

**The #MeToo Movement:
A Mixed Methods Analysis of Content Posted and Perceptions of Benefit and Harm**

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Abstract

Various societal inequalities exist between men and women that demonstrate the oppression women still face within society today, including the silencing of women regarding their experiences of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape. Instances of these forms of sexual violence among female victims are high globally, and victim-blaming and societal biases contribute to high levels of under-reporting of these crimes. The #MeToo movement, started by Tarana Burke in 2006 and utilised in 2017 on Twitter by Alyssa Milano, aimed to shine a light on the pervasive nature of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape. The #MeToo movement can be considered a new form of activism, hashtag activism, a social movement enacted online. Social movements can potentially create lasting social change within society. As a result, it is important to understand #MeToo, including how it developed, its utilisation and perceptions of this movement among society and those who participated in it. Across three studies, this dissertation presents a sequential mixed methods analysis of the #MeToo movement, exploring messages posted on Twitter on the day the hashtag went viral as well as perceptions of benefit and harm of the movement.

Study 1 used conventional content analysis on a corpus of over 10,000 tweets posted using the #MeToo hashtag, on the first day the #MeToo movement went viral, to understand the nature of the content users deemed important to share. The findings from this study show the role differences in power play in experiences of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape.

Study 2 employed a survey to explore perceptions of benefit and harm of the #MeToo movement and what attitudinal factors were associated with such perceptions. Further, gender differences concerning perceptions of benefit and harm were also explored. The findings of

this study highlight the role of internalised misogyny and protective paternalism in perceptions of benefit and harm of the #MeToo movement.

Study 3 utilised reflexive thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews conducted with women who participated in the #MeToo movement. This study showed that participants in the #MeToo movement perceived the movement as beneficial for themselves and mostly beneficial for society, with a few participants questioning its efficacy at creating lasting social change.

The final chapter explores the benefits and harm the #MeToo movement has had on women and society, including a discussion about whether #MeToo has changed the landscape for women when coming forward and reporting sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape. Additionally, this chapter explores how the #MeToo movement aligns with previous frameworks regarding social movements and critiques whether the #MeToo movement should be considered a social movement or a stepping-stone for a larger movement yet to emerge. Discussion also includes the implications of this research for policy and educational settings and recommendations for future research.

Publications and Conference Presentations Contained Within this Dissertation

Publications

Drewett, C., Oxlad, M., & Augoustinos, M. (2021, In Press). Breaking the Silence on Sexual Harassment and Assault: An Analysis of #MeToo Tweets. *Computers in Human Behavior*.

Drewett, C., & Oxlad, M. (Under Review). Internalised Misogyny and Protective Paternalism: Perceived Benefit and Harm of the #MeToo Movement. *Violence Against Women*.

Drewett, C., Oxlad, M., & Crabb, S. (Under Review). A Qualitative Examination of Australian and American Women's Experiences of Participating in the #MeToo Movement. *Sex Roles*.

Conference Presentations

Drewett, C. (2019). *Breaking the Silence on Sexual Harassment and Assault: An Analysis of #MeToo Tweets*. [Conference session]. Society of Australasian Social Psychologist 2019 Conference, Sydney, New South Wales.

Drewett, C. (2020). *Breaking the Silence on Sexual Harassment and Assault: An Analysis of #MeToo Tweets*. [Conference session]. South Australian Gender, Sex, and Sexualities 2020 Conference, Online.

Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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Overview of Dissertation

This dissertation is formatted as a “thesis by publication” allowed under the University of Adelaide Graduate Centre’s PhD guidelines. This dissertation style was selected to enable the presentation of material in an organised narrative and for the research described within this dissertation to be disseminated in peer-reviewed academic journals.

While this dissertation discusses whether #MeToo can truly be considered a social movement, the events that transpired in the later months of 2017 have colloquially become known as “the #MeToo movement”, and hence the term movement is used throughout this dissertation when discussing #MeToo. Additionally, this dissertation focusses solely on cisgendered women. Men, transgender and non-binary people also experience sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape, with transgender and non-binary people often experiencing higher levels of sexual violence than cisgendered individuals. However, the experiences of transgender and non-binary people are outside the scope of this dissertation and deserve a separate body of work dedicated to their experiences.

Chapter 1 begins by providing a review of past literature to provide context to the research conducted. The chapter discusses the historical mistreatment of women within society, including their access to education, appropriate healthcare, and property ownership. Additionally, this chapter explores sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape, examining the prevalence, impact, and under-reporting of these forms of sexual violence.

In Chapter 2, the theoretical background surrounding social movements is presented, including how such movements are defined in the literature and how they are theorised to develop. Social media platforms and the types of social movements that utilise such

platforms are also discussed. Finally, this chapter introduces the focus of this dissertation, the #MeToo movement, along with criticism and backlash the movement has faced.

Chapter 3 discusses the methodological rationale and considerations relevant to the research. This discussion includes presenting the benefits of using a sequential mixed-methods approach for this dissertation and the reasoning behind each study's analytic methods. Additionally, the benefits and ethical implications of utilising Twitter for research are discussed. The chapter concludes with a discussion about reflexivity, including considerations of researcher bias and the impact of researching sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape on the researcher.

Following these introductory chapters, three studies (Chapters 4-6), written as manuscripts but using the same typesetting as the overall dissertation, are presented, with each study providing further information as to how the #MeToo movement was utilised and perceived by individuals. References for these studies and all literature reviewed are provided at the end of the dissertation.

Study 1: “Breaking the Silence on Sexual Harassment and Assault: An Analysis of #MeToo Tweets” is presented in Chapter 4. This study, accepted for publication in *Computers in Human Behavior*, utilises conventional content analysis to explore a collection of 10,546 tweets using the hashtag #MeToo from the first day the hashtag went viral (October 17th 2017). The findings of this study show that messages of self-disclosure regarding sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape, supportive messages, and messages calling out poor behaviour were the most commonly shared #MeToo messages on the day examined. Additionally, the findings show that of disclosure messages, many movement participants shared incidents of sexual violence that occurred while the victim was underage or where the perpetrator was in a position of power. The implications of these findings for policymakers and potential educational campaigns are discussed.

Study 2: “Internalised Misogyny and Protective Paternalism: Perceived Benefit and Harm of the #MeToo Movement” is presented in Chapter 5. This study, currently under review with *Violence Against Women*, examined perceptions of benefit and harm of the #MeToo movement and used multiple linear regression to explore what attitudinal factors were associated with these perceptions. Additionally, within gender differences in perceptions of benefit and harm were explored. This study shows the role internalised misogyny and protective paternalism play in perceptions of the #MeToo movement. The need for strategies to reduce levels of sexism, not only in men but in women also, are discussed.

Study 3: “A Qualitative Examination of Australian and American Women’s Experiences of Participating in the #MeToo Movement” is presented in Chapter 6. In this study, currently under review with *Sex Roles*, semi-structured interviews were conducted with women in Australia and the United States of America who had participated in the #MeToo movement. These interviews were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis to explore the experience of participating in the #MeToo movement and any perceived benefits and harm that arose from their participation in the movement. The findings from this study showed that women widely perceived the #MeToo movement as beneficial for themselves and society. However, some questioned its efficacy at creating lasting social change.

Chapter 7 concludes this dissertation by exploring the overall findings and implications of this research. The #MeToo movement appear to have impacted women and society as a whole. However, some people question the #MeToo movement’s applicability as a social movement. This chapter of the dissertation (a) provides important information regarding the role power imbalances play in sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape, (b) provides further reasoning for the development of strategies to reduce sexism, and (c) sheds light on the importance of women having a platform to report incidents of sexual violence.

Finally, the limitations of this dissertation and potential directions for future research are presented.

Chapter 1: The Experience of Women

1.1 Overview

This first chapter describes women's mistreatment throughout history and how men have silenced women's stories. Additionally, sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape are discussed, including providing definitions and information about the prevalence, impact, and under-reporting of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape. This chapter covers important topics and background information needed to provide the context and justification for the dissertation.

1.2 Historical Treatment of Women

Throughout history, women have been mistreated and oppressed. Forms of mistreatment and oppression have included restricting access to property ownership, being unable to vote, making access to education impossible or dangerous, mistreatment by medical professionals, restricted abortion access and forced genital mutilation. These and other examples of women's historical and current mistreatment will be discussed further in this section.

1.2.1 Women's Relation to Men

Women have spent most of history being considered less than men and being controlled by patriarchal forces and institutions. For example, in early England, a woman's status was directly tied to men. A married woman was unable to retain her surname or to own property. Once married, her legal recognition ceased to be, as said by Crawford (2002), "A husband and wife became one person, and that person was the husband" (p. 153).

Additionally, until the 1980s in Australia and the 1990s in the United States of America (US),

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forced sexual intercourse by a husband onto their wife was not considered rape in legal terms (Australian Law Reform Commission [ALRC], 2010a; Stanley, 2020).

Around the world, until the twentieth century, women were also prevented from voting due to their perceived lack of rationality (Mead, 2013). Women eventually won the right to vote in Australia in 1902, in the United Kingdom (UK) in 1918, and the US in 1920. While in some countries, it took a substantially longer; women in Saudi Arabia only won the right to vote in 2015 (Miller, 2020). However, even where women were granted the right to vote in the early 1900s, some caveats determined which women could vote, as it was often only white, married women who could exercise the right to vote (Mead, 2013).

Women have also been controlled and subjugated throughout history by their perceived virginity. First, it is important to note that virginity is a social construct, made apparent by the changing constructions of virginity over time (Carpenter, 2011). During Victorian times, it was believed a woman could lose her “virtue” by simply kissing or being alone with a man unchaperoned (Carpenter, 2011). Notably, expectations regarding virginity were more heavily applied to women than men (Carpenter, 2011). As a result of the societal and cultural importance placed upon women’s virginity, women have been subjected to virginity testing. Methods of virginity testing have varied throughout history from bleeding following intercourse, to how loud or how long it takes a woman to urinate following intercourse, to examining whether the hymen is intact (Burge, 2016). Despite the knowledge that the hymen is not an accurate indicator of virginity amongst medical professionals (Adams et al., 2004; Rogers & Stark, 1998), these virginity tests persist in some places today. For example, in 2011, female protesters arrested in Egypt who identified as unmarried were subjected to virginity testing by military doctors (Wynn & Hassanein, 2017).

Unfortunately, the concept of virginity and the pressure placed on women to “save themselves” for marriage has led to countless women’s deaths. Honour killings are violent

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acts that men often commit against women to restore honour to their family following a perceived violation of honour codes (Kulwicki, 2002). Violations may include a woman's loss of virginity before marriage, infidelity (Cooney, 2014), or acting autonomously, such as receiving an education or leaving an abusive husband (Hayes et al., 2016). These killings have occurred predominantly (but not exclusively) in Muslim communities in the Middle East and Southern Asia (Thrasher & Handfield, 2018). In 2000, the United Nations Population Fund estimated 5,000 women and children are murdered each year in honour killings (Wikan, 2008). While there is limited up-to-date data surrounding honour killings, even in the early 2000s, the United Nations Population Fund estimate was thought to underestimate the true number of deaths (Wikan, 2008).

1.2.2 Women's Education

Historically, women have also been denied the right to education. In medieval times, most women were not educated, and those that were primarily received their education through a convent (Kersey, 1980). Later in history, women were still denied an education, and it was not until the nineteenth century when women were permitted to study at universities (Whitehead, 1999). However, as said by Whitehead (1999), "if the definition of what it is to be an educated woman is to be a woman educated like a man, then by definition there would be very few educated women in early modern Europe" (p. x). One historian estimated that in Renaissance England, only 15 women had received an education similar to that of a man (Messer-Davidow, 1983).

While schools eventually allowed White, middle- and upper-class girls to receive an education, this education was often not extended to girls of colour (Baumgartner, 2017). In the rare instances that it was, their access was severely limited, as in the case of 10-year-old

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Rosetta Douglass, who, despite being accepted to a school in 1848, was unable to sit in a room with the other students because she was Black (Baumgartner, 2017).

Conversely, education was also used as a weapon to wipe out centuries of knowledge amongst women. When the Europeans invaded North America and gained control over Native American peoples, children and young adults were forced into off-reservation schooling provided by the US government (Almeida, 1997). The centuries-old practices of Native American peoples were lost, and the formal education system was arguably a factor in the breakdown of family structures and the start of substance abuse, not just for women but for all Native Americans (Almeida, 1997). Similarly, within Australia in the 1960s, education was used as a way to force the assimilation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with White Australians. (Marsden, 2018). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were required to abandon their culture and practices should they wish to receive an education (Marsden, 2018).

Centuries later, gender disparity in education is still an issue around the world. For example, women in Saudi Arabia were unable to receive an education until 1956 (Alsuwaida, 2016). In 2015, the United Nations (UN) reported that gender parity had been achieved in most regions for both primary and secondary education; however, there is still a significant gender gap present in North and sub-Saharan Africa and Western Asia (UN, 2015).

Additionally, young girls often face violence for seeking an education, as seen in the case of Malala Yousafzai, who survived an assassination attempt by the Taliban for speaking out on behalf of girls' right to education (Blumberg, 2020). In Australia, Indigenous girls are still at a significant disadvantage regarding education, as they are often tasked with family and carer responsibilities from an early age, thus acting as a barrier to receiving an adequate education (Keddie, 2015).

1.2.3 Women's Health

The health care system has often failed women, dating back to Ancient Greece when the concept of “hysteria” was applied to women who exhibited signs of psychological distress (Tasca et al., 2012; Trimble & Reynolds, 2016), a concept that continued to have salience in the health profession for centuries. Instead of being thought of as psychological distress, prominent philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, and Hippocrates believed these feelings to be from a lack of sex, making the female uterus “sad” (Tasca et al., 2012). The implications from the concept of hysteria remained into the Middle Ages, where manifestations of psychological distress were often conflated with witchcraft among women, who were often subsequently persecuted and murdered (Trimble & Reynolds, 2016). Renowned psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud later changed the understanding of hysteria; instead of the disease being caused by a lack of sex and motherhood in women, the lack of sex and motherhood was caused by the disease (Tasca et al., 2012).

While the historical lack of understanding of women's health may seem benign, studies have shown that this dismissal of women's health is ever-present and deadly. Studies have shown that women are less likely than men to receive pain medication when presenting with the same level of pain (Chen et al., 2008; Samulowitz et al., 2018) and more likely to have their pain treated as psychological rather than physical (Samulowitz et al., 2018). One needs only look online to find hundreds of stories from women whose pain was dismissed, which can be fatal, as with the case of a 22-year-old woman in France in 2018 who called emergency services complaining of stomach pain so intense, she thought she was “going to die” (Billock, 2018). The operator dismissed her and, after a five-hour wait, she was transported to hospital where she died of multiple organ failure following a stroke (Billock, 2018).

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1.2.3.1 Women's Bodily Autonomy.

In addition to their mistreatment by medical professionals, women's bodily autonomy is often disregarded and used to control them. In many countries, women experience forced female genital mutilation (FGM), which involves injury or the partial or total removal of external female genitalia (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2020). FGM has been performed on approximately 200 million girls and women, most commonly on girls from infancy to age 15 years (WHO, 2020). This procedure has no health benefits, only severe risks (e.g., pain, infections, urinary problems, scar tissue, increase risk of childbirth complications, psychological trauma, and death) and is performed for cultural reasons tied to patriarchal beliefs about virginity and female pleasure (WHO, 2020).

Another form of oppression women experience worldwide is efforts to restrict their access to abortions. In 2019, seven states in the US enacted abortion bans once a foetal heartbeat is detected, which is around six weeks (Reingold & Gostin, 2019). These bans can lead to imprisonment for any medical professional who performs the procedure and penalties for the woman accessing the abortion (Reingold & Gostin, 2019). In Ireland, up until May 2018, abortion was illegal unless there was a risk to the woman's life, with all cases potentially resulting in up to 14 years imprisonment (Taylor et al., 2020). In Poland, despite already only allowing abortions in three scenarios: foetal abnormalities, the threat to the women's health, and incest or rape, the government planned to pass a ruling only allowing abortions for "lethal" abnormalities (Pronczuk, 2020). However, due to mass protests, the likes of which Poland had not seen since 1980, the legislation was halted (Pronczuk, 2020).

1.3 Silencing Women

Throughout history, women have often been excluded from constructing language, reality, and history, which Spender (1980) states has been no accident. The magazine, *Slate*, examined 614 popular history books listed on the 2015 New York Times non-fiction

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bestseller list and found that men wrote 75.8% of these books (Kahn & Onion, 2016). Of the 21% that were biographies, 71.7% were about men (Kahn & Onion, 2016). Interestingly, 69% of female authors wrote about female historical figures, while only 6% of men wrote about women (Kahn & Onion, 2016). As Spender (1980) says in their seminal work *Man Made Language*:

Women have ‘made’ just as much ‘history’ as men but it has not been codified and transmitted; women have probably done just as much writing as men but it has not been preserved; and women, no doubt, have generated as many meanings as men, but these have not survived (p. 53).

As institutions of knowledge, and information storage and dissemination, have been historically controlled by men, despite women writing their histories, men have allowed these histories to be suppressed and forgotten (Spender, 1980).

One way in which male social dominance has been maintained, historically and across cultures, is by the separation of public and private social spheres; women are relegated to the private domain (i.e., the home) while men control the public domain (Megarry, 2014), patterns which remain relevant today. Not only does this separation urge women to become mothers and housewives while men go out and work and become involved in politics (Oxford Reference, n.d.), but it also allows for domestic violence, child abuse, infidelity, and emotional abuse to occur in private, out of the public eye and to become harder to “prove” (Rogers, 1998).

A by-product of centuries of relegating women to the home and the “private” sphere has resulted in the continued underrepresentation of women in politics worldwide. In Australia, of the 227 Federal Senators and Members of Parliament, around 38% are women (Parliament of Australia, n.d.); in the US, just over a quarter of the 117th congress are women, and while this is still a relatively small number, it is a 50% increase from a decade ago

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(Blazina & Desilver, 2021). Globally, women make up only 25.5% of parliaments (IPU Parline, 2021), and only 22 countries have female Heads of State (UN Women, 2021). Not only are women underrepresented in politics, but women who seek to become active in politics, whether as a politician or simply as a political activist, are often met with hostility, bullying, and violence in an attempt to thwart their efforts to become politically engaged (Krook, 2017).

Women are not only targeted outside of parliament but inside as well. Brittany Higgins, a former Liberal Party of Australia (LP) political staffer, and three other anonymous women recently accused a male colleague of rape, with Higgins' assault occurring inside the Australian Parliament (Stayner, 2021). Further, UK politician Jo Cox was stabbed 15 times and shot three times by a man who claimed he killed Cox for "political and/or ideological reasons" and claimed to be a political activist (BBC News, 2016). These stories are, unfortunately, not isolated. Zainab Fatuma Naigaga, an opposition party member in Uganda, was arrested at a political rally and later stripped down in public to nothing but her headscarf (Kaaya, 2015), while Juana Quispe, a councilwoman from Bolivia, was found dead following pressure to resign after she helped female colleagues file harassment complaints (Krook & Sanín, 2016). Another area where women are continuously silenced is their experiences of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape.

1.4 Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault and Rape

Definitions of sexual harassment vary within psychological and legal settings, giving rise to many debates (Fitzgerald et al., 1997). Section 1.4.1 provides a more detailed discussion about varying definitions between and within nations and how definitions have changed over time. Throughout this dissertation, a broad definition of sexual harassment as specified by Diehl et al. (2014) is utilised: "unwanted, sexually connoted behavior that aims

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at or leads to reducing a target person to her or his gender, as well as behavior involving gender-based devaluation and violation of a target person's dignity” (p. 489).

Definitions of sexual assault are similarly varied. For this research, the following definition from the Australian and New Zealand Standard Offence Classification (ANZSOC; 2011) is used:

Physical contact, or intent of contact, of a sexual nature directed toward another person where that person does not give consent, gives consent as a result of intimidation or deception, or consent is proscribed (i.e., the person is legally deemed incapable of giving consent because of youth, temporary/permanent [mental] incapacity or there is a familial relationship). (p. 33)

In many instances, the terms sexual assault and rape are used interchangeably (ALRC, 2010b); however, for this research, they are used separately, with rape defined according to the definition outlined by the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s *Uniform Crime Report* (2014):

Penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim (p. 1).

1.4.1 The History of Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault and Rape

Sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape, date back centuries. For example, Black women frequently endured sexual coercion during slavery and received no protection from the law, while employed women in the late 19th and early 20th century reported various instances in which men made sexual advances towards them, ranging from unwanted physical contact to assault (Siegel, 2003).

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Women's organisations in Australia, such as the Women's Electoral Lobby, began demanding legal recognition of sex discrimination in the 1970s due to viewing the recognition of sex discrimination as a means to address, not only discrimination, but also sexual harassment. However, it was not until 1981 that Senator Susan Ryan from the Australian Labour Party introduced a bill to prohibit sex and marital status discrimination, which failed to gain support from the incumbent Australian LP government (Mason & Chapman, 2003). The 1983 election saw a change in government, and Senator Ryan introduced a second Sex Discrimination Bill which, following heated debate and compromise, was enacted in 1984 (Mason & Chapman, 2003). Similar movements during the 1970s and 1980s occurred in the US, with women coming together to demand the law recognise sexual harassment as the form of discrimination it was, and still is (Siegel, 2003).

Under the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Commonwealth), sexual harassment is a legally recognised form of discrimination in Australia. Similar laws exist in the US with the *Civil Rights Act of 1964* and the *Equality Act 2010* in the UK, both of which have made sexual harassment in the workplace illegal. Despite existing laws making sexual harassment illegal, many people fail to see the full scope of the issue. A 2018 survey conducted in the US and Europe found that, on average, all respondents underestimated the number of people who have experienced sexual harassment, men more so than women (Ipsos, 2018). Further, there are gender differences in perceptions of sexual harassment against women, as a study conducted in Australia with white-collar workers found men to be more tolerant of workplace sexual harassment than women (McCabe & Hardman, 2005).

Unfortunately, sexual harassment is often not taken seriously within society, as evidenced by the fact that sexual harassment is often used as material in television programs. For example, over 56 episodes of five different situation comedy television programs that aired on the US television station NBC between 1997 and 1998 were analysed to measure the

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frequency of harassment (Montemurro, 2003). Results showed an average of 4 instances of sexual harassment per episode (Montemurro, 2003), while more recent research examining US medical television programs found 62 instances of sexual harassment in 80 episodes (Ramedani et al., 2020). The use of sexual harassment as material in television programs is problematic as it may lead to the further trivialisation of sexual harassment within society (Montemurro, 2003).

The laws regarding rape have been historically problematic for women and written mainly by men. One of the first set of written laws, the Code of Hammurabi, dates back to around 1780 BCE and states that if a virgin was raped, the act was considered property damage for her father, whereas if a married woman was raped, she was guilty of adultery and would be executed (Smith, 2004). Also, the Old Testament states that should a man rape a woman, he is to pay her father and then marry her (New International Version, 2011, Deuteronomy 22:28-29). Additionally, early laws ignored the rape of Black women within the US (Cocca, 2004) and, up until the 1990s, many states in the US still considered a woman's sexual history when deciding her innocence (Eichelberger, 2012).

In Australia and the US, rape is a state rather than a federal issue, and, as a result, the definitions and terminology used can vary greatly within these countries. In Australia, the state of New South Wales (NSW) uses the term sexual assault, with the offence defined as:

Any person who has sexual intercourse with another person without the consent of the other person and who knows that the other person does not consent to the sexual intercourse is liable to imprisonment for 14 years. (Fileborn, 2011b, p. 1)

Therefore, this definition does not cover instances of sexual assault that do not include rape (Fileborn, 2011b). The only other Australian state to include a similar definition of sexual assault to NSW is Queensland (Fileborn, 2011b). However, legal loopholes in this state make it one of the hardest jurisdictions to achieve justice, as the mistake of fact defence allows

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perpetrators to claim that they had an honest - but mistaken - belief that there was consent, including because they were intoxicated due to alcohol or illicit substances (Prezel & Marsh, 2019).

Similarly, in California, rape falls under sexual assault (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network [RAINN], 2020a), while in Texas and New York, rape is a separate offence (RAINN, 2020c; RAINN, 2020b). There are also issues regarding the terminology used in laws surrounding rape in the UK but for different reasons. Under the *Sexual Offences Act 2003*, a person commits rape if “he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person with his penis”, this definition, however, makes it impossible for a woman to rape a man or even another woman (McKeever, 2018).

There have been many reforms to the conceptualisation of sexual assault within legal systems worldwide. As previously mentioned, historically, women raped by their husbands were not considered by the law to have experienced sexual assault. Instead, this behaviour was viewed as a property offence as women were considered the property of their father or husband and experiencing sexual assault made a woman “less valuable” to her father or the sexual assault was viewed as damaging the husband’s property (Fileborn, 2011a). This notion remained in Australian law until the 1980s (Fileborn, 2011a; ARLC, 2010a) and in the US until the last states to repeal these laws, Oklahoma and North Carolina, removed them in 1993 (Stanley, 2020). Additionally, there has been a move away from the belief that unless a woman showed active, physical resistance, she was not sexually assaulted (Fileborn, 2011a). Consent, the circumstances of the assault and the assertion that submission is not a demonstration of consent became more relevant (Fileborn, 2011a).

Unfortunately, some individuals in government have very reductive views of rape and sexual assault, usually as a way to further restrict abortion access for women who have become pregnant as the result of rape. For example, former US Republican Todd Akin once

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said, when asked whether abortion was justified in cases of rape, “if it’s a legitimate rape, the female body has ways to try to shut the whole thing [pregnancy] down” (Mikkelson, 2014, para. 10). Another former US Republican, Rick Santorum, once said that women who found themselves pregnant following rape should “make the best out of a bad situation” (Mikkelson, 2014, para. 22). Most disturbingly, female US Republican Jodie Laubenberg said that abortion bills did not need exemptions for rape and incest victims because “they have what’s called rape kits, that the woman can get cleaned out” (Mikkelson, 2014, para. 38), confusing rape kits with the dilation and curettage procedure where tissue is removed from the uterus after a miscarriage (Mayo Clinic, 2019). Despite laws enacted worldwide to prevent sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape, they still frequently occur.

1.4.2 Prevalence of Sexual Harassment and Assault

Within Australia, 1 in 2 women is reported to have experienced sexual harassment at some time in their lives, with those aged 18-24 years more likely to have experienced sexual harassment than older cohorts (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2016). In the US, 77% of women report experiencing verbal sexual harassment, while 41% of women report experiencing sexual harassment online (Kearl, 2018).

In the UK, 20% of women have experienced sexual assault since the age of 16 years (Flatley, 2017), with 85,000 women aged 16-59 years old reported to experience rape or attempted rape every year (Ministry of Justice, Home Office & Office for National Statistics, 2013). In the US, 1 in 5 women has experienced rape or attempted rape (Smith et al., 2018), while 1 in 2 women has experienced sexual assault (Breiding et al., 2014). In Australia, the terms sexual assault and rape are combined by most government organisations researching these experiences, making it challenging to gather separate statistics. However, in 2018, 26,312 people reported a sexual assault to the police, 84% of whom were female (ABS,

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2019). These inconsistencies with definitions, terminology, and loopholes make the legal system challenging to navigate, and the ability to seek justice seem unreachable, all of which can lead to the under-reporting of sexual assault.

1.4.2.1 Gender and Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault and Rape. While women are more likely to experience sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape, men also face such experiences. In Australia, 1 in 4 men is reported to have experienced sexual harassment (ABS, 2016), while, in the US, that figure climbs to an estimated 34% (Kearl, 2018). Additionally, 4% of men have experienced sexual assault in the UK (Flatley, 2017), while around 12,000 men experience rape, or attempted rape, every year (Ministry of Justice, Home Office & Office for National Statistics, 2013). In Australia, 16% of the sexual assault cases reported to police in 2016 involved a male victim (ABS, 2019).

Literature regarding male victims of sexual harassment and assault is limited. This paucity can be attributed to the misplaced belief within society that men cannot be victims, as evident by the fact that until 1994, men were excluded as victims in the legal definition of rape in the UK, and despite federal law in the US defining sexual abuse in gender-neutral terms since 1986, not all jurisdictions have adopted this (Bullock & Beckson, 2011). Within society, men are believed to always desire sex; this makes it difficult for them to be perceived as “victims”, especially in cases involving female perpetrators (Smith, 2012), and physiological reactions from men (i.e., erections and ejaculation) are wrongfully perceived to signify consent, further perpetuating misconceptions (Fuchs, 2004).

Research has also shown that male victims of sexual assault differ from female victims. For example, men are more likely to be assaulted by a stranger, more likely to be assaulted by more than one person, more likely to be drug raped (Larsen & Hilden, 2016), and it often takes male victims longer to access mental health services than female victims (McLean, 2013).

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Unfortunately, in regard to the perception of male victims of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape, men frequently do not support other men. Research has shown that men are less likely than women to perceive female-perpetrated sexual harassment against a male as sexual harassment (Runtz & O'Donnell, 2006) and also more likely to blame male victims of sexual assault (Burt & DeMello, 2003; Davies et al., 2006; Davies & Rogers, 2006). Such perceptions have been attributed to gender roles; as men are more likely to endorse traditional views about masculinity than women, they are more likely to hold a negative view towards male victims of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape (Davies & Rogers, 2006). All of these negative perceptions may contribute to male rape victims significantly under-reporting their experiences to the police (Javaid, 2015; Weiss, 2010)

While men experience sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape, women remain the primary victims of such experiences, and, as a result, the current research focuses on male perpetrated sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape against female victims.

