotations from the women the artist has interviewed, explaining how street harassment has affected them. 'It's their opportunity to say to the men who harass them – this is not how I'm going to let you treat me' (Fazlalizadeh, quoted in Kale 2016).

⁵⁰ 117 people were surveyed in total, of which 15 people had seen the cards, one person had viewed the design online, one person had only heard about the cards and 100 people had not seen the Call Out Cards.

Figure 2: Stop Telling Women to Smile portrait examples



'I'm not your property.
You're not in control of my body.'

'You are not entitled
to my body.'

Images reproduced with permission from Stop Telling Women to Smile (Stop Telling Women To Smile, no date e)

The women in the portraits speak back to harassers on the basis of their own experiences of street harassment, but they also speak on behalf of other female street harassment victims/survivors. As

Fazlalizadeh observes, although there are cultural differences with regards to street harassment, there are also a great many similarities, which resonate in the stories that women share in every city the artist has visited – that women are not full human beings but only exist in public spaces for the pleasure of men and that men are therefore entitled to treat women as they wish (Simon, no date). The portrait designs are also appropriated by other women to reject these assumptions of male dominance in public spaces and to inform harassers that women deserve to be treated as equal beings. Most notably, every year on ‘International Wheat Pasting Night’, the artist makes the poster designs available as free downloads on the STWTS website (Stop Telling Women To Smile, no date c) and invites women activists from around the world to participate in a coordinated effort to put up posters in their communities (Tavangar, 2018). In 2018, for example, women participated from several countries including Canada, France, Germany, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, the UK and the US (Stop Telling Women To Smile, no date d).

In other parts of the world, activists have created different types of street art initiatives to confront male harassers, safely from a distance. For example, using crowdsourced data from their online map, Safecity identified a harassment hotspot in a Delhi slum where men lingered next to a local tea stall and intimidated women and girls who walked past. In order to address the problem, which the young girls in the slum had identified as a major issue, Safecity organised an art workshop for them. The girls painted a mural near the tea stall depicting numerous staring eyes with the message: ‘Look with your hearts and not with your eyes’ (Carr, 2015).

Figure 3: Safecity art workshop mural, Delhi



Image reproduced with permission from Red Dot Foundation

The mural was extremely effective in changing behaviour as the staring and loitering in the vicinity completely stopped (Elsa D’Silva interview 2015). This tactic was an especially effective means for women and girls to respond to male harassers in a country which, according to Elsa D’Silva, is deeply rooted in patriarchal socio-cultural norms, making it difficult for women and girls to directly confront

male perpetrators and to demand their rights (Vilekar, 2016). Such examples of street art initiatives deployed by the movement enable women to confront male harassers on the street indirectly, to reject the objectification of women and to demand that harassers treat them as equal human beings.

4.5.3 Advocacy

Many anti-street harassment activists engage in advocacy work in the political and legislative arena. Advocacy in this context can be defined as 'attempts to change policies or influence the decisions of any institutional elite, government, and state institutions through enhancement of civic participation' (Schmid, Bar and Nirel, 2008, p. 581). Advocacy activities include lobbying at local and national levels and involvement in the drafting and scrutiny of anti-street harassment legislation. Anti-street harassment groups in the US, for instance, have engaged in lobbying activities with city governments by testifying as street harassment experts at public hearings. The first ever city council hearing on street harassment was held in New York City in 2010. 18 people testified, including activists from Hollaback!, GGE and SSH, about the pervasiveness of street harassment and how it impacts on their lives. One of the outcomes of the hearing was a commitment by the Council to pursue funding to conduct New York City's first study on street harassment (Stop Street Harassment, 2019a). However, thus far a city-wide study has not been conducted. Instead, the New York City Council members helped to fund Hollaback!'s mobile phone app which, in addition to the functions available to users described earlier, allows people to report harassment incidents directly to the City Council, should they wish to do so (O'Connor, 2016). Since the New York City hearing, anti-street harassment activists have participated in council hearings in Philadelphia, in 2013, in Kansas City, in 2014 and in Washington DC, in December 2015 (Stop Street Harassment, 2019a). Many of those who testified at the Washington DC hearing, including local anti-street harassment groups, CASS, Defend Yourself and SSH, advocated for city officials to collect data specific to the district in order for all parties to gain a better understanding of the problem and develop non-punitive, community solutions to street harassment (Kearl, 2015a).

While some parts of the movement focus on creating non-punitive solutions, a growing number of anti-street harassment groups have pushed for legislative action on street harassment in recent years in order to criminalise street harassment and call for stricter sanctions against perpetrators of harassment. Much advocacy work in this area has taken place in South and Central America, including in Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica and Peru. *Paremos el Acoso Sexual (PAC)*, for instance, worked closely with the Peruvian parliament on the formulation of Latin America's first law against sexual harassment in public spaces, enacted in March 2015 (Elizabeth Vallejo, PAC, Peru, interview 2016). Professor Elizabeth Vallejo, founder of PAC, explained how her research on street harassment was timely in this regard. In 2013 she conducted the first national survey on street harassment in Peru and the survey

data was used to inform the draft legislation against street harassment. PAC then made recommendations on the draft bill and after the legislation passed, the activists monitored its implementation, progress and enforcement (Elizabeth Vallejo interview 2016). Under the auspices of Peru's anti-street harassment law, public spaces are considered to be streets, squares, parks, public transportation, etc., and perpetrators of street harassment face a maximum prison sentence of 12 years (Dos Manos Peru, 2015).

Following the success of PAC's initiative, el Observatorio contra el Acoso Callejero (OCAC) Chile began advocating for a national law against street harassment in Chile. The *Respeto Callejero* (Street Respect) bill was first presented to Congress in March 2015 and was finally approved in April 2019. The enactment of the bill modifies the criminal code to define the crime of sexual harassment in public spaces, carrying fines and possible prison sentences (Observatorio contra el Acoso Callejero, 2019; Quiroz, 2019). OCAC's advocacy work was instrumental in ensuring the successful passage of the legislation. As María Francisca Torres Pacheco, Communications Director, at OCAC told me: 'we had a team of lawyers constantly lobbying with parliamentarians and with the Ministry of Women and Gender Equity. They constantly pressed for progress in the legislative process' (personal communication, 2019). One important means for doing so was providing evidence on the prevalence, nature and negative effects of street harassment for young women in particular. OCAC conducted the country's first national survey on street harassment in 2014 (Observatorio contra el Acoso Callejero, 2015a), which, like PAC in Peru, helped convince legislators that street harassment was a serious social problem that required punitive action. As Torres Pacheco explains:

The survey that OCAC did was very important so that the deputies, senators, and the men of Chile, took the issue seriously. Street harassment was not a topic, it was something that came with being a woman. ... The figures allowed us to have more tools to defend ourselves. Before our survey, there were no studies in Chile about street harassment. The testimonies of thousands of women were not enough for the authorities to believe us and understand that this was a real social problem, but the statistics did. (personal communication, 2019)

As well as successfully advocating for policy change at the national level, OCAC provided guidance on one of two municipal ordinances criminalising street harassment, enacted by Chilean mayors in 2018 (María Francisca Torres Pacheco, personal communication, 2018).

Acción Respeto in Argentina have similarly spent the last few years advocating for legislative action on street harassment at both the local and national level, including directly advising on local legislation (Juliana Santarosa Cobos, Acción Respeto, Argentina, interview 2019). For example, in 2016, in part, as a result of the group's campaigning and lobbying efforts, the city of Buenos Aires enacted a law that made street harassment illegal. The legislation adopts both a punitive and educational approach to

tackling street harassment. Those found guilty of street harassment are liable to a small fine or court-ordered community service. But the legislation also includes educational campaigns emphasising that all verbal comments or interactions in public spaces require women's consent and the campaigns encourage bystanders to intervene to deter harassment (Brigida, 2016).

Acción Respeto have also argued in favour of introducing a national bill against street harassment that would, if enacted, reform the penal code in Congress (Juliana Santarosa Cobos, interview 2019). The proposed, more rigorous legislation, which has been approved by a special committee in the Chamber of Deputies, would establish street sexual harassment as a 'crime against sexual integrity', with fines of at least AR\$ 3,000 (£62.00) and up to AR\$ 25,000 (£516) imposed to those found guilty of street harassment (Thomson, 2017). The bill was revised by the Senate in October 2018 and returned to the Chamber of Deputies for consideration (Pereyra, 2018). The penal law has not yet passed. However, in April 2019, street harassment was incorporated as a form of gender violence, constituting 'violence against women in public space', into a national law, the 'Comprehensive Women Protection Act', which 'governs all forms of gendered violence against women' in both the private and public domain. This is a civil law which establishes certain obligations for the state but does not impose any punishment on perpetrators of street harassment (Juliana Santarosa Cobos, personal communication, 2020).

In a similar manner, Acción Respeto in Costa Rica have been working closely with parliamentary groups on new national anti-street harassment legislation, which was presented to the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica in May 2017. The bill aims to punish perpetrators of street harassment with prison sentences of between six months and two years for acts involving bodily sexual contact. The initiative also grants the National Women's Institute the possibility of running educational programmes to raise awareness among the population (Arrieta Pérez, 2017). The bill was passed unanimously by the Women's Commission in the Congress and was approved in June 2020 in a first debate by the plenary. It is now awaiting approval by the Constitutional Chamber (Alejandra Arbuola Cabrera, Acción Respeto, Costa Rica, personal communication, 2020).

In sum, there is a growing regional trend in Latin America⁵¹ and elsewhere for advocating the introduction of legislation that criminalises street harassment. However, despite the fact that more than 20 anti-street harassment laws (local and national level) were passed globally between 2012 and 2018 (Kearl, 2018), many of them in response to lobbying and consultation efforts by activists, there is a divergence in opinion within the movement regarding the question of criminalisation. Several anti-

⁵¹ Similar laws are in the process of being considered for enactment by legislators in Panama and Paraguay (Paraguay.com, 2017; Perea, 2017).

street harassment activists remain sceptical with regard to the application, enforcement and effectiveness of such laws.

A major reservation among anti-street harassment activists is the possibility that legislation would be disproportionately applied to marginalised groups, most notably men of colour, people from low income groups and gender diverse individuals. This concern is articulated by Jessica Raven of CASS, US: 'We don't want laws to be passed for people to be thrown in jail because what we find is ... people of colour are negatively impacted by criminalisation' (interview 2016). Hollaback! NYC concurs with this view. On the organisation's website, one of their frequently asked questions reads, 'Does Hollaback! think street harassment should be made a criminal offense?'. 'No' is their response. (Hollaback!, no date b). They elaborate:

Criminal law and punishment are disproportionately applied to people of color, low-income individuals, and trans and gender-nonconforming people. We believe that it is our role as advocates to steer policy makers away from measures that would increase criminalization that predominantly affects these groups, and toward measures that engage communities in prevention. ... Criminalizing verbal harassment and unwanted gestures is neither the final goal nor the ultimate solution to this problem and can, in fact, inadvertently work against the growth of an inclusive anti-street harassment movement. ... Our objective is to address and shift cultural and social dialogues and attitudes of patriarchy that purport street harassment as simply the price you pay for being a woman or being LGBTQ. It is not to re-victimize men already discriminated against by the system. (Hollaback!, no date b)

This position is clearly understandable in a country where 'mass incarceration', particularly among young men of colour, has reached epidemic proportions. It is estimated that in Washington DC, for example, three quarters of young Black men (and almost all those in the most marginalised neighbourhoods) can expect to serve a prison sentence (Alexander, 2012, pp. 6–7). The viewpoint expressed by CASS and Hollaback! reflects an anti-carceral feminist perspective, one that 'eschew[s] policing and the criminal justice system as avenues of redress for gendered and racialised harassment', instead advancing the goal of transformative justice at the community level (Rentschler, 2017, p. 566).

Those activists advocating for legal action against street harassment agree that criminalisation is not the 'ultimate solution' to the problem. Instead, they argue that bottom-up, community-based approaches that seek to educate society about street harassment and reshape attitudes and behaviours are the most effective strategies at creating long-term social change. In this respect, there is perhaps more convergence between the two camps than at first glance might appear. Those in favour of criminalisation assert that 'the educational path, albeit the most effective one in assuring that [street harassment] ends, is also the longest because it's a social change' (Juliana Santarosa

Cobos, interview 2019). In the meantime, legislation can be an important mechanism in helping to bring about the desired social change. For instance, according to feminist lawyer and Director of Acción Respeto in Argentina, Juliana Santarosa Cobos:

We know that penal law always arrives late, it comes into play once the damage has been done. It might punish the assailant, but it does not work to prevent the aggression from happening. ... It makes that one harasser pay for his crime or misdemeanour, but the collective problem persists. ... So why push for a law to punish [street harassment]? Because we believe it's necessary to offer women a legal instrument that enables them to report episodes of [street harassment] in the present time, while the social change takes place. It's empowering for us, it sends the message that the State itself puts its foot down and isn't compliant with [street harassment] anymore, it challenges the impunity of the harassers and it gives them a lesson: you're going to be held accountable for the violence you exert. (interview 2019)

Thus, introducing anti-street harassment legislation sets an important precedent. It signals to society that a practice previously perceived as normal, harmless and even complimentary is now recognised by the state as a crime, with sanctions in place for non-compliance of the law. In the immediate term, such laws provide an official reporting mechanism for victims/survivors of street harassment and in the longer term, legislation contributes towards generating new social norms around street harassment, which in turn aim to encourage further reporting and act as a deterrent to potential perpetrators of harassment.

While there is a divergence in opinion on this issue within the movement, which is only to be expected given its global scale and decentralised structure, it is interesting to note that criminalisation and community engagement are not mutually exclusive strategies. As discussed above, much legislation provides for educational programmes to generate awareness about street harassment among the general public and to encourage bystander intervention. And those anti-street harassment groups that advocate for legislation do so in tandem with community engagement. For example, in Chile alongside OCAC's lobbying efforts, the organisation's different teams work to position the issue on the public agenda. OCAC has more than 10 communications professionals working on a voluntary basis and a team that participates in civil society fora (neighbourhood boards, schools and universities) where they seek to make street harassment visible as a social problem and educate women and girls about harassment and how to resist it (María Francisca Torres Pacheco, OCAC Chile, personal communication, 2019).

In Egypt, part of HarassMap's mission to change social perceptions and behaviours and encourage bystanders to intervene involves educating the public that everyday harassment is a crime with legal ramifications (Abdelmonem, 2015b, p. 103). To make this message explicit HarassMap launched the

'A harasser is a criminal campaign' in 2015 using TV, radio and social media adverts, and deploying community volunteers (Masr, 2015). While HarassMap has not conducted official research to measure people's perceptions or behaviour change since the launch of the sexual harassment law in 2014, observations on the ground suggest that there is increased reporting, both official police reporting and through social media using different hashtags, including #Sexual harassment is a crime and #Harasser is a criminal (Enas Hamdy, HarassMap, Egypt, personal communication, 2019).

Importantly, community engagement may help to hold the state and law enforcement officials accountable by ensuring that anti-street harassment laws are properly implemented and enforced. In the case of Egypt, reporting rates have historically been very low due to a number of issues, including problems around enforcement. In 2014 HarassMap found that only 2% of people reported public sexual harassment to the police. The main reason for not reporting was fear of stigma (78%) and 54.4% of respondents believed that police officers did not take action against perpetrators when reports were made (Fahmy *et al.*, 2014, p. 26). Other issues which deter reporting are the requirement of providing witnesses as evidence of harassment, as stipulated by the law, and fear that police officers will mock women or commit harassment themselves (Hassan, Komsan, and Shoukry, 2008, p. 10, Rebecca Chiao, personal communication, 2019).

On their website, HarassMap explain 'How to report to the police' (HarassMap, no date b), and to achieve more effective and consistent enforcement of sexual harassment laws, the organisation encourages community accountability around reporting and bystander intervention: 'If bystanders and police continue to make excuses for harassers and blame the harassed, not even the best law will ever be enforced. So know these laws, intervene to help people who have been harassed and use the law to make sure that harassers are held responsible for their crimes' (HarassMap, no date b). In short, HarassMap activists believe that community engagement is essential if existing laws are to provide justice for victims/survivors of street harassment. As Rebecca Chiao explains:

Police and policymakers are just other members of society and in Egypt if the police don't believe something is a crime or worth punishment, even if there are excellent laws in place, they won't enforce them. So while community engagement can stand on its own and doesn't wait for or depend on top-down action for change, in our experience, top-down action cannot stand on its own and is inspired by community engagement. (personal communication, 2019)

The global anti-street harassment movement is moving towards advocating for legal action against street harassment, with more and more laws being enacted across the globe. Despite valid concerns by many anti-street harassment activists about the application, enforcement and effectiveness of such laws, legislation provides victims/survivors of street harassment with an official mechanism to exercise their right to report street harassment as a crime. In the longer term, it is anticipated that

such laws will contribute towards creating new social norms around street harassment. This may encourage further reporting of street harassment, enable more effective and consistent enforcement of laws and, eventually, act as a deterrent for potential street harassers. However, community engagement is essential if such laws are to be effective.

I have argued that the global anti-street harassment movement uses a diversity of tactics and methods to obtain its goals and to influence a wide range of target audiences. Despite such diversity, I have found that a large portion of activism serves an educative and consciousness-raising function. Much online activism is aimed at creating supportive feminist spaces for harassment victims to share their experiences, air their grievances and make visible the gender dynamics of street harassment. Several actions, both online and offline, are designed to educate the media and the general public that street harassment is an overt social problem in need of a solution. Anti-street harassment activism often seeks to engage the community in providing solutions, deploying awareness raising to reshape social attitudes and encourage bystander intervention. Other activism is targeted explicitly at male harassers, prompting them to reflect on and change their behaviour in public spaces. Finally, I have shown that while there is a range of opinion within the movement concerning the question of criminalisation, those activists pushing for legal action do so alongside community engagement and educative action. Despite its diverse forms, then, much anti-street harassment activism serves a consciousness-raising and educative function.

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored the origins, development and characteristic features of the global anti-street harassment movement. In so doing, the research has helped to call the global anti-street harassment movement into existence (Eschle, 2004, p. 66). I argued that while the multifarious contemporary anti-street harassment initiatives may, on the face of it, appear discrete and independent from each other, they are in fact members of a global feminist movement that is a loose but integrated non-hierarchical network (Gerlach, 2001, pp. 289–290). This networked structure allows activists to act autonomously while simultaneously enabling them to share knowledge and information and foster a sense of solidarity and community with each other. The global anti-street harassment movement, I have argued, is chiefly defined by its shared ideal of ending street harassment. Activists within the movement are also unified through common, though not homogenous feminist values, shared goals, occasional collaborations and a diverse range of common tactics and methods.

Chapter Five: Motivations Inspiring Anti-Street Harassment Activism

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the motivations research participants provided for becoming anti-street harassment activists and how the motivations of activists might, in part, explain the evolution of the global anti-street harassment movement. This chapter addresses the first part of the study's second research question, which asks: How do motivations function in the emergence and development of the global anti-street harassment movement? I analyse the two primary motivations for activism articulated by my participants: grievances and emotions, in particular, anger as a response to gender injustice and empathy for victims and survivors of street harassment and sexual violence. I conclude that individual motivations, whilst marginalised by predominant social movement perspectives, are important factors in the generation and development of this global feminist movement.

I am interested in activists' motivations for engaging in anti-street harassment activism and their experiences and understandings of gender injustice for what this tells us about the development of this particular social movement. Rather than begin with meso- and macro-level 'structural' explanations of movement emergence, e.g., organisations, resources, mobilisation and opportunities (Pinard, 2011), as propounded by dominant social movement theoretical frameworks, i.e., resource mobilization and political process theories, I start my analysis at the micro-level. In what follows, I examine the self-reported motivations that have inspired individuals to become anti-street harassment activists and, in several instances, to create and expand anti-street harassment initiatives. As noted earlier, motivation is defined as whatever moves individuals to initiate or continue activism against street harassment (Jasper, 2006, p. 157). It is possible that actors only partially disclose their motivations for engaging in activism; for example, they may, consciously or unconsciously, conceal non-ideological reasons for participating, such as individual self-fulfilment (Milan, 2013, p. 52). Non-ideological reasons and other motivations may or may not be factors, but I am not interested in identifying the most important possible motivation, but simply to find out what the participants' main reported motivations are.

In total, the data comprises information on the motivations of 26 of the 33 research participants.⁵² During the second and third phases of interviewing (December 2015 to November 2016) and (January 2019) respectively, I asked the majority of participants (19/20),⁵³ in an open-ended manner, about their motivations for establishing an anti-street harassment initiative or engaging in anti-street

⁵² 11/17 participants in the first phase; 19/20 in the second and third phases (four of these were repeat interviews).

⁵³ The other interview enquired about aspects of the research unrelated to activists' motivations; the line of enquiry focused very narrowly on the global diffusion of an anti-street harassment and personal safety mobile phone app.

harassment activism. While the topic of motivations was not a specific line of enquiry in the first interview phase (March 2014 to July 2014), eleven of the seventeen participants offered information on this subject.⁵⁴ Whether or not the interview data is representative of the wider global anti-street harassment movement is not possible to know. However, as noted in chapter three, I have interviewed important figures in the movement, many of whom founded and/or coordinate the most well-known and influential anti-street harassment groups and campaigns.

5.1 Grievances and Gender Injustice

For the purposes of my research, as previously noted, I define grievances as a sense of dissatisfaction about situations or conditions evaluated as unjust based on gender. My interview data reveals that grievances are a prominent self-reported motivator for anti-street harassment activism. 21 of the 26 participants explained that a sense of dissatisfaction motivated them to become activists, either in response to personal experience of street harassment, which they understood as a form of gender-based injustice, or through learning about similar or more extreme injustices suffered by other women. For the vast majority of activists, sentiments of discontent about recurrent everyday experiences of street harassment and the recognition of street harassment as unjust provided the impetus for their activism. For example, Julia Gray, co-founder of Hollaback! London, explained:

I grew up in London and I've been experiencing street harassment since I was about 14, and it was ... always an issue for me. I would say I'm quite an outspoken person, I'm a feminist and it was something that I was always aware shouldn't be happening. I was always very aware of the fact that it was unjust and not right and what I was finding was that I was struggling to find anyone to communicate with. A lot of my girlfriends just said 'oh well, don't worry about it, you've just got to ignore it' ... I just got really fed up and thought, I really want to see if I can do something. (interview 2014)

In a similar vein, Elizabeth Vallejo of *Paremos el Acoso Callejero* (Let's End Street Harassment), Peru, recounted experiencing street harassment since her adolescence, which aggrieved her and catalysed her activism: 'well, this is an issue that was bothering me a lot [for] a lot of years since I was a teenager and not just me because ... every time I talk[ed] to another teenage girl about [street harassment] they were also very bothered and ... I didn't understand why no one was doing anything' (interview 2016). Personal experience of street harassment and recognition of the practice as gendered, unequal and unfair similarly motivated Jasmeen Patheja to initiate Indian anti-street harassment group, *Blank Noise*, in 2003. Patheja described experiencing pervasive street harassment whilst exploring the city

⁵⁴ As noted in chapter three, I revised RQ2 after the first interview phase to take into account the new theme that had emerged during preliminary data analysis – that of the role played by motivations and digital technologies in contributing to the movement's evolution.

of Bangalore as an art college student. She was conscious of walking the streets in a defensive manner ‘almost like some sort of armour was around me’ and ‘that there was this kind of weight that we were carrying as women every day’ because of the constant threat of harassment. This realisation and sense of dissatisfaction, coupled with the fact that street harassment was dismissed by society as ‘eve teasing’ and minimised by her college peers: ‘so most of the students in my class and my peers would just say “yeah, it happens”’, galvanised Patheja’s activism (interview 2015).

For several other participants street harassment had been a persistent issue since their adolescent years or even earlier, as young girls, and they described feeling frustrated that their harassment experiences were routinely minimised and invalidated by friends, family and the wider community. For some, such minimisation served to reinforce their understandings of oppressive gender relations and motivated anti-street harassment activism: ‘that’s actually how I started. That’s something I was told by my aunt and my mother ... this was really disturbing when I was little, “well, they just think you’re pretty”’ (Julia Brilling, Hollaback! Berlin, Germany, interview 2014).

Others had initially normalised their own experiences of street harassment and came to accept the situation as inevitable and unchangeable. It was only when they experienced a change in consciousness, coming to view street harassment as a form of gender injustice, that they became motivated to resist it. Jessica Raven, former Executive Director of Collective Action for Safe Spaces, US, explained that:

I grew up in New York; I’ve been dealing with street harassment since I was 12. I didn’t see that there was anything that I could do about it and then I came to accept it as a fact in my life. ... There were two factors that pushed me to seek out a way to do something ... one was the fact I was still experiencing street harassment when I was pregnant. It was very vulgar and demeaning and I thought that ‘this isn’t the world that I want my child to grow up in.’ ... And the second thing was I had recently left an abusive relationship and so as I was learning more about domestic violence and about just misogyny in general ... that motivated me to want to do more. (interview 2016)

Emily May similarly points to a shift in consciousness as a catalyst for activism. As outlined in chapter four, May was motivated to co-found Hollaback! in New York with six friends after the female friends in the friendship group shared their harassment experiences in what, effectively, became a consciousness-raising conversation; the male friends responded: ‘you guys live in this completely different city than we do’ (interview 2016). This remark highlighted the gender-specific ways in which street harassment is experienced and perceived. Because men generally do not experience harms as a result of harassment practices, they also do not see women’s uniquely gendered suffering (Tuerkheimer, 1997, p. 172). Relatedly, because women’s distinctive gender-specific harms, such as

street harassment, are typically dismissed as trivial and therefore inevitable in the male dominated culture (West, 1987, p. 82), these harms are also ignored or minimised by the victim (Tuerkheimer, 1997). May describes her 'click' of recognition (Klein, 1984) when she realised that street harassment was not a normal consequence of womanhood and how this moved her to action:

I think everyone assumes there's some personal horrific story that would be the reason that I cared so much about this to do this work for ten years, but really the horrific story behind it is just that it was this non-stop, everyday form of violence that I'd come to accept. And I think when I realised that I had accepted it as normal and that, in fact, it wasn't normal to a good half of the population and it shouldn't [be], it was a shock to my system and motivated me to want to take action on behalf of myself and on behalf of everyone else who was going through this. (interview 2016)

As these examples illustrate, it was not personal experience of street harassment per se that motivated action, but rather a sense of dissatisfaction about such experiences stemming from an awareness and rejection of street harassment as a gender-based injustice. In other words, what galvanised their activism were grievances, based on the realisation that their individual experiences of street harassment, which were often minimised and normalised by families and peers, and sometimes by themselves, in fact, amounted to unfair and 'unequal treatment of themselves as women' (Klatch, 2001, p. 795, original emphasis). In this respect, the possession of feminist consciousness is often a precursor to anti-street harassment activism because it enables women to recognise their individual problems as being rooted in gender.

The transformation from seeing problems, like experiences of street harassment, as personal or 'normal' to perceiving problems as a consequence of social factors requiring a political solution is a critical component of feminist consciousness (Klein, 1984, p. 3; Klatch, 2001, p. 792).⁵⁵ This involves seeing things differently about oneself and about society, things that were previously hidden, which leads to opportunities for feminist collective action (Bartky, 1990, p. 21). As is evidenced in the quotations from the interviewees above, many routine social situations are apprehended 'as occasions for struggle' (Bartky, 1990, p. 21). Everyday experiences like street harassment and sexism take on new meanings and are revealed as opportunities to challenge the deceptiveness of social reality (1990, p. 21). Such awakenings are often enabled by digital technologies. As Juliana de Faria, Founder of Chega de Fiu Fiu (Enough with the Catcalls) in Brazil explained:

⁵⁵ Making the personal political was a key aim of consciousness-raising groups (gatherings where women discussed their own oppression) during the women's liberation movement (WLM) (Rogan and Budgeon, 2018, p. 2). And as I argue in chapter six, anti-street harassment digital story-sharing platforms perform a similar function in today's digital age.

[The movement] is spreading because ... [street harassment] has always been understood as something that was part of life ... When one brave woman has the courage to say out loud that it doesn't have to be part of life, everything clicked. We started recognizing ourselves as victims ... to understand the oppression we suffer. And when we understand that, well, this changes everything. It's like when we wear glasses for the first time! (interview 2015, original emphasis)

Thus, the possession of feminist consciousness has allowed anti-street harassment activists to see things differently, to situate their individual experiences of street harassment within wider social structures and to frame street harassment as a feminist issue requiring a political solution. I do not imply that acquiring feminist consciousness necessarily precipitates political action in any immediate sense. Some anti-street harassment activists, as the earlier quotations above demonstrate, were aware from a young age that street harassment was illegitimate and unjust, and they identified as feminists for several years before becoming politically active. In many cases, as I illustrate in the next chapter, it was the advent of digital technologies that afforded women, who had long been aggrieved about street harassment, the opportunity to take action. Neither do I suggest that the possession of feminist consciousness, or identifying as feminist, always automatically corresponds with a feminist understanding of street harassment. At least, this was the case for two of my participants, who identified as feminists and yet initially viewed street harassment as an individual problem, rather than seeing it as part of a wider social system. Emily May, for example, identified as a feminist since her childhood (Mendes, Ringrose and Keller, 2019, p. 97), but, as described earlier, only explicitly recognised and labelled her experiences of street harassment as rooted in gender much later on. Rochelle Keyhan, Director of Feminist Public Works in the US, similarly identified as a feminist from a young age but did not initially incorporate street harassment 'into any sort of feminist platform' (interview 2016). She was motivated to establish a Hollaback! chapter in Philadelphia, not in response to grievances and consciousness of gender injustice but, rather, after providing legal assistance to Hollaback! and, in turn, identifying with the group's values, interests and aims:

I considered myself a pretty radical feminist that was pretty progressive, and I had never realised we were allowed to be angry about street harassment and so learning all about what [Hollaback!] do and what their mission was like, oh my gosh if this is revolutionary to me, it's probably revolutionary to a lot of people, and I just got really excited about it. (Interview 2014)

In analysing my interview data, it is clear that grievances, informed by an awareness of gender injustice, is a primary determinant of anti-street harassment activism. But as the last example reveals, the politicisation process is not always linear, moving from experience and knowledge to action (Eschle and Manguashca, 2010, p. 177). As Cheryl Hercus suggests 'doing feminism', that is participating in feminist events (or identifying oneself as belonging to a feminist organisation and

developing a collective identity) may precede and even result in changes in knowledge (Hercus, 2005, p. 12).

In summary, the interview data highlight that the majority of my participants were motivated to become activists in response to feeling aggrieved about their experiences of street harassment. My findings support informal interview data gathered by Levanta La Voz! (Hollaback! Madrid) on the mobilising motivations of six expatriate anti-street harassment activists. Prior to relocating to Spain, the six women frequently experienced street harassment in their home countries, often from a young age, and initially perceived their situations as 'natural, inevitable and inescapable' (Bartky, 1990, p. 14). However, experiencing pervasive street harassment in a different cultural setting prompted the recognition that the practice was gendered and discriminatory. This realisation created a sense of dissatisfaction and frustration, and moved the women to act. For example, Debbie asks:

Why did I get involved with fighting street harassment? Because I just couldn't take it anymore. Harassment is something I think women notice and feel more when they live abroad ... the prevalence and society's normalisation of street harassment means women are more likely to think of their own country's harassment as just part of being a woman, but it's when we are abroad and experience another culture's harassment that we really feel it. So, despite having experienced plenty of harassment in my native country of England, the street harassment cultural shock I got from moving abroad to Spain was difficult to deal with. ... I realised that ... I deserved a basic respect that was continuously being denied me in the street, and that's when it got unbearable. (quoted in Kaligraphy, 2017)

This discussion illustrates that anti-street harassment activists often become politically active in response to grievances about personal experiences of street harassment and the recognition that those experiences are unequal, unfair and unjust.

It is not only a sense of dissatisfaction about personal experience of gender-based injustice that motivates anti-street harassment activism. Knowledge of sexual violence injustices experienced by other women are important as well. Activism may be prompted by witnessing injustices or by knowledge that such an event has occurred nearby (Eschle and Maiguashca, 2010, p. 74). For instance, as noted earlier, Feminista Jones was motivated to intervene as a bystander when she witnessed a young mother being street harassed in New York City in 2014. This incident led to the creation of her #YouOKSis hashtag campaign:

I've seen these things and I've experienced them myself a lot of times, but I don't know what it was about this particular incident, but something just told me 'I need to say something' or 'I need to just try to help her out a bit' because the man was being really aggressive and really persistent, and I just decided to do that and the question that I asked her was 'are you okay sis?' Because I

just wanted to check in with her and because she was Black; I tend to call Black women 'sis', short for sister. (interview 2016)

Feminista Jones' intervention was successful to the extent that the woman managed to escape her harasser, which was the objective. But the man subsequently confronted Jones, verbally abusing her. After the event, Jones tweeted about this particular incident and her own experiences of street harassment 'because I was tired of keeping it to myself and it was really getting on my nerves', encouraging her Twitter followers to intervene when they witnessed incidents of street harassment (interview 2016).

Some of the interviewees were motivated by feelings of discontent and injustice about more extreme forms of sexual violence experienced by women – gender-based injustices which had occurred in their communities or countries. For example, following a series of sexual assaults against women walking home by themselves at night in Brooklyn, New York, Oraia Reid co-founded RightRides for Women's Safety to combat sexual assault and harassment. Reid, herself a survivor of sexual assault, explains:

Over the course of that summer there were increasing attacks and they were increasingly more violent and it really felt that our communities were being targeted and women were not safe. ... I didn't know any of these women particularly but ... the atrocity of the crimes committed against them and the fact that they couldn't get home safe was something that really struck me as horrific, but also something that I felt compelled to do, to have a response ... I just wanted to give everybody a ride home.' (interview 2014)

Over the ensuing months and years, RightRides mobilised and organised women-only volunteers to give free late-night lifts home to women and LGBTQ+ people across four boroughs in New York (interview 2014). Elsa D'Silva was similarly motivated to make public spaces safer for women in 2012, following the brutal rape and murder of 23-year-old university student, Jyoti Singh Pandey in Delhi. The attack and death of Pandey marked a turning point for D'Silva, who abandoned her business career to launch Indian anti-street harassment group Safecity:

At that time in India, all the conversations were about the rape because it was so horrific. I guess an inflection point had been reached when women just kind of, it was like a damn bursting, so wherever you went the conversation was about it ... and I was thinking 'how can I be working on mentoring women to achieve corporate excellence when in the first place we limit the choices that girls have?' ... So much as I would like to say I'm working towards getting more women in business and pushing them up the career ladder, it will not be possible if public spaces are not safe and equally accessible to all. (interview 2015)

As D'Silva learned about the horrific incident and through subsequent consciousness-raising conversations with women about their experiences of street harassment and other forms of sexual

violence, she began to remember her own experiences ‘which I had filed at the back of my mind and forgotten.’ D’Silva came to understand these experiences as symptomatic of the unequal and unjust treatment of women in the public sphere (interview 2015). For this activist, then, awareness of injustices suffered by other women allowed her to see things about herself and her society that were hitherto concealed (Bartky, 1990, p. 21) and she consequently channelled her dissatisfaction into activism.

The fact that some activists were motivated to engage in activism in response to discontentment with more extreme sexual violence injustices indicates that the movement does not apply a sharp distinction between street harassment and other forms of VAW. On the contrary, as mentioned in chapter four, anti-street harassment activists, in line with feminist scholarship, locate street harassment on a continuum of sexual violence (Kelly, 1988; Gardner, 1995, p. 4). As Keyhan contends: ‘street harassment isn’t just an independent issue; it’s part of so many other issues, and it’s like a Venn diagram where it’s just intersecting with everything that involves gender-based violence and gender-based insecurity and lack of safety’ (interview 2014). The point here is that some women have become activists to combat street harassment/sexual assault, in response to sentiments of discontent and injustice about more extreme incidents of sexual violence suffered by women and recognising that these forms of sexual violence interlink.