1.4.3 Impact of Sexual Harassment and Assault

Experiencing sexual harassment and assault can have many adverse impacts on victims. Research has shown that experiencing sexual assault can lead to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, substance abuse, sexual dysfunction, social difficulties, and suicidality (Mason & Lodrick, 2013). Further, the probability of developing PTSD following rape is 49% and 23.7% for other forms of sexual assault with these traumatic events accounting for more PTSD cases than any other traumatic event, including being physically assaulted (31.9%) or shot or stabbed (15.4 %; Breslau et al., 1998). The type of rape a woman experiences can also influence the severity of the trauma response; being raped by an acquaintance is often far more traumatic than experiencing stranger rape (Temple et al., 2007; Ullman & Siegel, 1993). Research has also shown that being assaulted by a group

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(Möller et al., 2014), being injured (Kirlpatrick et al., 1989; Möller et al., 2014), and a combination of forcible and drug-or-alcohol facilitated rape (McConnell et al., 2020; Zinzow et al., 2011) leads to higher levels of PTSD.

Sexual harassment has also been shown to adversely impact victims' health. Among middle and high school students, experiencing sexual harassment from peers has been shown to have a wide variety of impacts, including lower academic outcomes (Lichty & Campbell, 2012), social avoidance (Duffy et al., 2004), lower-self-esteem and body image (Gruber & Fineran, 2008), loss of appetite and dieting (Chiodo et al., 2009), and self-injury (Chiodo et al., 2009; Marshall et al., 2013).

Similar results are seen among individuals who experience workplace sexual harassment. Houle et al. (2011) conducted a longitudinal study with men and women who had experienced workplace sexual harassment and found that depressive symptoms following sexual harassment continued for up to a decade. Additionally, sexual harassment in the workplace can adversely affect job satisfaction, psychological wellbeing, and physical health (Chan et al., 2008). As a result of sexual harassment, many women may quit their job, which can have long-term consequences for their career. For example, qualitative and longitudinal research conducted by McLaughlin and colleagues (2017) found that a job change following sexual harassment in the workplace causes women financial stress. Additionally, this job change can also result in the stifling of women's career advancement; some women become reclusive after experiences of workplace sexual harassment, and others are pushed to less lucrative careers where they believed sexual harassment would be less likely to occur (McLaughlin et al., 2017).

On top of these adverse impacts of experiencing sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape, most women never receive justice for what happened to them because most do not report their harassment, assault or rape to the relevant authorities. Contributing factors to the

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under-reporting of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape will be discussed in the following section.

1.4.4 Under-Reporting of Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault and Rape

Despite the high prevalence, victims rarely report sexual assault to the relevant authorities. Wolitzky-Taylor et al. (2011a) found that only 15.8% of women's most recent (or only) rape experiences were reported to the police, while Belknap (2010) estimated that, in the US, at least 90% of all rape cases are never reported to the police. Additionally, research from the past decade estimated that only 5-30% of individuals who experience workplace sexual harassment report their harassment to their employers, and less than 1% pursue legal action (McDonald, 2012).

Several reasons appear to contribute to the under-reporting of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape. Those who experience workplace sexual harassment say they did not report for fear of being blamed or fearing retaliation (McDonald, 2012), with victims who report often fired (Dubose, 2021; Foster, 2021), contributing to fear in future victims and preventing them from reporting. These fears are not misplaced, as Hart (2019) found that participants were less likely to recommend for promotion a woman who self-reported sexual harassment than a woman who experienced nonsexual harassment or a woman whose sexual harassment was reported by a co-worker. Furthermore, Hart (2019) also found a bias against women who self-reported sexual harassment but not a bias against those who had experienced sexual harassment, supporting the notion that sexual harassment is an entrenched part of the workplace and women are penalised when they report harassment.

When surveyed by Fisher et al. (2003) about why they did not report their sexual assault, 81.7% of college women said they believed it was not serious enough, 42.1% were not sure if a crime had occurred, 30% did not believe the police would think the incident was

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serious enough, around 20% did not want their family and friends to know, and 19% were afraid of retaliation from their assaulter. Seminal research conducted by Kilpatrick and colleagues (1992) found that 69% of women who had been raped were concerned that people would think that it was their fault or that they were responsible in some way, and 66% of victims said they would be more likely to report to the police if there was a law prohibiting the media from collecting and disclosing their name and address.

Many survivors of assault and rape also report experiencing a ‘second victimisation’ during the investigation, which refers to the upsetting and degrading way law enforcement and the court system treat some victims (Patterson, 2010). When an individual reaches out for assistance following a sexual assault, they place trust in medical and/or legal systems and how these systems respond to their help-seeking can have a significant impact on their recovery (Campbell, 2013). Receiving insensitive treatment can add to feelings of powerlessness and shame (Campbell, 2013). Victims who report their sexual assault to the police can expect to answer intimate questions regarding the details of their assault, which victims often report stray into questions regarding their clothing, sexual history, and whether they sexually responded during the assault, questions which make victims uncomfortable (Campbell, 2013). Should the victim make a report, they then face a high level of case attrition and low levels of conviction, knowledge of which can also contribute to a lack of reporting (Brooks & Burman, 2017).

Situational and individual factors can also influence the reporting of sexual assault. Fisher et al. (2003) found that those assaulted by a stranger rather than an acquaintance were more likely to report. While Bachman (1998) found that where the perpetrator used a weapon or the victim was injured, reporting to the police was more likely. Additionally, where the victim and perpetrator’s race/ethnicity differed, assaults were more likely to be reported, and African American victims were more likely to report than victims who were White or of

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another race/ethnicity (Fisher et al., 2003). Fisher et al. (2003) posited that whether a victim reports their assault to the police is dependent on characteristics that involve demonstrable evidence that an assault had occurred and a stranger committed it.

1.5 Summary

The information presented in this chapter shows that women have long been discriminated against and had their rights suppressed. While most women are now allowed to vote and access education, there is still a long way to go within society. One area where women are still significantly disadvantaged is their frequent victimisation through sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape. The information presented in this chapter shows that these forms of sexual violence have high prevalence rates and detrimental impacts on women and are also significantly under-reported due to the stigma that remains present within society.

The widespread uptake of the Internet and social media platforms provides a new way for women to disclose their experiences of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape. Chapter 2 reviews the use and implications of such platforms for disclosing sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape.

Chapter Two: Social Movements

2.1 Overview

This chapter explores past literature regarding social movements, including definitions and how social movements develop. Additionally, past social movements are discussed along with the social change they facilitated. Social media and the advent of new forms of social movements such as hashtag activism and hashtag feminism are described along with current literature on the #MeToo movement, the focus of this dissertation. Criticisms and backlash received by the #MeToo movement are presented, including questions surround intersectionality and culture and men's involvement with the movement, along with the research aims of the dissertation.

2.2 Social Movements

This section will explore the literature surrounding social movements and provide details about past social movements that have created significant and lasting societal change. Additionally, social media's role in social movements, including the emergence of hashtag activism and hashtag feminism, will be discussed.

2.2.1 Defining, Developing and Becoming Involved in Social Movements

Social movements are complex yet important phenomena. To better understanding their workings, this section will define social movements and explore how they develop within society. Finally, how individuals become involved in social movements will be discussed.

2.2.1.1 Defining Social Movements. Social movements are a complex phenomenon, defined by Aberle (1966) as "...an organized effort by a group of human beings to effect change in the face of resistance by other human beings" (p. 315). Expressing support for a

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cause, addressing collective problems, and tackling sources of public grievances are not enough to be considered a social movement. A social movement must involve challenging the behaviour and/or the legitimacy of specific social and political opponents (Diani, 2012).

Snow (2013) describes six key aspects that define a social movement: 1) all movements are change-oriented in the sense that they seek or oppose change; 2) movements are challengers to, or defenders of, existing institutional structures or systems of authority; 3) movements are collective, rather than individual, enterprises; 4) they act outside of existing institutional or organisational arrangements, although to varying degrees; 5) they operate with some degree of organisation; 6) social movements typically display some degree of temporal continuity – while they may be episodic, they are not fleeting.

Anthropologist Aberle (1966) theorised that there are four types of social movements (see Figure 2.1). The type of social movements is dependent upon how much change is being sought and whom the movement is attempting to change (Aberle, 1966).

Figure 2.1

Aberle's (1966) Types of Social Movements

		How Much Change?	
		<i>Limited</i>	<i>Radical</i>
Who is Changed?	<i>Specific Individuals</i>	Alternative	Redemptive
	<i>Everyone</i>	Reformative	Revolutionary

Alterative social movements seek to make limited change to specific individuals (Aberle, 1966). An example of an alternative social movement is Alcoholics Anonymous, which seeks to change the relationship between an individual and alcohol. Redemptive social movements seek to generate radical change in specific individuals (Aberle, 1966). For

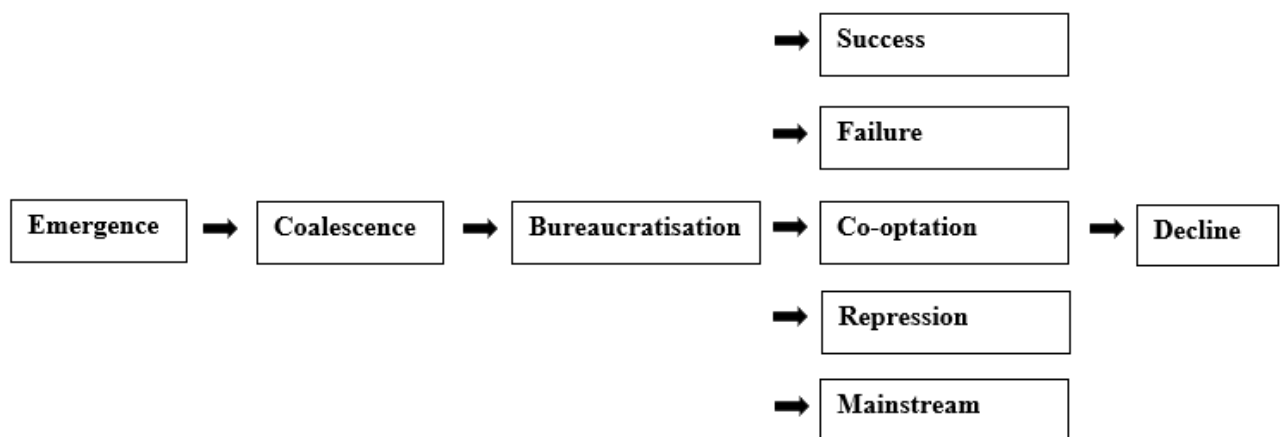
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example, many religious sects can be considered redemptive movements. Reformative movements seek limited change in everyone (Aberle, 1966), as with many changes urged by environmental groups that encourage society to make small changes like recycling and reducing plastic use to help save the environment. Finally, revolutionary social movements seek to produce radical changes in everyone; a prime example of this kind of movement is the Civil Rights Movement in the US, which aimed to radically change prejudicial attitudes and behaviours in the entire population.

2.2.1.2 Development of a Social Movement. Herbert Blumer (1969) identified a four-stage lifecycle of a social movement, which subsequent researchers have now refined to be emergence, coalescence, bureaucratisation, and decline (Christiansen, 2009; see Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2

Four Stages of a Social Movement, Adapted from Christiansen (2009).



In the first stage, emergence, social movements have no organisation and are simply considered as widespread discontent, where potential participants are unhappy with some aspect of society but have not taken any action against this issue (Christiansen, 2009). In the second stage, coalescence, the causes of discontent and the action needed becomes clearer (della Porta & Diani, 2006), no longer is there an individual sense of unhappiness

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surrounding a societal issue; the unrest becomes collective (Christiansen, 2009). At this stage, leaders emerge, and mass protests may occur to demonstrate the movement's power and highlight the group's demands (Christiansen, 2009). The third stage, bureaucratization, is when the movement's aims become solidified by the creation of a formal organisation (della Porta & Diani, 2006) and the movement can no longer rely on leaders and mass rallies to achieve its goals; it must rely on skilled staff members to carry out the movement's objectives (Christiansen, 2009). Many movements that do not reach the bureaucratisation phase fail because participants cannot maintain continued mobilisation (Christiansen, 2009). The final stage of a social movement is decline. However, this does not necessarily mean failure (Christiansen, 2009).

Miller (1999) argues that social movements can decline in four potential ways: repression, co-optation, success, and failure. Repression occurs when authorities use measures to control or destroy a movement, such as passing legislation making it illegal to engage in certain activities, while co-optation occurs when the leader chosen to represent a social movement begins to associate with the target of the movement more so than with the movement itself (Miller, 1999). Some movements decline because they are successful and have achieved their specific goals, while others decline due to organisation failure within the social movement (Miller, 1999). While social movements progress through many stages and face many barriers, there are examples of tangible societal change resulting from past social movements (see section 2.2.2). As well as understanding the types of social movement and how they develop, it is essential to understand how individuals become involved in a social movement.

2.2.1.3 Becoming Involved in a Social Movement. Research has shown that people become involved with social movements and activism with varying levels of continuity

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(Corrigan-Brown, 2011). Therefore, it is essential to understand how individuals become involved in a social movement.

Researchers have theorised that individual factors, including their ideologies, available resources, biographical availability, and social networks, determine whether someone becomes engaged with a social movement (Corrigan-Brown, 2011). Further, Passy and Giugni (2001) found that the more an individual perceived their involvement with a social movement to be effective, the more likely they were to become involved. Additionally, individuals recruited by someone in their social network with *strong* ties to the social movement were more likely to become involved (Passy & Giugni, 2001).

Important research conducted by Klandermans and Oegema (1987) has determined that there is a four-step process to becoming a participant in a social movement (see Figure 2.3). These four steps include: becoming part of the mobilisation potential, becoming the target of mobilisation attempts, becoming motivated to participate, and overcoming barriers to participation (Klandermans & Oegema, 1987). The first step, becoming part of the mobilisation potential, refers to individuals within society that can be mobilised to become part of a social movement due to their positive stance towards the beliefs or goals of the movement (Klandermans & Oegema, 1987). Individuals who are not part of the mobilisation potential will not consider engaging with the social movement, even if specifically sought out by those in the movement (Klandermans & Oegema, 1987). The second step involves how an individual becomes a target of attempts to be mobilised within the social movement.

Targeting can occur in several ways, including through mass media, direct communication, their ties with an organisation, or through friends (Klandermans & Oegema, 1987). The third step, becoming motivated to participate, involves a cost and benefit analysis by the individual to determine whether the benefits of engaging with the social movement outweigh any negatives they may experience (Klandermans & Oegema, 1987). The final step involves the

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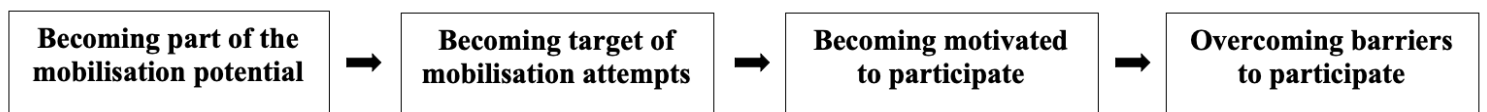
individual overcoming any barriers that may prevent them from becoming a participant of the social movement, with more motivated individual's able to overcome higher barriers

(Klandermans & Oegema, 1987).

Figure 2.3

The Four Stages of Becoming a Participant of a Social Movement, Adapted from

Klandermans and Oegema (1987)



The information presented in this section shows that whether an individual will become involved in a social movement is not solely determined by individual factors but can also be influenced by perceptions of the movement. Involvement with social movements is important because such movements have led to significant and meaningful societal changes throughout history.

2.2.2 Past Social Movements That Have Created Significant Change

It is vital to acknowledge the significant social changes that have arisen from social movements. Therefore, this section will discuss historical social movements, primarily focusing on the Suffrage movement, while also exploring the impact of more recent social movements. Additionally, to frame the topic of this dissertation, the four waves of feminism will be discussed.

2.2.2.1 Examples of Significant Historical Social Movements. Throughout history, many social movements have existed, the Civil Rights movement in the US being one of the most powerful. The Civil Rights movement emerged in the 1950s due to widespread racism and inequality faced by Black people in the US (Andrews, 2013). The Civil Rights movement

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lead to desegregation and lasting cultural change and, as a result, is heavily examined by academics interested in social movements (Andrews, 2013). Additionally, the Stonewall riots occurred on June 28th 1969, when police raided the Stonewall Inn, a prominent gay bar in New York City, and the patrons initiated a riot that lasted well into the next day (Armstrong & Cragge, 2013). The Stonewall riots are often considered the beginning of the gay liberation movement in the US (Armstrong & Cragge, 2013). However, the historic social movement that will be discussed in detail due to its relevance to the focal topic of this dissertation is the Suffrage movement.

As previously mentioned in section 1.2.1, women were barred from voting for most of history. The Suffrage movement emerged in the late 1800s, and in 1904, the International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA) was formed (Mead, 2013). While many of the tactics employed by suffragettes to help women obtain the vote were commonly seen within politics, for example, lobbying, petitioning, picketing, and even utilising pageants (The Library of Congress, n.d.), some suffragettes took a more extreme approach. Those that some have labelled “militant suffragettes” in the UK took to smashing windows, cutting telephone wires, burning down houses, and destroying art galleries and museums (Griffin, 2018; Thompson, 2016). Many women were imprisoned and force-fed to break their hunger strikes (Purvis & Hannam, 2020), while Emily Davidson died after throwing herself under the King’s horse at the Epsom Derby in 1913 (British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC], 2014).

New Zealand became the first country to grant women suffrage in 1893, with Australia following soon after in 1902 at a federal level; however, individual states granted the right much earlier, with South Australia becoming the first in 1894 (Mead, 2013). Women in the UK received the right to vote in 1918, and women in the US won the right in 1920 (Miller, 2020). Notably, it was primarily White women who were able to vote, as Indigenous women in Australia did not receive that right until 1962 (Tarrant, 1996), and non-White

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women in the US did not receive the right to vote until the passing of the *Voting Rights Act* in 1965 (Britannica, 2020). While social movements such as the Civil Rights movement and Suffrage movement have created significant, lasting changes within society, other, smaller and more recent movements have also created social change.

2.2.2.2 Examples of Recent Significant Social Movements. Social movements have the potential to create social change in various ways. The Arab Spring protests throughout Middle Eastern countries is a prime example of the possibility of change. On December 17th 2010, 26-year-old Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire in Sidi Bouzid, Tunisia, due to a municipal officer confiscating his fruit cart and publicly humiliating him (Moss, 2013). Protests began almost immediately following Bouazizi's self-immolation, as his death was a symbol of the frustration of the poor in Tunisia; however, the protests were not isolated to the lower class, as trade unionists also staged strikes that were later joined by the professional middle class when 8,000 lawyers marched in support of the movement (Bayat, 2017).

These uprisings eventually resulted in the President of Tunisia, Ben Ali, who had been in power since 1987, fleeing to Saudi Arabia (Moss, 2013). Following a peaceful election in October 2011, the previously banned Islamist Al-Nahda party gained control of the parliament, introducing gender quotas to ensure 40% of the new parliament were women (Moss, 2013). Similar protests occurred throughout the Middle East, including in Egypt, Yemen, Libya, Syria, and Bahrain, resulting in the transfer of power in these countries (Bayat, 2017; Moss, 2013). The Arab Spring shows the ability of social movements to create lasting social and political change.

When thinking about social change resulting from social movements, the mind tends to think of political change. However, there can also be cultural and economic change (Andrews, 2013). For example, research has shown that targeting by activists can result in companies changing their practices and policies to appear more environmentally friendly

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(Lenox & Eesley, 2009), as a company's financial performance is harmed by being perceived as a risk to the environment (Vasi & King, 2012). Additionally, the *Global Corporate Sustainability Report* (Neilson, 2015) showed that the key driving factors behind respondents' brand choices were the company being environmentally friendly and having a commitment to social values (45% and 43% of respondents, respectively).

2.2.2.3 The Waves of Feminism. The Suffrage movement discussed in section 2.2.2.1 can be viewed as a demonstration of feminism. Exploring the entire history of feminism is beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, in considering the sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape of women and social movements to address such behaviours, it is important to have at least some knowledge of feminism and feminist theory. Therefore, a brief summary will be provided here.

The word feminism is believed to have been originated by French philosopher Charles Fourier in the 1830s (Goldstein, 1982; Offen, 1988), and while there were many instances of early displays of feminism throughout history (see LeGates, 2001 and Schrupp & Schrupp, 2017), the first wave of feminism began in the mid-1800s (LeGates, 2001). The goals of the first wave of feminism centred around women's property and status within society, aiming to remove laws that gave husbands control over their wife's education, employment, and health (LeGates, 2001). The Suffrage movement falls under first-wave feminism; however, similar to the complaints of the Suffrage movement, first-wave feminism is often critiqued for its White, middle-class focus (LeGates, 2001).

Second-wave feminism reached its height in the 1960s and 1970s. Spurred on by Betty Friedan's *The Feminist Mystique*, women during this second wave were concerned with equality in education and the workplace along with their reproductive rights (Gosse, 2005). Like first-wave feminism before it, second-wave feminism still struggled with issues of race and class, as White, middle-class women dominated this new wave of feminism, and this

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overabundance of White feminism created a large rift between White feminists and feminists of other races (Brunell & Burkett, 2021; see section 2.3.2.1 for a more in-depth discussion of race and feminism). Between second and third-wave feminism, many prominent feminist scholars, including Judith Butler, Bell Hooks (stylised as bell hooks), and Raewyn Connell (Appelrouth & Desfor Edles, 2011), emerged.

Third-wave feminism emerged in the 1990s; however, rather than demanding to become part of the patriarchal society as had been done in previous waves, third-wave feminists sought to sabotage existing power structures and rebuild society (Brunell & Burkett, 2021). Third-wave feminism redefined women as powerful and in control of their sexuality, shown in media such as *Sex and the City*, while the media aimed at children began to show young girls as smart and independent, such as Disney heroine *Mulan* and *The Simpsons* daughter Lisa (Brunell & Burkett, 2021).

The fourth wave of feminism is believed by some to have commenced in the early 2010s and continues at the time of this dissertation (Rivers, 2017). A large focus of fourth-wave feminism is addressing sexual harassment and rape culture within society. For example, in April 2012, after experiencing one too many sexist incidents, Laura Bates started a website where women could anonymously share their experiences of everyday sexism (Bates, 2014). The #MeToo movement, the focus of the current research, is another example of a fourth-wave feminist movement (see section 2.3 for a detailed discussion).

2.2.3 Social Media

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (n.d.) defines social media as “websites and applications which enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking” (para. 87). While early social media sites date back to the 1970s, it was not until

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the 2000s when the social media platforms known today emerged, with MySpace in 2003, Facebook in 2004, YouTube in 2005, and Twitter in 2006 (Edosomwan, 2011).

Social media reach cannot be denied, with an estimated 4.2 billion people worldwide using social media platforms in 2021, which is over half the global population and a 13% increase from the previous year (Kemp, 2021). People spend an average of 2 hours and 25 minutes on social media platforms per day, with Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp being the most used platforms (Kemp, 2021).

Social media platforms can be a complex phenomenon, conferring both benefits and harms to women. These sites are often used as platforms to anonymously harass and abuse women, who often experience name-calling, rape and death threats, and doxing (Mendes et al., 2019), which is the act of publishing private information about someone to cause harm (Faruqi, 2019). However, social media platforms simultaneously offer women a place to connect, form communities, raise awareness about issues, disrupt the male gaze, and publicise instances of injustice and misogyny (Baer, 2016). These platforms offer “great potential for broadly disseminating feminist ideas, shaping new modes of discourse about gender and sexism, connecting to different constituencies, and allowing creative modes of protest to emerge” (Baer, 2016, p. 18). Therefore, it is unsurprising that social media platforms have become a tool for social movements with the emergence of hashtag activism.

2.2.4 Hashtag Activism

Hashtag activism involves using the hashtag function on social media platforms to advocate for various social causes, such as humanitarian causes, environmental issues, or political debates (Moscato, 2016). One of the first noted instances of hashtag activism is the aforementioned Arab Spring protests throughout the Middle East, where social media platforms spread information about what was occurring within these countries (Moss, 2013).

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Since then, many other forms of hashtag activism have been witnessed. The Black Lives Matter movement is one of the most prominent examples of hashtag activism.

In 2013, George Zimmerman was acquitted of the murder of a Black teenager, Trayvon Martin. When the verdict was released, the first instance of #BlackLivesMatter (#BLM) appeared on social media (Ince et al., 2017). The initiators of the movement called #BLM a response to the structural anti-Black racism that runs rampant in the US (Sawyer & Gampa, 2018). Since Trayvon Martin's death, a string of Black people killed by police has further added fuel to the #BLM fire. These deaths include those of Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Walter Scott, Alton Sterling, Philando Castile, Stephon Clark, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd (BBC News, 2021). There have also been widespread protests in most major US cities (Sawyer & Gampa, 2018), the latest being after Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin killed George Floyd by kneeling on his neck until he could no longer breathe (Tomazin, 2020).

Importantly, research has shown that the #BLM movement has positively impacted the US population. Sawyer and Gampa (2018) found that following #BLM, implicit pro-White attitudes had decreased. The authors also confirmed that this was not a result of a historical downward trend, as pro-White attitudes increased during the Obama administration (Sawyer & Gampa, 2018).

Despite these positive outcomes, academia has not always viewed hashtag activism in a positive light. This form of activism has previously been labelled "slacktivism" because engaging with social issues via social media requires minimal time and effort and a lack of action (Glenn, 2015). Others have used the term "clicktivism" to define similar online participation methods, i.e., online petitions, content sharing, and "liking" (Halupka, 2014), with the criticism that these forms of "clicktivism" provide little real-world impact (George & Leidner, 2019).

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One of the most significant challenges with previous non-online social movements has been encouraging people to attend protests and events, especially with the threat of opposition from those in power (Opp, 2009; Zeitzoff, 2017). However, social media platforms circumvent this challenge allowing people to be active in a social movement from within their home (Zeitzoff, 2017). Additionally, social media platforms allow activists to easily publicise wrongs committed by those in the opposition and provide easy connection between activists while also lowering coordination and communication costs and assist in raising funds (Juris, 2005; Zeitzoff, 2017).

However, it is important to recognise that hashtag activism is not a perfect solution. Research has shown class inequalities when it comes to using the Internet for activism, with working-class members much less likely to engage in online forms of activism as a result of the skills, time, and access barriers they face compared with their middle- and upper-class counterparts (Schradie, 2018). Additionally, research has shown that computer access leads to more successful online activism; however, many marginalised groups are forced to rely solely on a smartphone to access the Internet, thus limiting the effectiveness of the activism attempt (George & Leidner, 2018).

2.2.4.1 Hashtag Feminism. One important form of hashtag activism is “hashtag feminism”, referring to the way feminists can utilise the hashtag function on Twitter to produce conversation among different users (Mendes et al., 2019). Some researchers have labelled hashtag feminism as the “latest iteration in a long history of feminist conversation-expansion tactics that politicize personal experiences with all forms of patriarchy, including media” (Clark, 2014, p. 1109). Others state that the use of hashtagging for feminist purposes is the “new wave” of feminism (Dixon, 2014).

Previous examples of hashtag feminism include #YouOkSis, #YesAllWomen, and #WhyIStayed. Black women in the US started #YouOkSis as a way for fellow Black women

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to share their experiences of public sexual harassment or assault (Conley, 2017) while also urging others to ask those they see experiencing public abuse to ask, “You ok, Sis?” (Rentschler, 2017). The hashtag #YesAllWomen arose after a shooting in California, where the shooter had created a manifesto detailing his hatred of women (Thrift, 2014) and explained that the shooting was an act of revenge against women for those who had refused his sexual advances (Rodino-Colocino, 2014). The hashtag #YesAllWomen served as a rebuttal to the argument that “not all men” commit acts of sexual violence against women, but all women have experienced it (Thrift, 2014). Moreover, the #WhyIStayed hashtag went viral following footage released showing American NFL player Ray Rice assaulting and dragging his fiancé, Janay Palmer, out of a lift by her hair and the subsequent media coverage critiquing Palmer for eventually marrying Rice (Clark, 2016). #WhyIStayed was used to show the complexity of domestic violence and urge individuals and the media to avoid victim-blaming women in domestic violence situations (Clark, 2016).

These hashtags provide a voice to marginalised groups and often contain a call to action, encouraging individuals and society to take immediate action or form in opposition to mainstream media (Yang, 2016). Women use various tactics on social media for hashtag activism, including humour and sarcasm, denouncing misogyny, and the use of first-person personal experiences that intensify in high numbers (Myles, 2019). The latter was most prominent during the display of hashtag feminism that is the focus of the current dissertation: the #MeToo movement.

2.3 The #MeToo Movement

In 2006, activist Tarana Burke developed a non-profit organisation called “Just Be In”, where she worked with fellow Black women who were survivors of sexual assault (Trott, 2020). During this work, she first used the phrase “me too” to let these women know that

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they were not alone with their experiences of sexual assault (Brockes, 2018; Trott, 2020).

Over a decade later, this phrase would become a viral phenomenon.

On October 5th 2017, *The New York Times* published an article detailing the alleged sexual harassment of actress Ashley Judd and several other women by film producer Harvey Weinstein. This article sparked a wave of support for Judd, with additional women coming forward to tell their stories of encounters with Weinstein, including Lupita Nyong'o (Nyong'o, 2017), Angelina Jolie, and Gwyneth Paltrow (Kantor & Abrams, 2017).

On October 16th 2017, eleven days after the initial article published by The New York Times, actress Alyssa Milano sent out a Tweet urging women worldwide to use the hashtag #MeToo if they had ever experienced sexual harassment or abuse. In the first 24 hours after Alyssa Milano's call to action, the hashtag was used approximately half a million times (France, 2017). Between October 16th 2017 and September 30th 2018, the hashtag #MeToo was used 19 million times, while 65% of adult social media users in the US said they regularly see content related to sexual harassment and assault (Anderson & Toor, 2018).

In the months following, several other prominent men within the entertainment industry were accused of sexual misconduct, including Kevin Spacey (Vary, 2017), Louis CK (Grow, 2017), Dustin Hoffman (Hunter, 2017), and Craig McLachlan (McClymont, 2018). As a result of this wave of allegations, on January 1st 2018, Hollywood women announced that they had joined forces to form the Time's Up Legal Defence Fund to assist in funding legal action for people who had experienced harassment or assault in the workplace or while trying to advance their career but who would otherwise be unable to seek legal recourse due to financial constraints (Stevens, 2018).