Grievances, whether relating to personal experience of street harassment or stemming from sexual violence injustices experienced by other women, provide a principal motivating impetus for anti-street harassment activism. While grievances contain a cognitive element, they are also apprehended through emotion (Hercus, 2005, p. 48). This is because ‘thinking and feeling are parallel, interacting processes’ of appraising and engaging with the social world (Jasper, 2011, p. 286). As I demonstrate below, this interaction between cognition and feeling is evident in the testimonies of my participants.

5.2 Emotions

In this section, I examine the role of emotions in motivating anti-street harassment activism. As stated in chapter three, I understand emotions as feelings generated in response to experiences and events, or that arise from affective bonds (Pinard, 2011, p. 5). I further understand emotions as socially constructed, i.e., social norms, values and culture influence how people experience emotions (van Troost, van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2013, p. 187). During the second and third phases of interviewing, I asked the majority of participants (19/20) whether supposedly negative emotions, such as fear or anger, and positive emotions, such as empathy or love, had motivated their activism or influenced their actions (Eschle and Maiguashca, 2008). In my interview schedule, drawing on Eschle and Maiguashca (2008), I framed anger and fear as ‘negative emotions’ and empathy and love as ‘positive emotions’. On reflection, I realise that I should not have used the modifiers ‘negative’ and

'positive' because these terms are often understood simplistically in the literature. Anger, for example, can result in positive outcomes and is potentially beneficial in social relations (Sayers and Jones, 2014, p. 281). Feminist social movement scholars have highlighted the positive, transformative effects of anger, e.g. Taylor (1996); Whittier (2001) and, as discussed in the literature review, feminist affect scholars have contested the distinction between negative and positive emotions, showing the transformative potentialities of 'bad feelings', like depression, unhappiness, guilt, shame and fear (e.g., Cvetkovich, 2003, 2012; Love, 2009; Ahmed, 2010). The fact that I prompted my participants, however, had no effect on the data because none of the participants mentioned emotions in terms of positive or negative evaluations. In the following discussion, I focus my analysis on anger/indignation⁵⁶ and empathy, since these emotions were identified by the participants as principal motivators driving anti-street harassment activism.⁵⁷

Until 20-30 years ago, analysis of emotions was virtually absent from the scholarship on social movements, which, at that time, was dominated by structural, rationalistic perspectives on social movements (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta, 2001a, p. 1; Jasper, 2011, p. 286). Since then, there has been a resurgence of interest in the subject and increasing recognition of the importance of emotions in mobilising and sustaining activism (Brown and Pickerill, 2009). However, the emerging scholarship on emotions and social movements has been hampered by a number of conceptual ambiguities, reflecting the wider sociology of emotions (Jasper, 2011, p. 286). One problem is that labels for particular emotions, such as anger and fear, are often adopted uncritically from natural language but, in fact, encapsulate different types of feelings. For example, anger 'can be a gut surge of panic over something in the shadows' or an amplified indignation over a perceived injustice (Jasper, 2011, p. 286). Because my argument draws on literature from different fields as well as interview transcripts, I have out of necessity retained the original terminology used. However, my usage of the term 'anger' throughout my argument implies the longer-term 'higher order' emotion of indignation (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta, 2001a, p. 12) – 'the morally grounded form of anger' (Jasper, 2014, p. 208), as opposed to the more immediate, automatic or reactive form of anger, which tends to quickly emerge and wane (Jasper, 2011, p. 287). 'Indignation' is defined as 'anger aroused by something unjust,

⁵⁶ I provide conceptual clarity between these terms below.

⁵⁷ Four participants claimed that love had motivated their activism, but only one interviewee provided a specific example of how this emotion had played an influential role. Similarly, nine participants said they were motivated into activism out of fear, but only three interviewees elaborated on this point. Moreover, two of the three participants that offered examples of fear as a motivator did so in relation to anger. Two participants, unprompted, said that hope motivated them to continue fighting against street harassment. Two participants, similarly, unprompted reported that enthusiasm motivated their activism or that the work was 'fun' and one participant, unprompted, said that admiration for other activists and victims/survivors of street harassment bolstered her activism.

unworthy, or mean' (Merriam-Webster, 2017). Moreover, this is the meaning implied by the participants in their usage of the word 'anger', as the testimonies below illustrate.

5.2.1 Anger/indignation

From my analysis of the interview data, it is evident that anger/indignation is a central motivating emotion catalysing anti-street harassment activism; 18/20 participants reported that anger had galvanised their activism. Anger as a motivator for feminist activism can be in response to gender-based injustices suffered by others and/or injustices personally experienced (Eschle and Manguashca, 2010, p. 76; Mackay, 2015, p. 133). In the case of the latter, for example, Alice Junquera of OCAC Chile claims that what motivated her most urgently was anger at facing increased levels of street harassment upon moving to Chile: 'I really thought it wouldn't be worse than Brazil here, but it is, surprisingly ... I was angry, like really, really angry ... and this is what actually motivated me' (interview 2016). Similarly, for Hala Mostafa, co-founder of I Saw Harassment, Egypt, 'anger was the motivation' stemming from the recognition that she suffered constant harassment and humiliation on the streets of Cairo and the indignity of not being treated as 'a complete human being' (interview 2016). Reflecting on earlier street harassment experiences and the feelings these elicited, Julia Gray articulated her rage at being treated unfairly and unequally on the basis of her gender:

I think that as I've gotten older the anger that I've felt for my younger self at some of the things that were said to me and done to me as a young girl in London, I feel like beyond outrage that that could have happened ... I feel so much anger and frustration and sadness that that is an experience that any girl has to go through, and I think that was super, super, super what drove me was that young women particularly should not have to go through that and be conditioned to believe that they're anything less than full human beings, and they're not there for the satisfaction or the pleasure of men. (interview 2016)

While anger over personal gender injustices moved this activist to action, feelings of indignation were also in response to the sexual mistreatment of young women more broadly, and the attendant psychological and emotional harms that street harassment often inflicts on them. As feminist scholars argue (Kissling, 1991, p. 455; Bowman, 1993, pp. 537, 538; Davis, 1993, pp. 140, 150-152; Tuerkheimer, 1997, p. 184; Laniya, 2005, p. 103), street harassment has negative impacts on women's self-esteem; the practice 'reduces women to sexual objects' and the actions of the harasser subsequently forces women to perceive themselves as objects readily available for men (Bowman, 1993, pp. 537, 538). In other words, as I have previously argued, street harassment oppresses women through sexual objectification, which serves to reinforce male dominance in public spaces through the power to evaluate women's body parts and, by extension, their wider worth as human beings.

Street harassment further oppresses women through reinforcing their fear of vulnerability to sexual and physical violence in public spaces (Bowman, 1994, p. 540; Davis, 1994, p. 140; Tuerkheimer, 1997, p. 187). Some interviewees highlighted this harmful impact of street harassment as a source of anger motivating their activism. For instance Holly Kearl stated:

Anger regularly motivates me. Anger over my own experiences of street harassment and most often anger over the experiences of others. Last month, for example, I conducted a focus group with Asian American women and they shared stories for nearly 1.5 hours. They had some really horrific things happen and I was so angry and angry too that most of them then felt unsafe getting home once we were done [with the focus group] as it was nearly 9 pm and dark out. (interview 2015)

In an earlier interview, Kearl similarly recognised the irony that women participating in anti-street harassment events often find public spaces tense and anxious places to navigate, particularly at night when they are fearful about returning home safely: 'even as we're working on this we're not safe' (interview 2014). Moreover, she acknowledged that street harassment continues to be an everyday reality for the women activists seeking to combat it. The resultant indignation felt by this activist sustains her commitment: 'we're advocates but we're living it too, and each time I'm personally harassed ... I'm like "oh my gosh I'm so angry, this makes me so upset, what gives them the right to say this and make me feel this way? I deserve to be in public space safely." And I think that refuels us' (interview 2014). Similarly, Nay El Rahi, co-founder of HarassTracker, Lebanon, sees her activism sustained by anger against gender injustice. She expressed her frustration that victims of street harassment often experience fear and anxiety as a result of harassment practices. And the fact that street harassment is normalised by society is a further source of indignation inciting her activism:

I think anger fuels most of our work and activism ... because the fact that you see injustice and you live injustice and you're a victim of injustice or certain injustices ... this is basically at the base, at the premise of whatever you do to change it ... I mean sometimes you feel afraid for no reason whatsoever; you feel it's unfair that you live in fear. It makes you angry that everyone thinks it's normal. That makes you want to do something about it. (interview 2016)

These examples highlight the transformative potential of anger – anti-street harassment activists mobilise the energy and the motivating force of anger to fuel their activism and to resist and combat street harassment. As Randall Collins (2004, p. 127) asserts, 'the core of anger is the mobilization of energy to overcome an obstacle.' Carol Gilligan concurs, identifying 'anger as the "political emotion par excellence", providing the fuel for activism or advocacy. Thus it is a catalyst for change – it is energy' (quoted in Dorney, 2000, p. 235). The mobilising and energising nature of anger is clearly articulated by Julia Brillling, Director of Hollaback! Berlin, Germany:

Anger motivates me a lot. I have no problem with anger. Especially when you're a woman, people always act like 'you can't be angry, it's not okay. You can't be aggressive.' But honestly, when I was angry, when I was aggressive, that's when I started working ... When I was really angry, that's when the magic happen[ed] ... So yes, I embrace anger. I think it's very good – you can be a grumpy feminist and do amazing work ... I mean that's why I started Hollaback!, I was so angry. I was just so pissed off and I was just looking for resources, and 'I just can't take this shit, I'm going to change it! I'm not having it!' So Hollaback! was born out of anger. (interview 2016)

Brilling's account of anger as subversive of and incongruent with prevailing normative expectations of womanhood illustrates Alison Jaggar's concept of 'outlaw emotions' – conventionally unacceptable emotions often experienced by members of subordinated groups 'who pay a disproportionately high price for maintaining the *status quo*' (Jaggar, 1989, p. 166). The social situation of such individuals prevents them from experiencing 'the conventionally prescribed emotions' (Jaggar, 1989, p. 166). On this basis, women subjected to street harassment are more likely (but not inevitably) to experience anger, disgust or fear, rather than perceive the practice as flattering or harmless. Olatokunbo Laniya confirms this view; while most men tend to perceive street harassment as harmless and even flattering to women, women by contrast tend to experience harassment as a harm, even if they unwittingly accept it as inevitable (Laniya, 2005, pp. 92, 103).

However, street harassment is interpreted differently by different women and some 'milder' forms of harassment, such as verbal sexual comments, are sometimes read as a form of compliment by some women (Kissling, 1991, p. 452). Of course, some women may minimise street harassment experiences as a coping mechanism to normalise and downplay men's harmful behaviours, which reveals the 'entrenched, "everyday" nature of street harassment' as experienced by many women (Fileborn, 2014, p. 38). Some of the activists in my study, as highlighted above, certainly normalised their own harassment experiences, prior to experiencing a shift in consciousness, because of the pervasive mundaneness of street harassment.

According to my interview data, then, anger against gender injustice and oppression has propelled individuals' action. Some participants explicitly identified anger as the motivation that initially drew them into activism, whilst others reported that anger fuels and sustains their work. The self-reporting tallies with what we know of activists' behaviour and with feminist social movement scholarship. As discussed in the literature review, feminist scholarship holds that anger is of paramount importance as a motivating force propelling feminist activism (Hercus, 1999, p. 52). Feminist SM research (Taylor and Whittier, 1995; Taylor, 1996; Hercus, 1999) has shown how feminist social movements and organisations encourage women to transform immobilising feelings of depression, guilt and shame in the face of perceived injustices into the mobilising emotion of anger. Other feminist research, focusing at the micro-level (Hercus, 1999, 2005; Eschle and Maiguashca, 2010; Mackay, 2011, p. 173, 2015),

reveals that anger in response to gender injustice motivates individuals to become feminists and/or feminist activists. For example, in their research on feminist anti-globalization activism, Eschle and Maiguashca (2010, 76) found that anger at gender injustices, such as exclusion from decision making processes within mixed activist spaces, was the central motivating emotion. In a different way, Finn Mackay (2015) argued that women were motivated to participate in Reclaim the Night marches to express their anger at recent rape cases, sexist police advice or closure threats to refuges, as well as in response to fear of male VAW and through feelings of empowerment and solidarity (Mackay, 2015, pp. 133, 137, 175, 176, 179, 292–293).

The source of anti-street harassment activists' indignation stems from the fact that street harassment is a pervasive everyday reality in their own and other women's lives, with profound psychological and emotional impacts upon women. Street harassment can impact negatively on women's self-esteem; it reduces women to sexual objects forcing them to view themselves as mere objects readily available for the satisfaction and pleasure of men (Bowman, 1993, pp. 537, 538). In addition, anti-street harassment activists have mobilised because they are angry that the practice undermines their dignity and prospects for equality, impairing their ability to participate in the public sphere as full human beings.

As I have argued, a further source of indignation catalysing anti-street harassment activism is that activists and other women feel vulnerable and unsafe in public spaces. Anti-street harassment activists often have a heightened sense of 'rape awareness' (Lennox and Jurdi-Hage, 2017, p. 29) as a result of their own experiences of street harassment and sexual assault and learning about the experiences of other women. As Noora Flinkman of HarassMap in Egypt told me: 'if you're very immersed in this issue, you also maybe see the danger more ... I'm more aware and nervous about stuff now than I was before. Before I was not scared of anything ... I was just super angry and now I'm much more worried and scared about stuff and I think it's because ... I really know what can happen' (interview 2016). Because street harassment does not operate in a vacuum but rather is part of a continuum that can culminate in assault, rape or even murder (Gardner, 1995, p. 4), any form of street harassment, however 'mild', can and does easily invoke fears of more dangerous outcomes. While the majority of harassment incidents do not lead to rape, 'a reasonable woman', as Cynthia Bowman (1993, p. 554) pointed out, cannot determine which incident will escalate to violence and therefore must consider every encounter as potentially dangerous. As such, and as illustrated in the testimonies above, street harassment often reinforces fear and anxiety and creates perceptions among women of a lack of safety in public spaces. Such perceptions of and vulnerability to sexual and physical violence have generated feelings of anger in the participants, precipitating and fuelling their activism. The interview data reveals, then, that anger against gender injustice and oppression is a powerful motivating emotion driving anti-street harassment activism.

5.2.2 Empathy

In addition to anger against gender injustice and oppression, my interview data highlights that empathy is a prominent motivating emotion or, more accurately, emotional response, galvanising anti-street harassment activism. 17 of the 20 participants said that empathetic feelings towards victims and survivors of street harassment/sexual violence had motivated their activism. This is in accordance with feminist social movement scholarship (Hercus, 2005, p. 11; Eschle and Maignashca, 2010, p. 77), which highlights the importance of empathy in explaining why women become feminists and engage in feminist activism. However, these studies do not theorise the concept of empathy, so I draw on literatures from moral and social psychology to develop my argument further.

Empathy refers to 'an emotional response that stems from another's emotional state and that is congruent with the other's emotional state or situation' (Eisenberg and Strayer, 1990, p. 5). While this definition of empathy implies that a wide range of emotions – positive and negative alike – may elicit empathy (Magai and McFadden, 1995, p. 196), for the most part, the participants in my research understood empathy as an emotional response that 'enables a person simultaneously to identify with and evaluate the suffering of another' (Fleckenstein, 2014, p. 702).

My data reveals that empathy has motivated the activism of anti-street harassment activists in the following way: activists vicariously share the distress experienced by victims/survivors of street harassment/sexual assault, which moves them to act on behalf of victims/survivors. Empathy is evident, for example, in Nihal Saad Zaghloul's account of her motivation to establish Egyptian anti-street harassment initiative Bassma/Imprint Movement. The activist witnessed her friend's sexual assault when the women were attacked by a group of men in Cairo's Tahrir Square: 'one of the reasons is that I felt my friend's pain and I didn't want that to happen to me or to anyone else I know, and so you start something' (interview 2016). The fact that Zaghloul both knew the victim and was physically present when the attack occurred meant that she was particularly susceptible to empathetic identification, which moved her to action. While people tend to feel empathy for almost anyone in distress, they are more likely to respond empathically to victims who are family members, close friends, those who they perceive as similar to themselves, and to victims who are physically present (Hoffman, 2000, pp. 13–14).

Nevertheless, it is not necessary for activists physically to see another's distress to feel empathy. The human capacity to represent events and to evoke affect is not limited to visual modalities (Hoffman, 2016). In addition, empathy is language-mediated; that is, it is evoked through words (Fleckenstein, 2014). Several participants commented that empathy with victims and survivors of street harassment/sexual assault had been aroused through reading or listening to their stories of sexual violence – stories were shared with activists at anti-street harassment events, such as public lectures

or workshops, or posted to anti-street harassment digital story sharing platforms. Bryony Beynon, co-founder of Hollaback London!, talked of having 'a direct channel to other people's pain' through the act of reading about and publishing victims/survivors' stories on the Internet. And for Elsa D'Silva, while indignation was the initial emotional trigger drawing her into activism following the brutal Delhi rape case, hearing and resonating with the pain of women's stories acted as a powerful motivator sustaining her work:

every day I hear these stories. Whenever I speak ... at the end there's always someone who comes to me and then they start crying, so I connect with them in a very deep way and I'm privileged that I've been given the opportunity to be the channel where I can make a difference and make that change, many women can't ... There's not a day that goes by where somebody's story doesn't leave me in tears so sometimes it's very, very overwhelming ... that is empathy. (interview 2015)

Similarly, while for some participants, personal experience of gender injustice initially spurred their activism, empathy with others became the overriding motivating force driving their activist work. For example, according to Emily May:

it was many, many stories that we received from people and that feeling of after the first year or so, I didn't really need Hollaback! for me anymore and we could have just let it die off, but what I saw with the story after story that came in ... [was] that it was so much bigger than me and my experience. ... And it was ... the empathy involved in that that caused me to want to turn [Hollaback!] into a non-profit and to want to try to do something for others, not so much for myself. (interview 2016)

Because, as demonstrated in the previous section, many anti-street harassment activists are themselves victims/survivors of street harassment and sexual assault, it is perhaps unsurprising that they have developed strong empathetic feelings for other victims/survivors. As mentioned above, the psychologist Martin Hoffman (2000) has argued that perceived similarity among the *empathizer* and the *target* (Davis, 1996) contributes to empathy (Håkansson and Montgomery, 2003, p. 270). According to Hoffman (2000), people associate another individual's situation with their own similar experiences. The empathizer is reminded of past similar experiences through cues in the target's situation, which subsequently evoke emotions that correspond with the target's emotional state. Thus, if a person has experienced a distressing situation, and later observes or learns of someone else in a similar situation, cues in their situation that remind the empathizer of her/his past experience may evoke renewed feelings of distress (Hoffman, 2000; Håkansson and Montgomery, 2003). Barnett, Tetreault and Masbad (1987, p. 262) provide empirical evidence for the association between empathy and perceived similarity. The researchers found that women who had been raped considered

themselves more similar to, and reported heightened empathy for, a rape victim depicted on videotape, compared to women who were not rape victims.

In a similar way, my research suggests that anti-street harassment activists consider themselves to be empathic with, similar to and connected with (predominantly) women victims/survivors of street harassment. For example, as described above, Feminista Jones intervened in a street harassment situation in part because she perceived 'the target' as similar to herself – both were victims of street harassment and Black women (as signalled by the form of address 'sis') – which brought about a motivation to act on 'the target's' behalf. This intervention led to the creation of Jones' #YouOKSis hashtag campaign, encouraging others to respond empathetically in similar situations (interview 2016). Similarly, also discussed above, following a series of sexual assaults on women who were walking home by themselves at night, Oraia Reid co-founded RightRides for Women's Safety in New York. Perceived similarity among Reid, herself a survivor of sexual assault, and the women victims/survivors contributed to a sense of connection and empathy, and motivated Reid to take action: 'it had a lot to do with not being able to get home safely and that thought really resonated with me' (interview 2014). I argue that the distress suffered by street harassment victims, whether physically witnessed or learned about through their stories of harassment and assault, is vicariously shared by anti-street harassment activists, which acts as an important motivational force propelling and sustaining their activism.

While anti-street harassment activists experience strong feelings of empathy that have the effect of motivating activism, empathetic identification with the experiences of victims/survivors of street harassment and sexual assault can sometimes take its toll on anti-street harassment activists' emotional wellbeing. For Reid, the cumulative impact of listening to women's stories of sexual violence was distressing because it evoked feelings of her own sexual assault trauma: 'it was very hard for me to ... I would constantly hear ... I appreciate that people would share their very personal story but at the same time it became very triggering' (interview 2014). Similarly, Holly Kearl described reading people's stories of harassment and assault on a daily basis as 'emotionally draining', particularly those accounts documenting the psychological harms suffered by street harassment victims/survivors. In some cases, such harms lead to what Bowman has called the 'ghettoization of women', effectively confining women 'to the private sphere of the hearth and home' (1993, p. 520). Kearl explains: 'it's hard to read these stories day after day. It's really draining some days, especially the ones where people are "I'm so devastated, I don't know what to do. I'm so upset, I don't leave my house anymore." ... It's really hard, and people are entrusting us with their stories. They're believing we can make a difference and that's a lot of pressure as well' (interview 2014).

In a different vein, Julia Gray observed the contradictions involved in needing to be both empathetic and at the same time, emotionally resilient, hinting at the 'emotion work' (Hochschild, 1979) required

to carry out her work effectively: 'in order to be able to do your job properly, that means that you can be really vulnerable as well, ... [there's a] contradiction between that need to be very emotionally accessible and also be really strong and resilient to be able to support people' (Gray, interview 2016). For a small number of activists, then, the emotional impact of the work undertaken, which often entails reading and listening to detailed descriptions of VAW and women's emotional accounts of how such violence profoundly impacts upon their lives, is compounded by a sense of ethical responsibility towards victims/survivors of street harassment and sexual assault and a concomitant desire to make a difference. Although the emotional dimensions of anti-street harassment activism can at times be distressing and burdensome for some activists, it is clear that empathy is a strong motivating emotion propelling anti-street harassment activism. Activists are moved to act because they closely identify with and share the suffering of street harassment victims/survivors.

5.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that grievances, based on perceptions of gender injustice, are an important dimension in the emergence of the global anti-street harassment movement. Whether gender injustices were personally experienced or learned from witnessing, or listening to or reading about, sexual violence injustices suffered by other women, activists were dissatisfied and moved to act. Motivating emotions have played a similarly important role in the movement's emergence and development. In most cases, anger/indignation in response to gender injustice provided the initial emotional trigger drawing individuals into anti-street harassment activism, whilst in other instances anger acts as a powerful motivating force refuelling activists' work. Similarly, empathy with victims/survivors of street harassment and sexual assault provided the initial motivational pull for some activists, while for others empathy is a strong motivating emotion that sustains their activism over time.

Beginning my analysis at the micro-level distinguishes my study from dominant SM theoretical explanations of movement emergence, i.e., resource mobilization and political process theories. These perspectives, as I have discussed, privilege meso- and macro-level structural factors and tend to marginalise the role of individual motivations in accounts of social movement formation and activity (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta, 2001b; Gould, 2004; Pinard, 2011, pp. 14–15). As noted in chapter two, the argument advanced by mobilization theorists and following them, proponents of PPT, is that grievances are ubiquitous aspects of social life and therefore have insignificant explanatory power with respect to social movement emergence (Jenkins and Perrow, 1977, p. 266; Obershall, 1978, p. 298; Jenkins, 1983, pp. 528, 530; Pinard, 2011, p. 11).

But due to the normalisation of street harassment, grievances concerning this issue are not omnipresent in society precisely because street harassment *is*. Put another way, women have long

been disaffected by street harassment but, as my interviewee testimonies illustrate, the prevalence, normalisation and subsequent invisibility of street harassment (Bowman, 1993, p. 534) has often prevented many women from perceiving their discontent and frustration with street harassment incidents as a legitimate grievance, instead regarding the issue as an invidious and inevitable everyday aspect of womanhood about which little could be done.

It is only, after all, since the early 2000s that a far-reaching feminist global anti-street harassment movement has emerged, which is a recent development by comparison to feminist campaigning against other forms of sexual violence and VAW, more broadly, in different countries across the globe (e.g., Gangoli, 2007; Bevacqua, 2008, p. 164; Mackay, 2015, pp. 33–53). Individuals have engaged in anti-street harassment activism because they feel deeply aggrieved about street harassment, a practice they have evaluated as unjust based on gender. The acquirement of feminist consciousness has enabled anti-street harassment activists to see things differently, to reinterpret their individual experiences of street harassment within a political frame of reference. Much of this awakening, as I argue in the next chapter, is enabled by digital technologies. To conclude, contrary to dominant SM theoretical perspectives, I argue that motivations matter in explaining the emergence and development of the global anti-street harassment movement. Anti-street harassment activists were motivated to act because they felt deeply aggrieved and angry about their own and other women's mistreatment. In turn, activists established or joined initiatives across the globe, forming a movement to expose, resist and end street harassment. In the next chapter, I illustrate how digital technologies have enabled activists to create, organise, participate in and expand anti-street harassment activism, thus expediting the movement's development.

Chapter Six: Digitally-Enabled Anti-Street Harassment Activism

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the ways in which digital technologies – ‘combinations of information, computing, communication, and connectivity technologies’ (Bharadwaj *et al.*, 2013, p. 471), – function in the emergence and development of the global anti-street harassment movement.⁵⁸ More specifically, I am interested in analysing how digital technologies, and activists’ interactions with those technologies, can be said to have enabled the formation and expansion of the movement. Contextualising my research within literatures that explore the relationship between social movement activity and digital technologies, I argue that anti-street harassment activists have taken advantage of three key affordances offered by digital technologies relevant to movement emergence and development: lowered participation costs for engaging in activism, the possibility to create and maintain collective identities, and the ability to diffuse innovations across dispersed sites. I am not seeking to offer an exhaustive set of enabling conditions; instead, I have investigated the affordances of digital technologies as an essential facilitative factor in the movement’s emergence and growth.

An affordance-based perspective focuses on the relationship between the infrastructure of digital technologies and users’ interactions with those technologies, asking what uses digital technologies encourage and enable, what they are suited to and what they can perform well (Conole and Dyke, 2004, p. 301). ‘Technological affordance’ is defined as the ‘actions or uses that a technology makes easier (and therefore facilitates)’ (Earl and Kimport, 2011, p. 32). As noted in chapter three, I draw loosely on Earl and Kimport’s ‘leveraged affordances’ approach, which assumes that the more actors take advantage of, or leverage, the affordances offered by digital affordances, the more transformative the effects on activism, including the potential for activists to create social movements (Earl and Kimport, 2011, pp. 10, 32). Unlike these scholars, however, I am not interested in analysing how digital activism may (or may not) be changing the underlying nature and dynamics of ‘protest’ participation and organisation, depending on the extent to which activists successfully leverage technological affordances (Earl and Kimport, 2011, pp. 32-34). Rather, I am concerned with investigating anti-street harassment activists’ interactions with digital technologies and the effects of these interactions on the evolution of the global anti-street harassment movement.

In what follows, I show that three key affordances have enabled anti-street harassment activists to initiate, organise, engage in and expand anti-street harassment activism, thus accelerating the

⁵⁸ Earlier versions of this chapter were published as Desborough, K. (2017) ‘The Global Anti-Street Harassment Movement: A Digitally-Enabled Feminist Politics of Resistance’ in *European Conference on Politics and Gender*. University of Lausanne, 8-10 June; Desborough, K. (2018) ‘The Global Anti-Street Harassment Movement: Digitally Enabled Feminist Activism’, in Vickery, J. R. and Everbach, T. (eds) *Mediating Misogyny: Gender, Technology, and Harassment*. Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 333–351.

movement's emergence and global development. These affordances are 1) reduced participation costs, 2) creation of collective identities and 3) diffusion of innovations and I discuss each in turn.

6.1 Reduced Participation Costs

The first affordance involves digital technologies' potential to lower the participation costs for activists creating, organising and engaging in collective action (Van Laer and Van Aelst, 2009, p. 236; Earl and Kimport, 2011, p. 10). Participation costs refer to the amount of resources required to engage in a particular form of action, such as time, money, attention or skills (Van Laer and Van Aelst, 2009, p. 235). The reduction of participation costs removes, or at least lessens, the temporal, financial and spatial obstacles to group action, thereby enabling the creation of new and efficient forms of collective action (Van Laer, 2007, p. 5; Shirky, 2009, pp. 18, 22, 48). In the remainder of this section, I show how activists have used the affordance of reduced participation costs to create anti-street harassment campaigns and groups, coordinate their activities, mobilise and organise participants, and expand the movement.

6.1.1 Creating anti-street harassment initiatives

My research indicates that anti-street harassment activists have taken advantage of the affordance of reduced participation costs, which, in part, explains the formation and development of the many types of anti-street harassment initiatives that have emerged in the last two decades. It also explains anti-street harassment activists' creation and usage of innovative forms of digital activism, including anti-street harassment story-sharing platforms, harassment crowdmaps, online anti-street harassment videos, hashtags and mobile phone apps, as discussed in chapter four.

The vast majority of my participants (29/33) either formed Internet-based initiatives or belong to groups that originated online (as a website or a social media campaign). This suggests that the Internet has lowered the financial costs to participation as it has afforded anti-street harassment activists the possibility to create online initiatives at relatively low cost.⁵⁹ Whilst activists have traditionally been constrained by financial resources, in today's digital age they can create a website or a campaign via social media, as long as activists possess the necessary computer skills and have access to a computer with Internet connectivity, which as I make clear later in this chapter, is not, of course, everyone. As such, the Internet can empower individuals and groups that have a message to convey but little means to pursue it (Leizerov, 2000, p. 469). For instance, Juliana de Faria, journalist and Founder of Brazilian anti-street harassment initiative, *Chega de Fiu Fiu* (Enough with the Catcalls) submitted an article on

⁵⁹ As discussed in chapter four, most anti-street harassment activists are unfunded and all but two initiatives in my sample were unfunded when they launched online or established digital actions.

street harassment for publication in a women's magazine. The editor rejected her submission because the topic was 'too politically correct'. She explains:

Violence against women was now a politically correct topic? So thank God for the Internet era: I decided to do it on my own ... I decided to go with an online campaign, because I had no money ... and I thought it would be an easier and cheaper way to engage people. We started publishing some art on social media ... The illustrations went viral and several women started writing [to] me. They were sharing their fears and traumas with street harassment and many of them were sharing their stories for the very first time. (interview 2015)

de Faria, then, took advantage of the low cost of the Internet (Earl and Kimport, 2011, p. 19) to create Chega de Fiu Fiu's initial online storytelling campaign in 2013.⁶⁰ This made street harassment visible as a social problem and a form of sexual violence and, by extension VAW. In turn, women were empowered to speak about their experiences of street harassment, and the campaign heralded a public debate on the distinction between flirting and verbal harassment (Moura Ribeiro, 2016, p. 141).

Hollaback! has similarly utilised the low-cost affordance of digital technologies to create innovative forms of anti-street harassment activism (and as I discuss later, to mobilise participants, organise Hollaback! site leaders and expand the international network). As previously noted, Hollaback! began operating in 2005 in New York, initially as a blog where women and LGBTQ+ people could share their experiences of street harassment. Inspired by Thao Nguyen (as discussed earlier) the seven Hollaback! founders recognised the potential afforded by mobile phones, the Internet, blogs and emerging social media to expose and resist street harassment (May and Carter, 2016, p. 13). As Emily May describes:

So [Thao Nguyen] put that photo on Flickr, it went viral, made it to the front cover of the New York Daily News and really ignited this city-wide conversation about public masturbation. Everyone either had a story or they knew somebody that had a story ... and we all just thought here's this thing that everyone seems to have experienced or knows somebody who's experienced and nobody's doing anything about it, and everybody thinks that they're alone, that they're the only ones. And so we decided to take what she had done and see if we could do the same but apply it to all different kinds of street harassment. (interview 2015)

Thus, the Hollaback! founders effectively took advantage of the affordances of 'new technologies' (with the rise of blogging, camera phones and social media usage) to provide a platform for themselves and other women and LGBTQ+ people to share their stories of harassment, and to make street harassment visible as a problem in an environment of emerging press and public interest sparked by Thao Nguyen's actions. Some of the founders were technologically savvy, with previous knowledge in

⁶⁰ Chega de Fiu Fiu's 2015 follow-up Twitter campaign, #primeiroassedio (#firstharassment) generated 82,000 tweets and retweets in under a week, attracting widespread media coverage (Chega de Fiu Fiu, 2015).

setting up websites and registering domain names, and within a few days the team had launched their first blogging website: hollabacknyc.blogspot.com (May and Carter, 2016, p. 15). In seeing the creation of the blog as a 'breakthrough' and an opportunity to create a 'bigger, more global conversation' around street harassment (May, quoted in Keller, Mendes, and Ringrose, 2016, p. 5), Hollaback! organisers subsequently utilised digital technologies to expand Hollaback! into a global network, which I discuss in the next section. In essence, the relative inexpensiveness and accessibility of the Internet has enabled anti-street harassment activists to form online initiatives and create innovative digital actions to expose, resist and combat street harassment.

6.1.2 Organising and coordinating anti-street harassment activism

Anti-street harassment activists have further used the affordance of reduced participation costs to organise and coordinate their actions and to mobilise people quickly and efficiently. Taking advantage of lowered organisational costs associated with coordination, communication and 'information-related activities' (Bonchek, 1995, p. 5), activists have been able to enlarge the reach and speed of their communication efforts, connecting with more participants in more places. According to Holly Kearl, Founder and Executive Director of Stop Street Harassment (SSH), 'technology is the core because we started as a website and we do most of our work online ... So, without the technology it would be kind of impossible to reach each other at this level and this speed' (interview 2014). This point is echoed by Julia Brillling, Director of Hollaback! Berlin, Germany: 'it wouldn't be possible without technology. That's the thing, it's all Internet-based. All you need is [a] computer and the Internet ... it allows you to connect to so many people instantly, so we reach a lot of people just by posting something ... more people than working on the streets putting up posters' (interview 2016). Importantly, the Internet has allowed anti-street harassment activists – most of whom work on their own or in very small teams – to disseminate information directly to target audiences and to reach large numbers with fewer resources. This is evidenced by the Egyptian group, Bassma, who use Facebook to share ideas, stories, images and films with large numbers of adherents quickly and at low cost. For instance, a video posted in February 2016 received more than 24,000 views in two months. For Nihal Saad Zaghloul, 'to reach an audience like that for us is enormous' (interview 2016).

In a similar fashion, Girls Against, UK have leveraged the Internet's reduced organisational costs (Bonchek, 1995, p. 5) to coordinate their communication and outreach efforts, aimed at combating sexual harassment and assault in the live music industry. The activists tweet and email bands and liaise with venues and security companies in an attempt to improve safety during live performances, change security policies, raise awareness of harassment at music venues and 'provide a safe space for victims to discuss their experiences' (Hannah Camilleri, interview 2016). She elaborates:

We would be nothing without the Internet. We do everything on there, our campaign is primarily on Twitter. We have a Facebook and do most of our communicating via emails, [direct messaging], asks and messages. That's the only way we've been able to get into contact with important people in the music industry who are going to be the huge catalyst for change. (Hannah Camilleri, interview 2016)

As well as enabling Girls Against to coordinate their activities efficiently and inexpensively, social media has been instrumental in allowing the activists to mobilise more people to their cause. Since forming in September 2015, the original group of five teenagers from the UK has expanded significantly, with over 70 international representatives and 18,000 followers on Twitter. And the campaign has garnered the support of several high-profile bands, who post messages on social media discouraging harassment and those who harass from attending their shows (Hannah Camilleri, interview 2016; Girls Against, no date). Thus, it can be seen that anti-street harassment activists value and leverage the connectivity afforded by the Internet as it enables the transmission of information to fellow activists and participants quickly and efficiently, which assists in mobilisation and movement building efforts.