In the years following the initiation of the #MeToo movement, some of those accused during the #MeToo movement have experienced significant repercussions. Producer Harvey Weinstein was charged (McHenry, 2018) and later found guilty of rape and sexual assault in

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New York (ABC News, 2020), while Bill Cosby was also sentenced to 3 to 10 years in prison for his history of sexual assault (Durkin, 2018). Actors Kevin Spacey (Bishop, 2017; Fleming Jr., 2017) and Danny Masterson (Moniuszko, 2017) were fired from their respective TV shows after accusations of sexual assault, while NBC news anchor Matt Lauer was fired following allegations of sexual harassment (NBC News, 2017).

2.3.1 Criticisms and Backlash of the #MeToo Movement

Criticisms of the #MeToo movement did not take long to arise after the hashtag went viral. Nutbeam and Mereish (2021) found in their analysis of tweets, negative attitudes about the #MeToo movement were conveyed in various ways, including by invalidating accusations that were made during #MeToo and showing concerns about the effect of the movement on the status and privilege of men. In the media, people began to label the movement a “witch hunt”, some criticised the movement claiming that, while sexual harassment is a serious issue, some accusations are comparatively small, and experiences were minimised. For example, Dalmia (2017) claims it was unreasonable that a popular radio show in Minnesota was cancelled after the host put his hand on the back of a woman with a loose shirt. Similarly, actor Liam Neeson expressed concern that the #MeToo movement was becoming a witch hunt because he viewed Dustin Hoffman’s actions as minor offences (Nordine, 2018). Others have criticised the movement saying men should be allowed to touch and “hit on” women at work (Pradier & Messer, 2018). Ironically, Woody Allen, who has had allegations of sexual misconduct against him, expressed concern that “every guy in an office who winks at a woman is suddenly having to call a lawyer to defend himself” (Swenson, 2017, para. 8). However, in a *New York Times* opinion piece, West (2017) commented on the views expressed by Allen, saying, “Sure, if you insist, it’s a witch hunt.

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I'm a witch, and I'm hunting you... The witches are coming, but not for your life. We're coming for your legacy" (para. 6 & 11).

Unfortunately, there have been consequences of the #MeToo movement that will adversely impact women. Research in the US found that 60% of male managers are uncomfortable participating in work activities with women, including mentoring, working alone, or socialising, a 32% increase from pre-#MeToo (Lean In, 2018). This response from male managers can be a significant issue as research has shown that having a male mentor or advocate can help women break through the glass ceiling and land positions at an upper management level (Hewlett et al., 2010). There have also been genuine criticisms regarding the intersectionality of the #MeToo movement, specifically regarding its racial and cultural diversity and inclusivity.

2.3.2 Race, Culture, and #MeToo

In this section, the role of race and culture is discussed regarding how it intersects with the #MeToo movement. In the first section, the exclusion of Black women from the #MeToo movement and the importance of acknowledging the role of racialised sexism many women of colour face are discussed. In the second section, the experience and impact of #MeToo in other cultures is explored to show that while the #MeToo movement was a global movement, the way it manifested in each country differs as a result of pre-existing beliefs and societal perceptions regarding women and sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape.

2.3.2.1 Intersectionality and #MeToo. Even though the phrase "Me Too" was started by a Black woman, Tarana Burke, for other Black women who have experienced sexual assault and rape, the #MeToo movement that arose as a result of Alyssa Milano's Tweet received criticism for its lack of intersectionality.

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The concept of intersectionality refers to the “interactivity of social identity structures such as race, class, and gender in fostering life experiences, especially experiences of privilege and oppression” (Gopaldus, 2013, p. 90). There was a push for the #MeToo movement and the White women participating in it to acknowledge racialised sexism that many women of colour face. For instance, Onwuachi-Willig (2018) provided the example of actress Leslie Jones, who received immense abuse on Twitter following being cast in the *Ghostbusters* remake. Jones received unsolicited and sexually explicit images of men and doctored images of herself (Onwuachi-Willig, 2018). However, despite this online sexual harassment, the media often classified her abuse as racism and not sexism, thus ignoring the role her gender played in the abuse (Onwuachi-Willig, 2018).

Further, the #MeToo movement and Milano received backlash from women of colour for co-opting a phrase started by a Black woman and thus, yet again, erasing Black women from a movement they created (Onwuachi-Willig, 2018). The exclusion of Black women in the #MeToo movement reflects the marginalisation Black women have experienced in feminist movements throughout history (Onwuachi-Willig, 2018). White feminists often failed to acknowledge their racism and, as a result, created a limited conceptualisation of women’s discrimination that Black women were not represented in and, therefore, unable to support (Breines, 2006; Ryan, 2019). A tangible example of this exclusion is when *Time* magazine honoured the #MeToo movement and labelled the “Silence Breakers” as the Person of the Year in 2017, yet Burke, the founder of the movement, was not featured on the front cover with the other leaders of the movement, but relegated to inside the magazine (Banet-Wiser, 2018).

There was also a wider critique of how the media treated Black women who had experienced sexual assault compared to White women who had experienced similar abuse. Musician R. Kelly has been the subject of articles and a documentary detailing his sexual

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assault of women and sexual relationships with underage girls, including marrying fellow musician Aaliyah without parental consent when she was 15 years old (Leung & Williams, 2019). Leung and Williams (2019) compared the treatment of the Black women who accused musician R. Kelly of sexual assault, who were shunned and publicly disbelieved, to the treatment of their White female counterparts who accused Harvey Weinstein during the #MeToo movement. Additionally, despite the release of a *Buzzfeed* article detailing R. Kelly's sexual assault of several women three months before the #MeToo movement going viral in October 2017 (DeRogatis, 2017), R. Kelly maintained his record deal and performed for over a year (Tsioulcas, 2019), while Weinstein was fired three days after the first *New York Times* article was published (Twohey, 2017). These stark comparisons show the different ways society reacts to rape and sexual assault allegations from women of colour.

Negative perceptions of Black women and their sexuality can be traced back centuries to the time of slavery, and these negative perceptions continue to influence current perceptions of Black female rape victims and the discrimination they often face (Kennedy, 2003). Studies have shown that prosecutors are less likely to file charges of rape and sexual assault if the victim is Black, and the jury is more likely to believe claims of rape and sexual assault presented by a White woman than a Black woman (Kennedy, 2003).

2.3.2.2 Cultural Differences in #MeToo Participation and Experience. While the #MeToo movement began in the US, the movement spread globally, including to countries with similar beliefs and societal norms, such as Australia and the UK (Fileborn, Loney-Howes, & Hinds, 2019; Rampen, 2018). However, the #MeToo movement also spread to countries culturally different from these “Western” countries, all of whom have a differing societal view regarding sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape.

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Hasunuma and Shin (2019) explored how the #MeToo movement impacted South Korea and Japan, both of which fair poorly regarding women's issues like the gender pay gap and women in leadership. In South Korea, the #MeToo movement inspired hundreds of women to come forward with allegations of sexual harassment and assault, especially Korean women who forced to serve as sex slaves for the Japanese army in World War II (Hasunuma & Shin, 2019). The #MeToo movement was ignited in South Korea with a story from a female prosecutor, Suh Ji-Hyeon, who went on a live news program to publicise the sexual harassment and discrimination she had received at work (Hasunuma & Shin, 2019). When she reported this harassment to her superior, she was dismissed, given a poor work evaluation, and demoted to a less prominent position (Hasunuma & Shin, 2019). Ji-Hyeon's story inspired other South Korean women to come forward and led to forming a network called "Citizen's Action to Support the MeToo Movement". The network, which aimed to support victims and seek social change, ran several protests throughout 2019 to end sexual discrimination and sexual violence (Hasunuma & Shin, 2019). In Japan, however, the impact of the #MeToo movement was quite different, with fewer women participating and more staying anonymous than in other countries (Hasunuma & Shin, 2019). Interestingly, the #MeToo movement in Japan focused primarily on the journalism industry, with many women coming forward being freelance writers, thus facing much greater pressure to stay silent to avoid damaging their reputations (Hasunuma & Shin, 2019).

In China, government censorship limits online social movements' ability to penetrate the country; however, #MeToo made its way into China (Li et al., 2020). Two women in December 2017 and January 2018 used the social media platforms Weibo (similar to Twitter) and WeChat (similar to Facebook) to detail how they had each been subjected to sexual harassment and assault by their professors, both using the #MeToo hashtag to draw public attention (Li et al., 2020). While these allegations sparked public discussions and drew

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attention to the nature of sexual misconduct in Chinese colleges, the movement was unable to spread as much as it could in countries like the US due to the constant government censorship, which included banning the #MeToo hashtag and suspending prominent feminist Twitter accounts (Li et al., 2020). The limited reach of the #MeToo movement in China was still seen as positive by the women involved, as it was utilised as a form of education about sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape, provided women with an outlet to reveal painful secrets about their experiences, and offered a way of finding groups to share stories and support other women (Lin & Yang, 2019).

In Zambia, the #MeToo movement received both positive and negative reactions. Many believe that the #MeToo movement has been the most effective platform to date to expose the systemic oppression of women and the endemic nature of sexual violence in Zambia (Muzyamba, 2020). However, some pointed out that standing up to men placed women in a more vulnerable position, questioning what would happen to women with children if their husbands, the primary family breadwinners, were imprisoned (Muzyamba, 2020). They also saw the movement as a threat to the traditional relational norms between men and women in Zambia, calling it a “hegemonic imposition of western ideals” (Muzyamba, 2020, p. 8).

It is also important to note that not all women in other cultures were willing or able to participate in the #MeToo movement. Moitra and colleagues (2019) found that while women in Bangladesh were supportive of the #MeToo movement, many did not participate. The women interviewed expressed that sex was not something spoken about openly within Bangladeshi culture and, as a result, they did not feel it was culturally appropriate to participate in the movement (Moitra et al., 2019). Additionally, the women said that they did not participate due to social constraints placed on them by their family and their in-laws (Moitra et al., 2019). Unfortunately, these women also believed participating in the #MeToo

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movement was pointless because they believed that no one cares and it would not bring about change in Bangladesh (Moitra et al., 2019).

2.3.3 Men and the #MeToo Movement

As discussed in section 1.4.2.1, men can also be victims of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape. Therefore, it is understandable that many men chose to be involved with the #MeToo movement; however, often, this involved utilising a new hashtag meant only for men, including #MeTooMen and #UsToo.

The #MeToo movement was viewed as a place for only women to discuss their experiences of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape, which frustrated men who had also experienced these behaviours. Thus, the #MeTooMen hashtag was created (Hawkins et al., 2019). In an analysis of the #MeTooMen hashtag, Hawkins and colleagues (2019) found five major themes among the tweets. The first theme involved the way people reacted to men sharing their stories on Twitter; they included expressing empathy, support, anger (at the culture of sexual assault), and joking and being dismissive towards the men. The second involved pushing for recognition that men can be victims of sexual assault and that women can be perpetrators of sexual assault, while the third theme involved messages acknowledging victims' resilience. The fourth theme focused on the stigma around being a male victim of sexual assault and the need to break the silence surrounding these experiences. The final theme was related to tweets discussing the larger systemic issues present within society that play a role in sexual assault, including power, the church, and the entertainment industry.

Further, Bogen and colleagues (2020) examined how men utilised the hashtag #UsToo following an article released by *The New York Times* titled "It Can Happen Even to Guys: Ohio State Wrestlers Detail Abuse, Saying #UsToo". Women in minority groups have

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also used the hashtag #UsToo to discuss their experiences of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape. Bogen et al. (2020) found that while a small percentage of men used the #UsToo hashtag to disclose their experiences of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape, most tweets were reactions to the wrestlers' admission of sexual abuse, with most being messages of support. However, over a quarter of the tweets analysed were negative responses, including victim-blaming, trolling behaviour, and messages that aimed to diminish the seriousness of sexual abuse and normalise it within society (Bogen et al., 2020).

Unfortunately, men's involvement with #MeToo was not always positive, as can be seen with the development of the #HimToo hashtag, which started as a way for men to share their experiences similar to #MeTooMen and #UsToo, but eventually became a backlash to #MeToo (Boyle & Rathnayake, 2020). During the confirmation hearing of US Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh and the rape allegation put forward by Dr Christine Blasey Ford, hashtag #HimToo began trending to discuss the risk of false allegations of sexual assault against men (Boyle & Rathnayake, 2020). In an analysis of the #HimToo hashtag, Boyle and Rathnayake (2020) found that many of the people using and interacting with this hashtag were conservative individuals, with many references to President Donald Trump, the National Rifle Association (NRA), and #MAGA (Make American Great Again) in their profiles. Interestingly, the authors found that the most prominent individual using #HimToo was a woman, Candace Owens, an American conservative and vocal Trump supporter (Boyle & Rathnayake, 2020). Messages using the #HimToo hashtag centre around the idea that "no man is safe" from fake allegations, with "radical feminists" often blamed for false allegations, and this outrage, as said by Boyle and Rathnayake (2020), is used to justify further aggression towards women.

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Banet-Wiser (2018) theorises that popular feminism (watered down feminism portrayed and commodified by the media) and what they label “popular misogyny” are deeply intertwined, with popular feminism being active and popular misogyny being reactive.

At a time when girls’ self-esteem and sexual agency are the focus of new corporate industries, federal funding, and educational programs, there is also what seems to be an explosion of rape and sexual assault cases on college campuses...at a time when girls are encouraged to become a central part of the world of technology, from coding to STEM fields, there are online misogynistic movements such as #GamerGate, where men threaten women with death and rape for their participation in the technological sphere (Banet-Wiser, 2018, p. 172)

Therefore, based on this proposed link between feminism and misogyny, it is clear why one of the largest feminist social movements in recent history led to the emergence of a backlash hashtag like #HimToo.

2.4. #MeToo Research So Far

At the onset of this dissertation, there was a paucity of research regarding the #MeToo movement. However, the intervening years have seen an emergence of a variety of studies, which will be discussed in this section.

Several studies have analysed the tweets posted during the #MeToo movement. Hosterman and colleagues (2018) examined tweets that were supportive in nature and sorted tweet content into five categories: emotional, informational, directive, appraisal, and other. Emotional tweets were those that displayed messages of caring, understanding, and love to victims of sexual violence or anger that they have experienced such things; informational tweets were those providing data and assistance to victims; directive tweets were suggestions and advice provided to the reader of the tweet to take action and help victims; appraisal tweets were others providing their own stories in support of the victim; and any tweet that did

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not fit the category was labelled as other (Hosterman et al., 2018). Hosterman et al. (2018) found that informational tweets were used the most frequently.

Similarly, Bogen and colleagues (2019) explored tweets from the #MeToo movement in which individuals disclosed information about their experience of sexual harassment, sexual assault or rape. They examined them for “who”, “what”, “when”, “where”, “why”, and “how” information about experiences of harassment and assault. While both these studies provide valuable information regarding the content posted during #MeToo, they only explore limited content posted (i.e., disclosure tweets or supportive tweets), and as no study has examined all tweets, there may be other themes discussed during #MeToo not captured by these two studies.

In their study, Kunst et al. (2019) sought to explain why men and women differ in their attitudes towards the #MeToo movement, theorising that it was due to ideological differences between genders. To measure attitudes towards #MeToo, the authors utilised measures of perceived benefit and perceived harm of the movement, which were also used in the current dissertation. They found that men perceived fewer benefits of and more harm from the #MeToo movement than women. Additionally, those who scored higher on perceived benefit of the #MeToo movement were more likely to identify with feminism, showed lower levels of hostile sexism and rape myth acceptance, and were more likely to perceive the #MeToo movement as positive (Kunst et al., 2019). Further, those who reported greater perceived harm of the #MeToo movement were less likely to identify with feminism, showed higher levels of benevolent sexism, hostile sexism, rape myth acceptance, and beliefs in a just world, and were less likely to perceive the #MeToo movement as beneficial (Kunst et al., 2019). While the research done by Kunst and colleagues is significant, it is important to recognise that it is likely that not all women perceived the #MeToo movement as beneficial and not all men perceived the movement as harmful. Examining these differences within

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genders and factors associated with differing perceptions is an important potential focus for research.

Additionally, in section 2.3.2.2, information was provided about the past research conducted with individuals in countries such as China and India regarding their perceptions and experiences of the #MeToo movement (Hasunuma and Shin, 2019; Li et al., 2020; Moitra et al., 2019). However, studies concerning “Western” women’s perceptions of participating in the #MeToo movement have not yet been identified.

The emergence of research about the #MeToo movement throughout this dissertation being conducted demonstrates the importance of the #MeToo movement and the drive for knowledge surrounding this global phenomenon. Despite this emerging literature, additional studies are required to expand knowledge surrounding the #MeToo movement and its influence on societal behaviour.

2.5 Aims of the Dissertation

This dissertation explores women’s involvement in the #MeToo movement and public perceptions of the movement. Quantitative and multiple qualitative methods will be utilised in this research via an analysis of publicly available Tweets, cross-sectional survey data, and semi-structured individual interviews. I seek to examine the nature of the content that #MeToo participants chose to share the first day the movement went viral to understand the information individuals deemed important to disclose at that time, how sexual harassment, assault and rape are experienced, and what individuals chose to share about sexual violence when they had a platform to do so. Information shared on the day the movement went viral is worthy of examination as that day can be seen to mark the transition of the movement from the emergence to the coalescence stage, and findings may guide policy and resources for individuals in need.

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Further, I seek to understand public perceptions of the #MeToo movement's benefit and harm and factors associated with such perceptions to gather valuable information about the movement's impact. Such perceptions may act as a stepping-stone, influencing whether individuals become active in, or a barrier to, anti-sexual assault movements and this information may help inform policymakers about factors to address in creating social change. Finally, I seek to understand the experiences of people who were active in the #MeToo movement, including their perceptions of benefits and harms.

Chapter Three: Methodological Rationale and Considerations

3.1 Overview

The research conducted in this dissertation utilised multiple research designs and analytical methods to explore the #MeToo movement. This chapter provides a rationale for the mixed-methods approach and the qualitative and quantitative analyses conducted. Additionally, using Twitter as naturalistic data and the reciprocal influence of the researcher on the research and the research on the researcher are discussed.

3.2 Rationale

Mixed-methods research involves using qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analyses (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Moran-Ellis et al., 2006). When referring to mixed-methods research, it typically involves using both qualitative and quantitative methods utilised within the same study; however, as is the case of this dissertation, it can also be expanded to include a mixed-methods collection of studies as part of a broader research program. Early researchers acknowledged that qualitative and quantitative data each have biases and weaknesses, therefore, mixed-methods research gained popularity in the late 1970s as a way to counteract these weaknesses and biases (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The research in this dissertation utilised sequential mixed-methods analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Fetters et al., 2013), where a qualitative study was performed initially, followed by a quantitative study, and culminating with another qualitative study. Mixed-methods approaches to research have been shown to be beneficial as they provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being researched compared to studies that simply utilise either qualitative or quantitative approaches (Hurmerinta-Peltomäki & Nummela, 2006).

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Conducting a qualitative study as the first step in the mixed-method approach was a conscious decision. At the onset of this dissertation, there was a paucity of research surrounding the #MeToo movement. It is common to conduct qualitative research first as an exploratory phase (Chow et al., 2010), as was done in this dissertation in the form of a content analysis of Twitter data examining the messages individuals posted using the hashtag #MeToo the day the hashtag went viral. From the results of this exploratory study, I aimed to determine people's perceptions of the #MeToo movement, particularly whether they perceived it as beneficial or harmful to society, and what factors were associated with these perceptions. This aim was best achieved using quantitative methods, employing a survey to gather an appropriate number of responses and analysing the data using statistical analyses. Finally, I wanted to understand people's experiences of participating in the #MeToo movement and to collect rich, in-depth data about these experiences. The results from my quantitative study led to a desire for more comprehensive data about perceptions of benefit and harm, particularly the perceptions of those who participated in the movement. This data would be best obtained using a qualitative design, as it is common in previous research for quantitative data to raise a question that can be more thoroughly explored with qualitative data (Moran-Ellis et al., 2006). Therefore, I chose to undertake an interview-based study where data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis.

3.3 Research and Ethical Considerations

3.3.1 The Use of Twitter for Research

Social media platforms, such as Twitter, offer a new way to conduct research by providing the ability to explore a wide variety of topics on a massive scale (McCormick et al., 2017). Additionally, Twitter provides access to naturalistic data, which is data unaffected by the influence or actions of the researcher (Jupp, 2006). While utilising surveys allows researchers to examine behaviours or attitudes recalled by participants retrospectively, social

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media data allows researchers to observe human interaction and expression in real time (McCormick et al., 2017). Furthermore, McCormick and colleagues (2017) even argue that data collected from Twitter “provide a better reflection of day-to-day social experiences than ethnographic work” (p. 392).

However, ethical questions have been posed about using data from social media platforms, such as Twitter, for research. As stated by the British Psychological Society (BPS; 2017), social media platforms blur the lines between public and private spaces, as most forms of Internet communication now occur in both spaces simultaneously. For example, an individual posting a message to a public social media platform while in the privacy of their home. From a legal perspective, users sign away their rights to the content they post when they agree to Twitter’s terms and service agreement (Ahmed et al., 2017), and in Australia, while copyright law protects tweets, there are allowances for their use in research (Hookway, 2008). Despite researchers potentially being exempt from obtaining informed consent when using Twitter data, this practice remains a contentious issue among researchers (Beninger, 2017).

There is also contention about the use of social media data among social media users. In a study exploring social media users' opinions about using social media platforms for research, Beninger (2017) found three main views: scepticism, acceptance, and ambivalence. Those who expressed scepticism did not see how social media platforms would be a useful tool for gathering data and were concerned with the lack of transparency, not only in the online space but with the purpose of the research (Beninger, 2017). The users were accepting of researchers using verbatim quotes but worried about the interpretation of the data and the possibility for the context to be distorted (Beninger, 2017). Those individuals who were accepting saw the benefits of using social media platforms for research and acknowledged that these forms of data lacked biases caused by the presence of a researcher (Beninger,

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2017). Those individuals who were ambivalent towards using social media data for research felt that there was little they could do to stop it and chalked it up to a consequence of sharing information on the Internet (Beninger, 2017). This research shows that while some social media users may accept the use of their content for research purposes, others have genuine concerns about researchers misrepresenting their messages. Therefore, while informed consent may not be required or possible, other ethical guidelines such as making efforts to protect users' identity should be upheld to ensure the privacy of social media users.

3.3.2 Conducting Research During a Pandemic

On January 25th 2020, Australia recorded its first case of COVID-19 in the state of Victoria (Handley, 2020), and two months later, on March 22nd, the first of many lockdowns initiated by both the federal and state governments was enacted (Snape, 2020). The global spread of the COVID-19 pandemic made many traditional forms of research unfeasible due to social distancing requirements (Sy et al., 2020). Therefore, adaption was required to continue research during this time.

As I was about to commence conducting interviews when the COVID-19 pandemic spread, this provided several barriers in completing my research. It quickly became apparent that all interviews would need to be completed via telephone or video chat rather than face-to-face. This change introduced the potential barrier of technological literacy issues as all international interviews occurred via a video chat program such as Skype or Zoom, and not everyone knew how to use these programs (Clay, 2020). Also, participants may not have had access to a stable Internet connection (Jowett, 2020). Additionally, during COVID-19, many people were required to work from home (Sy et al., 2020), and schools in 189 countries suspended on-campus learning (Ewing & Vu, 2020). These decisions created significant issues with participant availability, as those who initially volunteered to participate now

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found themselves struggling to home school their children and/or work from home, leaving them without the capacity to be interviewed.

Moreover, it was also important to consider the mental health of those participating in the interviews. The stress of a global pandemic and the resulting social isolation and quarantine has had a significant adverse impact on many people's mental health (Javed et al., 2020; Kato et al., 2020; Sharma & Vaish, 2020). Thus, in conducting research during the global pandemic, it was important to minimise additional stress for participants.

3.4 Analytic Approach

As mentioned prior, I used multiple qualitative and quantitative analytical approaches throughout this dissertation. Study 1 was a qualitative design using conventional content analysis; Study 2 was a quantitative design with the main statistical analysis being multiple linear regression, and; Study 3 was a qualitative study utilising reflexive thematic analysis. In this section, information about each analytic method will be discussed, along with why and how it was used.

3.4.1 Conventional Content Analysis (Chapter 4)

When conducting Study 1, I determined that the most appropriate qualitative analytic method was content analysis. The goal of content analysis is “to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study” (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992, p. 314).

According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), content analysis can take three different forms: conventional content analysis, directed content analysis, and summative content analysis.

In conventional content analysis, researchers avoid using a preconceived theory, instead allowing the categories to flow from the data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Conventional content analysis is most commonly performed when the phenomenon being researched has limited existing literature and is beneficial as it assists the researcher to gather information

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without imposing categories or theoretical ideas onto the data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Direct content analysis is performed when there is an existing theory surrounding a phenomenon, and the research aims to validate or expand the theory, and compared with conventional content analysis, a direct approach is much more structured (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Finally, a summative content analysis starts by identifying certain words or phrases to explore the contextual use of those words or phrases (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). If the research ceased with identifying the frequency with which these words or phrases appeared, this type of analysis would be quantitative; however, the researcher includes a latent approach to the content analysis to interpret the meaning behind the words and phrases (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

In Study 1, I performed a conventional content analysis, as little was known about the #MeToo movement before this study, and I wanted to understand the content posted on the first day the movement went viral. Following this initial analysis, the category that identified participants disclosing their experiences of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape was analysed using a summative approach. These tweets were analysed for references to sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape and frequencies were tallied for these references and disclosures involving these behaviours occurring while participants were underage, at school or at work. From this study, given the huge volume of #MeToo tweets and the personal disclosures made, I was left wondering how the general public perceived the #MeToo movement and whether this varied by gender. Therefore, Study 2 was developed to explore this question.

3.4.2 Quantitative Analyses (Chapter 5)

For Study 2, I was interested in exploring the general public's perceptions of the #MeToo movement, particularly perceptions of benefit and harm, and factors associated with

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these perceptions. Thus, I determined that quantitative data collection and analytic methods would be the most effective means of capturing the desired information. Additionally, quantitative methods enable the researcher to make better generalisations about the data due to the large sample sizes.

I developed a survey comprising demographic items and various psychometrically validated measures to examine perceptions of the #MeToo movement and the factors associated with these perceptions. The a priori selection of variables to be included in this study was based on past literature as presented in Chapter 5, and the minimum sample size was determined using guidelines from Tabachnick and Fidell (2013). Additionally, assumptions of linearity, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity were tested in line with recommendations (Pallant, 2016; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

In addition, to using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (t-tests) to examine gender differences in perceptions, I choose to use multiple linear regression for more extensive analysis as it “allows a more sophisticated exploration of the interrelationship among a set of variables” (Pallant, 2016, p.149). Therefore, utilising this statistical analysis method allowed me to determine what demographic and attitudinal factors were associated with perceptions of benefit or harm for the overall population and according to gender.

3.4.3 Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Chapter 6)

Finally, for Study 3, after collecting information regarding how the general public perceived the #MeToo movement, I was keen to explore how those who had participated in the movement perceived it. I collected data via semi-structured interviews and determined that reflexive thematic analysis would be the most appropriate analytic method to identify the themes present in these interviews.

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To build upon their widely used guide on how to conduct a thematic analysis in psychological research (see Braun & Clarke, 2006), Braun and colleagues (2019) identified three schools of thematic analysis: coding reliability thematic analysis, reflexive thematic analysis, and codebook thematic analysis. Coding reliability approaches to thematic analysis combine qualitative and quantitative analytic methods, where themes are qualitatively reported as themes, but the researchers place importance on quantitative values of reliability and replicability (Braun et al., 2019). Reflexive thematic analysis, so called to acknowledge the active role of the researcher in the knowledge production, is an open and iterative process with no preconceived codes at the onset of the analysis (Braun et al., 2019). Reflexive thematic analysis aims to provide an interpretation, not a summary, of the data (Braun et al., 2019). The final school of thematic analysis presented by Braun and colleagues (2019) is codebook thematic analysis, situated between the previous two schools, taking the structured approach to coding from coding reliability thematic analysis with the underlying philosophy of reflexive thematic analysis (Braun et al., 2019).

As I had no preconceived codes when embarking on Study 3, I used reflexive thematic analysis in analysing the interview transcripts. Additionally, the research conducted in Study 3 followed the steps outlined by Braun and Clark (2006): 1) familiarising yourself with the data, 2) generating initial codes, 3) searching for themes, 4) reviewing themes, 5) defining and naming themes, and 6) producing the report.

3.5 Reciprocal Influences of Researcher and Research

Reflexivity has been a core component in qualitative research for many years and refers to how the researcher examines the intersection of themselves and their research (Macbeth, 2001). Reflexivity is important for researchers because, as said by Berger (2015), it helps them to acknowledge and monitor the “impact of their biases, beliefs, and personal experiences on their research; and maintain the balance between the personal and the

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universal” (p. 220). Tracy (2010) deems self-reflexivity as an important part of researchers being sincere in qualitative research and notes that self-reflexivity should be practiced from the beginning to the end of the research process.

I am a young, university-educated woman who is passionate about the rights and liberties of women and has previously experienced sexual harassment and sexual assault. I acknowledge that it is these passions and experiences that led me to conduct this research. It is also important to note that I am White, cisgendered, and heterosexual, all of which provide me with a significant level of privilege and limit my understanding of the intersectionality between sexism and race, sexuality, and gender expression. I do not consider myself to be able-bodied; however, I am afforded a small amount of privilege due to the invisible nature of my disability. Throughout the research I was mindful of my biases and their potential influence on the research.

While it is important for researchers to acknowledge their role in the research process, it is equally important to understand how conducting research can impact the researcher. Before conducting the dissertation research, I could not have predicted the impact that spending several years immersed in stories, information, and facts surrounding sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape would have on my outlook on the world and wellbeing. As a young woman, who has experienced sexual harassment and sexual assault, spending over a year analysing stories of often horrific experiences of sexual violence, my wellbeing deteriorated. It was not until I spoke of these challenges at a conference presenting this research that I learned about vicarious trauma from other sexual assault and rape researchers.