Hollaback!, as alluded to earlier, has utilised the accessibility and advancement of digital technologies to coordinate and expand the global Hollaback! network. While Hollaback! does not actively recruit participants, potential new members can easily sign up to the network by clicking on a 'Join the Movement' button on the organisation's website (Hollaback!, no date j). Users are directed to a page with suggestions on ways to participate (Hollaback!, no date i); for example, sharing a story of harassment, volunteering at a local Hollaback! site, or starting a new site (Hollaback!, no date g). Those interested in launching their own site are encouraged to familiarise themselves with and agree to Hollaback!'s community values, which espouse a commitment to collective agency, mutual respect, tolerance and trust, solidarity, diversity, intersectionality and participatory, non-hierarchical structures (Hollaback!, no date d).

Hollaback! site leaders receive all their training online: during a three-month period, new site leaders participate in a series of webinars, covering topics such as leveraging social media, dealing with the press and organising on the ground. In addition, each site is provided with a customised website, which they build and populate with local content (Debjani Roy, interview 2014). To encourage communication, collective identification and collective action, Hollaback! operates a Listserv, a private Facebook group and a shared Google Drive through which activists can access informational resources and marketing materials to create anti-street harassment strategies and campaigns (Debjani Roy, interview 2014). Debjani Roy sums up the importance of digital technologies for the development of the global Hollaback! network:

In my opinion, technology is everything ... without it we wouldn't be able to organise in this decentralised way; we wouldn't be able to have regular contact with site leaders; we wouldn't be able to work towards understanding what this looks like on a global scale. The speed of information flow is absolutely necessary to building the movement at the pace that it's been growing. It is impossible without it. (interview 2014)

Hence, for this activist, digital technologies have lowered the organisational costs for Hollaback!, enabling the coordination and growth of the global network. Hollaback! has utilised digital technologies to take maximum advantage of their affordances, which has allowed the network to emerge and expand.

Anti-street harassment activists have similarly taken advantage of the low organisational-cost affordance to organise on-the-ground actions and recruit and coordinate volunteers. For example, prior to the Egyptian regime's increasingly stringent control of street activism, Bassma depended on WhatsApp, a free mobile phone messaging app, to coordinate volunteers, who formed security patrols to prevent mob sexual attacks of women during protests and religious holidays and to intervene in incidents of sexual violence. Nihal Saad Zaghloul explained: 'mobile phones are very important because this is how we communicate and send each other text messages ... We work all day and many of us might not have access to email all day but we have access to SMS. So SMS is very important, we use WhatsApp ... if something comes during the night' (interview 2016). As noted in chapter four, Bassma's rescue operations were highly organised and synchronised. The group were renowned for their ability to move quickly 'and intervene in a timely manner in highly chaotic situations' (Tadros, 2015, p. 1356). This high level of organisation was greatly facilitated by the Internet and SMS communications, allowing Bassma activists to mobilise volunteers and coordinate their activities swiftly – alerting activists of immediate incidents, disseminating information regarding area/s where women were at risk and sending rescue missions to those areas.

In a different vein, the Internet plays a critical role in attracting new Blank Noise 'Action S/hero' volunteers and in coordinating the vast network of online and offline anti-street harassment actions across and beyond India. While Blank Noise was created by Jasmeen Patheja in India in 2003, originally as a response to her own experiences of street harassment, she utilised digital technologies to develop a network of volunteers, initially across India and, more recently, in Canada, Colombia, Japan, Pakistan and the US. According to Patheja: '[the Internet] is integral to our work ... If it wasn't for the web, we wouldn't have been able to be organised in the way we are' (interview 2015). These digitally-mobilised volunteers work in their own communities to make visible, resist and combat street harassment and other forms of sexual violence (Jasmeen Patheja, interview 2015; Blank Noise, 2018).

Through its website, Blank Noise has coordinated several creative offline interventions such as 'I Never Ask For It'. This campaign involves the online coordination of street interventions and the creation of public installations from clothing women wore at the time they were harassed or sexually assaulted to debunk the common misconception that women, and their attire, are to blame for sexual violence (Blank Noise, no date b, no date c). Victims/survivors of street harassment and sexual assault are encouraged, via the website, to send in the garment they wore at the time of incident, along with their testimonial of the experience. The garments are then photographed and uploaded to the website to serve as 'testimonies of clothing' to end victim blaming (Blank Noise, no date b).

In 'Meet to Sleep', an on-the-ground campaign coordinated online by Blank Noise, women congregate in public parks to sleep (or at least attempt to). By taking up public space, women seek to expose the problem of street harassment and redefine notions of safety and vulnerability (Kaur, 2018). The annual event takes place simultaneously across several cities and towns every December to commemorate the gang rape and murder of Jyoti Singh in Delhi in 2012 (Eng, 2018). Information and guidelines for Meet to Sleep are circulated on the Blank Noise website and participants are encouraged to sign up online. Meet to Sleep actions took place in more than 29 cities throughout India and Pakistan between 2014-2018 (Blank Noise, no date a). Blank Noise has effectively taken advantage of the Internet's low organisational costs to recruit thousands of volunteers (Blank Noise, 2017), enabling the group to expand throughout and beyond India. In addition, the Internet has afforded Blank Noise activists the opportunity to disseminate information about innovative offline actions, and to mobilise Action S/heroes to participate in interventions transnationally.

Similarly, anti-street harassment initiatives Stop Street Harassment (SSH) and Stop Telling Women to Smile have leveraged the organisational-cost affordance to coordinate transnational actions on the ground. The annual International Anti-Street Harassment Week, which aims to raise awareness about street harassment, to attract global media attention around the issue and to foster a sense of solidarity among activists (Stop Street Harassment, 2018d), is coordinated online by SSH. The annual event is advertised on the SSH website, through the organisation's online newsletter and on social media, mobilising myriad groups and individual activists worldwide. Each year, over 100 groups from around 25-40 countries participate in marches and rallies, distribute flyers, conduct workshops and undertake other awareness and consciousness-raising actions in their own locales over the course of the week (Kearl, 2015b, p. 88; Stop Street Harassment, 2018d). Additionally, SSH organises official Twitter discussions and webinars throughout International Anti-Street Harassment Week (Kearl, 2015b, p. 88) in which the participating groups and other activists network and, after the event, the organisation publishes an online wrap-up report.

While this form of digitally-enabled transnational networking is relatively loosely organised, in that grassroots groups on the ground devise local actions themselves, the Internet allows activist

organisers to marshal a wider pool of participants more rapidly and inexpensively (Earl, 2007). As mentioned earlier, the central organiser of International Anti-Street Harassment Week, Holly Kearn, told me that ‘without the technology it would be kind of impossible to reach each other at this level [internationally] and this speed’ (interview 2014). Moreover, the Internet affords the opportunity for anti-street harassment activists to collaborate on a common cause in different geographic spaces simultaneously. This collective action helps to generate global awareness and media interest on the issue of street harassment and build collective identification among activists, a topic I return to in the following section.

6.1.3 Digital inequalities and existing participation costs

I have argued that anti-street harassment activists have taken advantage of the affordances of reduced participation costs to devise initiatives and forms of activism, coordinate their actions, mobilise and organise participants, and expand the global movement. This is not to imply that all anti-street harassment groups and individual activists worldwide, or participants, enjoy equal access to digital technologies (or notice and effectively use technological affordances) (Earl and Kimport, 2011, p. 33). Much has been written about the digital divide, which shows that Internet access is not equally distributed among groups, but disproportionately benefits the young, affluent and more technologically skilled (Schuster, 2013, p. 11; Elliott, 2016). As Joanne Smith, Chief Executive of Girls for Gender Equity, pointed out, young people in marginalised communities ‘don’t have, many times, that kind of a phone to have that kind of an app and in the neighbourhoods that they go home to, they’re not going to take a picture of somebody who’s harassing them.’⁶¹ They’re going to find a safe space’ (interview 2014). Hence, digital inequalities exist between individuals and groups within the movement, with privileged groups and activists, particularly those that are technologically savvy, better able to access and take advantage of the opportunities afforded by such technologies.

Nor does it mean that technological affordances entirely eliminate participation costs for activists. Based on my interviews with anti-street harassment activists in the global movement, a lack of time and money were often identified as constraints and barriers to participation, especially for unfunded activists who regularly need to juggle paid employment with their activist work. So while digital technologies have certainly afforded anti-street harassment activists reduced financial and organisational costs associated with activism, such costs have not been eradicated. As discussed in chapter four, for instance, some (initially unfunded) anti-street harassment groups have become funded not-for-profit organisations in order to achieve financial stability and to obtain what they perceive as more sustainable organisational structures for delivering social change.

⁶¹ One of the ways to respond to street harassment advocated by Hollaback! (Hollaback! 2016c).

Moreover, anti-street harassment activists, like most women speaking out about sexism, are at risk of misogynistic online harassment or 'gendertrolling' (Mantilla, 2013, p. 565). Some of my participants reported experiencing online misogyny, including death and rape threats, which impacted negatively on their emotional wellbeing. This reveals that while the Internet affords opportunities for activists to create, organise and engage in anti-street harassment activism, it also affords opportunities for misogynists, racists and homophobic individuals to locate one another, to organise and to harass and abuse women and other people (Vickery and Everbach, 2018b, p. 19). So while activists' usage of digital technologies has lowered the costs to participation and made activism easier in practical terms, 'it is never *easy* to engage in such activism ... hidden are the emotional, mental or practical factors which make engaging in digital feminist activism risky, exhausting, draining and overwhelming' (Mendes, Ringrose and Keller, 2018, p. 244). Although I am confident that digital technologies have enabled lowered participation costs for anti-street harassment activists, it would be fruitful to examine in more depth the emotional costs associated with online misogyny and their long term effects on activists' participation in the global anti-street harassment movement.

In summary and notwithstanding these caveats, activists have taken advantage of the affordance of reduced participation costs offered by digital technologies to devise, organise and engage in anti-street harassment activism, thus accelerating the movement's emergence and growth.

6.2 Promotion of Collective Identity

In this section, I argue that some anti-street harassment activists have utilised the affordances of digital technologies to create a collective identity, which has fostered and sustained their participation in the global movement. Activists' interactions with digital technologies can assist in the development of collective identities by making concerned individuals aware of similar struggles (Garrett, 2006, p. 205). Holly Kearl, for instance, explains how she came to identify with the experiences, values and goals of activists resisting street harassment through researching the rise of anti-street harassment websites: 'I had felt unsafe and annoyed by harassers in public spaces for years before I found out there were groups taking action. So, knowing others were trying to make public spaces safer, a goal I wanted for myself, helped draw me to [the movement]' (interview 2015).

The Internet promotes collective identification as activists observe, learn from each another and validate each other's actions, which can occur rapidly, and concurrently in numerous places and in numerous ways (Van Laer, 2007, p. 8). For example, Julia Brilling was inspired to launch a Hollaback! chapter in Berlin after reading and identifying with content posted on Hollaback! London's website, notably testimonies from street harassment victims and Hollaback!'s feminist framings of street harassment. She explains, 'This [was] so good to read. It was so healing; it was so inspiring. It was like "oh my God, this happened to me as well" and I never knew I could talk about it ... This empowerment,

this feminist space, this safe space, the community, it's just so helpful' (interview 2014). Thus, for these activists, the shared sense of 'we-ness' or solidarity in having recognised certain shared attributes as salient and important (Taylor and Whittier, 1992, p. 110; Nip, 2004, p. 206), facilitated through activists' interactions with digital technologies, prompted them to take action against street harassment in their local contexts.

Similarly for Juliana de Faria, learning via online platforms about the efforts of anti-street harassment initiatives, and being able to situate her experiences of street harassment within wider social structures rather than seeing them as an individual problem, made her feel connected to the movement. This promoted a sense of collective agency. She explains:

I felt part of something bigger ... When I found out about Hollaback and Everyday Sexism I felt so understood. One of the worst part[s] of harassment, the sexual violence in general, is the loneliness. It happens to you and you feel like it happened because of something you did, or something you are, and you blame yourself and don't even dare to speak up. That happened to me all my life. So those projects kind of released me from guilt. I understood then that harassment was not part of life, that there were women fighting against it and so could I! (personal communication, 2018, original emphasis)

In this sense, anti-street harassment story-sharing platforms perform a consciousness-raising function, which involves the reinterpretation of individual experiences, viewing them instead as influenced by social forces, and identifying as a member of a wider group with shared experiences (Whittier, 2017, p. 377). Much like the consciousness-raising groups of the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) in the late 1960s and 1970s, they are spaces for women to air their grievances about everyday sexist experiences, like street harassment, and to build a sense of solidarity and community (Blevins, 2018). In the WLM, consciousness-raising generally occurred in small groups through collective discussion (Whittier, 2017, p. 377). But in the digital age, stories are shared more quickly across time and space, connecting personal yet similar narratives, and spurring other women to disclose their experiences, engage in public debate and in activism against street harassment. Anti-street harassment activists are using the affordances of the Internet to make the personal the political. As Feminista Jones put it:

Being harassed on the street is not new ... It's just that now we have the resources and we have the language and we have the tools and we have the connections to be able to work together ... So, I think that what's helping a lot is just women are feeling freer and braver to come forward. They're seeing people like me being willing to talk about it and it makes them feel safer about talking about it, and the more people you have talking about having these shared experiences, the better it is because then it's not just a few people that are just complaining. People are

starting to see that it's all kinds of women: all ages, all orientations, all races, all marital statuses, who are all saying the exact same thing, 'this happens to me too.' (interview 2016)

Jasmeen Patheja similarly indicates that the global anti-street harassment movement is growing, in part, through story sharing and consciousness-raising in online spaces:

I think that a lot of it has happened online and one thing influencing another in terms of one testimony ... there's a sense of somebody sitting somewhere else connects with the fact that this has been their experience too, so I guess that if you were to look at the past decade, there's been an overall conscience raising in understanding and sharing and building dialogue on street harassment because people have also come forward and shared their experiences ... So, I guess one part of it could be attributed to that sense of growing resonance and growing a sense of one story's affecting the other and it spreads. (interview 2015)

Many of my interviewees commented on the fact that prior to the affordances of the Internet, women in different sites had no or little awareness of similar struggles against street harassment, and no mechanism to forge collective identities across national borders. Clearly, at the local level women did and still do have access to other resources and 'symbolic support' (Milan, 2015, p. 888) for constructing collective identities, including face to face meetings, leaflets and public demonstrations. However, as Emily May observed, only localised initiatives emerged around street harassment before the advent of the Internet and social media. Yet, 'now you're really seeing globally folks having these similar shared experiences and addressing them all around the world in approximately the same timeframes, which is to say within the past ten years or so' (interview 2016). She elaborates:

I really think that to a large extent ... in the beginning anyway, [the movement] was largely born by people going online and sharing their stories and realising that they weren't alone, and then beyond that, over the years it's also become fuelled just by knowing that there are other groups out there that are doing this. And so, it's kind of like success begets success, and somebody will say 'oh, it's happened to me' and they'll look around and see other initiatives and they're like 'well, I can do something about this. Maybe I can try this, nobody's doing this thing.' And they'll start their own group or their own initiative, and I mean that's pretty awesome. (interview 2016)

Through the Internet, then, some women from disparate geographical locations have come to see themselves as part of a collective on account of their shared grievances (Garrett, 2006, p. 205). As the quotations by Julia Brillling, Emily May and Feminista Jones show, the Internet has enabled the development of a common identity built on women's perception of shared experiences and understandings of street harassment: 'this happened to me as well', 'oh, it's happened to me', 'this happens to me too.' In many cases, as alluded to by Emily May, the recognition of shared experience and values – or a sense of 'we' – has prompted women to establish their own anti-street harassment

group or campaign. There are several examples of anti-street harassment activists in one site drawing inspiration from the values and tactics of other activists elsewhere. For example, *Paremos el Acoso Callejero* (Let's End Street Harassment) in Peru inspired women in Chile and Colombia to launch Observatories against Street Harassment (Rodrigues, 2014); de Faria, who initiated *Chega de Fiu Fiu*, was, in part, inspired by the Everyday Sexism Project in the UK and by Hollaback! (Diu, 2015); and, as I discuss in the next section, HarassMap has provided the inspiration for several other anti-street harassment campaigns, including Safecity in India and HarassTracker in Lebanon.

The social media practices of anti-street harassment activists, including the generation and circulation of hashtags like #EndSH, #globalshactivism and #YouOkSis, also play an influential role in the process of identity formation. For example, the hashtag #EndSH, originally created by activists in Egypt and Lebanon in 2011 as a platform for women to tweet about their experiences of street harassment and VAW (Kearl, 2015b, p. 58), has since developed into a generic anti-street harassment hashtag, used by activists globally to share information on street harassment injustices and strategies of resistance, and to construct a sense of belonging among activists. Through #EndSH activists engage in dialogue with one another, learn about and support each other's work and build and reinforce ties of solidarity. In addition, #EndSH provides a platform for activists around the world to participate in global 'tweetathons' (Twitter discussions) and other forms of collective action against street harassment, which assist in the construction of collective identification.

SSH coordinated a global tweetathon in 2015 using the hashtag #globalshactivism, calling for activists across the world to problematise street harassment, exchange solutions to combat it and join together in solidarity. Activists from more than 30 countries discussed what constituted street harassment, the challenges they faced around street harassment and in their activism, and how they overcame such challenges. And activists shared ways they were working to make public spaces safer, as well as promoting one another's work and inviting other actors to participate in the discussion. Hence, this digital platform afforded the possibility for activists to exchange meanings and construct a new sense of belonging (Treré, 2015, p. 906) and to maintain existing bonds of solidarity. A sense of collective identification forged through the hashtag #globalshactivism is clearly demonstrated in the following tweet: 'It's so great to be part of a global community working to end SH. We are huge. We are everywhere!' (@PplsJusticeSEOH, 2015). Feminista Jones agrees that social media has played a key role in the process of collective identity creation and the growth in global anti-street activism:

I really think social media has a lot to do with it because it's able to connect people who have these kinds of same ideas. They're like 'we have to do something', but don't feel that they have the support to do it or don't feel that they have the vehicle, but now they have these free platforms that you can use to really get information out and to really connect and build with other

people that are trying to do it. So, I think that's why we're seeing the boom and that's why we're seeing more talk about it and more push for change. (interview 2016)

Social media, then, appears to be enabling some anti-street harassment activists to construct a collective identity as women with common experiences, interests and values use these platforms to share stories, exchange ideas and work together to resist street harassment. This is further evidenced by Feminista Jones' #YouOkSis Twitter hashtag campaign, which provides a space for dialogue and support for Black women around their experiences of street harassment (Feminista Jones, interview 2016). As others have argued elsewhere (Nip, 2004, p. 236), #YouOkSis enables direct interactions between women with shared grievances to interpret their experiences and debate possible solutions. I analysed a #YouOkSis Twitter discussion facilitated by Jones in 2014, which shows the forging of a sense of common identity and shared meanings around Black women's encounters with street harassment. For instance, in interpreting understandings of street harassment, several tweeters suggested that the practice entails male entitlement and domination of women's bodies, space and time. For example, @Spelman_FMLA (2014) asserted that 'Women do not exist for male entertainment or consumption. #YouOKSis is an opportunity to remind men that women aren't ornamental.' In discussing the prevalence of street harassment, participants typically associated it with pervasive patriarchy and misogyny in society, with @thetrudz (2014), for example, equating the ubiquity of street harassment with 'other gender violence prevalence. Patriarchy. Domination. Entitlement. Minimal recourse. #YouOKSis.' Discussions on vulnerable targets of harassment prompted several people to reflect that Black girls and young Black women are particularly prone to harassment and that sexual and gender-based harassment intersects with racist harassment. For instance, @CityofAngelle (2014) tweeted that, 'Racism and sexism combine to dehumanize and de-womanize Black women in America. The point of #YouOKSis is to show up for them.' In this regard, The Twitter discussion generated an exchange of ideas concerning strategies for effecting change with an emphasis on bystander intervention. Anti-street harassment activists use the affordances of social media to create communities in which women can articulate their experiences and understandings of street harassment, and to motivate collective responses to combatting harassment.

I have argued so far that activists have utilised the affordances of digital technologies for constructing collective identity, which helps to explain the rise in anti-street harassment activism. Through learning about similar struggles elsewhere and by engaging in social media practices, women in disparate locations have come to identify themselves as belonging to a broader group of people affected and disaffected by street harassment and they have been inspired to mobilise against it.

Identities not only play a critical role in mobilising participation but also in sustaining it (Polletta and Jasper, 2001, p. 292). One way collective identities are reinforced is through community-building practices. In Sasha Roseneil's (1995) research on activists at the Greenham Common Women's Peace

Camp in the 1980s, for example, she found that collective identification strengthened as relationships developed between activists (sustained through close-knit, daily interactions and practices in the camp), which boosted activists' motivation to participate (1995, pp. 2, 32, 90). But it is often argued that online interactions lack the level of trust and collective identification necessary for establishing strong community ties that are fundamental for collective action (Diani, 2000, pp. 391, 397; Harlow and Harp, 2012, p. 201).

However, I found that for some activists I interviewed, online interactions facilitated by the Internet reinforced a sense of identification and community, which sustained their commitment to the cause. Juliana de Faria confirms this view: 'the Internet ... holds the movement together. Because thanks to this incredible tool, we women from all around can share very similar experiences and look, together, for a solution to the problem' (interview 2016). Similarly, Nay El Rahi of HarassTracker, Lebanon, attests: '[the Internet] makes us feel part of a bigger effort to counter this ... localised, but just very general, very global issue. ... Knowing that other people are working on making it less bad or trying to basically limit its effects, makes us feel that we're on a ... continuum of struggle' (interview 2016).

Other interviewees specifically referred to the community-building affordances of digital technologies and how these have enabled the forging and maintenance of identification and solidarity among anti-street harassment activists. According to Jasmeen Patheja, founder of Blank Noise in India, 'because of our shared vision in some spaces or because we know we exist, there is a sense of a global community ... and that has only happened through the presence of web. It's more than knowing that X exists, it's sharing and standing there in solidarity with X' (interview 2015). Similarly for Julia Gray, co-founder of Hollaback! London, UK:

the Hollaback online network ... means that it's so much easier to spread the word basically. People are really using it and it's brilliant, it just means that people feel like they're not alone because they just go onto the Internet and see that there's this whole network there. ... [This] online community has been incredibly important in spreading the message and providing people with that sort of solidarity and that support and that network, sort of family feeling. (interview 2014)

This reveals an important function of online communities – their ability to foster a sense of belonging among people who do not (or hardly) know each other offline (Wellman and Gulia, 1999, p. 175). This sense of collective belonging and identification can help to reduce feelings of isolation experienced by movement participants (Schuster, 2013, p. 17) and, in turn, bolster their motivation:

I think that really helps me to continue because it gets really hard sometimes and you feel like you're really alone ... and you see the successes of others and then you learn and try to re-strategise. (Nihal Saad Zaghloul, Bassma, Egypt, interview 2016)

Yes, of course, emotionally and psychologically and mentally yes, [I know] I'm not alone ... I know this is a long-term procedure ... if you are a lot of people doing this, you're going to [gender] change a little bit faster and spread everywhere. Yeah, of course having HarassMap and Bassma and other initiatives and NGOs working on this locally and internationally, yeah, [it] lets me feel, I'm not insane. Yes, some other people are with me. (Hala Mostafa, I saw Harassment, Egypt, interview 2016)

... it can feel so isolating and lonely because most people don't get the issue, they don't understand ... So, knowing there are other people out there who are fighting the same battles and maybe making progress as well, just knowing that's happening can be very helpful. (Holly Kearl, SSH, US, interview 2014)

Thus for these activists, digitally-enabled collective identification has fostered a sense of solidarity and community with other activists resisting street harassment, some of whom had little or no contact with each other in the offline environment. This has helped sustain their morale and commitment to the cause.

6.3 Diffusion of Anti-Street Harassment Innovations

This section examines activists' usage of digital technologies and their ability to diffuse anti-street harassment innovations (information and tactics) among geographically dispersed actors, which partly explains the recent spread in global anti-street harassment activism. Diffusion refers to the planned or spontaneous spread of an 'innovation, through direct or indirect channels' among individuals in a social system (Givan, Roberts and Soule, 2010, p. 1; Rogers, 2010, pp. 5, 7). Social movement scholars have long been concerned with how movements (or some component of a movement, such as a form of activism, issue or outcome) spread across different sites (Givan, Roberts and Soule, 2010, p. 1). Doug McAdam and Dieter Rucht (1993), for instance, noted that campaigns in different sites are rarely discrete and independent entities; rather, activists in one site draw inspiration from the ideas and tactics of other similar groups.

Traditionally, scholars have assumed that an innovation diffuses most rapidly through direct or 'relational channels', in which the spread and emulation of a new idea is determined by interpersonal contact between actors (McAdam and Rucht, 1993, p. 59; Soule, 2004, p. 295). However, in the digital age, the Internet can facilitate the quick transmission of ideas and tactics between individuals and groups, reducing the significance of interpersonal connections for the spread of activism (Ayres, 1999, p. 135). This is not to suggest that people's interactions with the Internet are somehow 'non-relational' or that interpersonal contact is necessarily always removed from the equation, as discussed in the conceptual framework. In this section, I argue that digital technologies have afforded anti-street

harassment activists the opportunity to spread innovations broadly and quickly, which has contributed to the movement's global expansion.

To begin with, the Internet enables the sharing of information, strategies and shared frames of reference among individuals and groups that may have little or no contact with each other (Givan, Roberts and Soule, 2010, p. 12). Organisational websites provide a useful channel for the rapid transmission of information across geographic sites (Ayres, 1999, p. 137). The websites of several anti-street harassment groups, most notably SSH and Hollaback!, operate as clearinghouses for information and resources on street harassment activism. The SSH website, for example, hosts a 'Resources' page (Stop Street Harassment, 2018f), containing definitions and statistics on street harassment, information on relevant publications, video clips of anti-street harassment documentaries, films, and music videos, images and flyers that activists can easily download and adapt to their local contexts, as well as hyperlinks to the 100+ anti-street harassment groups and campaigns in operation around the world, or at least those that are visible online (Stop Street Harassment, 2018b), providing activists and potential activists with avenues for participation. In addition, SSH diffuses information on movement activities worldwide through its Facebook page, Twitter feed, and a monthly online newsletter, disseminated to almost 1,900 subscribers (Holly Kearn, personal communication, 2016).

Similarly, Hollaback! utilises a range of digital tools and spaces – among them a website, Listserv, private Facebook page, online newsletter, shared Google Drive and quarterly peer to peer calls (via either videocall, Google Hangouts, Skype, WhatsApp or chat/email) – to share ideas and resources for conceptualising and resisting street harassment (Debjani Roy, interview 2014; Julia Brilling, interview 2014). Like SSH, the Hollaback! website hosts a 'Resources' page (Hollaback!, no date h) with information, research and educational materials on street and online harassment, and guides and information on anti-street harassment resistance strategies, including bystander intervention tactics and details of digital trainings offered on becoming an effective bystander (Hollaback!, no date a). Moreover, the Resources page provides a link to 14 'HOLLA HOW-TO Guides' (Hollaback!, no date e) on, for example, organising an anti-street harassment protest march, holding a community workshop or producing an online video.

Thus, with this assemblage of technological resources, activist groups and individuals 'do not have to reinvent the wheel at each place and in each conflict ... they often find inspiration elsewhere in the ideas and tactics espoused and practiced by other activists' (McAdam and Rucht, 1993, p. 58). Some of my interviewees confirmed this view, noting that the Internet allowed for faster and more efficient activism. For instance, Rochelle Keyhan explained: 'if you're by yourself without the Internet, you're going to have to recreate every wheel ... I think it helps speed up the activism in that way because you can learn from each other' (interview 2016). I have observed such instances of Internet-enabled

tactical diffusion when participating in anti-street harassment meetings and workshops with Bristol-based groups in the UK. For example, at a BS5 Against Street Harassment (BASH) meeting in 2016, the idea to produce anti-street harassment cards for women to distribute to perpetrators was floated. The inspiration for this form of action, and the text that BASH adapted for inclusion on the cards, was sourced from the SSH website. The Bristol Street Harassment Project, a project of Bristol Zero Tolerance, has similarly adapted resources from SSH's and Hollaback!'s websites in order to produce anti-street harassment cards and informational leaflets on street harassment. For example, their leaflet called 'Toolkit: How You Can Respond to Street Harassment' has a message of thanks to SSH and Hollaback! 'for ideas, links and inspiration!'

An excellent example of digitally-enabled anti-street harassment diffusion, apart from the global growth of Hollaback!, discussed earlier, is the spread of HarassMap's digital harassment mapping platform beyond Egypt's borders. Using the Ushahidi crowdsourcing/crowdmapping platform, HarassMap utilises GIS and SMS technologies to document and map harassment incidents across Egypt (Fahmy *et al.*, 2014, p. 11). Between its launch in 2010 to 2016, HarassMap received online requests from 107 groups and individuals in approximately 40 countries seeking guidance on replicating and adapting the model (Rebecca Chiao, personal communication, 2016).

According to the HarassMap website, more activists and groups are in the process of adapting the harassment mapping platform to their local contexts (HarassMap, no date a). HarassMap activists provide guidance to potential adopters online, primarily through Skype, and around 15 groups have launched initiatives based on the HarassMap model (Rebecca Chiao, personal communication, 2016, 2019). While there is no data on the precise indirect channels through which diffusion has occurred, HarassMap's digital mapping system has attracted significant online media attention. Thus, it is possible to infer that at least some, if not many, of these groups became aware of HarassMap through the Internet.⁶²

Although it has been argued that the successful emulation and diffusion of the HarassMap model is, in part, attributable to its adaptability and accessibility (Young, 2014, p. 10), survey research carried out in late 2016 found that some potential adopters failed to launch similar initiatives due to a lack of digital skills and information technology (IT) support (Angie Abdelmonem, personal communication, 2017). According to researcher Angie Abdelmonem, while Ushahidi is, in theory, accessible, in that the crowdmapping technology is designed for laypeople to download and implement, in practice, non-technologically savvy users find such platforms hard to navigate. In addition, groups require more than general IT knowledge to effectively operate the technology; ongoing IT support is needed (personal

⁶² Certainly, this is true in terms of the spread of Hollaback! worldwide. Data provided by Hollaback! shows that at least 66 percent of people (265 of 399) who were inspired to set up their own Hollaback! site first learned about Hollaback! through the Internet.

communication, 2017). Any discussion then of social movements and the affordances of digital technologies should take into account the technical competence of activists, which they rarely do. 'New skills, particularly complex ones unrelated to existing capabilities, come at a cost in time and effort' (Garrett and Edwards, 2007, p. 18). Hence, where potential crowdmap adopters failed to launch, they were sometimes unable to take advantage of the capacities afforded by the new technology because activists lacked the necessary technical skills and support. This reveals how innovation diffusion and take up is affected by digital inequalities within the global movement. Activists who face barriers, such as lower digital literacy skills and a shortage of IT support have fewer opportunities than their digitally privileged counterparts to adopt such innovations.

However, part of HarassMap's extended mission towards 'creating a global movement of HarassMap-inspired initiatives against sexual harassment' (HarassMap, no date a) entails developing an updated platform with centralised IT functions to make it easier for other activists to adopt and adapt the crowdmap model (Angie Abdelmonem, personal communication, 2017). More accessible crowdmapping technology, currently being piloted by HarassMap (HarassMap, no date a) should lower the participation costs for activists, in terms of time and effort. Thus, it is likely that this form of anti-street harassment activism will spread more rapidly and more widely in the near future. Future research should investigate this possibility.

A further example of diffusion via online channels is the spread and emulation of the hidden-camera video '10 Hours of Walking in NYC as a Woman' (Rob Bliss Creative, 2014). The actress in the video, Shoshana Roberts, who was 24 at the time, encountered more than 100 incidents of verbal harassment as she walked around New York City for 10 hours (over a few days). The video went viral in October 2014, with more than one million views in 24 hours (Bailey, 2016, p. 594), and as of October 2018, had been viewed more than 47.8 million times on YouTube. 10 Hours of Walking in NYC as a Woman has inspired the production of multiple videos in many cities of the world, including Cairo (Mohney, 2014), Delhi (Pruthi, 2014), Mexico City (Morras, 2016), Rome (Palmer, 2014), São Paulo (Carolina O., 2014), and San Jose, Costa Rica (Ellefson, 2016). One of the reasons for the rapid diffusion of this tactic is that it provides a highly effective means for stimulating awareness and debate on the topic of street harassment⁶³ at relatively low cost, in terms of time and effort. Activists/video makers took a few days to capture the video footage, using concealed GoPro cameras and microphones, and then compiled edited versions of the footage, which they posted to video sharing websites (Willett, 2014; Bailey, 2016).

⁶³ For example, the original '10 Hours of Walking in NYC as a Woman' video provoked thousands of news articles on street harassment in the US and internationally (Kearl, 2015b, p. 63).

In the original format of the video, a woman walks alone through the streets of a particular city without responding to her harassers. In a modified version by 'Las Morras' – a group of four female friends resisting street harassment in Mexico City – two of the women walk in pairs through the capital's streets and respond directly to male harassers, while the other two secretly record the encounters. The female friends explained on their YouTube page: 'We are four 'morras'⁶⁴ living in Mexico City. Like many women, men harass us, yell at us and insult us in the street every day. We wanted to go out and ask our harassers what they actually have to say to us' (Morras, 2016). In the video, the friends walk along Mexico City's streets to a chorus of whistles, shouts and comments, with one man even surreptitiously masturbating in front of them. Las Morras respond to their harassers with phrases such as 'did you speak to me? If you don't have anything to say, don't talk to me' (Paullier, 2016). The confrontational style of the video executed by Las Morras was deliberate; the activists wanted to demonstrate to women that public spaces are not the preserve of men. Confronting their harassers was necessary, according to Las Morras, in order to defend their and other women's rights to public space, and to reclaim power back from male harassers (El Comercio, 2016; Mulato, 2016). The decision to modify the '10 Hours of Walking' format shows that diffusion 'is a creative and strategic process, one that is marked by political learning, adaption and innovation', rather than simply imitation (Givan, Roberts and Soule, 2010, p. 3).

In addition to Internet-enabled diffusion of online tactics, digital technologies have also facilitated the diffusion of offline actions in the movement, such as the Good Night Out (GNO) campaign, initiated by Hollaback! London in 2014. GNO addresses harassment in music and drinking venues by providing training to venue staff, as well as support and resources, to tackle and prevent harassment (Hollaback London!, no date). Since its inception, GNO has spread to 19 cities across the UK and Ireland, and internationally, in Chicago and Vancouver. It is now an independent campaign (Good Night Out Campaign, 2020). Hollaback! London initially transmitted information about GNO online in 2013 to five potential participating venues in London. Bryony Beynon described being 'totally amazed by the reaction ... within weeks [we] had at least ten requests to start local GNOs, this would not have been possible without online [platforms]' (personal communication, 2016).⁶⁵

Moreover, the Internet has facilitated adaptation and innovation of the GNO model across the Hollaback! network. For example, Hollaback! Baltimore drew inspiration from Hollaback! London when the London chapter shared information about GNO online in 2013. The two site leaders in Baltimore modified the GNO model to a more extensive 'Safer Spaces Campaign' covering cafés, clubs and businesses committed to the provision of harassment-free environments (Hollaback! Baltimore,

⁶⁴ Mexican slang for 'girls'.