Vicarious trauma refers to the adverse psychological effects that result from engaging with traumatic material (Maguire & Byrne, 2017), and while many vicarious trauma symptoms are similar to those for PTSD, this kind of distress often goes unnoticed (Lerias & Byrne, 2003). Vicarious trauma arises in many professions, including correctional workers

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(Munger et al., 2015), mental health professionals, and lawyers (Maguire & Byrne, 2017). As stated by Pearlman and Saakvitne (1995), vicarious trauma that goes unaddressed can manifest as cynicism and despair, and this loss of positivity can be felt by many, as pointed out by the authors:

...by our friends and families, as we no longer interject optimism, joy, and love into our shared pursuits; and in the larger systems in which we were once active as change agents, and which we may now leave, or withdraw from emotionally in a state of disillusionment and resignation (p. 33).

Once I was aware of vicarious trauma, I implemented strategies to mitigate the impact and was mindful of this being a source of potential bias when I interacted with my data corpus. There is no doubt in my mind that conducting this dissertation research has changed me in both positive and negative ways. My experience shows why it is important to not only be mindful of the impact researcher bias can have on the research but also the impact the research has on the researcher.

3.6 Summary

In this chapter, I have provided a rationale for employing a sequential mixed-methods approach in this dissertation and a background for the analyses utilised. Additionally, I have provided important considerations for using social media in research, discussing the benefits of the naturalistic data it provides and the ethical questions surrounding this type of research. And finally, the importance of self-reflexivity during qualitative research was explored while also considering how the research may impact the researcher.

Chapter 4

Statement of Authorship

Title of Study	Breaking the Silence on Sexual Harassment and Assault: An Analysis of #MeToo Tweets
Publication Status	✔ Accepted for Publication Submitted for Publication Unpublished and Unsubmitted work written in Manuscript Style
Publication Details	Drewett, C., Oxlad, M., & Augoustinos, M. (2021, In Press). Breaking the Silence on Sexual Harassment and Assault: An Analysis of #MeToo Tweets. <i>Computers in Human Behavior</i> .

Principle Author

Name of Principle Author (Candidate)	Chloe Drewett
Contribution to the Study	I am responsible for the conception and primary authorship of this study. I conducted the literature review, developed the research aims, conducted analysis, and wrote the manuscript. I was identified as the first author when this article was submitted for publication, and I have been responsible for all communications with journal administration including responses to reviewer feedback.
Overall Percentage (%)	85%
Certification	This study reports on original research I conducted during the period of my Higher Degree by Research candidature and is not subject to any obligations or contractual agreements with a third party that would constrain its inclusion in this thesis. I am the primary author of this study.
Signature	Date May 14 th 2021

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Co-Author Contributions

By signing the Statement of Authorship, each author certifies that:

- i. the candidate's stated contribution to the publication is accurate (as detailed above);
- ii. permission is granted for the candidate to include the publication in the thesis; and
- iii. the sum of all co-author contributions is equal to 100% less the candidate's stated contribution.

Name of Co-Author	Dr Melissa Oxlad
Contribution to the Study	My role was to assist with analysis, comment on drafts, make suggestions on the presentation of material in the study, and to provide editorial input. I also provided advice on responding to comments by the journal reviewers and editor.
Signature	Date 14 th May 2021

Name of Co-Author	Professor Martha Augoustinos
Contribution to the Study	My role was to comment on drafts, make suggestions on the presentation of material in the study, and to provide editorial input.
Signature	Date 14 th May 2021

Chapter 4: Study 1

Breaking the Silence on Sexual Harassment and Assault: An Analysis of #MeToo Tweets

This study, using conventional content analysis, examined a corpus of #MeToo tweets from the first day the hashtag went viral, October 16th 2017. Of the 10,546 #MeToo tweets collected, three major categories were identified: these included *#MeToo Facilitated Self-Disclosure*, *Messages of Support*, and *Calling Out Poor Behaviour* with 5,243, 1,556, and 1,207 tweets, respectively. The majority of disclosure tweets detailed experiences of sexual assault (44%) and experiences that occurred during childhood (29.4%). The results of this study offer valuable insights regarding the information users chose to share during the first day of the #MeToo movement and the nature of sexual harassment and assault experienced by these individuals. This information may be used by policymakers to identify and implement means to reduce the prevalence of sexual harassment and assault.

Keywords: social media, Twitter, sexual harassment, sexual assault, social change

4.1 Introduction

Around the world, sexual harassment and assault remain pervasive problems affecting people of all genders, with women typically affected at high rates. In the United States of America (US), 43.6% of women have experienced some form of sexual assault (Smith et al., 2018), and 77% of women have experienced verbal sexual harassment (Kearl, 2018). In Australia, 53% of women have experienced sexual harassment (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017) and 82% of the 23,052 cases of sexual assault reported to police in 2016 involved a female victim (ABS, 2018). While worldwide, one in three women will experience physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner or sexual violence by a non-partner (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2013). Additionally, those who identify as LGBTQIA+ are at a greater risk of experiencing sexual assault compared to cisgender, straight men (Coulter et al., 2017; Ford & Soto-Marquez, 2016; Gurung et al., 2017). Men are also not immune to sexual harassment and assault, with recent research reporting 3.2% - 28.7% of college-aged American men (Forsman, 2017) and 27.5% of those within a fraternity experience sexual assault victimisation (Luetke et al., 2020). While in a review of large population studies, 3% - 7% of men were found to have experienced sexual assault (Bullock & Beckson, 2011).

Research from the last two decades has shown that experiencing sexual harassment can adversely affect individuals' physical and mental health resulting in nausea, sleeplessness, loss of self-esteem, psychological distress, depression, anxiety, and eating disorders (Barak, 2005). Similarly, sexual harassment in the workplace early in one's career can lead to depressive symptoms lasting as long as a decade after the harassment (Houle et al., 2011). Additionally, workplace sexual harassment can lead to adverse work outcomes, including reduced job satisfaction, increased absenteeism, work withdrawal, and deteriorating relationships with colleagues (McLaughlin et al., 2017).

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However, despite their prevalence, sexual harassment and assault are rarely reported to authorities. One study found that only 15.8% of women's most recent (or only) rape experiences were reported to the police and that rates of reporting have not significantly increased since the 1990s (Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011a). Similarly, men have also been found to under-report sexual assault (Bullock & Beckson, 2011).

Several factors appear to impact reporting behaviour. Many survivors of assault and rape experience 'second victimisation' during the investigation, a term used to describe the upsetting and degrading way some are treated by law enforcement and the court system (Patterson, 2010). A high level of case attrition and low levels of conviction can also play a role in the lack of reporting (Brooks & Burman, 2017). Additionally, research has shown that being raped by a stranger and sustaining injuries have both been linked to a higher likelihood of reporting while being under the influence of drugs or alcohol and knowing/being in a relationship with the perpetrator decreases the likelihood of reporting (Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011b). Researchers have theorised that this could be a result of societal stereotypes around rape regarding the circumstances when one can be considered a rape victim (Wolitzky-Taylor, 2011b). Such theories suggest that when an individual predicts that they will be less likely to be perceived as a "proper rape victim", they may be less likely to report their experiences to avoid victim-blaming (Wolitzky-Taylor, 2011b). Also, men are often reluctant to report sexual assault due to concerns about their sexuality being questioned (Forsman, 2017). These factors, along with a societal tendency to silence women and marginalised groups, further add to under-reporting.

4.1.1 Platforms to give people a voice

With the advent of the Internet and later social media, women and other previously silenced groups now have a platform to express their views and publicise their experience of

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the world (Megarry, 2014). Social media platforms offer women a place where they can communicate, form communities, engage in consciousness-raising, disrupt the male gaze, and call out instances of injustice and misogyny (Baer, 2016). These platforms offer “great potential for broadly disseminating feminist ideas, shaping new modes of discourse about gender and sexism, connecting to different constituencies, and allowing creative modes of protest to emerge” (Baer, 2016, p. 18). However, while social media has great potential for women and marginalised groups, it can also be a platform for hate speech and expose people to harassment and abuse such as insults, name-calling, humiliation, death threats, and doxing from both people known and unknown to them (Mendes et al, 2019; Rezvan et al., 2020; Rezvan et al., 2018). Additionally, female users may receive unsolicited sexually obscene and pornographic messages and sexual solicitation, which has adversely impacted their physical and emotional wellbeing (Burke Winkelman et al., 2015).

Cultural factors can also limit the effectiveness of social media platforms to facilitate social change. Research has shown there is a large gender gap in South Asian countries regarding online participation; for example, only 24% of Facebook users in India are women (Jain, 2016). Lower participation rates are said to result from women dealing with online abuse, including cyberstalking, impersonation, and personal content leakages (Sambasivan et al., 2019). Thus, inequalities in online spaces limit marginalised individuals’ use of social media platforms for social change.

Despite the potential for positive and negative experiences on social media, social media platforms have given rise to a form of protest labelled “hashtag feminism”, referring to the way feminists can utilise the hashtag function on Twitter to produce conversation among different users (Mendes et al., 2019). Some researchers have labelled hashtag feminism as the “latest iteration in a long history of feminist conversation-expansion tactics that politicize personal experiences with all forms of patriarchy, including media” (Clark 2014, p. 1109).

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Previous examples of hashtag feminism include #YouOkSis, #YesAllWomen, and #RapeCultureIsWhen, which were all used to call out the hostility, misogyny, and sexism surrounding rape culture, sexual harassment, and everyday sexism (Mendes et al., 2019). These hashtags provide a voice to marginalised groups and often contain a call to action encouraging individuals and society to take immediate action or form in opposition to mainstream media (Yang, 2016).

While being a potentially powerful tool for social action, hashtag feminism also has its problems. Some users engage in trolling, an interpersonal, antisocial behaviour that occurs online and can include posting malicious comments to provoke or upset others (Craker & March, 2016). Trolling is common among feminist spaces and can disrupt the goals of feminist activism, leading to wasted time and arguments unrelated to finding a solution (Dixon, 2014). Also, in the area of sexual harassment and assault, if a topic is trending on Twitter, there can be a tendency to use proper names in hashtags threatening the privacy of victims (Losh, 2014).

Due to the popularity of hashtag feminism, researchers have begun examining the content of the tweets posted using activism hashtags. Maas, McCauley, Bonomi, and Leijja (2018) analysed a collection of tweets using the hashtag #NotOkay, which was a response to then-presidential candidate Donald Trump's infamous quote in which he talked about grabbing women by their genitals. The main themes identified in their research were the acknowledgement and condemnation of rape culture, questioning Trump as a presidential candidate and the national discourse surrounding sexual assault as a result of his candidature, and urging men and boys to step up and help end violence against women (Maas et al., 2018). In Turkey, following the attempted rape and subsequent murder of 20-year-old university student Ozgecan Aslan, women across the country began using the hashtag #sendeanlat (#tellyourstory) to talk about their experiences of being a woman (Ikizer et al., 2018). In

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analysing the #sendeanlat hashtag, Ikizer and colleagues (2018) reported five main themes: reactions to victim-blaming, discussing honour culture, experiences of assault, social media, and women's role in rape.

4.1.2 The #MeToo movement

A recent example of hashtag feminism on a large scale, the focus of the current study, is the #MeToo movement. On October 5th 2017, The New York Times published an article detailing the alleged sexual harassment of actress Ashley Judd and several other women at the hands of Harvey Weinstein. This article sparked a wave of support for Judd, with many women coming forward to share their tales of harassment (Kantor & Twohey, 2017). Eleven days after the New York Times article, on October 16th 2017, actress Alyssa Milano sent out a Tweet urging women around the world to use the hashtag #MeToo if they had ever experienced sexual harassment or abuse. While Alyssa Milano popularised #MeToo, it was activist Tarana Burke who originally developed the hashtag in 2005 to act as a “bat signal” for women (specifically for women of colour) who had survived sexual assault to feel that they were not alone (Brockes, 2018). Following the Harvey Weinstein scandal, Alyssa Milano used the hashtag and expanded its purpose by asking women around the world to use it to demonstrate the pervasive nature of sexual harassment and assault.

In the first 24 hours after Alyssa Milano's call, the hashtag was used approximately half a million times (France, 2017). Between October 16th 2017 and September 30th 2018, the hashtag #MeToo was used 19 million times, and 65% of adult social media users in the US reported regularly seeing content related to sexual harassment and assault (Anderson & Toor, 2018).

Past research into #MeToo has examined specific messages found within the tweets. Hosterman, Johnson, Stouffer, and Herring (2018) examined the types of supportive tweets

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posted using the #MeToo hashtag and found that informational support, tweets that provided information about resources to help victims of sexual harassment and abuse, was the most common. Conversely, Bogen, Bleiweiss, Leach, and Orchowski (2019) investigated messages of disclosure during the #MeToo movement and examined them for “who”, “what”, “when”, “where”, “why”, and “how” information about experiences of harassment and assault. While these studies have imparted valuable information, they only examined one facet of a massive international phenomenon.

To date, no research has examined the range and frequency of different kinds of tweets shared during the #MeToo movement or the nature of the sexual harassment and assault disclosed by movement participants, particularly what participants deemed important to share on the first day the movement went viral. Such qualitative data is central to understanding how sexual harassment and assault is experienced, what individuals choose to share when given a platform and to guide policy and resources for individuals in need.

4.2 Aims

The current research, using conventional content analysis, examined a corpus of tweets from the day the #MeToo movement went viral to understand the information individuals sought to disclose at that time. This information is of value as #MeToo is recognised as a social movement for change, and the first day the hashtag went viral can be seen to mark the transition from the emergence to the coalescence stage of a social movement (Christiansen, 2009). That is, there has been a movement from general discontent about sexual harassment and assault where no, or only individual, action has been taken, to greater discontent which is more defined and coordinated where leadership may emerge, and mass demonstration of discontent occurs (Christiansen, 2009). Given the importance of this transition, the current study sought to explore two research questions. First, with the opportunity to have their voices heard through hashtag activism, what information did

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individuals choose to share on the first day the #MeToo movement went viral? Second, if individuals disclosed experiences of sexual harassment and assault, what was the nature of the experiences disclosed?

4.3 Method

4.3.1 Using Social Media for Research

Twitter is in the public domain and thus can be considered to be publicly useable by researchers: as Hookway (2008) argues when discussing accessible blogs, "... [they] may be personal but they are not private" (p. 105). However, there is some concern as to whether the use of social media posts for research purposes is ethical considering at the time of posting, the user is unaware, and therefore cannot consent, to the use of their posts for research purposes (British Psychological Society [BPS], 2017). It is nonetheless the case that unless users specifically make their account private, they are explicitly aware that their posts are publicly available in an open forum. Additionally, while social media posts fall under Australian Copyright Law, there are allowances for the use of these posts for study or research (Hookway, 2008). The use of publicly available tweets is therefore consistent with ethical guidelines for Internet-mediated research (BPS, 2017), and as such, it was not necessary to gain consent from Twitter users.

That said, the nature of the posts examined in the current study are incredibly personal, with many detailing experiences of sexual harassment and assault. Similar to the tweets analysed by Megarry (2014), those used in this study draw attention to the widespread nature of sexual harassment and assault in society. However, to protect the anonymity of users, following data collection, the researchers removed all potentially identifying information from tweets. Additionally, in order to respect the users and their stories, in the current study, only a limited number of extracts are reported. All tweets are reproduced

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verbatim, with all spelling or grammatical errors, to maintain the integrity of the information shared by users. The School of Psychology Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee, at [removed for blind review], approved this research.

4.3.2 Procedure

The authors used Sifter, a website that until September 30th 2018 was given access by Twitter to historical data (defined as Twitter data that is older than 30 days), to collect and download tweets about the #MeToo movement. Only original tweets (no retweets), in English, from the first day the #MeToo hashtag went viral (October 16th, 2017) were gathered. Initially, Twitter only allowed users to post tweets containing 140 or fewer characters. However, the month before the hashtag #MeToo going viral, Twitter increased their character limit to 280 (Newton, 2017).

The tweets were downloaded into an Excel file, where only the tweet content, the time of posting, the link to the original tweet, and an identification number for the tweet, were recorded. A separate file containing only the identification number and tweet content was created and uploaded into NVivo (Version 12, QSR International, 2018).

Data collection resulted in a sample of 10,546 #MeToo tweets. While it was not possible, due to the sheer volume, to download all tweets from the day the hashtag went viral, the sample size of tweets examined in the current study is larger than other research analysing tweets from hashtag movements regarding sexual harassment and assault (Bogen et al., 2019; Clark, 2016; Maas et al., 2018). Consistent with previous research concerning the #MeToo hashtag (Bogen et al., 2019; Maas et al., 2018), only English tweets were analysed. No other criteria were applied to tweet inclusion, and therefore the full corpus of 10,546 tweets was analysed. As noted above, after data collection, the researchers removed all potentially

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identifying information to protect the anonymity of users. De-identification of data occurred before data analysis.

Sifter does not download information about the demographics of Twitter users. Therefore, information cannot be provided about the age, gender, or cultural background of the Twitter users contained within this study. Not knowing who tweets is a common difficulty for social science research using Twitter (Sloan, 2017). Research in the United Kingdom has estimated that, where gender can be identified, Twitter is used by 48.8%-57% of males and 43%-51.2% of females (Sloan, 2017; Sloan et al., 2013); however, in most cases, gender cannot be identified (Sloan, 2017). In the US, adult Twitter users are typically divided equally by gender (Wojcik & Hughes, 2019).

Research has shown that victims of sexual harassment and assault are primarily women (ABS, 2018; Cortina & Berdahl, 2008) and those in the LGBTQIA+ community (Garvey et al., 2017); however, men may also experience sexual harassment and assault (Forsman, 2017; Luetke et al., 2020). Therefore, people of all genders may experience sexual harassment and assault and post on Twitter about any topic, including about #MeToo. In recognition of this, following the #MeToo phenomenon, the hashtag #MeTooMen emerged as a platform for men to share their experiences of sexual harassment and assault (see Hawkins et al., 2019).

Gender is not a profile customisation option provided to Twitter users. Additionally, approaches commonly used in qualitative research exploring online posts to determine users' gender such as profile names, direct self-identification, use of gendered tags (i.e., explicit references to a specific gender), references to gendered roles (i.e., husband, wife, father, mother), and gender-preferential language could not definitively identify gender for current tweeters as such actions were often not present in the brief characters allowable on Twitter.

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As a result, the gender of Tweeters in the current study is unknown. Therefore, gender-neutral terms are used when referring to those who tweeted during the #MeToo movement. Similarly, at the time the tweets were collected, they were not geotagged, and it was not possible through the use of profile locations and tweet content to definitively identify geographical information about the Twitter users in this study. Tweets were neither included nor excluded based on gender, or geographical location or the inability to identify gender or geographical location.

4.3.3 Data Analysis

Data were analysed manually using conventional content analysis, an approach typically employed when seeking to describe a phenomenon and researching topics where limited theory exists (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). In line with the research questions, the analysis took both an inductive and deductive approach. Initially, an inductive approach, using no preconceived categories, was undertaken to provide a broader exploration of what users shared on the first day the #MeToo movement went viral. Later, a deductive approach was taken to classify the nature of sexual harassment and assault experiences that users disclosed.

The research team consisted of three women of varying ages with experience in gender-related and qualitative research on areas such as sexism, violence and discrimination. The first and second authors undertook the analysis with discussion with the third author. Analysis began with the first author engaging in data familiarisation by immersing herself in the data, reading a selection of tweets multiple times to gather an understanding of the data and the language utilised. Following this, each tweet was examined individually to begin to derive codes related to the first research question. Codes were then sorted into categories and subcategories to explain the data meaningfully. Categories and subcategories were then

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reviewed to ensure they accurately represented the data and were defined and named. The authors discussed the findings to refine any categories and subcategories. For example, tweets consisting only of the #MeToo hashtag were originally a distinct category. However, this was revised to become a subcategory of *#MeToo Facilitated Self-Disclosure* as posting the #MeToo hashtag was classified as a form of self-disclosure. Any category containing less than 1% (100) of coded tweets was not reported. Finally, frequency counts were made for categories and subcategories and extracts illustrative of the analysis were selected.

A secondary analysis examined the nature of sexual harassment and assault experiences that users disclosed. This analysis was deductive and involved re-examining the tweets assigned to the *Detailed Disclosure, Experience Reporting, and Minimising Experiences* subcategories of the *#MeToo Facilitated Self-Disclosure* category. During this analysis, the experiences disclosed were coded into existing categories of sexual harassment, sexual assault, or rape. Several tweets relayed instances occurring in the workplace or under the age of 18 years; these experiences were also coded. Once coding was complete, frequency counts were made, and relevant extracts were chosen to represent the data. The first author coded all tweets, while the second author also coded a random selection of the tweets. Consistency between the coding of the first and second authors showed a high level of agreement (82%) with any discrepancies resolved by consensus. All authors reviewed the codes and confirmed the final analysis.

4.4 Results

From the data, 14 categories and eight subcategories were identified (see Table 1 for a brief description of each tweet and its frequency; Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the data). Smaller categories included *#YesAllWomen* (tweets claiming that all women have experienced some form of sexual harassment or assault), *Intersectionality* (tweets urging the #MeToo movement to acknowledge the harassment and assault experiences for individuals of

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colour, those with disability, transgender individuals, etc.), and *Political* (tweets that had a political focus, i.e., anti-Trump or anti-Clinton). The three largest categories included: *#MeToo Facilitated Self-Disclosure*, *Supportive Messages*, and *Calling Out Poor Behaviour*, each of which consisted of multiple subcategories. The three largest categories are described below, with example extracts.

4.4.1 Category 1: #MeToo Facilitated Self-Disclosure

The largest category identified from the tweets was labelled *#MeToo Facilitated Self-Disclosure* (n = 5243). These were tweets where users shared their experiences of sexual harassment and/or assault. Due to variation in the detail users disclosed, this category was coded into four subcategories. The largest subcategory was labelled *#MeToo, Enough Said* (n = 3318). In these tweets, users implied that they had experienced sexual harassment or assault but gave no specific details, instead choosing to validate and affirm the #MeToo hashtag. For example:

"#MeToo. Enough said by me. Yes, it's this pervasive".

"I'm not embarrassed anymore but I'm still mad as hell. #MeToo"

"#MeToo - too many times"

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Table 4.1

#MeToo Tweets: A Description of Categories and Sub-Categories and Frequency of Assigned Tweets

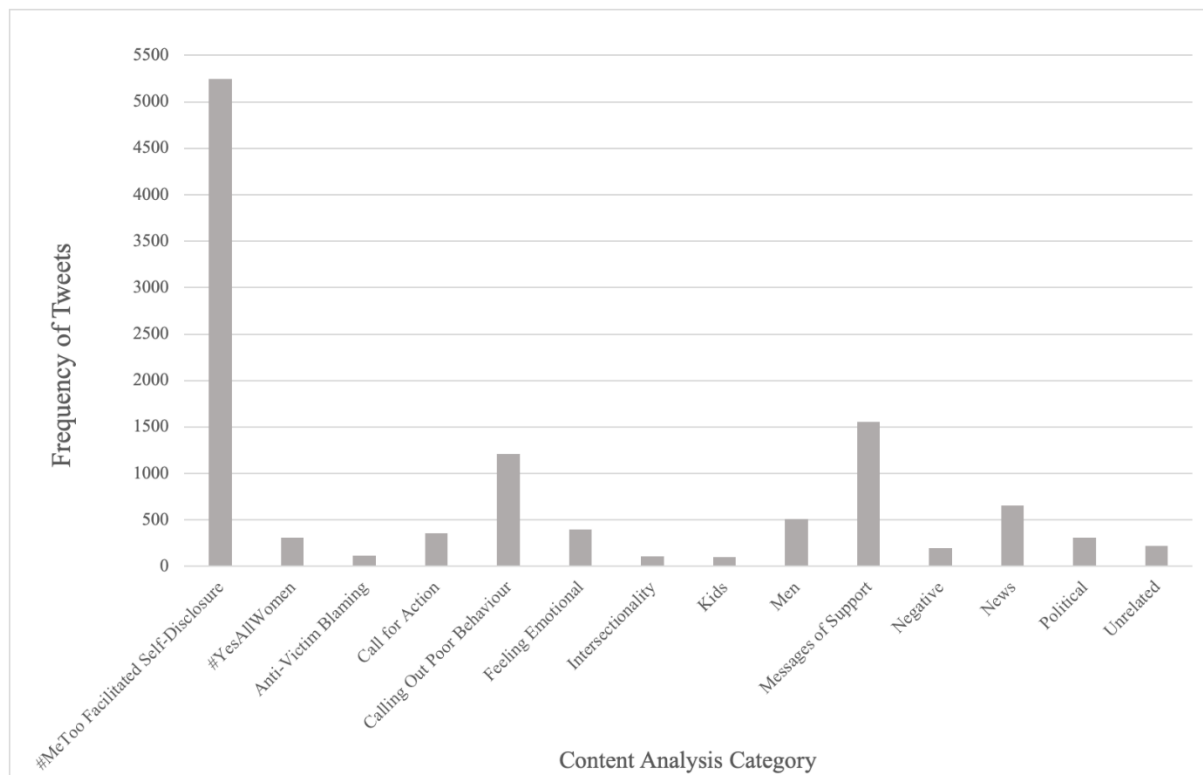
Category	Description	Tweets
#MeToo Facilitated Self-Disclosure		5243
<i>#MeToo, Enough Said</i>	Tweets with no details, simply saying #MeToo, or implying something happened.	3318
<i>Experience Reporting</i>	Tweets about experience telling family/friends or the authorities.	155
<i>Detailed Disclosure</i>	Tweets detailing specific details about their own harassment or assault.	1658
<i>Minimising Experiences</i>	Tweets claiming that what they went through “doesn’t matter” or isn’t important enough to include.	112
#YesAllWomen	Tweets that claimed that all women have experienced some form of sexual harassment or assault.	310
Anti-Victim Blaming	Tweets where the main message was to stop blaming victims.	119
Call for Action	Tweets that stated that something needs to be done about sexual violence.	356
Calling Out Poor Behaviour		1207
<i>Calling Out People</i>	Tweets that called out specific people for something they have said or done.	1006
<i>Calling Out Society</i>	Tweets that called out society for the way women are treated.	201

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Feeling Emotional	Tweets that expressed strong emotions, e.g. anger or sadness.	396
Intersectionality	Tweets that urged people to acknowledge the intersectional nature of sexual harassment/assault with factors like race, sexuality, and disability.	107
Kids	Tweets where people mentioned their kids, hoped the future would be better for them, or said they would teach their kids better.	104
Men	Tweets where the main focus was on men; #notallmen, assault happens to men too, men need to do better.	508
Messages of Support		1556
<i>For People</i>	Tweets that showed support for the women and men that have experienced harassment/assault.	1442
<i>For the Movement</i>	Tweets that expressed support for the #MeToo movement.	114
Negative	Tweets that were against the #MeToo movement or critical of the movement.	194
News	Tweets from news accounts about #MeToo.	655
Political	Tweets that were political in nature; anti-Trump, anti-Clinton.	312
Unrelated	Tweets that are not related to the #MeToo movement; using the hashtag to get views, advertisements.	219

Figure 4.1

Frequency of Tweets Assigned to Each Content Analysis Category



“I don’t want to say it bc it makes me mad that it happened /3/ fucking times and not many people care but #MeToo”

The next subcategory of tweets, labelled *Detailed Disclosure* (n = 1658), was qualitatively different in that tweets contained very detailed information about users’ experiences of sexual harassment and/or assault. These tweets provided information about users’ age, when they were harassed/assaulted, who harassed/assaulted them, and the nature of the harassment/assault. Example tweets include:

“I was pushed up against a ladder and forcefully kissed while at work. I was 19. #MeToo”

“@Alyssa_Milano I was 11, he was my good friends father. #metoo”

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“Had my breasts grabbed from behind by an old man while walking in the street. I was 12. Never told my mum, or almost anybody. #metoo”

“#MeToo At a music festival, pushed down between two tents and then left in the mud afterward by a man I'd never met before.”

The third subcategory, labelled *Experience Reporting* (n = 155), consisted of tweets that provided accounts of experiences when reporting of sexual harassment/assault to the police, school, work, or family. For example:

“When an officer had the nerve to ask ‘If he says sorry, can this all be resolved? #metoo”

“After an assault at age 11, the D.A. YELLED at me, alone, without my parents, and said if I was lying I would go to Hell. #MeToo”

“#MeToo when I was 20, and the first question the guy's lawyer asked me in court was 'what were you wearing?'"

“I was regularly sexually harassed at a job. I took it to my managers and was told to take it as a compliment. #MeToo”

The final subcategory was labelled *Minimising Experiences* (n = 112). These were tweets where users spoke of sexual harassment or assault but used language that minimised their experience, most often claiming that what they experienced was not as bad as what other individuals have experienced. Example tweets include:

“For me, less serious experiences than many, yet still #metoo”

“Knife point. Attempted rape. I was lucky - many others have experienced (are experiencing) far worse. #MeToo”

“I count my blessings that it wasn't rape. #MeToo”

“#MeToo catcalling, many times..nothing as serious as what other women have sadly have been thru but still not right.”

4.4.2 Category 2: Messages of Support

The second-largest category, labelled *Messages of Support* (n = 1556), was coded into two subcategories. The largest subcategory was characterised as *Support for the Participants* (n = 1442). These were tweets of love and support for those participating in #MeToo and additional messages of support for those who did not feel comfortable posting about their experience. For example:

“I support all the lovely women out there and admire their courage to tell their sexual assault stories. #metoo”

“You are not alone. We stand as one. We fight as many. Never give up. Never back down. Most importantly: never blame yourself. #metoo”

“I wish i could talk ab it more but #metoo , i love yall. You are so fucking strong”

“I have so much respect for the brave souls that have shared their stories. It's not easy. #MeToo”

The second subcategory of tweets were those that expressed *Support for the Movement* (n = 114). It consisted of tweets that expressed gratitude for the #MeToo movement and supported the goals of the movement. Examples include:

“#MeToo is important for so many reasons”

“this tag is so empowering i love u all #MeToo”

“Woke up feeling empowered. Thanks 2 @Alyssa_Milano for bringing together those of us who have been victimized. #metoo #riseup”

“#metoo makes me hopeful for my daughters future. Let's make this a teachable moment, let's make #metoo history.”

4.4.3 Category 3: Calling Out Poor Behaviour

The third-largest category, labelled *Calling Out Poor Behaviour* (n = 1207), was coded into two subcategories. *Calling Out People* was the largest subcategory (n = 1006). Tweets within this subcategory involved users calling out individuals for something they had said or done. For example, several prominent figures had critiqued the #MeToo movement and had either purposely or inadvertently blamed victims of sexual harassment or assault for what had happened to them. Therefore, a large portion of tweets called out these people for their distastefully perceived comments. Additionally, tweets were also often passively directed at those against the #MeToo movement, strangers, or anonymous people. Such Tweets included:

“@missmayim, rape isn't about sex, it's about power. Your method not only shames women -- but it also doesn't work”

“If you were wondering why so many women marched after Trump was inaugurated, maybe now you understand. #MeToo”

“If you are responding to a #metoo post with doubt, YOU are aiding and abetting abuse.”

“I should have the right not to be harassed at work by drunk Santas or by fuckboys with a Latina fetish #MeToo”

The second subcategory, labelled *Calling Out Society* (n = 201), consisted of tweets where users questioned or attacked society's treatment of women. Such tweets tended to focus on street harassment, rape culture, and the “boys will be boys” discourse that excused such behaviour. Examples of tweets in this subcategory include:

“Because girls are given rape prevention tips, while boys are not bothered with tips on how not to rape. #MeToo”

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“How SHAMEFUL is it that we live in a society that women feel LUCKY that they've "only" been verbally harassed? #MeToo”

“stop telling women to be careful and start telling men to be respectful #MeToo”

“Every Fall Colleges hold workshops for females on sexual assault. Not one workshop for guys teaching them NOT TO RAPE #MeToo”

4.4.4 Nature of Sexual Harassment and Assault Identified within Self-Disclosure Tweets

The category *#MeToo Facilitated Self-Disclosure* was further analysed to understand the nature of the self-disclosures made (see Figure 2).

27% of tweets mentioned experiences of sexual harassment:

“In high school almost daily having to hear innuendos & invitations to go out & have sex with boys #MeToo”

“But someone sent me an unsolicited dick pic on Insta the other day! So, it never ends. #metoo”

“He sexually harassed me and I got fired when I complained. #MeToo”

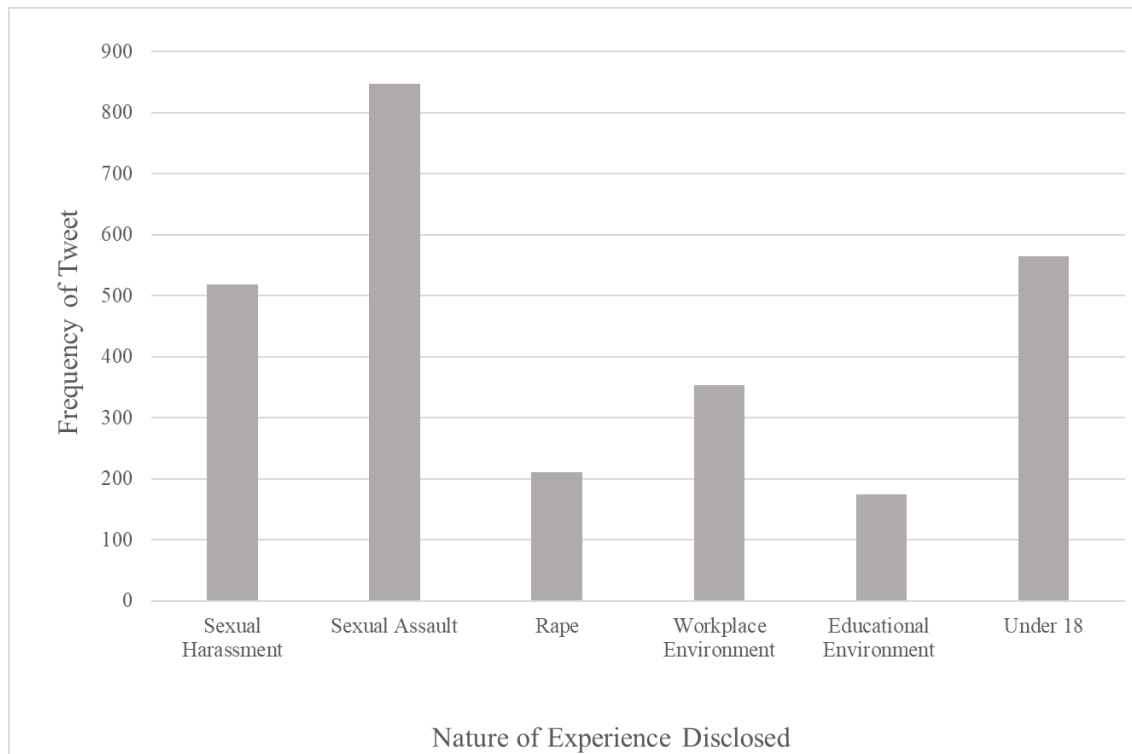
“The manager at the pizza shop I worked at asked me to hand him the pizza paddle so he could "smack my ass with it." #MeToo”

Experiences of sexual assault, including sexual violence, groping, stalking, and indecent exposure, were disclosed in 44% of tweets:

“My step father's drunk friends thought it was cool to grab my tits and laugh about. I was 15 #MeToo”

Figure 4.2

Frequency of Tweets Assigned to Each Category of Sexual Harassment and Assault Experience Disclosed



“I was on my knees at work stocking a shelf. A man came up and shoved his crotch in my face. #metoo”

“From age 7-9 was regularly sexually assaulted by family friend #MeToo”

“Was 15, man in a car exposed himself to me and masturbated. #MeToo”

Experiences of rape were described in 11% of tweets:

“When I was 16, a man pulled me in the women's bathroom and raped me. #MeToo”

“#MeToo It was rape. He thought he deserved payment for the drinks he bought.”

“I've had a couple of partners force the issue of sex when I wasn't in mood, usually using guilt until I gave in #MeToo”

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“An old boyfriend raped me because I refused to have vaginal sex on my period. I was 17. #MeToo”

Additionally, users provided information about the timing and locations of sexual harassment and/or assault. 18.4% of the tweets mentioned experiences occurring in a work environment:

“At an old job, a manager groped me and tried to get me to meet him for sexual favors. I locked myself in the bathroom. #MeToo”

While 9.1% of tweets detailed experiences occurring in an educational environment (including university or college):

“Reported the teacher who assaulted me to school officials - told to keep quiet or I wouldn't get recommendations for college. #MeToo”

Most disturbingly, 29.4% of the tweets described experiences that happened as a child (those who indicated they were under the age of 18 when the experience occurred):

“I was sexually assaulted by my foster father from the age of 14 to 18. It can happen to anyone anywhere #MeToo”

4.5 Discussion

This study aimed to provide a qualitative analysis of tweets posted on the first day the #MeToo movement went viral, October 16th 2017. The three largest categories identified from the tweets were self-disclosure messages detailing individual experiences of sexual harassment and assault, supportive messages for individuals participating in the #MeToo movement and the movement itself, and calling out society and individuals for the treatment of women.

These results align with previous research regarding hashtag activism relating to sexual harassment and assault. In their research examining the hashtag #NotOkay, Maas et al. (2018) found acknowledgement and condemnation of rape culture to be the largest category

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among the tweets. From the current research, the category *Calling Out Poor Behaviour* contained tweets criticising the rape culture that is pervasive in many societies. In a study looking at the Turkish hashtag #sendelat (#tellyourstory), Ikizer et al. (2018) found one of the main categories amongst tweets was assault experiences, which was also reflected in the current study as self-disclosure was a significant category of the #MeToo tweets.

Regarding the nature of the self-disclosure tweets, the most common experience disclosed was sexual assault, followed by sexual harassment, then rape. However, as seen in the *Minimising Experiences* subcategory, many users perceived their experiences of sexual harassment, and sometimes even sexual assault, as not “as bad” as those experienced by others. This belief may have been one factor that resulted in individuals who have a story of sexual harassment or assault not participating in the #MeToo movement or participating but not detailing their experiences out of a perception that their stories are not “bad” enough to share in the #MeToo movement. Additionally, providing a detailed self-disclosure may not have been something every user felt comfortable doing due to the severity of their experience/s or perceived consequences of sharing and may explain why the subcategory #MeToo, *Enough Said* was the largest subcategory in the #MeToo *Facilitated Self-Disclosure* category.

The high number of individuals disclosing that their experiences of sexual harassment and assault occurred in a workplace, at school, or as a child indicates that individuals are often victimised in locations where they lack power. Those who spoke about experiences in the workplace often mentioned their harasser being either senior staff members or their boss. Harassment and assault in a school environment were often described as coming from older students or teachers. While those who spoke about childhood harassment and assault experiences frequently implicated an older family member. These findings fit with

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perceptions that power inequality is one of the potential causes of sexual harassment (Cortina & Berdahl, 2008).

An explanation from this perspective may be that those in positions of power, within an organisation or an educational setting, use this power to force their sexual desires on those subordinate to them (Cortina & Berdahl, 2008). Regarding sexual assault, research has shown that men are more likely than women to associate sex with dominance (Sanchez, Crocker, & Boike, 2005) and aggression (Mussweiler & Förster, 2000). Additionally, research has shown that the stronger the mental association between power and sex in men, the more likely men were to endorse rape myths and report a higher likelihood of committing rape (Chapleau & Oswald, 2010). These findings show that society needs to work harder to protect and give a voice to individuals who experience sexual harassment and assault, as well as to address associations between sex and power.

While no studies examining the broader cultural impact of the #MeToo movement have been identified, significant repercussions have resulted from celebrities coming forward during #MeToo. Producer Harvey Weinstein was charged (McHenry, 2018) and later found guilty of rape and sexual assault (ABC News, 2020), actor Kevin Spacey was fired from his Netflix television series *House of Cards* (Bishop, 2017) and recast in the film *All The Money In The World* (Fleming Jr., 2017). NBC news anchor Matt Lauer was fired after sexual harassment allegations (NBC News, 2017), actor Danny Masterson was fired from Netflix's *The Ranch* (Moniuszko, 2017), and while the accusations against Bill Cosby did not begin during the #MeToo movement, in September 2018 he was sentenced to three to 10 years in prison for his treatment of women (Durkin, 2018).

The #MeToo movement shows what can be accomplished when marginalised groups have a platform, such as through hashtag activism, to be heard. As a result of individuals speaking out against injustice, individuals who had spent years taking advantage of and

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abusing others experienced tangible consequences for their actions. Additionally, the Time's Up Initiative, formed as a result of the #MeToo movement, is still working for the equality of women. Recently they have supported the US national women's soccer team in asking for equal pay (Cohen, 2019), supported new anti-harassment legislation (Branigin, 2019), and helped launch Time's Up Healthcare to end sexual harassment in medicine (Mohan, 2019).

4.5.1 Methodological Considerations

Twitter provides a lack of information about user demographics and geographic location, which limits the ability of researchers to compare populations and make claims about the representativeness of findings (Mislove et al., 2011). Researchers have sought to resolve this issue through the use of proxy demographics or reviewing profile locations and geotags that apply to original posts; however, the demographics of individuals who use varying methods of location specification often differ significantly, and Twitter users who supply geographic information do not appear to be representative of the wider Twitter population (Sloan & Morgan, 2015).

Additionally, Twitter users may differ in their demographics from others within their country, meaning they are not representative of their population. Survey research has found that in Australia, men, those who live in capital cities, and those aged 14-24 use Twitter more than women, those in regional areas, and those in other age groups (Roy Morgan, 2016). In the US, Twitter users tend to be White, better educated, and wealthier compared with the general public (Wojcik & Hughes, 2019), while in the UK, similar results have been found, that Twitter users tend to be male, between the ages of 18-30, and more educated than the general public (Mellon & Prosser, 2017). Therefore, people must be mindful of potential population bias when interpreting research findings from data obtained via social media platforms.

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While Twitter provides a way for people to detail their experiences, false allegations are also possible. The literature around false allegations is sparse, but the rate appears to be 2-10% (Lisak et al., 2010). However, between 64% and 96% of victims never report their sexual assault (Lisak et al., 2010). Therefore, accurate rates of sexual harassment and assault and false allegations are hard to determine. Not only is there the potential for false stories, but there is also the possibility that some stories originate from false accounts. Gurajala and colleagues (2016) estimated that of 62 million Twitter profiles, around 0.1% were fake accounts.

The current research, while consistent with other studies examining the #MeToo movement, also only examined English language tweets. The #MeToo movement is a worldwide phenomenon, with individuals in South Korea, Israel, Japan, Sweden, Italy, Spain, France, China, India, and South Africa all participating in #MeToo (or similar hashtags in their language) and making accusations against high profile members of their communities (Adam & Booth, 2018). It is vitally important to understand and publicise the stories that all individuals have to tell about sexual harassment and assault regardless of language, culture or country of residence.

As we cannot know the geographical location of the Twitter users in the current study, cultural factors may have influenced the number and nature of tweets shared on the first day the #MeToo movement went viral and may also limit feminist movements that seek to gain traction via social media. So, while our research shows what a large number of users shared on the first day the #MeToo movement went viral, not all individuals can freely and/or safely share their experiences of sexual harassment and assault on social media platforms. The ability to use social media platforms as a means of expression is not equal around the world. In China, the government imposes strict censorship guidelines to limit freedom of speech and failure by social media companies to comply with these guidelines can result in fines or

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complete shutdown (King et al., 2013). Furthermore, cultural factors influence participation in movements such as #MeToo. For example, Moitra and colleagues (2020) found that amongst Bangladeshi women, despite having stories to share, participation in the #MeToo movement was low. This low participation was attributed to a variety of factors, including patriarchal influence and a lack of hope (Moitra et al., 2020).

The current research also lacks a temporal analysis. Only tweets from the first day the #MeToo movement went viral were analysed. Therefore, it is possible that information individuals shared on this day may differ from what was shared in the weeks or months following October 16th 2017. Furthermore, the tweets that were used in this research may have been influenced by potential bias that results from social media data, such as that from Twitter. The data available for collection can be influenced by the application programming interface used and algorithms that filter or stream data meaning researchers may receive biased information (González-Bailón et al., 2014).

4.5.2 Future Studies

Many other avenues for future research related to #MeToo exist. Studies could examine: cultural and language influences on movement participation and what is shared; how posts change over time via a temporal analysis; support for the movement; whether the movement has resulted in a significant attitudinal change locally and globally; whether people are more likely to believe victims of sexual harassment or assault following this movement; whether the movement has made some individuals more defensive; and whether the movement has led some individuals to be more sceptical about accusations. Additionally, future researchers could examine if gender differences are evident in any attitudinal changes. Future research could also explore individuals' motivations for participating in the #MeToo

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movement and whether those who shared their stories during #MeToo found the experience beneficial or regret going public with their experiences.

4.6 Conclusion


With more than half of all women experiencing sexual harassment in their lifetime (ABS, 2017; Kearl, 2018) and one in three women experiencing sexual violence worldwide (WHO, 2013), societal change must occur to reduce incidences of sexual harassment and assault. Educating people about the extreme adverse effects that can occur for individuals who have experienced sexual harassment and/or assault must be a priority (Barak, 2005; Gruber & Fineran, 2008; Houle et al., 2011; McLaughlin et al., 2017). The results of this study offer valuable insights regarding the information individuals shared on the first day the #MeToo movement went viral and the nature of sexual harassment and assault disclosures. Additionally, it provides information which highlights the urgent need for policymakers to identify, and implement, means to reduce the prevalence of sexual harassment and assault, especially among those with a lack of power. Moreover, this study shows that when given the opportunity, women and other marginalised groups want to tell their stories. When considering how society can assist women and other marginalised groups who are sexually harassed or assaulted, perhaps the most efficient way of helping is to give them a voice, to truly listen to their stories, and to finally end society's history of silencing such groups.

Chapter 5

Statement of Authorship

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Signature	 Date May 14 th 2021

Co-Author Contributions

By signing the Statement of Authorship, each author certifies that:

- i. the candidate's stated contribution to the publication is accurate (as detailed above);
- ii. permission is granted for the candidate to include the publication in the thesis; and
- iii. the sum of all co-author contributions is equal to 100% less the candidate's stated contribution.

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Chapter 5: Study 2

Internalised Misogyny and Protective Paternalism: Perceived Benefit and Harm of the #MeToo Movement

We examined perceived benefit and harm of the #MeToo movement and how perceptions varied for men and women. Results showed that men perceived the #MeToo movement as less beneficial and more harmful than women. For the overall sample, gender, benevolent sexism, hostile sexism, and right-wing authoritarianism were associated with perceived benefit of the #MeToo movement, while gender, age, hostile sexism, sexual harassment myth acceptance, and rape myth acceptance were associated with perceived harm of the movement. The role of internalised misogyny and protective paternalism is discussed as well as the implications of this research.

Keywords: sexual harassment, sexual assault, social media, social movement, #MeToo

5.1 Introduction

With the advent of social media, women have a potential platform to express their views and publicise their world experience (Megarry, 2014). As a result, social media platforms have given rise to a form of protest labelled “hashtag feminism”, referring to the way feminists can utilise the hashtag function on Twitter to produce conversation among different users (Mendes et al., 2019). An example of hashtag feminism is the #MeToo movement.

The New York Times, in October of 2017, published several articles alleging Hollywood film producer Harvey Weinstein had sexually harassed and assaulted multiple actresses, including Ashley Judd (Kantor & Twohey, 2017), Lupita Nyong’o (Nyong’o, 2017), Gwyneth Paltrow (Kantor & Abrams, 2017), and Angelina Jolie (Kantor & Abrams, 2017). As a result of these accusations, actress Alyssa Milano took to Twitter on October 15th 2017, urging women worldwide to use the hashtag #MeToo to show the pervasive nature of sexual harassment and assault. This call to action was heeded, with the hashtag used over half a million times on Twitter in the first 24 hours (France, 2017). In the following months, many other well-known male actors such as Kevin Spacey (Vary, 2017), Louis CK (Grow, 2017), Dustin Hoffman (Hunter, 2017), and Craig McLachlan (McClymont, 2018) were also accused of sexual misconduct. Despite the high-volume use of the hashtag, not all people appeared supportive of the #MeToo movement, with the movement receiving backlash from individuals who disagreed with it (Flowers, 2017; Kersten, 2019) as well as corporations and managers scared of the possibility of harassment and assault allegations in a post-#MeToo era (Bennhold, 2019). These mixed reactions raise questions: is the #MeToo movement perceived as beneficial or harmful, and what factors are associated with such perceptions?

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Perceptions about a social movement are important to determine as they may act as a steppingstone, influencing whether individuals become active in the said movement.

Klandermans and Oegema (1987) theorised that there are four steps to becoming a participant in a social movement: “becoming part of the mobilization potential, becoming a target of mobilization attempts, becoming motivated to participate, and overcoming barriers to participate” (p. 519). The first step, mobilisation potential, refers to those who take a positive stance towards a movement and, as a result, could be mobilised to become active in that movement (Klandermans & Oegema, 1987). In a study examining the impact of the 2017 Women’s March, Saguy and Szekeres (2018) found that exposure to the March decreased the extent to which people accepted the gender hierarchy but only among men who weakly identified with their gender, and for men whose gender was important to their self-concept; exposure to the March increased their acceptance of the gender hierarchy. These results support the theory posited by Klandermans and Oegema (1987) that those with a positive stance towards a movement can become mobilised to support that movement. Determining perceptions of benefit and harm of the #MeToo movement and the factors associated with such perceptions, such as those discussed below, will provide valuable information about the kinds of people that see benefits and harms in movements aimed at reducing sexual violence against women. Such information may help inform policymakers about factors to address to encourage support for social movements such as #MeToo and societal attitude change, which may ultimately reduce sexual harassment and assault of women.

5.1.1 Rape and Sexual Harassment Myths, Ambivalent Sexism, and Right-Wing

Authoritarianism

When it comes to sexual harassment and assault, many women remain silent, choosing not to report their experiences to authorities (Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011a;

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Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011b). This lack of reporting can be attributed to societal myths about sexual harassment and rape pervasive within our society. Sexual harassment mythology encompasses widely held attitudes and beliefs that deny and justify male perpetrated sexual harassment of women (Lonsway et al., 2008). Experiencing sexual harassment has been shown to have various adverse impacts for women, for example, depressive symptoms (Houle et al., 2011), reduced job satisfaction, increased absenteeism, work withdrawal, and deteriorating relationships with colleagues (McLaughlin et al., 2017). Amongst adolescents, research has suggested that exposure to sexual harassment can have a more significant adverse effect on health-related outcomes than other forms of harassment (i.e., racial, weight or socioeconomic status based), including self-esteem, body satisfaction, depressive symptoms, self-harm, and substance use (Bucchianeri et al., 2014).

Similar to myths about sexual harassment, rape myths are also pervasive within our society. Rape myths are complex beliefs that support and perpetuate sexual violence against women (Payne et al., 1999). These myths centre on blaming the victim, absolving blame from the perpetrator, and minimising or justifying the aggressive act (Payne et al., 1999). Research has shown that experiencing sexual assault can lead to social difficulties, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance abuse, sexual dysfunction, and suicidality (Breslau et al., 1998; Chen et al., 2010; Mason & Lodrick, 2013). The acceptance of these myths has been linked to other prejudicial beliefs.

Ambivalent sexism, a construct developed by Glick and Fiske (1996), is a way to encapsulate the contradictory attitudes men hold towards women: benevolent sexism (the belief that women should be housewives and need to be protected by men) and hostile sexism (the violent apathy). Past research has shown that increased ambivalent sexism is associated with increased sexual harassment myth acceptance (Russell & Oswald, 2016) and rape myth

acceptance (Chapleau et al., 2007). High ambivalent sexism levels have also been linked to right-wing authoritarianism (Feather & McKee, 2012).

Altemeyer (1981) conceptualised right-wing authoritarianism as a personality construct with three components: authoritarian submission (a high level of submission to the established and legitimate authorities), authoritarian aggression (aggression acted out in secret, hidden ways against those who cannot defend themselves), and conventionalism (following the values and norms decreed by your leader and believing everybody should follow those same values and norms). Authoritarians tend to take these values and norms from their religion, which are often fundamentalist religions that believe the father should be the head of the house and their wives and children should be subservient (Altemeyer, 2006).

While there is little research linking right-wing authoritarianism and social movements, right-wing authoritarianism has been linked to other negative attitudes towards women, including more prejudice towards women in the workplace (Christopher & Wojda, 2008) and being less supportive of women leaving domestic violence situations (Riley & Yamawaki, 2018).

5.1.2 Past Research Exploring Perceptions of the #MeToo Movement

In a previous study regarding the #MeToo movement, Kunst et al. (2019) sought to explain why men and women differ in their attitudes towards the #MeToo movement, theorising that it was due to ideological differences between genders. They found that men perceived fewer benefits of and more harm from the #MeToo movement than women. Overall, those who reported a greater perceived benefit of the #MeToo movement were more likely to identify with feminism, showed lower levels of hostile sexism and rape myth acceptance and were more likely to perceive the #MeToo movement positively (Kunst et al., 2019). Conversely, those who reported greater perceived harm of the #MeToo movement

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were less likely to identify with feminism, showed higher levels of benevolent sexism, hostile sexism, rape myth acceptance, and beliefs in a just world, and were less likely to perceive the #MeToo movement as beneficial (Kunst et al., 2019).

As previously mentioned, Kunst et al. (2019) found that men scored higher than women on a measure of perceived harm of the #MeToo movement but lower than women on a measure of perceived benefit of the #MeToo movement. Research has also shown that men score higher on measures of right-wing authoritarianism (Feather & McKee, 2012), ambivalent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Glick et al., 2000), sexual harassment myth acceptance (Lonsway et al., 2008), and rape myth acceptance (Payne et al., 1999; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010). However, while Kunst et al. (2019) found interesting results, it is worth noting that while women tend to see the #MeToo movement as more beneficial and less harmful than men, there are women who go against this trend, and vice versa for men.

5.1.3 Women's Internalised Misogyny and Men's Support

Despite the #MeToo movement aiming to reduce the sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape of women, not all women were supportive of the movement. Prominent feminists, including Germaine Greer and various celebrities, spoke out against the #MeToo movement during its virality, including critiquing the women speaking out. Daphne Merkin, a self-described feminist writing for The New York Times, said the women who complained about sexual harassment and assault “perceive themselves to be as frail as Victorian housewives” (2018, para. 8). However, the #MeToo movement is not the first women's movement opposed by other women. During the worldwide fight for suffrage, not all women wanted the right to vote, and many were members of the Anti-Suffrage movement. Giving women the right to vote was seen as violating the perceived boundary between the public male sphere and the private female sphere, and the Suffrage movement challenged ideas

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about women's role within society (Goodier, 2013). While the Suffrage movement eventually succeeded, female anti-suffragists proved to be the biggest challenge for securing women the vote (Goodier, 2013).

As previously mentioned, while research has shown that men tend to score higher than women on measures of rape myth acceptance (Payne et al., 1999), sexual harassment myth acceptance (Lonsway et al., 2008), and ambivalent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Glick et al., 2000), women do not score zero on these measures. Furthermore, in some countries, women's benevolent sexism scores exceed men's scores (Glick et al., 2000). As women also hold these prejudicial views towards their gender and have been shown not to support movements that aim to help women, it is important to determine the factors associated with whether a woman perceives the #MeToo movement as beneficial or harmful.

Additionally, while men may score higher than women on these measures, that does not mean all men perceived the #MeToo movement as harmful. Several men not only supported the #MeToo movement but actively participated in it. Kevin Spacey was accused of assault by fellow actor Anthony Rapp (Vary, 2017), actor Terry Crews spoke about being assaulted by a male Hollywood executive (Mumford, 2017), and actor James Van Der Beek took to Twitter to share that he had experienced sexual assault by powerful older men in the industry (Weaver, 2017). As a result of the number of men who have also experienced sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape, the hashtags #MeTooMen and #UsToo arose as a way for men to tell their stories (see Bogen et al., 2020; Hawkins et al., 2019). We must not paint all men with the same brush. Therefore, it is important to determine what factors determine whether men perceive the #MeToo movement as beneficial or harmful.

5.2 Aims

The researchers aimed to examine perceptions of benefit and harm of the #MeToo movement and the demographic and attitudinal factors associated with these perceptions. It

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was anticipated that those with higher levels of right-wing authoritarianism, ambivalent sexism, sexual harassment myth acceptance, and rape myth acceptance would report greater perceived harm and lower perceived benefit of the #MeToo movement. Further, based on previous research, it was anticipated that men would show higher levels of right-wing authoritarianism, ambivalent sexism, sexual harassment myth acceptance, rape myth acceptance, and perceived harm and lower levels of perceived benefit of the #MeToo movement. Further, this study seeks to expand upon Kunst et al. (2019) by exploring what factors are associated with perceived benefit and harm of the #MeToo movement for men and women, respectively.

5.3 Method

5.3.1 Participants

The sample comprised 299 participants, 178 females, 115 males, and six genders other than female or male (five non-binary and one demigirl), aged 18 to 71 years ($M = 24.8$, $SD = 9.1$). Most participants reported no religious affiliation ($N = 189$, 63.2%); among those who reported being religious, most were Christian ($N = 54$, 18.1%). Additionally, most participants had not completed university education ($N = 199$, 66.6%), with Year 12 the highest level of education completed ($N = 147$, 49.2%).

5.3.2 Measures

5.3.2.1 Predictor Variables

Demographic information. Participants provided information on four demographic items; age, gender, religion, and the highest level of education completed.

Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA). The 22-item RWA scale assesses right-wing authoritarianism (Altemeyer, 2006). Participants rated on a nine-point Likert scale (1 = very strongly disagree to 9 = very strongly agree), their level of agreement with each item, with

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higher scores indicating a stronger belief in right-wing authoritarianism. The RWA has excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = .95$) (Altemeyer, 2006). Internal consistency for the current study was also excellent ($\alpha = .94$).

Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI). The ASI is a 22-item measure of two subsets of sexism: hostile sexism, defined as traditional antipathy towards women, and benevolent sexism, a subtler form of sexism that believes women should be homemakers and stay-at-home mothers as they are the more caring and delicate gender (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Participants rated, on a six-point Likert scale (0 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), their level of agreement with each item, where higher scores indicate higher rates of hostile and benevolent sexism towards women. The ASI has a Cronbach's alpha ranging from .83 to .92 (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Cronbach's alpha in the present study was good for the overall and subscale scores; .90 for the overall score, and .92 and .80 for hostile sexism and benevolent sexism, respectively.

Illinois Sexual Harassment Myth Acceptance Scale (ISHMA). The 20-item ISHMA measures four facets of myths about sexual harassment: (1) Fabrication/Exaggeration; (2) Ulterior Motives; (3) Natural Heterosexuality; and (4) Woman's Responsibility (Lonsway et al., 2008). Participants indicated, on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree), their level of agreement with each item. Higher scores indicate higher acceptance of sexual harassment myths. In the present study, internal consistency was excellent ($\alpha = .94$).

Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMA). The 45-item IRMA measures seven component beliefs about rape: (1) She asked for it; (2) It wasn't really rape; (3) He didn't mean to; (4) She wanted it; (5) She lied; (6) Rape is a trivial event; and (7) Rape is a deviant event (Payne et al., 1999). Participants rated on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = not at all agree to 7 = very much agree), their level of agreement with each item. Higher scores indicate a

higher level of rape myth acceptance. It has excellent internal reliability ($\alpha = .93$) (Payne et al., 1999). Internal consistency in the current study was excellent ($\alpha = .96$).

5.3.2.2 Dependent Variables

Perceived Benefit and Perceived Harm of the #MeToo Movement. These measures each consist of four statements about the perceived benefit and harm of the #MeToo movement (Kunst et al., 2019). Participants indicated the degree to which they agreed with each statement using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Higher scores on these measures indicate a higher perceived benefit and harm of the #MeToo movement. Cronbach's alpha for the original perceived benefit questions ranged from .79 to .88, and for perceived harm, it ranged from .77 to .80. (Kunst et al., 2019). The current study's internal reliability was excellent, with Cronbach's alphas for perceived benefit and perceived harm of .87 and .90, respectively.