⁶⁵ Initial adopters of the GNO model mostly became aware of the initiative through the Internet; however, relational channels of diffusion also played a role in the spread of GNO, such as word of mouth from 'club-goers' and links with the UK's National Union of Students (Bryony Beynon, personal communication, 2016).

2016). The Safer Spaces Campaign has since been emulated by Hollaback! Croatia and Hollaback Appalachian Ohio! (Hollaback! Croatia, 2016; People's Justice League, 2016). As Debjani Roy explained 'innovation is happening everywhere and there's a scaling process, so what [London did] Baltimore and then Croatia did on [a] maybe slightly smaller scale' (interview 2014). Thus, as this example shows, the Internet has allowed Hollaback! chapters to share ideas and innovate, with scaling operating both upwards and downwards.

Digital technologies have afforded activists the possibility to diffuse anti-street harassment information and tactics broadly and quickly both online and offline, which has contributed to the expansion of the global movement. Individuals and groups, with the required digital skills and resources, have learned from each other, borrowed and adapted innovations across dispersed sites to expose, resist and combat street harassment in their local contexts. This digitally-enabled diffusion of innovations has increased the scope of anti-street harassment activism around the world.

6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined how digital technologies function in the emergence and development of the global anti-street harassment movement, or to be precise, how such technologies and activists' interactions with them have enabled the movement's formation and growth. I have argued that anti-street harassment activists have taken advantage of three key affordances offered by digital technologies relevant to movement emergence and expansion: reduced participation costs for engaging in activism, the possibility to create and maintain collective identities, and the ability to diffuse information and tactics across disparate sites.

I first investigated how digital technologies have afforded anti-street harassment activists reduced participation costs for creating, organising and engaging in activism. I argued that activists have used the cost-reducing affordance of the Internet (Earl and Kimport, 2011. p. 15) to create anti-street harassment initiatives and online actions, coordinate their activities, mobilise and organise participants, and expand the global movement. Next, I claimed that anti-street harassment activists have taken advantage of affordances for constructing collective identity. Women affected and disaffected by street harassment have used the Internet and social media to learn about and engage with similar struggles against street harassment and in doing so, have come to recognise particular shared experiences, interests and values as important. This perception of belonging to a broader group of people with shared grievances, or a sense of 'we' has inspired several women to mobilise against street harassment in different countries globally. In addition to facilitating activism, digitally-enabled collective identification has similarly sustained some activists' commitment to the cause through the forging of solidarity and a sense of community. Finally, I examined the role of digital technologies in facilitating diffusion and emulation of anti-street harassment innovations. I contended

that the Internet has afforded activists the opportunity to diffuse information and tactics efficiently as dispersed actors have learned from each other, borrowed and adapted innovations.

My study illustrates that digital technologies, specifically their affordances, are an important and necessary condition for the formation and growth of the global anti-street harassment movement. However, affordances are ultimately constituted by the digital divide and consequently, their availability and adoption is unequal. '[T]he Internet remains a tool that only women with the privilege of connection hold' – a privilege based on multiple factors, including class, race, geographical location, education, literacy, infrastructure, skill and socio-cultural norms, in addition to gender (Hunt, 2005, pp. 1–2). Affordances provided to digitally privileged activists are not accessible to women without digital access or with low levels of digital literacy or other barriers who resist street harassment. Thus, digital technologies have contributed to the movement's global development in an uneven way, affording some activists the opportunity to participate in and shape the movement whilst marginalising other actors.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

This thesis has examined the emergence, development and defining characteristics of the global anti-street harassment movement. My aims were to conceptualise and establish the existence of this social movement through an empirical analysis of its characteristic features and to explore how both activists' motivations and digital technologies function in the evolution of the movement. Based on a qualitative mixed methods approach combining semi-structured interviews and document analysis, I conclude that motivations and digital technologies, specifically their affordances, are important factors in the formation and development of the movement. In this concluding chapter, I will summarise and reflect on the research, emphasise the contributions of this thesis and consider the implications of my findings for future research

I set out in this thesis to answer two research questions:

1. What are the characteristic features of the global anti-street harassment movement? (RQ1)
2. How do motivations and digital technologies function in the emergence and development of the global anti-street harassment movement? (RQ2)

In examining these questions, I have conceptualised and demonstrated the existence of the global anti-street harassment movement, and offered an explanation for the movement's emergence and development. I have reviewed, critically analysed and applied feminist scholarship and social movement literature pertinent to my research and formulated my conceptual framework, drawing upon and integrating a panoply of concepts, including the continuum of sexual violence, gender oppression, feminist consciousness, grievances, emotions, affordances and collective identity. While acknowledging that there is no single specific model for feminist research (Maynard, 1994, p. 21), my study has been guided by feminist methodological and epistemological principles. I began the research from the standpoints and experiences of women activists (Harding, 1993, p. 56, 1997, pp. 382–383; Stanley and Wise, 1993, pp. 119–120, 164), using semi-structured interviews as my primary research method to provide insight into activists' motivations, experiences, views and understandings; I positioned myself within the research process; and attempted to generate useful knowledge, which may be utilised by activists within the global anti-street harassment movement. The original empirical data presented in this thesis represent the perspectives and voices of anti-street harassment activists, as interpreted and mediated through my conceptual framework.

7.1 Calling the Global Anti-Street Harassment Movement into Existence

In chapter four, I delineated the origins, development and characteristic features of the contemporary global anti-street harassment. While multitudinous anti-street harassment initiatives have emerged around the world over the past two decades, with the shared ideal of ending street harassment, there are very few studies on this particular social movement and none which examine my research problem.

By mapping the origins, development and characteristic features of the global anti-street harassment movement – its structure, feminist ideological dimensions, goals and forms of activism – this research has helped to call this social movement into existence (Eschle, 2004, p. 66). I argued that while the numerous and diverse contemporary anti-street harassment initiatives may, on the surface, appear disconnected and disorganised, they are in fact constituents of a global feminist social movement that is a loose but integrated and decentralised network (Gerlach, 2001, pp. 289–290). This diffuse, non-hierarchical movement structure allows initiatives to act autonomously while simultaneously facilitating the flow of information between movement participants.

This global feminist movement is principally defined by its shared ideal of ending street harassment. Activists within the movement are further unified through common values and goals, a diversity of common tactics and methods and occasional participation in joint actions. While not claiming that anti-street harassment activists subscribe to a homogenous set of values, I have shown that all the research participants self-identify as feminist, variously defined, and hold similar feminist beliefs concerning street harassment and in relation to the oppressions they are contesting. Anti-street harassment activists are involved in a feminist political project to resist, contest and end a form of gender oppression that intersects with other social identities and power differentials.

I found that the global anti-street harassment movement is pursuing an overarching set of goals conducive to achieving its ultimate aim of eradicating street harassment. The common goals centre on creating dialogue around the issue, making visible and redefining the problem of street harassment and fostering attitudinal and behaviour change. Movement goals are dynamic and fluid, responsive to activists' progress and changing priorities. While my intention has not been to assess the impact of the global anti-street harassment movement in terms of goal attainment, I suggest that the movement has, to varying degrees, succeeded in making the problem of street harassment visible. As Emily May remarked:

having worked on this issue and seen this over the past 10 years to have gone from this being not an issue, not even a term that people used to it, I think fairly broadly in the United States anyway, being accepted as a term and being accepted as a problem, maybe not to the extent to which it truly is and certainly not to the extent to which it impacts people differently, but broadly people kind of get it now. They get that it's not a good thing. (interview 2016)

The acknowledgement of street harassment as a social problem has only recently occurred, at least in some countries, largely due to the efforts of the global anti-street harassment movement. Transformations have taken place in the way some societies view and, in some respects, respond to street harassment, including increased public awareness of the problem, more nuanced media reporting on the issue, increased legal action, growing research interest and more women and LGBTQ+ people taking action against street harassment. The global anti-street harassment has, then, to a large extent, achieved its goal of 'making the invisible visible ... and rendering the trivial important' (Reinharz, 1992, p. 248). But, as the recent #MeToo movement reminds us, much work remains in changing social attitudes and behaviours concerning sexual harassment and violence.

I have illustrated that the global anti-street harassment movement deploys a diverse array of tactics and methods in pursuit of its goals, and engages with and seeks to influence a range of target groups, including victims and perpetrators of harassment, bystanders, policy makers, the media and the general public. Despite the diversity in forms of activism used and target groups appealed to, I found that much anti-street harassment activism serves an educative and consciousness-raising function. Such activism includes the creation of supportive online feminist spaces for street harassment victims/survivors to share their experiences and air their grievances, actions designed to educate the media that street harassment is an overt social problem requiring a solution, community-based awareness raising to reshape social attitudes and behaviours, and direct action techniques that confront and seek to educate male harassers whilst enabling women to reclaim their power and dignity back from harassers. And while the movement, or rather some elements of it increasingly target policy makers in an attempt to criminalise street harassment, activists simultaneously lobby for legal action alongside community engagement and educative action. Thus, there is much coherence between the varied forms of activism harnessed by the global anti-street harassment movement, which are aligned with the movement's overarching goals.

My study has helped to call the global anti-street harassment movement into existence (Eschle, 2004, p. 66) by analysing its defining characteristics and making explicit the connections and commonalities between the various entities that make up the movement, as well as by highlighting differences between movement participants and practices.

7.2 Motivations and the Emergence and Development of the Movement

Chapter five explored activists' motivations for engaging in anti-street harassment activism and argued that motivations – grievances and motivating emotions – are an important dimension in the evolution of the global anti-street harassment movement. Initially, I did not set out to examine this aspect of the research. As explained earlier, the original research focus centred on the goals and outcomes of the movement. However, during preliminary data analysis a new insight emerged: that individual motivations and digital technologies were factors in the evolution of the global anti-street harassment movement. I decided to pursue this topic instead, considering it necessary to first address unexamined questions around movement emergence and development before embarking on any analysis into the effects and impact of the movement.

I have argued that grievances, based on perceived gender injustice, provide the principal motivational impetus for engaging in anti-street harassment activism. The majority of my participants became moved to act in response to a sense of dissatisfaction concerning personal experiences of street harassment and the recognition that those experiences, generally minimised and normalised by peers, family and the wider society, in fact constitute unequal and unjust treatment of women generally. Activists were not only motivated by grievances stemming from their own experience of gender-based injustice, but so too by awareness of sexual violence injustices experienced by other women. Essentially, I found that activists were motivated into activism, in many cases establishing initiatives in different cities around the world, because they felt aggrieved and angry about their own and other women's unfair and unequal treatment in public spaces.

Whilst claiming that grievances are a prime motivating factor for anti-street harassment activism, I have not implied a dichotomous relationship between cognition and emotion. Rather, emotions interact with grievances in motivating activism. My findings reveal that indignation, or anger at gender injustice, is a central motivating emotion inspiring activism against street harassment. Activists are indignant that street harassment is an omnipresent reality in their own and other women's lives, with negative consequences for women's wellbeing; that the practice undermines their dignity, impeding their ability to function in public spaces as complete human beings; and that street harassment reinforces women's fear of vulnerability to sexual violence in public spaces. Anti-street harassment activists have mobilised the energy and the powerful motivating force of anger to resist these gender oppressions.

Empathy, I have argued, has similarly inspired anti-street harassment activism. Activists are moved to act on behalf of victims/survivors of street harassment and sexual assault because they vicariously share their distress. Empathetic feelings develop either through witnessing another's distress or through reading or listening to victims/survivors' accounts of sexual violence. I found that in some cases, whilst knowledge of gender injustice and anger were the initial motivators drawing participants into activism, empathy with others became a more prominent motivating force driving and sustaining their activist work.

The thesis demonstrates that grievances, based on perceived gender injustice, and emotions are strong motivational factors for initiating and continuing anti-street harassment activism. These findings are broadly in harmony with feminist social movement research in this area (Hercus, 2005; Eschle and Maiguashca, 2010), although my research differs conceptually with its focus on grievances as the motivating factor. Whereas existing research highlights awareness of gender injustice as the principal motivating factor for feminists (Hercus, 2005, pp. 10–11) and feminist activists (Eschle and Maiguashca, 2010, pp. 72–75), my study finds that grievances underpinned by gender injustice provided the motivational impetus for activism. In other words, I argue that the sense of being aggrieved is critical to stimulating action. An awareness of injustice on its own is an insufficient motivator for activism (Hardcastle, 2011, p. 342). That said, cognisance of gender injustice is very important for generating grievances, which in turn, stimulate action against street harassment.

7.3 Affordances and the Emergence and Development of the Movement

Chapter six explored how digital technologies, and activists' interactions with those technologies, have enabled the formation and expansion of the global anti-street harassment movement. I argued that activists have taken advantage of three affordances offered by digital technologies relevant to movement emergence and development. Digital technologies have afforded activists reduced participation costs for initiating, organising and partaking in activism. I found that research participants utilised the cost-reducing affordance of the Internet (Earl and Kimport, 2011, p. 15) to establish innovative initiatives and online actions, coordinate their activities, mobilise participants, and scale up their activities, thereby expanding the global movement.

My findings suggest that some anti-street harassment activists have used technological affordances for constructing collective identity, which has generated and sustained their participation in the movement. Through the Internet, women from disparate geographical locations have come to see themselves as part of a collective on account of the grievances they share (Garrett, 2006, p. 205). The shared sense of 'we', enabled by digital technologies, has inspired several women to take action

against street harassment in different countries globally. In addition to facilitating activism, I found that digitally-enabled collective identification has similarly sustained some interviewees' commitment to engage in activism through the creation and maintenance of solidarity among anti-street harassment activists.

Furthermore, I found that digital technologies have afforded activists the opportunity to diffuse informational and tactical innovations broadly and efficiently, which partly explains the spread in anti-street harassment activism around the world. Geographically dispersed actors have taken advantage of technological affordances to learn from each other, borrow, adapt and spread innovations across sites. My research, then, indicates that digital technologies, more specifically, their affordances, are an important and necessary enabling factor for the formation and growth of the global anti-street harassment movement over approximately the last two decades.

At the same time, as previously noted, affordances are structured by the digital divide and as a consequence, their availability and take up are not universal. Digital technologies afford certain activists the opportunity to participate in the movement whilst marginalising other actors, typically economically disadvantaged women. As indicated in the thesis, my positionality and some methodological choices no doubt shaped my perspective on the global anti-street harassment movement, which may have reproduced the inequalities in the movement structured by the digital divide.

7.4 The Movement Today

As mentioned earlier, the global anti-street harassment movement expanded most rapidly from 2010, a period corresponding with the rise in social media. The movement's global growth peaked between 2014-2016, in response to influential anti-street harassment viral videos and hashtags, as discussed in chapter four. Since 2017, the movement has experienced some contraction, which I suggest is the result of multiple interacting factors. One reason for the movement's contraction is the decline in Egyptian anti-street harassment activism due to the ongoing crackdown on street activism in the country, imposed in 2013. HarassMap remains active but most grassroots anti-street harassment initiatives have now ceased operating in Egypt. Another possible explanation for the decline in movement activity is gendertrolling (Mantilla, 2013, p. 565). There is no doubt that pervasive misogynistic online abuse has taken its toll on some activists. For example, 'Las Morras', who produced an online video in 2016, depicting their encounters with harassers on the streets of Mexico City (as described in chapter six), were forced into hiding soon after posting the video online due to ubiquitous gendertrolling, including death threats. The abuse led to the group's eventual decline in 2018 (Davis

and Santillana, 2019, pp. 18, 29). It is also possible, as Kearl suggests (2019), that the mainstream rise of the #MeToo movement in 2017 moved the focus away from street harassment to workplace sexual harassment. Relatedly, some anti-street harassment initiatives, notably Hollaback! have extended their mission in recent years to cover a broader agenda of issues, including online harassment, with less prominence given to street harassment in their campaigning efforts. While some anti-street harassment initiatives have withered away over the last few years, new ones still emerge. Although diminished somewhat, the movement is still active.

7.5 Recommendations for Future Research

A worthwhile avenue for future research is to investigate the ‘impact’ of the global movement as regards goal realisation. In chapter four, I pointed to several cases where activists had successfully deployed certain tactics to attain their stated objectives and earlier in this chapter, I posited that the movement had largely realised its goal of making street harassment visible as a social problem. Additional research is needed to assess the extent to which the movement has achieved this particular goal and indeed any of its goals. Further investigations might also evaluate the effectiveness of the movement’s different tactics, taking into consideration that women resist street harassment in different ways around the world (Gómez and Aden, 2017, p. 174).

The thesis illustrates that certain emotions play a significant role in motivating anti-street harassment activism. However, a limitation of this study is that, to a degree, I prompted the participants by asking whether purportedly negative and positive emotions had influenced their activism. It is possible that, had I not presented the participants with examples of motivating emotions, or (following feminist affect scholars) not distinguished between negative and positive emotions, the participants may have identified a wider range of motivating emotions. Future research could test this proposition and also explore the political potential of ‘bad feelings’ for catalysing anti-street harassment activism (Ahmed, 2010, p. 217).

Upon reflection it would have been interesting, had space permitted, to examine ideational diffusion across the movement, that is the spread of anti-street harassment ‘collective action frames’ – the shared meanings, beliefs and goals that inspire social movement actions and mobilise movement adherents (Stobaugh and Snow, 2010, p. 36). Given that collective action frames are thought to be an important mechanism that assist in the construction of collective identities, which, I have argued, are exhibited by some anti-street harassment activists, this merits future study.

It would also be interesting to explore other possible factors in the movement's emergence and development, including structural factors like resources and political opportunities as well as framing processes. In addition, further research could examine how other such factors interact with motivations and affordances in the movement's evolution.