5.3.3 Procedure

The University of Adelaide School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee approved this study. An online survey collected data between October 2019 and June 2020. To strengthen power, additional data was collected during March and April of 2021. Individuals were eligible to participate if they were aged over 18 years of age and fluent in English. Potential participants were informed about the study via social media platforms, flyers displayed in public locations such as the University of Adelaide campus, the University of Adelaide School of Psychology first-year psychology student research platform, and snowball sampling. First-year psychology students received course credit for participation. No other participants were incentivised for involvement.

Once potential participants accessed the online survey link, they were presented with a preamble explaining the study in more detail. Participants could then consent before

commencing the survey or exit the survey if not wishing to consent. Participation in the survey was voluntary, and participants could withdraw from the study at any time until the submission of their survey responses.

5.3.4 Data analysis

Data were analysed using SPSS Statistics (V.24). Due to the low number of participants indicating gender as other, the analysis included only male and female responses. Descriptive statistics were used to summarise scores for the overall sample and according to gender. Any differences based on gender were investigated using independent samples t-tests.

Multiple linear regression, using the enter method, was undertaken to determine factors associated with perceived benefit and perceived harm of the #MeToo movement. This method was also utilised to explore the factors associated with perceived benefit and perceived harm of the #MeToo movement for male and female genders. The findings of previous literature guided variable selection. Power analysis used the formula $N > 50 + 8m$ (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013), where m is the number of predictor variables. Thus, for the analysis using the full sample and nine independent variables (age, gender, religion, education, right-wing authoritarianism, ambivalent sexism subscales, sexual harassment myth acceptance, and rape myth acceptance), the required sample size for sufficient power was 122. For the two gender analyses, with eight independent variables (age, religion, education, right-wing authoritarianism, ambivalent sexism subscales, sexual harassment myth acceptance, and rape myth acceptance), the required sample size for sufficient power was 114. Therefore, all analyses were sufficiently powered.

Assumptions of linear regression were assessed, including linearity, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity. When conducting the regression, Mahalanobis distance was produced

and based on the critical values guidelines from Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), 11 cases exceeded the critical value and were removed from the analysis.

5.4 Results

5.4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 reports the descriptive results for the variables of interest. Women scored lower on ambivalent sexism (benevolent and hostile sexism), rape myth acceptance, sexual harassment myth acceptance, and perceived harm of the #MeToo movement than men. Further, women were more likely than men to perceive benefit of the #MeToo movement. There was no significant gender difference for right-wing authoritarianism.

Potential scores for the perceived benefit and harm of the #MeToo movement scales ranged from 4 to 20, with higher scores indicating greater perceived benefit and harm of the #MeToo movement. In the total sample, the average scores for the perceived benefit and harm scales were 17.6 (SD = 2.4) and 8.6 (SD = 3.9), respectively. Thus, on average, people perceived the #MeToo movement as more beneficial and less harmful.

Multiple linear regression was used to examine factors associated with perceived benefit and harm of the #MeToo movement. For perceived benefit, the model explained 36% of the variance, $F(9, 267) = 16.4, p < .001$. Women, those with high benevolent sexism scores, and low hostile sexism and right-wing authoritarian scores, were more likely to score high on perceived benefit of the #MeToo movement (see Table 2). For perceived harm, the model explained 57% of the variance, $F(9, 267) = 38.6, p < .001$. Men, younger people, those

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Table 5.1

Summary of Scores on Independent and Dependent Variables for the Overall Sample and According to Gender and Mean Comparison by

Variable	Overall Sample (N = 299)			Women (N = 178)			Men (N = 115)			<i>t</i>	df	<i>d</i>
	Range	M	SD	Range	M	SD	Range	M	SD			
Benevolent Sexism	49	17.1	9.2	38	16.4	9.1	49	18.6	9.3	-2.0*	285	.24
Hostile Sexism	41	13.7	11.0	38	12.7	10.4	41	15.7	11.5	-2.3*	290	.27
Rape Myth Acceptance	140	69.1	30.7	137	66.3	30.1	140	74.4	31.6	-2.2*	286	.26
Sexual Harassment Myth Acceptance	88	43.4	19.9	88	40.9	18.9	82	48.2	20.7	-3.1*	287	.37
Right-Wing Authoritarianism	132	52.7	26.8	132	54.2	28.2	896	51.4	24.7	.88	287	.10
Perceived Benefit ^a	10	17.6	2.4	10	17.9	2.2	10	17.1	2.6	2.9*	214.1	.34
Perceived Harm	16	8.6	3.9	16	7.8	3.6	16	9.8	3.9	-4.5**	288	.54

Gender

Note. The overall sample includes genders other than female or male (five non-binary and one demigirl). ^aEqual variance not assumed. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$.

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who scored low on rape myth acceptance, and high on hostile sexism and sexual harassment myth acceptance were more likely to perceive the #MeToo movement as harmful (see Table 3).

When examining women's perceptions of benefit of the #MeToo movement ($F(8, 156) = 10.5, p < .001$), the model explained 35% of the variance. Women who scored low on hostile sexism were more likely to see the #MeToo movement as beneficial (See Table 4). For men's perceptions of benefit of the #MeToo movement, the model explained 38% of the variance ($F(8, 97) = 7.5, p < .001$). Men who scored high on benevolent sexism and low on right-wing authoritarianism were more likely to perceived the #MeToo movement as beneficial (See Table 5).

In regards to perceived harm of the #MeToo movement, for women ($F(8, 156) = 19.5, p < .001$), the model explained 50% of the variance. Younger women and those who scored high on sexual harassment myth acceptance and hostile sexism were more likely to perceive the #MeToo movement as harmful (See Table 6). For men ($F(8, 97) = 22.8, p < .001$), the model explained 65% of the variance. Younger men and those who scored low on rape myth acceptance and high on sexual harassment myth acceptance were more likely to perceive the #MeToo movement as harmful (See Table 7).

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Table 5.2

Factors Associated with Perceived Benefit of the #MeToo Movement Using Multiple Linear Regression (n = 293)

Variables	B	SE	β	95% CI		t	p
				LB	UB		
Constant	21.5	.80		19.9	23.1	26.9	.00
Gender	-.48	.24	-.11	-.95	.009	-2.0	.05
Age	-.01	.01	-.02	-.03	.02	.36	.72
Religion	-.06	.27	-.01	-.59	.47	-.22	.83
Education	-.43	.27	-.09	-1.0	.11	-1.6	.12
Benevolent Sexism	.06	.02	.22	.03	.91	3.5	.001
Hostile Sexism	-.06	.02	-.27	-.10	-.02	-3.2	.002
Rape Myth Acceptance	-.01	.01	-.16	-.03	.01	-1.4	.16
Sexual Harassment Myth Acceptance	-.01	.01	-.01	-.04	.02	-.8	.42
Right-Wing Authoritarianism	-.02	.01	-.30	-.04	-.01	-3.3	.001

Note. B = unstandardised beta, SE = standard error of B, β = beta, CI = confidence intervals, LB and UB = lower and upper bound.

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Table 5.3

Factors Associated with Perceived Harm of the #MeToo Movement Using Multiple Linear Regression (n = 293)

Variables	B	SE	β	95% CI		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
				LB	UB		
Constant	3.8	1.05		1.8	5.9	9.7	.00
Gender	.93	.37	.13	.32	1.5	3.0	.003
Age	-.08	.02	-.20	-.12	-.05	-4.6	.00
Religion	.25	.35	.03	-.45	.94	.70	.48
Education	.48	.40	.06	-.23	1.2	1.3	.18
Benevolent Sexism	-.03	.02	-.08	-.08	.01	-1.5	.13
Hostile Sexism	.10	.03	.30	.05	.15	4.0	.00
Rape Myth Acceptance	-.03	.01	-.21	-.05	-.004	-2.3	.02
Sexual Harassment Myth Acceptance	.12	.02	.62	.08	.16	6.4	.00
Right-Wing Authoritarianism	.01	.01	.05	-.01	.03	.84	.40

Note. B = unstandardised beta, SE = standard error of B, β = beta, CI = confidence intervals, LB and UB = lower and upper bound.

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Table 5.4

Factors Associated with Women's Levels of Perceived Benefit of the #MeToo Movement Using Multiple Linear Regression (n = 178)

Variables	B	SE	β	95% CI		t	p
				LB	UB		
Constant	21.9	1.0		20.0	23.8	23.0	.00
Age	-.03	.02	-.12	-.06	.01	-1.6	.11
Religion	-.05	.31	-.01	-.67	.56	-.17	.87
Education	-.49	.32	-.11	-1.1	.14	-1.6	.12
Benevolent Sexism	.02	.02	.10	-.02	.06	1.0	.30
Hostile Sexism	-.05	.03	-.25	-.10	-.001	-2.0	.04
Rape Myth Acceptance	-.02	.01	-.27	-.04	.001	-1.9	.06
Sexual Harassment Myth Acceptance	-.01	.02	-.04	-.04	.03	-.30	.78
Right-Wing Authoritarianism	-.02	.01	-.21	-.03	.00	-1.9	.06

Note. B = unstandardised beta, SE = standard error of B, β = beta, CI = confidence intervals, LB and UB = lower and upper bound.

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Table 5.5

Factors Associated with Men's Levels of Perceived Benefit of the #MeToo Movement Using Multiple Linear Regression (n = 115)

Variables	B	SE	β	95% CI		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
				LB	UB		
Constant	19.6	1.4		16.9	22.4	14.1	.00
Age	.03	.02	.09	-.02	.07	1.0	.30
Religion	-.09	.52	-.01	-1.1	.94	-.17	.87
Education	-.36	.54	-.06	-1.4	.70	-.67	.50
Benevolent Sexism	.08	.03	.27	.03	.14	2.9	.005
Hostile Sexism	-.05	.04	-.22	-.12	.02	-1.5	.15
Rape Myth Acceptance	.004	.02	.04	-.03	.04	.23	.82
Sexual Harassment Myth Acceptance	-.04	.03	-.31	-.09	.01	-1.5	.13
Right-Wing Authoritarianism	-.03	.01	-.29	-.06	-.01	-2.4	.02

Note. B = unstandardised beta, SE = standard error of B, β = beta, CI = confidence intervals, LB and UB = lower and upper bound.

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Table 5.6

Factors Associated with Women's Levels of Perceived Harm of the #MeToo Movement Using Multiple Linear Regression (n = 178)

Variables	B	SE	β	95% CI		t	p
				LB	UB		
Constant	4.0	1.4		1.2	6.8	2.8	.005
Age	-.07	.03	-.18	-.12	-.02	-2.8	.006
Religion	.24	.46	.03	-.66	1.2	.53	.60
Education	.77	.47	.11	-.16	1.7	1.6	.10
Benevolent Sexism	-.01	.03	-.02	-.07	.05	.30	.80
Hostile Sexism	.12	.04	.36	.05	.20	3.4	.001
Rape Myth Acceptance	-.03	.02	-.23	-.06	.003	-1.8	.08
Sexual Harassment Myth Acceptance	.11	.03	.60	.06	.16	4.5	.00
Right-Wing Authoritarianism	-.001	.01	-.01	-.03	.02	-.12	.90

Note. B = unstandardised beta, SE = standard error of B, β = beta, CI = confidence intervals, LB and UB = lower and upper bound.

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Table 5.7

Factors Associated with Men's Levels of Perceived Harm of the #MeToo Movement Using Multiple Linear Regression (n = 115)

Variables	B	SE	β	95% CI		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
				LB	UB		
Constant	6.5	1.5		3.5	9.5	4.3	.00
Age	-.10	.03	-.30	-.15	-.05	-4.0	.00
Religion	.24	.56	.03	-.90	1.4	.44	.70
Education	-.25	.60	-.03	-1.4	.90	-.43	.70
Benevolent Sexism	-.04	-.03	-.09	-.10	.02	-1.3	.20
Hostile Sexism	.03	.04	.10	-.04	.11	.90	.40
Rape Myth Acceptance	-.04	.02	-.30	-.07	.00	-2.0	.048
Sexual Harassment Myth Acceptance	.16	.03	.90	.10	.21	5.6	.00
Right-Wing Authoritarianism	.02	.01	.15	-.01	.05	1.6	.11

Note. B = unstandardised beta, SE = standard error of B, β = beta, CI = confidence intervals, LB and UB = lower and upper bound.

5.5 Discussion

Perceptions of the #MeToo movements' benefit and harm and which demographic and attitudinal factors were associated with such perceptions were examined. Based on previous literature, it was anticipated that men would score higher than women on right-wing authoritarianism, ambivalent sexism, sexual harassment myth acceptance, rape myth acceptance, and perceived harm of the #MeToo movement and lower than women on perceived benefit of the #MeToo movement. Results supported all but one expectation; there was no significant gender difference for right-wing authoritarianism.

5.5.1 Perceived Benefit and Perceived Harm of the #MeToo Movement

Women, participants who scored higher on benevolent sexism, and participants who scored lower on hostile sexism, right-wing authoritarianism, and rape myth acceptance were more likely to perceive benefit of the #MeToo movement. Men, younger individuals, participants who scored higher on hostile sexism and sexual harassment myth acceptance and lower on rape myth acceptance were more likely to perceived harm of the #MeToo movement. In their research, Kunst et al. (2019) also found that women were more likely to perceive the #MeToo movement as beneficial, and men were more likely to perceive the movement as harmful.

Hostile sexism encompasses the belief that feminists are trying to gain power over men and a "tease" them regarding sex (Glick & Fiske, 1996). People with high levels of hostile sexism may believe that those who came forward during the #MeToo movement did so to gain power by damaging men's reputations, or those who were assaulted deserved it as they had teased men. Such beliefs may explain the relationships found in the current study between hostile sexism and perceived benefit and harm of the #MeToo movement.

Interestingly, the current results also showed that participants higher on benevolent sexism

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were also more likely to report perceived benefit of the movement. This finding could result from the nature of benevolent sexism, which involves the belief that women are delicate and need to be protected (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Such notions could have led participants to believe that one benefit of the #MeToo movement is showing society that women also need protection from sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape.

A key component of right-wing authoritarianism is authoritarian aggression, which is aggression against those who cannot defend themselves (Altemeyer, 1981). Authoritarian aggression may explain why participants who scored higher on right-wing authoritarianism scored lower on perceived benefit of the #MeToo movement. People with attitudes that support this kind of aggression may not look favourably upon a movement designed to highlight these hidden forms of violence. Additionally, right-wing authoritarianism has been linked to both sexist (Feather & McKee, 2012) and discriminatory attitudes (Christopher & Wojda, 2008; Riley & Yamawaki, 2018) towards women, providing a further explanation as to why individuals with high levels of right-wing authoritarianism would not perceive benefits of the movement.

Rape myths involve beliefs such as “many so-called rape victims are actually women who had sex and ‘changed their minds’ afterwards” and “when women go around wearing low-cut tops or short skirts, they’re just asking for trouble” (Payne et al., 1999, pp. 49-50). Such myths question the validity of victims and blame them for their rape. Therefore, if someone scores high on rape myth acceptance, they may view the #MeToo movement with scepticism and not believe the women who came forward during the movement, thus perceiving it as less beneficial. For those who show greater acceptance of sexual harassment myths that deny the extent of sexual harassment perpetrated by men towards women, the #MeToo movement may be seen as a “witch-hunt” against men, which was a prominent criticism within the media during the #MeToo movement (Nordine, 2018; Swenson, 2017).

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However, unexpectedly we found that participants who reported higher levels of rape myth acceptance were less likely to perceive the #MeToo movement as harmful. One possible explanation for this finding is that participants who had higher levels of rape myth acceptance were unphased by the #MeToo movement and may not believe the #MeToo movement has changed society, thus do not perceive the movement as a threat or harmful. Future research should explore this finding further.

Another interesting finding was that young individuals reported greater perceived harm of the #MeToo movement. This finding was unexpected as past research has shown that older generations are more likely to hold right-wing views (Ruffman et al., 2016), making them more likely to score high on ambivalent sexism measures (Feather & McKee, 2012). However, research has discovered a U-shaped pattern of endorsement of hostile and benevolent sexism, meaning younger and older generations have higher ambivalent sexism levels than middle age cohorts (Fernández et al., 2004; Garaigordobil & Aliri, 2013; Hammond et al., 2017). The current sample was relatively young, with an average age of 24.8 years, which may explain this unexpected finding. The relationship between age and perceived benefit and harm could be an avenue for future research.

5.5.2 Within Gender Differences for Perceived Benefit and Perceived Harm of the #MeToo Movement

For women, participants with higher levels of hostile sexism were less likely to perceive the #MeToo movement as beneficial, while younger women and those with high levels of hostile sexism and sexual harassment myth acceptance were more likely to perceive the movement as harmful.

For men, participants with high levels of benevolent sexism and lower levels of right-wing authoritarianism were more likely to perceive the #MeToo movement as beneficial,

while younger men and those with high levels of sexual harassment myth acceptance and low levels of rape myth acceptance were more likely to perceive the movement as harmful.

Despite being beliefs that adversely impact their gender, research has shown that women hold significant sexism views, both hostile and benevolent (Glick et al., 2000). The current results show that women who score high in sexism are less likely to support a movement designed to combat sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape. These findings may be related to the internalised misogyny present in many women, which centres around the fear, hatred, and devaluation of women and femininity (Piggott, 2004). Internalised misogyny presents itself in many ways, including delegitimising feminism and justifying toxic behaviour in men (Cowburn, 2019). Internalised misogyny may act as a protective barrier against the harsh reality that many women experience sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape. Thus, women with high levels of hostile sexism may perceive the #MeToo movement as less beneficial and more harmful for this reason.

For men with high levels of benevolent sexism, paternalism may explain why they may show more perceived benefit for the #MeToo movement. Protective paternalism is a component of benevolent sexism that perpetuates the belief that women are weak and need men to take care of them and protect them from harm (Glick & Fiske, 1996). As a result, they may see the movement as a further reason women need to be protected, thus perceiving it as beneficial.

5.5.3 Limitations and Future Research

A limitation of the current study is that the current sample consisted primarily of Australian participants and may, therefore, not represent all people's views. Future research should aim to explore support for the movement among culturally and linguistically diverse and gender and sexually diverse populations. Additionally, as this study was cross-sectional,

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claims about causation cannot be made. Longitudinal research may provide further insight into causal relationships. As noted, above future research may also explore relationships between rape myth acceptance, age and perceived benefits and harm of the #MeToo movement.

5.6 Conclusion

Social media platforms have given women and other minority groups the potential to give voice to and amplify stories that would once have been silenced within society. The #MeToo movement saw millions of people (France, 2017) come together to voice their experiences of sexual harassment and assault with the hopes of creating societal change. The #MeToo movement is a vivid example of women using social media platforms to make their voices heard, and as such, research must continue to examine this phenomenon. This study's findings show that gender alone does not determine perceptions of benefit and harm. Rather, demographic and attitudinal factors associated with perceived benefit and harm of the #MeToo movement may vary by gender. The current findings are useful as they can guide education about what beliefs need to be either fostered or altered in individuals to ensure that social movements like the #MeToo movement are perceived positively, and change can occur within society to reduce the rates of sexual harassment and assault.

Chapter 6

Statement of Authorship

Title of Study	A Qualitative Examination of Australian and American Women's Experiences of Participating in the #MeToo Movement
Publication Status	Accepted for Publication ✔ Submitted for Publication Unpublished and Unsubmitted work written in Manuscript Style
Publication Details	Drewett, C., Oxlad, M., & Crabb, S. (Submitted). A Qualitative Examination of Australian and American Women's Experiences of Participating in the #MeToo Movement. <i>Sex Roles</i> .

Principle Author

Name of Principle Author	Chloe Drewett
(Candidate)	
Contribution to the Study	I am responsible for the conception and primary authorship of this study. I conducted the literature review, developed the research aims, recruited participants, collected (via interviews) and analysed data, and wrote the manuscript. I was identified as the first author when this article was submitted for publication, and I have been responsible for all communications with journal administration.
Overall Percentage (%)	85%
Certification	This study reports on original research I conducted during the period of my Higher Degree by Research candidature and is not subject to any obligations or contractual agreements with a third party that would constrain its inclusion in this thesis. I am the primary author of this study.
Signature	Date 14th May 2021

Co-Author Contributions

By signing the Statement of Authorship, each author certifies that:

- i. the candidate's stated contribution to the publication is accurate (as detailed above);
- ii. permission is granted for the candidate to include the publication in the thesis; and
- iii. the sum of all co-author contributions is equal to 100% less the candidate's stated contribution.

Name of Co-Author	Dr Melissa Oxlad
Contribution to the Study	My role was to assist with study conceptualisation, data collection and analysis, comment on drafts, make suggestions on the presentation of material in the study, and to provide editorial input.
Signature	Date 14 th May 2021

Name of Co-Author	Dr Shona Crabb
Contribution to the Study	My role was to comment on drafts, make suggestions on the presentation of material in the study, and to provide editorial input.
Signature	Date: 14 th May 2021

Chapter 6: Study 3

A Qualitative Examination of Australian and American Women's Experiences of Participating in the #MeToo Movement

Historically, women have often been silenced, and this silence has stretched to experiences of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape, resulting in under-reporting of these experiences to authorities. The #MeToo movement provided a platform for women to break their silence about sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape. This study aimed to explore the perspectives of those who participated in the movement focusing on the movement's perceived benefit and harm. Eight women were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. Four themes were identified from the data using reflexive thematic analysis: *The #MeToo Movement was Beneficial in Multiple Ways; I Have No Regrets and I Would Do It Again; Family and Friends Were Mostly Supportive; and A Step in the Right Direction, but Society has Not Changed Enough Since #MeToo*. Women in this study perceived the #MeToo movement as having positive benefits for themselves and society and did not mention any harms that arose from participating. The findings also showed that, when given a safe space, women will speak up to ensure other women do not feel alone.

Keywords: sexual harassment, sexual assault, #MeToo, social media, social movement

6.1 Introduction

Throughout history, women have often been excluded from constructing language, reality, and history, which Spender (1980) argues, has been no accident. As institutions of knowledge, and information storage and dissemination, have been historically controlled by men, despite women writing their histories, men have allowed these histories to be suppressed and forgotten (Spender, 1980). The silencing of women is not only used to isolate them and prevent their voices from being heard, but it also provides men with the power to shape and control their voices (Houston & Kramarae, 1991). Indeed, women are often silenced through means such as the use of ridicule (men often label women's talk "gossiping" or "whining"), male-controlled media, and denying women opportunities for education (Houston & Kramarae, 1991).

In addition to silencing by those in positions of power, women also have self-silenced. While this may appear to be a choice, it results from societies that impose adverse consequences on those who speak out; for example, confronting discrimination can lead to being ostracised and disliked (Swim et al., 2010), and men view women who confront sexism as less competent (Simon & O'Brien, 2015). This self-silencing can have adverse effects on women; women who endorse self-silencing beliefs are less likely to respond to sexist incidents, such as unwanted sexual attention or gender-based discrimination (Swim et al., 2010) and may experience high levels of psychological distress (Hurst & Beesley, 2013).

Researchers have also described street harassment and rape as tools to silence women; these tools threaten women and prevent their free reign of public spaces (Dunckel Graglia, 2016; Houston & Kramarae, 1991; Hutson & Krueger, 2019). After experiencing sexual harassment or rape, women are further silenced by society shaming them, which, in turn, has led to a culture of under-reporting sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape. In the United States of America (USA), estimates suggest at least 90% of all rape cases go unreported to

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police (Belknap, 2010). Additionally, only 5-30% of those who experience workplace sexual harassment report their harassment to their employers, and less than 1% pursue legal action (McDonald, 2012). However, thanks to the advent of the Internet, there are new ways to break the silence surrounding sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape.

Social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook, now offer women places where they can communicate, form communities, engage in consciousness-raising, disrupt the male gaze, and call out instances of injustice and misogyny (Baer, 2016). While such platforms can also yield negative experiences for women (see Burke Winkelman et al., 2015; Mendes et al., 2019), they can also help break the silence by enabling feminists to spread their ideas and shape new forms of discourse surrounding gender and sexism (Baer, 2016). An additional benefit of social media platforms for feminists, as stated by Baer (2016), is the ability for “creative modes of protest to emerge” (p. 18). An example of this, and the focus of the current study, is the #MeToo movement.

On October 5th 2017, The New York Times published an article featuring stories from actresses Ashley Judd, Emily Nestor, and Lauren O'Connor about the harassment they had experienced at the hands of film producer Harvey Weinstein (Kantor & Twohey, 2017). Subsequently, additional notable actresses, including Gwyneth Paltrow, Angelina Jolie (Kantor & Abrams, 2017), Lupita Nyong'o (Nyong'o, 2017), Cara Delevingne (Karlán, 2017), and Salma Hayek (Hayek, 2017), also came forward, detailing similar experiences of sexual harassment and assault by Weinstein.

On October 15th 2017, actress Alyssa Milano, emboldened by the stories shared by her fellow women in Hollywood, took to Twitter to urge women around the world to use the hashtag #MeToo if they had ever been sexually harassed, sexually assaulted or raped, in order to show the pervasive nature of these experiences within society. This call to action resulted in the hashtag being used over half a million times in the first 24 hours (France,

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2017). The phrase “Me Too” was initially coined by Tarana Burke in 2005 for women, specifically women of colour, to use in order to feel less alone following experiences of sexual assault or rape (Brockes, 2018) but was utilised by Milano, who later credited Burke for the hashtag.

In the following months, other Hollywood celebrities were accused of sexual misconduct. Actor Anthony Rapp told BuzzFeed that Kevin Spacey made sexual advances towards him at a party when Rapp was 14 years old and Spacey was 26 (Vary, 2017), Anna Graham Hunter spoke of being sexually harassed as a 17-year-old film intern by Dustin Hoffman (Hunter, 2017), and five women accused comedian Louis C.K. of sexual misconduct, including masturbating in front of them (Grow, 2017). Accusations were also made against NBC news anchor Matt Lauer (NBC News, 2017), comedian Aziz Ansari (Way, 2018), and actor Jeffrey Tambor (Abramovitch, 2017a; Abramovitch, 2017b).

Following these accusations, several of the accused men have experienced consequences for their alleged actions. Harvey Weinstein was charged (McHenry, 2018) and later found guilty of sexual assault and rape (ABC News, 2020), and actor Kevin Spacey was fired from his Netflix television series *House of Cards* (Bishop, 2017) and recast in the film *All The Money In The World* (Fleming Jr., 2017). Similarly, Matt Lauer (NBC News, 2017), Jeffrey Tambor (Goldberg, 2018), and actor Danny Masterson (following sexual assault charges) (Moniuszko, 2017) were all fired from their respective roles in film and television. Despite these developments, there has also been a backlash to the #MeToo movement.

Some people in Hollywood were quick to label the #MeToo movement a “witch hunt” (Dalmia, 2017; Nordine, 2018), with actor Liam Neeson claiming that men like Dustin Hoffman were attacked for what he perceived as minor offences (Nordine, 2018). Actor and director Woody Allen, who has had allegations of sexual misconduct made against him,

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expressed concern that “every guy in an office who winks at a woman is suddenly having to call a lawyer to defend himself” (Swenson, 2017, para. 8).

This backlash is not isolated to Hollywood, as research in the US has shown that following the #MeToo movement, 60% of male managers are uncomfortable participating in work activities, such as mentoring, working, or socialising, alone with women, a 32% increase since before the #MeToo movement (Lean In, 2018). The same study also showed that 50% of men surveyed believe that the consequences of sexual harassment allegations are more damaging to the careers of the harassers than the victims, while 64% of women believed the reverse to be true (Lean In, 2018). However, this backlash mostly comes from people who did not participate in the #MeToo movement, so research has started to examine movement participants' experiences.

Women in China (Lin & Yang, 2019) and India (Pegu, 2019) have been interviewed regarding the #MeToo movement and their involvement in it. Lin and Yang (2019) found that, in China, the #MeToo movement was utilised as a form of education about sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape, provided women with an outlet to reveal painful secrets about their experiences, and as a way of finding groups to share stories and support other women. Pegu (2019) found that many women in India were uncertain whether #MeToo had created any lasting change but were adamant that the movement was necessary. While these two studies are vitally important, China and India are very culturally different from “Western” countries, and women's experiences may differ according to culture. To the researchers' knowledge, no other studies have examined women's experiences participating in the #MeToo movement, and none have looked at women's experiences in “Western” countries. Whether the women who participated in the #MeToo movement experienced benefit or harm from their involvement is important to determine for personal and societal reasons.

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Attitudes towards a social movement such as the #MeToo movement are important to determine as they can play a role in influencing whether an individual will become active in a movement. Klandermans and Oegema (1987) theorised that there are four steps to participation in a social movement: “becoming part of the mobilization potential, becoming a target of mobilization attempts, becoming motivated to participate, and overcoming barriers to participate” (p. 519). Mobilisation potential refers to those who take a positive stance towards a movement and, as a result, have the potential for mobilisation in that movement (Klandermans & Oegema, 1987). Knowing whether someone believed the #MeToo movement to be beneficial or harmful can help determine whether an individual will become part of the mobilisation potential of said movement or whether they may become an active barrier to the social movement creating social change.

Active involvement in social movements is of importance as such movements have led to political change (i.e., the Arab Spring protests; Moss, 2013) and attitudinal change (i.e., following the Black Lives Matter movement, implicit and explicit racial attitudes became less pro-White; Sawyer & Gampa, 2018). Additionally, speaking up about instances of sexism, such as sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape, has been shown to have a positive impact on women. Gervais and colleagues (2010) found that women who confronted sexist behaviours felt more competent, had higher self-esteem, and felt more empowered than those who did not confront the sexist behaviour they encountered. These findings show why it is important for people, not only women, to be active in social movements when they occur and why it is important to explore whether #MeToo participants perceived their involvement as beneficial or harmful.

6.2 Aims

The #MeToo movement is a global phenomenon, resulting in women worldwide using social media platforms to share their stories of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and

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rape. As noted, consequences have arisen for some men accused during the #MeToo movement. However, there has also been a backlash against women involved and the movement itself. Given this variable response, the current study explores women's experiences of participating in the #MeToo movement. Specifically, it explores how women participated and their experiences of participation, including any perceived benefits and/or harms. This study also aims to examine whether participating in the #MeToo movement differed for women in Australia and the US compared to those in China and India.

6.3 Method

6.3.1 Design

This study is part of a broader program of mixed-methods research exploring different aspects of the #MeToo movement. This study used a qualitative research design involving individual semi-structured interviews. Given the exploratory nature of the study, a semi-structured approach with open-ended questions was used. The questions were developed to explore experiences of participating in the #MeToo movement and included questions based on common themes identified in our previous research analysing #MeToo tweets (Drewett et al., 2021; In Press). Example questions included: "Can you explain your reasoning for participating in the #MeToo movement?" and "How do you feel about your decision to participate in the #MeToo movement?". Participants were advised that they were not required to discuss explicit details about their sexual harassment or assault experiences.

6.3.2 Recruitment and Data Collection

Between October 2019 and June 2020, the researchers conducted a survey about the #MeToo movement; inclusion criteria were that participants were at least 18 years of age and fluent in English. Participants in the current interview study were people who had completed the survey, participated in the #MeToo movement, and expressed interest in an in-depth

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interview about their experiences of participating in the movement. Additionally, information about the study was also posted on social media platforms to increase the sample size.

Potential participants were contacted via an email address they provided in the survey or when responding to the social media posts, with additional information and a consent form for the current study then provided. Participation was open to people of all genders; however, only women chose to be involved. Hence, the term 'women' is used throughout this study when referring to study participants.

The primary researcher and a supervisor conducted individual interviews between April and November 2020. In the instance where the primary researcher had a personal relationship with a participant, the interview was conducted by the supervisor, which occurred in two cases. No personal information or attitudes regarding the topic being researched was disclosed to the participants. Three participants who initially volunteered to participate dropped out prior to the interviews being conducted; two stating they were no longer interested and one being too busy to organise a time. Interviews were conducted via Skype/Facetime/Zoom or telephone, and interview length ranged from 9 minutes to 30 minutes ($M = 19$ minutes) and data saturation was achieved at 8 interviews. With participants' consent, interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed using a verbatim orthographic method (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Each participant was given a pseudonym, and all identifying information was removed from interview transcripts. Additionally, a conscious decision was made to report participant demographics as a group, rather than individually, to offer further protection for participants. Following Tracy's (2010) criteria for methodological rigorous qualitative research, all participants were offered their transcript to review and provide member reflections; three participants accepted the offer. Two participants requested

no changes, while a third participant requested further redaction of demographic information to ensure that they remained unidentifiable.

Recognising researchers' potential influence on the research process, we engaged in self-reflexivity throughout (Tracy, 2010). We note that the first author is a young, university-educated female who is a current PhD candidate. The first author has experienced sexual harassment and assault before conducting this research, however, she did not share her experiences on social media during the #MeToo movement but was an avid supporter of the movement, sharing information regarding the movement on social media and discussing the events with those around her. The research supervisors are middle-aged, university-educated women, both current lecturers with experience conducting interviews, who did not participate in the #MeToo movement.

6.3.3 Ethical Considerations

The University of Adelaide School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-Committee approved the wider research program, including this study. Before being interviewed, all participants provided consent. While participants were not asked directly about their personal experiences of sexual harassment or assault, there was an awareness that recounting experiences of involvement in the #MeToo movement could result in emotional distress. Given this, participants could refuse to answer specific questions, pause or end the interview at any time, were provided with a list of support options and offered the option to consult with a psychologist following their interview; no participants took up this offer.

6.3.4 Data Analysis

The Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Studies (COREQ) checklist (Tong et al., 2007; see Appendix F) guided the reporting of this research. Interview data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun et al., 2019), from a realist ontological

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position, whereby participants' interview data was taken as a direct reflection of their lived experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The data were analysed using inductive and deductive approaches. A deductive approach was taken to explore the data in relation to the research questions. Then an inductive approach was used to identify any additional themes. The software NVivo (Version 12, QSR International, 2018) was utilised to analyse the transcripts.

Data analysis occurred in a six-step process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The first step involved familiarisation with and immersion in the data via the repeated reading of the interview transcripts. Step two involved generating the initial codes by identifying features across the data that were related to the research aims. In step three, the initial codes were grouped into potential themes. Once an initial set of themes were created, step four was an ongoing process of reviewing the themes to ensure they reflected the data and addressed the research aims. Step five involved defining and naming the themes; this was an iterative process throughout the analysis. Finally, the most illustrative extracts were identified for each theme. All authors agreed on the final themes.

6.4 Results

6.4.1 Participants

Participants were eight women aged 18 to 52 years ($M = 32.6$, $SD = 13.3$). One participant did not want any demographic information shared to ensure her anonymity. Of the remaining participants, five lived in Australia at the time of the interview, and two in the US. Five participants were in a relationship, one participant identified being lesbian, and one identified as bisexual, and seven participants had undertaken tertiary education.

Participation in the #MeToo movement varied from educating family and friends (both online and in-person), contacting local government, and disclosing personal experiences of sexual harassment and assault on social media and to those around them.

6.4.2 Themes

Four themes representing women's experiences of participating in the #MeToo movement were identified across the interviews: *The #MeToo Movement is Beneficial in Multiple Ways*; *I Have No Regrets and I Would Do It Again*; *Family and Friends Were Mostly Supportive*; and *A Step in the Right Direction, but Society has Not Changed Enough Since #MeToo*. Details of the themes are outlined below.

6.4.2.1 Theme 1: The #MeToo Movement was Beneficial in Multiple Ways

The first theme encompasses how the women spoke about the #MeToo movement as beneficial to themselves, others and society. Some of the women discussed how the #MeToo movement had made it easier for them to speak about their own experiences, both online and in-person. Women described how the #MeToo movement had created a safe space for them to be open and vulnerable about their experiences. Because social media platforms were inundated with stories and information, they felt it was easier to start conversations about their own experiences. They went as far as to indicate that this movement allowed conversation that may not have happened otherwise.

I don't...[sigh] if it weren't for the #MeToo movement, I don't think nearly as many people would know about it, um, it allowed me to talk to my family members. (Marina, Lines 126-128)

Several women also discussed strong feelings of shame surrounding their experience of sexual harassment, sexual assault or rape. The #MeToo movement and the sheer volume of people sharing their stories was credited with helping them speak openly and overcome shame.

...and then when the #MeToo movement occurred, it helped me - really helped me feel less ashamed and able to talk about it. (Emma, Lines 213-214)

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While most women spoke about how the #MeToo movement provided them with the opportunity to speak out about sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape, several also mentioned that they knew they were not the only person who had gone through those incidents. They expressed using the #MeToo movement to speak out to create a sense of solidarity with other women. Participants recognised that while they felt able to speak up, others are unable to do so, and they felt a duty to speak up for those who cannot.

Okay, so I went through something horrible, but I am someone who can articulate what happened to me, who knows and understands what happened to me and can convey that, there may be people who aren't able to do the same thing (Emma, Lines 166-168)

As well as being able to speak about their experiences, some participants also expressed gratitude that the #MeToo movement allowed them to educate others. One woman even going so far as to educate a man in a position of power above her, following insensitive comments he made. She noted that he was appeared appreciative of her efforts.

..I felt that was a comment that he made was - that was very careless and thoughtless, and I had spoken to him about it later and I found him to be very open about it and actually like "oh, like you know, thank you for educating me". (Kala, Lines 170-173)

The movement as a means for education extended further. Two other women discussed that the #MeToo movement had helped them discuss sexual harassment and assault with their fathers. They spoke about their fathers using the information shared on social media during the #MeToo movement to educate themselves and other people around them.

I remember even like, um, I think my Dad saw one of the ones [Facebook posts] and was like "hey, like, that's, you know what, that's a really good thing that you're doing, like, I'm gonna – I'm gonna go and share that at work." (Sophie, Lines 88-90)

This theme highlights that women perceived several benefits from their participation in the #MeToo movement. These benefits were not solely personal, like being able to disclose their

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experiences of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape, but also enabled women to support and comfort other women struggling with what had happened to them and assisted in educating others.

6.4.2.2 Theme 2: I Have No Regrets and I Would Do It Again

Participants spoke positively about their involvement in the #MeToo movement; none expressed regret about their involvement or spoke of any harm they have encountered due to participating in the movement. Women spoke of how important they believed the movement to be at the time and saw value in ensuring that conversations about sexual harassment and assault are ongoing.

I've never had any sort of negative feelings about it at all. I think it was really important at the time and I think it's, um, an important conversation to keep having personally and I've, yeah, never really - never regretted it, at all. (Lana, Lines 192-194)

Additionally, a woman who had written to her state governor in the US spoke about why she had no regrets about contacting her local government about the treatment she received from law enforcement when she reported her assault, even though she received no response.

Uh, absolutely, I mean even if I get no response ever, I still think, you know, I have to figure out ways I can get my story out there without putting myself at risk...because I just think the more and more people know, the better (Emma, Lines 249-250 & 260)

Some women stated that, should there be another movement like #MeToo, they would be more active than they were initially. One woman attributed this desire to do more with now being older; she had been in her mid-teens during the movement and now, with increased age, would do more to educate those around her should the opportunity arise again. Another woman had commenced studying following the movement and would now use that education to approach the movement in a more general way. She described a strong belief that to

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produce societal change, conversations needed to include personal stories, but also to focus on communicating an intolerance for sexual harassment and assault.

Um, and maybe would've made it less about me and more about the movement in general and whether or not that would have changed the reception, um, because what happened to me is only going to, if anything, create sympathy or pity in others as opposed to change...I would have a personal element to it but also, um, I would put more of an emphasis on this on the fact that society is way too accepting all this crap, um, and back that up with some statistics (Betty, Lines 171-174 & 183-185)

This theme illustrated that none of the women regretted participating in the #MeToo movement. Instead, some women were keen to increase their involvement, should there be a similar movement in the future, and had considered how to alter their involvement to increase the likelihood of societal change.

6.4.2.3 Theme 3: Family and Friends Were Mostly Supportive

Participants discussed the reactions they received from others about them engaging with the #MeToo movement. Reactions arose from posting content on their social media platforms about the movement or when they disclosed personal experiences to those around them, both online and in person.

All women who shared #MeToo related content during the movement indicated they had received positive responses from those on their social media platforms and in their personal lives. Marina, who used the #MeToo movement to disclose her sexual assault to her family, spoke of the reaction she received from them, saying that her father, who worked in law enforcement, was disappointed that she had not taken legal action after the assault. Additionally, she expressed that her older sister had also experienced sexual assault, and she was able to be open and receive support from her when she made her disclosure.

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My other sister, um, she was also assaulted, she's in the military and so they have a really high sexual assault rates and so, unfortunately, that's not something that you want to have in common with a sibling... But, um, it was really good to have her as a support system and be able to check in with one another (Marina, Lines 263-265 & 269-270)

The women who had disclosed their experiences on Facebook also received positive, empathic responses from their friends. Responses consisted of general support and empathy but, in some instances, also friends sharing their experiences of sexual harassment or assault.

Um, most of it was love, you know, I think most of the people in my life were – a few people were like “oh, you know, I’m so sorry that sort of thing has happened to you”, you know, a few people shared their own stories, most people were just like “thank you for sharing, we love you” (Lana, Lines 151-154)

While most participants experienced support from those around them when they shared their stories or engaged with the #MeToo movement, some received an underwhelming response. For example, one woman felt disappointed in the minimal response she received from others on Facebook when she disclosed her experience.

I was surprised, yeah, that it was still a very quiet response, I think people still – um, there's a lot of stigma attached to it and people still shy away from it (Betty, Lines 70-72)

Additionally, while participants spoke of supportive responses from family and friends, they also noted that not all responses towards the movement from others in society were positive. One woman described that she began commenting on popular #MeToo posts attempting to silence strangers who were being negative or openly hostile towards the movement and those participating.

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I don't believe in letting things go past you if you think they're wrong. I think people should stand up for things that are wrong and, so if I read something that was really rude or – or cruel, then I would answer it (Hayley, Lines 164-167)

Therefore, while most of the women experienced a positive reaction from their family and friends online when they participated in the #MeToo movement and seen here and in Theme 1, not all responses were as positive as the women had hoped for and not enough changed as a result of #MeToo.

6.4.2.4 Theme 4: A Step in the Right Direction, but Society has Not Changed Enough Since #MeToo.

While women reported many benefits of participating in the #MeToo movement, as seen in Themes 1 and 3, some participants were also critical of the #MeToo movement. Women indicated that while there has been positive change at the individual level for movement participants, there has not been significant societal change:

Yeah, I don't think the movement itself has changed society. I think it's changed for – it's changed things for people who have experienced it. (Betty, Lines 146-147)

One participant spoke about her disappointment that despite the influx of knowledge about sexual harassment and assault due to the #MeToo movement, she had not observed significant changes within society, especially among lawmakers.

But the impact [of the #MeToo movement] it did not - the decision makers did not seem to be, um, very enlightened and they should be because they are highly educated professional people (Emma, Lines 196-197)

Another participant attributed this lack of societal change to the oversaturation of stories from celebrities, which she believed 'watered down' the movement and led to people not taking the movement as seriously as they should.

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I wasn't disappointed in the people, I was just disappointed in the general approach to – um, to that behaviour and also to the Me Too movement in general. I think some people maybe, um, didn't take it seriously because it was so, um - it was broadcast quite a lot by media and by celebrities and in some ways, I think that that may have kind of watered it down a little bit (Betty, Lines 95-99)

Therefore, while the women in this study mostly saw participating in the #MeToo movement as beneficial, some questioned its efficacy at changing sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape cultures and behaviours within society. However, all women believed there were personal benefits from participating in the movement and from the movement occurring as a whole, ranging from being able to discuss their own stories with those around them to helping them, and other women, feel less alone about their experiences of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape.

6.5 Discussion

This study explored women's experiences of participating in the #MeToo movement examining the perceived benefits and harm of participating in the movement and gathering data to compare and add these women's experiences of movement participation to those of women in China and India.

The women interviewed in this study reported many benefits from engaging in the #MeToo movement. They spoke about the #MeToo movement providing them with a space to talk to and educate those around them, on social media and in person, about the experiences and culture of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape to which women are subjected. They also expressed that the #MeToo movement helped them personally, as some used the safe space the #MeToo movement provided to disclose their personal experiences of sexual harassment, sexual assault or rape to their loved ones, who were largely supportive.

None of the participants reported experiencing harmful consequences of participating in the

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#MeToo movement, with some even mentioning that should another movement like #MeToo go viral, they would be more active than they were during #MeToo. Women also saw the #MeToo movement as a way to share their stories to help other women who felt alone or ashamed about their experiences by standing in solidarity with them. Some of the women were critical of the movement, articulating that society had not changed as much as they had hoped or expected following the #MeToo movement. Further, they suggested that only those who had participated in the movement and had experienced sexual harassment, sexual assault or rape would feel changed after the movement.

Sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape are often utilised as tools to silence women and isolate them from the world (Houston & Kramarae, 1991), whether this is in their own homes or offline. This tactic was acknowledged by the women interviewed, who often attributed their main reason for participating in the #MeToo movement to be providing a sense of solidarity with other women who came forward, as well as speaking out to help other women feel less alone about their experiences of sexual harassment, sexual assault or rape. As previously mentioned, women often feel the need to self-silence due to the adverse outcomes that come from speaking out against sexism (Simon & O'Brien, 2015; Swim et al., 2010); this can lead to women staying silent when experiencing sexism, including sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape. However, research has shown that confronting sexism improves women's self-esteem and helps them feel more empowered (Gervais et al., 2010). Therefore, society must continue to foster the safe space the #MeToo movement created, so women no longer feel the need to self-silence when experiencing sexual harassment, sexual assault or rape.

Further, the themes generated by Lin and Yang (2019) and Pegu (2019) from their interviews of women in China and India, respectively, were also identified in the current research. Women in China used the #MeToo movement as a form of education about sexual

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harassment, sexual assault and rape (Lin & Yang, 2019), which the women in the current study also mirrored. Additionally, using the movement as a tool to reveal painful secrets about their experiences of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape was present in China and the current sample of Australian and American women. Similarities also exist between this study's findings and those of women in India (Pegu, 2019), where women were uncertain whether #MeToo had created any lasting change but were adamant that the movement was necessary. These similarities show that while the culture surrounding sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape may vary across countries (see Hill & Marshall, 2018; Lin, 2018; Palermo et al., 2014; Stillman et al., 2009), women utilised the #MeToo movement in similar ways cross-culturally.

6.5.1 Limitations and Future Research

Although this study aimed to fill a gap in the literature regarding women in 'Western' countries, such as Australia and the US, experiences of participating in the #MeToo movement, it remains the case that the movement was a global phenomenon. People in other countries may have different experiences of participating in the #MeToo movement from those in this study. The #MeToo movement is an important social event, and future research should explore the experiences of individuals from multiple cultures to truly understand the experience of those who participated on a global scale. This understanding is important, not only because the stories and experiences of these women need to be heard and documented, but also because if women found the #MeToo beneficial, they may be more likely to participate in future movements regarding feminist issues, such as sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape.

The current study also lacked male participants. While the study was open to all genders, only women volunteered to participate. This sample bias could be due to various

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reasons, such as women being the most common victims of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape or increased stigma surrounding male victims of sexual harassment and assault. Future research could examine male experiences of participating in the #MeToo movement, including perceived benefits and harms, and whether their experiences differ from those of the women interviewed in our study.

6.6 Conclusion

The #MeToo movement has provided women with a platform to break their silence surrounding sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape. Women's experiences, including those of participating in the #MeToo movement, must be documented to prevent further exclusion from history. This study's participants' responses show that many women want to, and do, speak up when society creates environments where it is safe to do so. Women in this study reported several benefits and no harms from their participation. They expressed that the #MeToo movement provided them with a safe place to educate those around them and disclose their personal experiences of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape and show solidarity for other women. Understanding that women primarily viewed their engagement with the movement as beneficial is important for the women's wellbeing and as such outcomes may encourage people to come forward in future social movements that have the potential to create lasting change.

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7.1 Overview

This dissertation has explored various aspects of the #MeToo movement, using more than 10,000 tweets featuring the #MeToo hashtag, conducting a cross-sectional survey, and undertaking semi-structured interviews with women. The culmination of this research has offered unique insights into the content posted on the first day the #MeToo movement went viral, perceptions of benefit and harm of the movement and factors associated with these perceptions for an overall sample and according to gender. Valuable insights were also gained into women's experiences of participating in the #MeToo movement.

Chapter 1 provided background information about the historical treatment of women and the political, health, and legal restrictions and discrimination that women experience, not only in the past but currently. Chapter 1 also provided the definitions of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape that were utilised throughout this dissertation and the nature and culture of these phenomena within society, including their conceptualisation in the legal system, prevalence, impact, and high rates of under-reporting.

Chapter 2 provided information regarding social movements, including movement types, how they are formed and sustained, and how people become involved. Additionally, the new trend towards Internet-facilitated social movements, such as hashtag activism and hashtag feminism, was discussed. This chapter also gave a detailed history of the #MeToo movement, beginning with its conception by Tarana Burke and continuing to the formation of the Time's Up Initiative, while also detailing critiques of the #MeToo movement. Finally, this chapter discussed the lack of intersectionality and cross-cultural considerations present in the #MeToo, and the backlash stemming from societal misogyny.

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Chapter 3 provided the rationale for the methods and analyses utilised in the studies presented in this dissertation. This chapter also discussed the ethical issues of conducting research using Twitter data and the challenges of engaging in research during the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, the reciprocal influence of the researcher and the research was explored by discussing the importance of self-reflexivity when conducting qualitative research and the important impact research can have on the researcher.

Chapter 4 (Study 1) utilised conventional content analysis to analyse a collection of 10,546 tweets using the hashtag #MeToo to explore the messages shared the first day the movement went viral. Three major categories were identified, with messages most commonly about (1) disclosing personal experiences of sexual harassment, sexual assault or rape, (2) supporting the movement and those sharing their stories, or (3) calling out individual's or society's poor behaviour. Additionally, most of the experiences disclosed were instances of sexual assault and events that occurred when the individual disclosing was less than 18 years of age. This study identified what those who participated in the movement deemed important to share the day the #MeToo hashtag went viral and helped rectify the historical tendency of silencing women. Furthermore, it demonstrated that many instances of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape are perpetrated by people in positions of power, thus providing direction for future interventions and policies.

Chapter 5 (Study 2) explored perceptions of benefit and harm associated with the #MeToo movement and factors associated with these perceptions. Additionally, gender differences in perceptions of benefit and harm were examined. Overall, this study found that men were more likely than women to perceive the #MeToo movement as harmful and less likely to perceive it as beneficial. Within gender analyses of perceptions of benefit and harm of the #MeToo movement showed the role of internalised misogyny and protective paternalism in perceptions of the movement.

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Chapter 6 (Study 3) used reflexive thematic analysis to explore experiences of participating in the #MeToo movement. Eight women were interviewed to understand their perceptions of participating in the #MeToo movement and the benefits and harm they experienced from their participation. This study's findings show that women who participated in the #MeToo movement saw positive benefits for society and themselves, with none of the women interviewed regretting their decision to participate in the movement. Additionally, this study found that to ensure other women do not feel alone, women speak up about sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape when given a safe space to do so.

7.2 Contributions of Research

In this section, the contributions of the research conducted during this dissertation will be discussed. First, I will discuss the impacts of the #MeToo movement on women, the benefits and harm and the role internalised misogyny in perceptions of the #MeToo movement. Second, I will explore the role the #MeToo movement plays in social movement literature and whether it can rightly be considered a social movement. Finally, the cultural impact of the #MeToo movement will be discussed.

7.2.1 Women and the #MeToo Movement

In this section, I will discuss the impact the #MeToo movement has had on women, specifically looking at any benefits the #MeToo movement may have provided women and, conversely, any harm women faced due to the movement as well as the role internalised misogyny played in women's perceptions of the movement.

7.2.1.1 Benefits and Harm of the #MeToo Movement. As discussed in Chapter 1, women are routinely and systemically silenced within society, especially concerning their experiences of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape. The #MeToo movement provided a platform for women to break the silence surrounding these long-hidden issues, and they did

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so on a massive scale, with the #MeToo hashtag being used 19 million times between October 2017 and September 2018 (Anderson & Toor, 2018).

The findings presented in this dissertation illuminate how women utilised the #MeToo movement. Interestingly, the results found in Studies 1 and 3 mirror each other. In Study 1, the three main categories identified in the collection of #MeToo tweets were *#MeToo Facilitated Self-Disclosure*, *Supportive Messages*, and *Calling Out Poor Behaviour*. In Study 3, women interviewed about their participation in the #MeToo movement spoke about using #MeToo to disclose their experiences of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape to those around them. Additionally, they spoke about being active in the movement to ensure other women did not feel alone, and those who did not disclose during #MeToo, spoke of educating their networks, especially when they saw others engaging in questionable behaviour. These key concepts of disclosure, support, and education appear throughout Study 3 and show that while importance was placed on sharing stories during the #MeToo movement, significant value was also placed on providing support and care for those who disclosed and educating others.

Past research has shown that engaging in anti-sexual assault movements can positively impact women's mental health, as Strauss Swanson and Szymanski (2020) found in their study of American adult sexual assault victims that participating in anti-sexual assault activism was related to greater community connection, life meaning and coping. These outcomes, in turn, were associated with more positive psychological functioning among participants, showing the beneficial nature of survivors engaging in this kind of activism (Strauss Swanson & Szymanski, 2020a). Additionally, engaging in anti-sexual assault activism has reduced participants' feelings of shame and helped victims regain a sense of power and freedom while also serving as a useful coping mechanism that increases self-confidence (Strauss Swanson & Szymanski, 2020b). These findings were mirrored in Study

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3, where participants reported feeling less ashamed of their experiences of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape following the #MeToo movement. There have also been benefits of the #MeToo movement at a societal level.

Levy and Mattsson (2020) found that in the six months following the #MeToo movement, in 30 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, reporting of sexual crimes rose by 10%. Further, they found that while the #MeToo movement primarily focused on White women of high socioeconomic status, increased reporting was noted for White and Black victims and victims from high and low socioeconomic backgrounds (Levy & Mattsson, 2020).

Additionally, despite the #MeToo movement occurring almost four years before this dissertation, the outing of prominent individuals as sexual abusers continues within society. As previously mentioned, in Australia, former LP political staffer Brittany Higgins and three other staffers came forward with allegations of rape and sexual assault against a LP colleague, with Higgins alleging that her rape occurred inside Parliament House (Stayner, 2021). Since these allegations, a wave of allegations have been made against additional members of the LP, including former Attorney General Christian Porter, accused of raping a now deceased woman when they were both in high school (Grattan, 2021), and Member of Parliament Andrew Laming, accused of harassing women online (Dalzell, 2021) and taking an upskirt photograph of a woman (SBS News, 2021). It is possible that the #MeToo movement changed society and gave women a stronger platform to break the silence regarding sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape. This outcome was evident in Study 3, where women divulged that the #MeToo movement enabled them to speak out about their harassment and assault, not only to their family and friends but also to government officials and people in positions of power.

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While these findings may provide evidence that the #MeToo movement changed the landscape surrounding sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape, it was only a year after #MeToo that Dr Christine Blasey-Ford testified against then US Supreme Court Nominee Brett Kavanaugh, alleging that he had sexually assaulted her, and the world watched as a White, privileged woman was subjected to harassment and victim-blaming, before Kavanaugh was confirmed to the Supreme Court despite her testimony (Palmer et al., 2021).

Furthermore, surveys conducted post-#MeToo have found that male managers are now more uncomfortable participating in work activities with women, including mentoring, working alone, or socialising, which can be a significant issue as having a male mentor or advocate can help women break through the glass ceiling and land positions at an upper management level (Hewlett et al., 2010). There seems to be no clear answer regarding whether the #MeToo movement has created more benefits or harm for women. The results from this dissertation also give rise to questions regarding women's levels of misogyny.

7.2.1.2 Internalised Misogyny. As the #MeToo movement tackled sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape against women, one would expect all women to support the movement; however, this was not the case. The #HimToo movement, discussed in section 2.3.3, was not only initiated by a woman, but the main user of the hashtag was also a woman (Boyle & Rathnayake, 2020). This behaviour speaks to the internalised misogyny present in many women, which centres around the fear, hatred, and devaluation of women and femininity (Piggott, 2004). Internalised misogyny presents itself in many ways, from delegitimising feminism, to justifying toxic behaviour in men, to distinguishing themselves from other women with statements like "I'm not like other girls" (Cowburn, 2019). As said by Cowburn (2019): "In lieu of respecting that her fellow women are allowed to find joy in vampires and boy bands, she'd rather ridicule them for being happy." (para. 8). The "I'm not like other women" phrase shows that women with internalised misogyny are aware of the

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treatment certain women receive from men and, as a result, do all they can to distance themselves from those women to prevent being treated in the same manner.

A common manifestation of internalised misogyny is self-objectification, which refers to the way women often treat themselves as an object to be evaluated based on appearance (Szymanski et al., 2009). Self-objectification has been routinely shown to be related to depression (Jones & Griffiths, 2015; Szymanski & Henning, 2007) and eating disorders (Cohen et al., 2018; Schaefer & Thompson, 2018; Tiggemann & Kuring, 2004) among women and girls. Not only does internalised misogyny lead to adverse mental health outcomes, but women's endorsement of sexist attitudes has also been found to be related to negative attitudes towards the #MeToo movement (Moscatelli et al., 2021).

Similar results were also found in Study 2 of this dissertation, as women who had higher levels of hostile sexism were more likely to perceive the #MeToo movement as harmful. Additionally, among women, higher levels of sexual harassment myth acceptance and rape myth acceptance were associated with more perceived harm and less perceived benefit of the #MeToo movement, respectively. The implications of these findings will be discussed in section 7.3.

7.2.2 Social Movements and #MeToo

Social movements have a long history within society and, as discussed throughout section 2.2.2, have led to various changes within society. The nature of hashtag activism movements such as #MeToo circumvents previous barriers many social movements faced before the adoption of social media platforms within society, such as those pointed out by Zetizoff (2017), which include the ability to easily publicise wrongs committed by those in the opposition, to provide connections between activists, to lower coordination and communication costs, and help to raise funds. However, as discussed prior, there is some

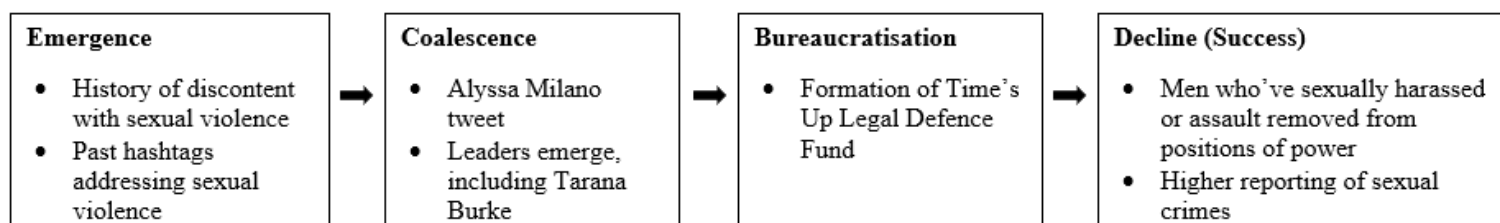
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debate about whether the #MeToo movement qualifies as a social movement or is simply an example of vigilantism or popular feminism.

In this section, the #MeToo movement is evaluated using the four stages of a social movement developed by Blumer (1969; discussed in section 2.2.1.2) (see Figure 7.1) and the types of social movements by Aberle (1966; discussed in section 2.2.1.1) to determine whether it can rightly be considered a social movement. The first stage, emergence, can best be seen in the discontent many women have shown for decades regarding the nature of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape.