7.6 Contributions of the Thesis

This thesis has made an original contribution to knowledge by addressing the paucity of literature on the global anti-street harassment movement. I have provided an extensive empirical investigation of the emergence, development and characteristic features of an underexamined global feminist social movement, one which is making visible, resisting and combating a pervasive gender oppression. This thesis also complements a wider literature on anti-street harassment activism, including a growing scholarship on feminist digital activism against street harassment and other forms of sexual violence (e.g., Rentschler, 2014; Keller, Mendes and Ringrose, 2016; Gómez and Aden, 2017; Mendes, Ringrose and Keller, 2019). While the feminist digital activism literature tends to emphasise the opportunities that online platforms afford feminist women and girls for responding to street harassment, i.e., site users, the contribution of this thesis lies in its analytical focus on the opportunities afforded to the feminist architects of these sites for creating, organising and engaging in anti-street harassment activism.

In addition, my research adds to a wider scholarship on contemporary feminist activism through original empirical research on the global anti-street harassment movement and the feminist activists within it (e.g., Cochrane, 2013; Evans, 2015, 2016; Mackay, 2015; Kurian, 2018; Belotti, Comunello and Corradi, 2020; Serafini, 2020). This case confirms the importance of digital technologies in enabling women to mobilise, speak out and share their experiences of sexism and violence, to make these issues visible to wider audiences, and to forge transnational connections (Cochrane, 2013, p. 603; Evans, 2015, pp. 73–78; Kurian, 2018; Belotti, Comunello and Corradi, 2020; Serafini, 2020, p. 292). It also contests a dominant narrative regarding contemporary feminism, that of feminism's co-optation by neoliberalism through its 'normalisation of individualism' (Evans, 2015, p. 46). While some feminists have adopted individualistic, neoliberal values and practices, the global anti-street harassment movement is connected to more radical and collective forms of feminist grassroots activism that have arisen in several countries over the last 15 years or so. Gender-based grievances and anger at injustice have sparked feminist campaigns and movements like the revived Reclaim the Night, #MeToo, #NiUnaMenos (Not One (Woman) Less) and Un violador en tu camino (A Rapist in your Path). Feminist activists within these movements see collective responses like empathy and solidarity as a means by which to resist violence against women and other gender injustices.

My study challenges dominant social movement theoretical assumptions regarding the significance of individual motivations in generating social movements. I have shown that motivations matter in explaining the formation and development of the global anti-street harassment movement. Grievances, based on perceived gender injustice, and motivating emotions are important factors. Here, the thesis contributes to social movement research, in particular feminist SM research (e.g., Hercus, 2005; Eschle and Maiguashca, 2010) both empirically, by providing original data on an unexamined feminist social movement and conceptually. I interweave the concepts of feminist consciousness and grievances to more effectively explicate the motivational dimensions of anti-street harassment activism and I theorise the motivating emotion of empathy, an emotional response not previously theorised in the context of feminist activism.

My analysis of motivating emotions departs from much social movement theory with its focus on mobilising emotions. The idea that social movement leaders invoke and (re)frame particular emotions to mobilise public concern and action has less purchase in understanding the emotional dynamics of digitally-enabled feminist networked movements, where traditional movement organisers play a marginal or less central role. Research on social movements and emotions would benefit from paying greater attention to the micro emotional dynamics of contemporary networked movements, i.e. by examining the motivating emotions of individual grassroots activists. The scholarship would also benefit from further exploration of the convergence between emotion and digital technologies; for example, asking how technology facilitates the arousal of emotion among activists and serves as a medium for the expression of emotion within social movements (Serrano-Puche, 2015, p. 2).

Finally, in arguing that affordances are an important enabling factor in the formation and growth of the global anti-street harassment movement, the thesis contributes to social movement digital activism research in several ways, as outlined in the literature review (e.g., Earl, 2010; Earl and Kimport, 2011; Gerbaudo and Treré, 2015). Most significantly, I have used a new conceptual model that integrates an affordances perspective with diffusion theory to analyse digitally-enabled diffusion of innovations among movement actors. In so doing, I have employed an original set of technological affordances in my analysis of how digital technologies function in the emergence and development of the global anti-street harassment.

My investigation of affordances adds further credence to the idea that cost reducing affordances are radically altering social movement organisational dynamics. In the digital age, individual activists and very small groups, as well as people with no prior activist experience, are able to organise and coordinate campaigns online often independently of traditional social movement organisations (Earl

and Schussman, 2003, 2004; Earl and Kimport, 2009, 2011; Shirky, 2009; Earl *et al.*, 2015). This suggests the need to reconsider prevailing assumptions about social movements, and dominant SM theories, in which social movement organisations are the main unit and focus of analysis (Earl and Kimport, 2011).

In conclusion, the thesis has provided a rich empirical and conceptual analysis of the global anti-street harassment movement, a social movement that has been neglected by the literature. I have offered an explanation for the movement's emergence and development and identified its key characteristics and dynamics. In so doing, I have engaged with, extended and modified social movement theory and added to current understandings of contemporary feminist activism. Through this research, I have made visible a distinctive feminist social movement, one that is tackling an issue of profound importance to many women around the world. The global anti-street harassment movement needs to be taken seriously because of its global scope, influence and enduring relevance.

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Appendix I: List of Interviewees

Interviewee(s)	Group/initiative	Country	Date	Interview type
Maria Meza	Atrévete Ya! (Hollaback Queretero)	Mexico	14/03/14	Skype
Julia Gray	Hollaback! London	UK	28/03/14	Skype
Chai Shenoy and Zosia Szytkowski	Collective Action for Safe Spaces	US	08/04/14	Face to face
Elizabeth Bolton	Stop Street Harassment	US	09/04/14	Face to face
Rochelle Keyhan and Anna Kegler	Feminist Public Works	US	09/04/14	Face to face
Joanne Smith	Girls for Gender Equity	US	10/04/14	Face to face
Oraia Reid	RightRides for Women's Safety	US	11/04/14	Face to face
Debjani Roy	Hollaback!	US	13/04/14	Face to face
Holly Kearl	Stop Street Harassment	US	24/04/14	Skype
'A women's rights activist'		Egypt	28/05/14	Skype
'Violence against women and girls sector worker'		UK	03/06/14	Telephone
Rebecca Chiao	HarassMap	Egypt	17/06/14	Skype
Arpita Bhagat	Hollaback! Mumbai	India	18/06/14	Skype
Penny Tristram	Hollaback! Bristol	UK	24/06/14	Face to face
Julia Brilling	Hollaback! Berlin	Germany	26/07/14	Face to face
ElsaMarie D'Silva	Safecity	India	27/11/15	Skype
Holly Kearl *	Stop Street Harassment	US	02/12/15	Skype
Juliana de Faria	Chega de Fiu Fiu	Brazil	04/12/15	Email
Jasmeen Patheja	Blank Noise	India	21/12/15	Skype
Jessica Raven	CASS	US	05/01/16	Skype
Elizabeth Vallejo	Paremos el Acoso Callejero	Peru	08/01/16	Skype
Julia Brilling *	Hollaback! Berlin	Germany	12/01/16	Skype
Hannah Camilleri	Girls Against	UK	01/02/16	Email
Alice Junqueira	OCAC	Chile	02/02/16	Skype
Feminista Jones	YouOKSis	US	12/02/16	Skype
Rochelle Keyhan *	Feminist Public Works	US	22/03/16	Skype
Bryony Beynon and Julia Gray *	Hollaback! London	UK	01/04/16	Face to face
Nihal Zaghloul	Bassma/Imprint	Egypt	04/04/16	Face to face
Noora Flinkman	HarassMap	Egypt	05/04/16	Face to face
Hala Mostafa Ahmed	I Saw Harassment	Egypt	07/04/16	Face to face
Elizabeth Vallejo *	Paremos el Acoso Sexual	Peru	24/04/16	Skype
Nay El Rahi	HarassTracker	Lebanon	02/05/16	Skype
Emily May	Hollaback!	US	11/05/16	Skype
Kalpna Viswanath	SafetiPin	India	01/11/16	WhatsApp
Juliana Santarosa Cobos	Acción Respeto: por un calle libre de acoso	Argentina	17/01/19	Email

* Follow-up/repeat interviews

Appendix II: Anti-Street Harassment Initiatives by Country

Initiative	Country	Number of interviewees	Number of interviews
Acción Respeto: por un calle libre de acoso	Argentina	1	1
Chega de Fiu Fiu (Enough with the Catcalls)	Brazil	1	1
Observatorio contra el Acoso Callejero (OCAC) (Observatory Against Street Harassment)	Chile	1	1
Bassma (Imprint Movement)	Egypt	1	1
HarassMap	Egypt	3	3
I Saw Harassment	Egypt	1	1
Hollaback! Berlin	Germany	1	2
Blank Noise	India	1	1
Hollaback! Mumbai	India	1	1
Safecity	India	1	1
SafetiPin	India	1	1
HarassTracker	Lebanon	1	1
Atrévete Ya! (Hollaback! Queretaro)	Mexico	1	1
Paremos el Acoso Callejero (Let's End Street Harassment)	Peru	1	2
End Violence Against Women Coalition (EVAW)	UK	1	1
Girls Against	UK	1	1
Hollaback! London	UK	2	2
Hollaback! Bristol	UK	1	1
Collective Action for Safe Spaces (CASS)	US	3	2
Feminist Public Works	US	2	2
Feminista Jones (#YouOKSis)	US	1	1
Girls for Gender Equity	US	1	1
Hollaback!	US	2	2
RightRides for Women's Safety	US	1	1
Stop Street Harassment	US	2	3
25 groups/initiatives	11 countries	33 interviewees	35 interviews

NB. Data were also gathered via email and social media from two additional initiatives: Acción Respeto, Costa Rica and the Street Harassment Project, UK, and from non-interviewee participants affiliated with HarassMap, Hollaback! and OCAC Chile.

Initiative	Country	Number of participants
Acción Respeto	Costa Rica	1
The Street Harassment Project	UK	1
HarassMap	Egypt	2
Hollaback!	US	1
OCAC Chile	Chile	1
27 groups/initiatives (TOTAL)	12 countries	39 participants

Appendix III: Interview Schedule

Personal motivations

- **When** did you start/join XXXX [initiative]?
- **Why** did you start/join this initiative?
 - Why did you decide to get active on the issue of street harassment? [if not already answered]
 - Were you inspired to set up XXXX because you heard about another initiative/campaign? If yes, how did you hear about this?
- Have you had any **challenges** to overcome to stay involved?
- What **motivates** you to keep going?

Structure and collaboration

Could you please tell me about how your initiative is **structured** and organised?

- Are there any **other individuals** involved in your initiative?
- **How many** people, roughly – how large is your initiative?
- How are **decisions** made in the initiative?
- How is your initiative **funded**?
- Do you **interact/collaborate** with any other anti-street harassment initiative? (local/national/regional/international)
 - What type of links do you have with these groups?
 - What type of activities do you do together?
 - How closely do you work together?
- Would you like to collaborate more with other initiatives on this issue?

Strategies

- What are the **main goals** that your initiative/campaign is trying to achieve?
- How are you trying to achieve them? What are some of **your tactics/methods/strategies**? Examples?
- **How successful** have these strategies been to date?
- What **barriers** remain to achieving your goals?

Ideology

- Does your initiative explicitly identify with **feminist** principles/adopt a feminist approach?
 - If yes, any particular type of feminism? If not, why not?
- What does 'feminism' mean to you?
- Do you think there is a **global anti-street harassment movement**?
 - If yes, who is in this movement?
 - Who do you think are the main groups/key individuals in this movement?
 - Do you consider yourself part of this movement?

Identity

- [If yes] what **holds the movement together** (what do you share in common)?
 - Do these shared [values/experiences] help to **sustain your activism**?
 - Did these shared [values/experiences] **draw you to the movement**?
- Have collaborations among activists helped to strengthen the movement?
- Are you part of **any other social movement** or movements? Which?
- You have said that your initiative identifies with XXXX [feminism?]; are they any **other identities** that are important to your activism?

Movement expansion and technology

- **Why** do you think the anti-street harassment movement (or the idea to end street harassment) is **spreading**?
- **How** is it happening?
 - How important is **technology** such as the internet and mobile phones to your initiative? [if not already answered]
 - Has the internet allowed you to foster **collaborations and idea sharing** with other groups in the movement/outside the movement? Can you give me some examples?

Concept of insecurity

- Do you find the concept of 'insecurity' to be **useful** in relation to the work your group does?
- What does the **word 'insecurity' mean** to you?
- Do you discuss street harassment within a security framework? Any **other frameworks**, e.g., **human rights**?

Emotions

- Have **negative emotions**, such as **fear or anger**, ever motivated you to get active or influenced how you act? Example?
- Have **positive emotions**, such as **empathy or love**, ever motivated you to get active or influenced how you act? Example?
- Has **friendship** ever played an important role in your activism? Example?
- Has **illness, tiredness, 'burnout'**, etc. ever constrained your activism?
- Given these obstacles, what **motivates** you to keep going? [if not asked at the start]

November 2015, drawn from (Eschle and Maignashca, 2008).

Appendix IV: Initial Interview Schedule

Origins of organisation/group

- How did your organisation/group get started?

Goals, success and 'failure'

- What are your goals - to change policy, raise awareness, change cultural values?
- Has your organisation been successful in achieving its goals?
- How does your organisation define 'success?' Narrowly: meeting stated objectives or more broadly?
- Do you identify different stages of success – short term vs long term?
- Do you attribute success/influence to internal characteristics of your organisation, e.g. organisation's leadership, organisational structure?
- Do you attribute success to external factors, e.g. funding, media attention?
- If the organisation, or parts of it, have been a failure, to what can this failure be attributed?
- What barriers remain to achieving your goals?
- Is the ultimate goal of ending street harassment achievable? In what time frame?

Single vs multi-issue

- Does your organisation/group have a range of activities or does it focus really on just one activity?
- Do you believe having an exclusive focus on ending street harassment is more effective than adopting a broader agenda?

Policy influence

- Does your organisation target mainly government institutions, and/or the general public, the media?
- Do you aim to influence different levels of governance – city, state, national, international?
- What impact have you had on policy/legislation?

Planning and evaluation

- Does your organisation have clear strategies for reaching its goals?
- Does your organisation do your own 'policy evaluation'?

Learning and adaptation

- What learning has occurred? Has the organisation adapted in any way and devised new strategies or practices?
- As the organisation has transformed, have your goals adapted over time or remained static?
- Do you have any plans to do new or different things?

Unintended outcomes

- Have there been any unintended outcomes of your work, e.g., spillover effects to other movements, incorporation of new values, beliefs, discourses and alternative opinions?

Technology

- How important do you think technology is to your work in stopping street harassment?

Feminism

- Does your organisation explicitly identify with feminist principles/adopt a feminist approach?
- Do you consider your organisation to be a thread in a wider (feminist) movement?
- How connected are you to other feminist organisations?

March 2014

Appendix V: Interview timeline

Date interviewed	Interviewee name / If anonymised, form of words	Initiative	Format
First phase of interviewing			
14/03/14	Maria Meza	Hollaback-Queretaro, Mexico	Skype
28/03/14	Julia Gray	Hollaback! London, UK	Skype
08/04/14	Chai Shenoy and Zosia Szykowski	Collective Action for Safe Spaces, US	Face to face
09/04/14	Elizabeth Bolton	Stop Street Harassment, US	Face to face
09/04/14	Rochelle Keyhan and Anna Kegler	Feminist Public Works, US	Face to face
10/04/14	Joanne Smith	Girls for Gender Equity, US	Face to face
11/04/14	Oraia Reid	RightRides for Women's Safety, US	Face to face
13/04/14	Debjani Roy	Hollaback!, US	Face to face
24/04/14	Holly Kearl	Stop Street Harassment, US	Skype
28/05/14	'A women's rights activist'	Egypt	Skype
03/06/14	'Violence against women and girls sector worker'	UK	Telephone
17/06/14	Rebecca Chiao	HarassMap, Egypt	Skype
18/06/14	Arpita Bhagat	Hollaback! MUMBAI, India	Skype
24/06/14	Penny Tristram	Hollaback! Bristol, UK	Face to face
26/07/14	Julia Brilling	Hollaback! Berlin, Germany	Face to face
Second phase of interviewing			
27/11/15	ElsaMarie D'Silva	SafeCity, India	Skype
02/12/15	Holly Kearl *	Stop Street Harassment, US	Skype
04/12/15	Juliana de Faria	Chega de Fiu Fiu, Brazil	Email
21/12/15	Jasmeen Patheja	Blank Noise, India	Skype
05/01/16	Jessica Raven	Collective Action for Safe Spaces, US	Skype
08/01/16	Elizabeth Vallejo	Paremos el Acoso Callejero, Peru	Skype
12/01/16	Julia Brilling *	Hollaback Berlin, Germany	Skype
01/02/16	Hannah Camilleri	Girls Against, UK	Email
02/02/16	Alice Junqueira	OCAC Chile	Skype
12/02/16	Feminista Jones	#YouOkSis, US	Skype
22/03/16	Rochelle Keyhan *	Feminist Public Works, US	Skype
01/04/16	Bryony Benon and Julia Gray *	Hollaback! London, UK	Face to face
04/04/16	Nihal Zaghoul	Bassma/Imprint, Egypt	Face to face
05/04/16	Noora Flinkman	HarassMap, Egypt	Face to face
07/04/16	Hala Mostafa Ahmed	I Saw Harassment, Egypt	Face to face
24/04/16	Elizabeth Vallejo *	Paremos el Acoso Callejero, Peru	Skype
02/05/16	Nay El Rahi	HarassTracker, Lebanon	Skype
11/05/16	Emily May	Hollaback!, US	Skype
01/11/16	Kalpna Viswanath	SafetiPin, India	WhatsApp
Third phase of interviewing			
17/01/19	Juliana Santarosa Cobos	Acción Respeto: por un calle libre de acoso, Argentina	Email

*Follow-up/repeat interviews