Figure 7.1

Four Stages of the #MeToo Movement, Adapted from Christiansen (2009)



As mentioned in section 2.2.4.1, some hashtags before the #MeToo movement, such as #YouOkSis, #YesAllWomen, and #RapeCultureIsWhen, addressed the same issues as #MeToo, but not on the same scale (Mendes et al., 2019).

The coalescence stage of the #MeToo movement began with Alyssa Milano's tweet, urging women to use the hashtag, thus defining the discontent women felt due to the pervasive nature of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape. At this time, the leaders of the movement also emerged, including Tarana Burke, the founder of the "me too" phrase, Alyssa Milano, who sent the tweet to initiate #MeToo, Ashley Judd, who first came forward against Harvey Weinstein, and later Rose McGowan, who was also assaulted by Weinstein (Louszko et al., 2018) and became a vocal part of the movement. While #MeToo originated on social

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media, people around the world took to the streets to protest the treatment of women and the culture of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape (Davies, 2018; Lopez, 2018; Slawson, 2018), and those in Hollywood dressed in all black at the 75th annual Golden Globe Awards to protest gender inequality (Edwards, 2018).

The formation of the Time's Up Legal Defence Fund illustrates the bureaucratisation stage of the #MeToo movement, where skilled individuals were hired to provide legal and financial aid to those who had experienced workplace sexual harassment and assault but would not have the ability to pursue legal action alone (Stevens, 2018).

The final stage, the decline, of the #MeToo movement is difficult to summarise. The #MeToo movement has not declined due to repression or co-optation, and as it managed to reach the bureaucratisation stage, it also does not meet Miller's (1999) definition of failure. As a result of the #MeToo movement, 201 men in positions of power were removed from their positions, and almost half were replaced by women (Carlsen et al., 2018) while Weinstein and Cosby, two serial sexual abusers, were found guilty and sentenced to prison (ABC News, 2020; Durkin, 2018). Additionally, research has shown that among 30 countries within the OECD, reporting of sexual crimes increased 10% in the first six months following the #MeToo movement, with results also showing a persistent increase in reporting to the authorities for over 15 months (Levy & Mattsson, 2020).

When exploring the types of social movements presented by Aberle (1966; discussed in section 2.2.1.1), the #MeToo movement can be thought of as a redemptive social movement, creating radical change in a limited number of people. Participants in study three stated that they believed the #MeToo movement created minimal societal change but created notable change for those who had experienced sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape. The changes they spoke of included feeling less ashamed and alone about their experiences

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and finding a sense of solidarity with other women who had experienced sexual harassment, sexual assault or rape and/or had also participated in the #MeToo movement.

However, while the #MeToo movement appears to fulfil the stages of a social movement, not all researchers consider #MeToo to be an authentic social movement. Some have suggested that the #MeToo movement was simply “vigilantism that foregoes judicial procedure in favour of public shaming” (Pipyrou, 2018, p. 416) and, in doing so, does not address the structural issue of sexual violence within society (Pipyrou, 2018). Critics argue that the constant barrage of claims and counterclaims present in the media due to #MeToo could lead to apathy towards the cause (Pipyrou, 2018). These are not the only criticisms made regarding the #MeToo movement.

While the #MeToo movement is seen as a feminist movement, some have questioned the efficacy of this form of feminism. Popular feminism, as presented by Banet-Wiser (2018), exists on a continuum, where media-friendly forms of feminism that include celebrities and corporations achieve high visibility while forms of feminism that critique patriarchal structures and systems of racism are often obscured. They argue that, while the stories shared by women during the movement are important, the #MeToo movement as a whole is a form of popular feminism, with the input from celebrities distracting from the fact that sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape occur across all industries and the movement’s overwhelming visibility in the media works against calls for social change (Banet-Wiser, 2018). Interestingly, this criticism was raised by a participant in study three, who stated that the oversaturation of celebrities and the media within the #MeToo movement “watered down” the movement’s impact. Banet-Wiser (2018) also questions popular feminism’s drive to “empower” women with no direction as to what these “empowered” women should do. The #MeToo movement was the culmination of women being angry for decades at the systemic nature of sexism, yet the movement itself gave no directions to women following

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the movement about what they could do to stop this pervasive sexism. These questions about its efficacy bring into question the #MeToo movement's ability to rightly be considered a social movement.

One of the biggest questions to come out of the research conducted during this dissertation is whether the #MeToo movement can truly be a social movement if minorities such as women of colour and LGBTQIA+ individuals felt they unrepresented or excluded from the movement. As presented in section 2.3.2.1, despite the #MeToo movement being created by Tarana Burke, a Black woman, many women of colour felt that the phrase “me too” was being co-opted by White women, and there was a lack of intersectionality present within the movement, with White feminists often ignoring the racialised sexism women of colour often face (Onwuachi-Willig, 2018). Additionally, the information presented in section 2.3.2.2 shows that despite sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape being global issues, many women in other countries were unable to participate in the #MeToo movement due to cultural barriers (Moitra et al., 2019) and governmental forces (Li et al., 2020). Some people have even gone so far as to say that the movement was forcing “Western” ideals onto other countries (Muzyamba, 2020).

As a result of these legitimate concerns, perhaps a more constructive way of viewing the #MeToo movement is not as a social movement but rather as dot on the timeline of a broader anti-sexual violence movement that is yet to be identified. Using the Suffrage movement discussed in section 2.2.2.1 as a comparison, rather than thinking of the #MeToo movement as equal to the Suffrage movement, perhaps it is more comparable to a single protest or event that occurred as part of the Suffrage movement. Additionally, both the #MeToo movement and the Suffrage movement can themselves be considered a part of a larger movement focused on women's rights. #MeToo may be a stepping-stone as part of a larger, still forming movement that will tackle sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape. As

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seen with the aforementioned cases that have dominated Australian news in the early part of 2021, women are still coming forward with allegations against prominent men years after the height of #MeToo. Australia has also recently witnessed, throughout multiple states, a March4Justice which coincided with Higgins' allegations (see sections 1.3 and 7.2.1.1; Gleeson, 2021). Based on figures from the organisers, 110,000 women and allies marched, on March 15th 2021, to put an end to gendered violence within Australia (March4Justice, 2021). While separate from the #MeToo movement, the March4Justice was similarly started by a tweet, when Janine Hendry tweeted that a demonstration should be held at Parliament House to highlight the treatment of women and demand change (Gleeson, 2021). These ongoing public displays, along with the information presented in the following section, show the cultural ramifications of the #MeToo movement.

7.2.3 Cultural Impact of #MeToo

The #MeToo movement has generated various tangible ramifications for society. Szekeres and colleagues (2020) explored public opinions about sexual assault, and longitudinal data showed a decrease in the dismissal of sexual assault due to the #MeToo movement. The authors further explored this finding and found that views regarding sexual assault did not change in a similar manner following the Women's March, indicating the impact of the #MeToo movement on societal attitudes (Szekeres et al., 2020).

Furthermore, in direct response to the #MeToo movement, the hashtag #HowIWillChange went viral to include men and boys in the conversation about sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape #MeToo started by asking them to evaluate their role in the perpetuation of rape culture (PettyJohn et al., 2019). Analysis of tweets using this hashtag found suggestions of examining one's own toxic masculinity, teaching the next generation,

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calling out other men when they engage in problematic behaviours, and listening to women's experiences (PettyJohn et al., 2019).

Research has also explored attitude changes that may have occurred in industries where sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape are systemic. A study exploring changes post-#MeToo at an organisational level found that 79% of companies reported distinct differences as a result of #MeToo, with employees demanding more transparency regarding sexual harassment, and 35% noted an increase in harassment reports since the movement began (Boyle & Cucchiara, 2019). A study conducted with sporting coaches in Canada found that many of those interviewed, while expressing strong support for the movement, also expressed the desire for more personal development about boundaries in the coach-athlete relationship (Tam et al., 2021). These findings are quite topical given the assault of McKayla Maroney by her gymnastic doctor Larry Nasar, made public during the #MeToo movement (Abad-Santos, 2017). Within an Australian context, the allegations against Nasar prompted a recent Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC; 2021) report about the culture within Australian gymnastics, which found it was constantly referred to as toxic and received several complaints of sexual abuse. The report detailed several recommendations to ensure the safety of athletes; however, due to the recent nature of the report, it is yet to be seen if these changes will occur.

7.3 Implications of Research

The research conducted during this dissertation has many important implications for academic, policy and educational fields. Key implications are outlined below.

7.3.1 Power Imbalances

The results found in Study 1 show that many people experience sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape when they are in positions that lack power, with most experiences

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disclosed during the first day #MeToo went viral occurring in the workplace, at school, or when the individual was a child. The findings also show that bosses or supervisors, teachers or older students, and older family members often perpetrate these behaviours.

While there are many potential causes of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape, many academics link these acts with power inequalities (Cortina & Berdahl, 2008) or the association of sex with power (Chapleau & Oswald, 2010). For example, the reason Weinstein could sexually harass, assault and rape many women for decades is the power he had in Hollywood: being a top film producer gave him the power to destroy women's careers should they speak out, which was revealed to have happened to actresses Ashley Judd and Mira Sorvino when director Peter Jackson admitted that *Miramax*, Weinstein's former film company, urged Jackson to blacklist the actresses under the guise of being difficult to work with (Redden, 2017). These power imbalances have real-world consequences, as recent survey data shows that 19% of young women see potential gender discrimination as a barrier for them reaching their career goals (Chwarae Teg, 2018).

Society must make efforts to address these power imbalances to prevent the most vulnerable being subjected to widespread sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape. Several approaches have been posited to tackle sexual harassment in the workplace, including hiring more women at leadership levels to balance gender inequality (Cortina & Berdahl, 2008) and providing strong policies and training to all members of an organisation (Buchanan et al., 2014). Similar suggestions for education have been proposed for the school environment to reduce teacher-perpetrated sexual harassment and sexual assault against students, which is vital as students often receive information about cultural norms from their teachers (Timmerman, 2003). Strides are already being taken to educate young children, as in Australia, a new curriculum is being introduced to teach children from kindergarten to year 10 about respectful relationships and consent in an attempt to educate them about power

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imbalances within relationships and how to avoid non-consensual and inappropriate relations (Chrysanthos & Visentin, 2021).

7.3.2 Reducing Sexism

Results from Study 2 and the information presented in section 7.2.1.2 show the damaging nature of sexism on women's health and their perceptions of the #MeToo movement. Thus, an important implication of this dissertation is the need to employ strategies to reduce sexism, especially among women, to ensure positive attitudes towards movements such as #MeToo that can potentially create social change. Unfortunately, attempts to reduce sexism cannot draw from proven techniques that reduce other forms of prejudice, such as racism, as they often employ intergroup contact (Becker et al., 2014). Men and women are often in continuous close contact with each other; however, this contact has limited impact on the levels of sexism within society (Becker et al., 2014).

The results of Study 2 show the dangerous nature of women's internalised misogyny, as women with higher levels of hostile sexism were less likely to perceive the #MeToo movement as beneficial and more likely to perceive it as harmful. Unfortunately, there is limited research regarding reducing levels of internalised misogyny, specifically hostile sexism, among women. de Lemus and colleagues (2014) developed a 20-hour program, utilised in Argentina, Spain, and El Salvador, to reduce sexism in men and women. The program educated participants on gender as a social construct, women's social obligations, ideologies regarding masculinities and sexism and gender-based violence (de Lemus et al., 2014). In all three countries, hostile sexism levels significantly decreased (de Lemus et al., 2014).

Furthermore, in Study 2, higher levels of benevolent sexism in men, a component of ambivalent sexism developed by Glick and Fiske (1996), which involves stereotyping women

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as warm, nurturing, and fragile, was related to higher levels of perceived benefits of the #MeToo movement. While this may seem positive, benevolent sexism undermines women and their abilities while also potentially causing adverse health outcomes such as greater levels of depression and increased risk of developing an eating disorder (Sheperd et al., 2011). Therefore, it is important to also reduce levels of benevolent sexism in society. Research conducted by Becker and Swim (2012) found that an effective way to reduce the endorsement of benevolent sexism is to provide people with information about its harmful consequences, while the aforementioned program developed by de Lamus and colleagues (2014) was also found to reduce benevolent sexism levels in Argentina and El Salvador.

7.3.3 A Platform for Women's Voices

The final implication that will be discussed from the research presented in this dissertation is the clear drive seen in women to speak out about sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape when given a platform to do so. The sheer volume of #MeToo tweets shows the number of people that wanted to participate in a movement designed to speak out against these forms of abuse, as data has shown the hashtag was used 19 million times between October 2017 and September 2018 (Anderson & Toor, 2018).

The results from Study 1 show that most tweets sent during the day #MeToo movement went viral were tweets of disclosure, support, and education, showing what people believed to be most vital to share given the platform provided to them by #MeToo. These results were further elaborated on in Study 3 when women were interviewed regarding their experience participating in the #MeToo movement. In the theme *The #MeToo Movement was Beneficial in Multiple Ways* (see page 143), many of the participants mentioned that their primary motivation for participating in the #MeToo was to assist other women who did not feel comfortable breaking their silence, to help them not feel alone. This admission from the

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women interviewed speaks to the altruistic nature of speaking out against instances of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape, as many women appeared to be engaging with the #MeToo movement for others as opposed to themselves.

As mentioned, engaging with anti-sexual assault movements has been found to improve women's psychological wellbeing (Strauss Swanson & Szymanski, 2020a) and thus further demonstrates the importance of providing women with a platform to break their silence surrounding sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape. While social media provides women with an easily accessible platform to air these grievances, it is also a place where many women experience abuse (Mendes et al., 2019). Therefore, social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook must work hard to combat the gendered harassment many women face online. As it is estimated that 500 million tweets are sent each day (Sayce, 2020), it is understandably difficult to monitor every tweet sent, but researchers have begun developing computer programs designed to identify sexism on Twitter (Frenda et al., 2019; Rodríguez-Sánchez et al., 2020), which may help remove tweets before they cause damage to recipients. Making social media sites safer for women will provide them with a platform to break their silence surrounding sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape, and other forms of sexism they may experience.

The importance of giving women a voice has become especially salient in Australia with the recent appointment of Grace Tame as 2021 Australian of the Year. In 2010, Tame was a 15-year-old high school student in Tasmania who was raped several times by her teacher Nicolaas Bester (Knowles, 2019). In 2015, after being released following only 19 months in jail, Bester bragged about his crimes on Facebook and served another four months (Knowles, 2019). Bester could share his side of the story, painting himself as a victim, while Tame, bound by Tasmanian law, was prevented from self-identifying to the media and effectively silenced. Thus, hashtag activism was activated to create the #LetHerSpeak

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campaign (Knowles, 2019). Tame eventually won an exemption to break her silence, and her fight has led to the overturning of the Tasmanian law barring other survivors from telling their stories (Humphries, 2020).

As can be seen with the rape of Grace Tame and the results found in Study 1, sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape are commonly experienced by people under 18 years of age and perpetrated by those in positions of power. While it is important to address those power structures that lead to such abuse (see 6.3.1), in the meantime, safe places for women to report acts of sexual violence must be created. As discussed in section 1.4.4, many people do not report their sexual harassment, sexual assault or rape for various reasons. As a result, many states in Australia have recently introduced ways of informally reporting sexual assault and rape online (it will not initiate a criminal investigation) to provide closure to the victim while also supporting future victims who come forward against the same perpetrator (Heydon et al., 2021; King, 2021). While this offers a valuable avenue for reporting, new options to report sexual assault or rape without having to face what is colloquially known as the “second rape” often experienced during interactions with legal professionals need to be developed for those who want to proceed with a criminal investigation.

7.4 Limitations and Recommendations

All studies conducted in this dissertation employed a cross-sectional design. As a result, no causal claims can be made from the research. While some studies examining the #MeToo movement used a longitudinal approach (see Szekeres et al., 2019), additional longitudinal research should be conducted to fully examine the impact of the #MeToo movement, potentially exploring changes in sexual harassment and rape myth acceptance levels and support for women coming forward concerning instances of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape.

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Additionally, most of the participants in all three studies were from “Western” backgrounds, primarily Australian and American. This demographic was certain in Studies 2 and 3 and, while it is not possible to know the location, race, or ethnicity of those who posted the tweets analysed in Study 1, only tweets in English were examined, thus limiting the generalisability of the findings. The #MeToo movement was a global phenomenon. Therefore, research should be conducted in cultures where sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape may be more prominent than in the countries explored here and where attitudes towards these forms of abuse may vary, to fully explore whether the #MeToo movement changed the prevalence of or attitudes surrounding sexual violence.

7.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have questioned the efficacy of the #MeToo movement and whether it can rightly be considered a social movement. As shown in the information presented throughout this discussion chapter, the #MeToo movement has had a wide-reaching impact on women, survivors of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape and society as a whole. However, it is important to note the significant limitations of inclusivity and diversity present within #MeToo, which ultimately leads to questioning how a movement that excludes a large subset of the female population can be considered a social movement. Time will tell whether the #MeToo movement will remain a singular event or whether it will become a part of a larger, yet-to-be-determined social movement that tackles sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape with a greater lasting societal impact.

This dissertation has added valuable knowledge concerning power imbalances in the cases of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape and can help guide future policy and educational endeavours. Additionally, the findings presented in this dissertation demonstrate the need for strategies to reduce levels of sexism, especially internalised misogyny within women. Finally, this dissertation not only acts as a written record for women’s stories during

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#MeToo, something often silenced in history, but it shows the power of hashtag activism and the importance of creating safe spaces for women to disclose their experiences of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Study 2 Participant Information Sheet

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

PROJECT TITLE: Attitudes Towards Sexual Harassment and Assault as Represented on Social Media

SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS SUB-COMMITTEE

APPROVAL NUMBER: 19/82

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr Melissa Oxlad

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Chloe Drewett

STUDENT'S DEGREE: PhD

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in the research project described below.

What is the project about?

This research project aims to explore attitudes towards sexual harassment and assault and how they are represented on social media platforms.

Who is undertaking the project?

This project is being conducted by Ms Chloe Drewett. This research will form the basis for the degree of a Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Adelaide under the supervision of Dr Melissa Oxlad and Professor Martha Augoustinos.

Why am I being invited to participate?

You are being invited as you are an Australian adult over the age of 18 years who speaks fluent English.

What am I being invited to do?

You are being invited to complete an online survey examining societal attitudes and perceptions. There will be demographic questions as well as questions regarding sexual harassment and assault and how they are represented on social media. Please note, one set of questions asks about societal attitudes towards rape.

At the end of this survey, you will be asked if you wish to participate in an interview for a future study. Participation in this interview is complete voluntarily, you are under no obligation to do so, and you are free to do the survey alone without any expectation that you will participate in the interview. Should you wish to participate in an interview, there will be an opportunity for you to leave a contact email address and the researchers will contact you with further information.

How much time will my involvement in the project take?

The survey will take approximately 25 minutes. The interview, should you choose to participate, will take approximately 60 minutes (you will receive more details about the interview, should you elect to participate).

Are there any risks associated with participating in this project?

While the risks associated with this project are small, should you feel any distress during the completion of this survey, you can contact either **Lifeline on 13 11 14** or **Beyond Blue on 1300 224 636**, both of which are available 24/7.

What are the potential benefits of the research project?

While there are no immediate benefits to you as the participant, this research may help broaden the knowledge we have about what factors can influence whether or not a person supports or dislikes things that happen on social media.

Can I withdraw from the project?

Participation in this project is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate, you can withdraw from the study at any time by exiting out of the browser you are using to take the survey. However, once the survey has been submitted, withdrawal is no longer possible.

What will happen to my information?

Your responses will remain completely anonymous and will not be linked with any identifying information. All data will be stored on a secure, password protected computer for a minimum of five years. The results will form part of the research for a PhD thesis, which will be written up for publication in a peer-reviewed journal, shared in the media, and potentially presented at a research conference. Participants will remain anonymous in any publication or presentation. Should you wish to receive a copy of the research findings, you can contact the researchers.

Should you volunteer to participate in the interview, your email address will be kept completely separate from your survey responses.

Your information will only be used as described in this Participant Information Sheet and it will only be disclosed according to the consent provided, except as required by law.

Who do I contact if I have questions about the project?

Should you have any questions, you can contact the following people:

Dr Melissa Oxlad
Principal Researcher
melissa.oxlad@adelaide.edu.au
08 8313 6411

Chloe Drewett
Student Researcher
chloe.drewett@adelaide.edu.au

Professor Martha Augoustinos
Co-Researcher
martha.augoustinos@adelaide.edu.au
08 8313 4627

What if I have a complaint or any concerns?

The study has been approved by the School of Psychology Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee at the University of Adelaide (approval number xxx). This research project will be conducted according to the NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 (Updated 2018). If you have questions or problems associated with the practical aspects of your participation in the project, or wish to raise a concern or complaint about the project, then you should consult the Principal Investigator. If you wish to speak with an independent person regarding concerns or a complaint, the University's policy on research involving human participants, or your rights as a participant, please contact the Convenor, School of Psychology Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee on:

Phone: +61 8 8313 4936

Email: paul.delfabbro@adelaide.edu.au

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will be informed of the outcome.

If I want to participate, what do I do?

Check the following question indicating that you give consent to take part in this study, then complete the online survey.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Melissa Oxlad, Chloe Drewett, and Professor Martha Augoustinos ¹

¹ Professor Augoustinos was a co-supervisor at the time of the ethics application but retired prior to making any significant contributions to data collection, analysis, interpretation, or manuscript writing for Study 2 and Study 3; hence, her absence as a co-author for the respective papers. Professor Augoustinos was replaced by Dr Shona Crabb as a co-supervisor for the last year of candidature.

Appendix B: Study 2 Consent Form

Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)

CONSENT FORM

1. I have read the attached Information Sheet and agree to take part in the following research project:

Title:	Attitudes and Sexual Harassment and Assault as Represented on Social Media
Ethics Approval Number:	19/82

2. I have had the project, so far as it affects me, and the potential risks and burdens fully explained to my satisfaction by the research worker. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions I may have about the project and my participation. My consent is given freely.
3. I have been given the opportunity to have a member of my family or a friend present while the project was explained to me.
4. Although I understand the purpose of the research project, it has also been explained that my involvement may not be of any benefit to me.
5. I agree to participate in the activities outlined in the participant information sheet.
6. I understand that as my participation in this study is anonymous, I can withdraw any time up until the submission of the survey.
7. I have been informed that the information gained in the project may be published in a journal article, thesis, and/or social media post.
8. I have been informed that in the published materials I will not be identified and my personal results will not be divulged.
9. I agree to my information being used for future research purposes as follows:
- Research undertaken by these same researcher(s) Yes No
 - Related research undertaken by any researcher(s) Yes No
 - Any research undertaken by any researcher(s) Yes No
10. I understand my information will only be disclosed according to the consent provided, except where disclosure is required by law.
11. I am aware that I should keep a copy of this Consent Form, when completed, and the attached Information Sheet.

Participant to complete:

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C: Survey Questionnaire

Demographics

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other

What is your age?

Insert answer

What is your current religion?

- Christian (Protestant/Methodist/Lutheran/Baptist/Anglican/Uniting)
- Catholic
- Muslim
- Buddhist
- Atheist or Agnostic
- Other
- None

What is your highest level of completed education?

- Year 10 or 11
- Year 12
- Cert. I or II
- Cert. III or IV
- Diploma/Advanced Diploma
- Bachelor/Bachelor Honours Degree
- Masters Degree
- Doctoral Degree

Ambivalent Sexism Inventory – Glick and Fiske (1996)

Below is a series of statements concerning men and women and their relationships in contemporary society. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

	<i>Disagree Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree Somewhat</i>	<i>Disagree Slightly</i>	<i>Agree Slightly</i>	<i>Agree Somewhat</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>
1. No matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Many women are actually seeking special favours, such as hiring policies that favour them over men, under the guise of asking for “equality”.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. In a disaster, women ought not necessarily to be rescued before men.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Most women interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Women are too easily offended.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. People are often truly happy in life without being romantically involved with a member of the other sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Feminists are not seeking for women to have more power than men.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess.	1	2	3	4	5	6

9.	Women should be cherished and protected by men.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10.	Most women fail to appreciate fully all that men do for them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	Women seek to gain power by getting control over men.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12.	Every man ought to have a woman whom he adores.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13.	Men are complete without women.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14.	Women exaggerate problems they have at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15.	Once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries to put him on a tight leash.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16.	When women lose to men in a fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17.	A good woman should be set on a pedestal by her man.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18.	There are actually very few women who get a kick out of teasing men by seeming sexually available and then refusing male advances.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19.	Women, compared to men, tend to have a superior moral sensibility.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20.	Men should be willing to sacrifice their own wellbeing in	1	2	3	4	5	6

order to provide financially for
the women in their lives.

- | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21. | Feminists are making entirely reasonable demands of men. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 22. | Women, as compared to men, tend to have a more refined sense of culture and good taste. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale – Payne, Lonsway, and Fitzgerald (1999)

Please read each statement carefully and provide the response that best reflects your level of agreement with each statement.

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Mostly Disagree</i>	<i>Slightly Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Slightly Agree</i>	<i>Mostly Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
1. If a woman is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of control.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Although most women wouldn't admit it, they generally find being physically forced into sex a real "turn-on."	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. When men rape, it is because of their strong desire for sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. If a woman is willing to "make out" with a guy, then it's no big deal if he goes a little further and has sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Women who are caught having an illicit affair sometimes claim that it was rape.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Newspapers should not release the name of a rape victim to the public.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Many so-called rape victims are actually women who had sex and "changed their minds" afterwards.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Many women secretly desire to be raped.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Rape mainly occurs on the "bad" side of town.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Usually, it is only women who do things like hang out in bars and sleep around that are raped.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

11.	Most rapists are not caught by the police.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	If a woman doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say that it was rape.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	Men from nice middle-class homes almost never rape.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.	Rape isn't as big a problem as some feminists would like people to think.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.	When women go around wearing low-cut tops or short skirts, they're just asking for trouble.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.	Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at men.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17.	A rape probably didn't happen if the woman has no bruises or marks.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18.	Many women find being forced to have sex very arousing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19.	If a woman goes home with a man she doesn't know, it is her own fault if she is raped.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20.	Rapists are usually sexually frustrated individuals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21.	All women should have access to self-defense classes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22.	It is usually only women who dress suggestively that are raped.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23.	Some women prefer to have sex forced on them so they don't have to feel guilty about it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24.	If the rapist doesn't have a weapon, you really can't call it a rape.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25.	When a woman is a sexual tease, eventually she is going to get into trouble.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

26.	Being raped isn't as bad as being mugged and beaten.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27.	Rape is unlikely to happen in the woman's own familiar neighbourhood.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28.	In reality, women are almost never raped by their boyfriends.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29.	Women tend to exaggerate how much rape affects them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30.	When a man is very sexually aroused, he may not even realise that the woman is resisting.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31.	A lot of women lead a man on and then they cry rape.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32.	It is preferable that a female police officer conduct the questioning when a woman reports a rape.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33.	A lot of times, women who claim they were raped just have emotional problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34.	If a woman doesn't physically resist sex—even when protesting verbally—it really can't be considered rape.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35.	Rape almost never happens in the woman's own home.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36.	A woman who "teases" men deserves anything that might happen.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37.	When women are raped, it's often because the way they said "no" was ambiguous.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38.	If a woman isn't a virgin, then it shouldn't be a big deal if her date forces her to have sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

- | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 39. Men don't usually intend to force sex on a woman, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 40. This society should devote more effort to preventing rape. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 41. A woman who dresses in skimpy clothes should not be surprised if a man tries to force her to have sex. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 42. Rape happens when a man's sex drive gets out of control. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 43. A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on the first date is implying that she wants to have sex. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 44. Many women actually enjoy sex after the guy uses a little force. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 45. If a woman claims to have been raped but has no bruises or scrapes, she probably shouldn't be taken too seriously. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

**Illinois Sexual Harassment Myth Acceptance Scale - Lonsway, Cortina, and Magley
(2008)**

Please read each statement carefully and provide the response that best reflects your personal opinion.

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Mostly Disagree</i>	<i>Slightly Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Slightly Agree</i>	<i>Mostly Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
1. As long as a woman doesn't lose her job, her claim of sexual harassment shouldn't be taken too seriously.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Women who claim that they have been sexually harassed are usually exaggerating.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. If a woman is sexually harassed, she must have done something to invite it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Women should not have to tolerate sexual harassment in the workplace.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Women often file frivolous charges of sexual harassment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. If a woman doesn't make a complaint, it probably wasn't serious enough to be sexual harassment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. It is difficult to believe sexual harassment charges that were not reported at the time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Women who wait weeks or months to report sexual harassment are probably just making it up.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

9.	Women who claim sexual harassment have usually done something to cause it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	Sexual harassment complaints must be taken seriously.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	Sometimes women make up allegations of sexual harassment to extort money from their employer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	Women who are caught having an affair with their supervisor sometimes claim that it was sexual harassment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	Women sometimes file charges of sexual harassment for no apparent reason.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.	A woman can easily ruin her supervisor's career by claiming that he "came on" to her.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.	Sometimes a woman has a "fantasy" relationship with her boss and then claims that he sexually harassed her.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.	Most women are flattered when they get sexual attention from men with whom they work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17.	Sexual harassment is degrading to women.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18.	Most women secretly enjoy it when men "come on" to them at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

19.	It's inevitable that men will "hit on" women at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20.	Women shouldn't be so quick to take offense when a man at work expresses sexual interest.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21.	Women can usually stop unwanted sexual attention by simply telling the man that his behaviour is not appreciated.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22.	Women can usually stop unwanted sexual attention from a co-worker by telling their supervisor about it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23.	Perpetrators of sexual harassment must be held responsible for their behaviour.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24.	Nearly all instances of sexual harassment would end if the woman simply told the man to stop.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Right-Wing Authoritarianism Scale – Altemeyer (2006)

Below are some statements about our society, please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following:

	<i>Very Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Moderately Disagree</i>	<i>Slightly Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Slightly Agree</i>	<i>Moderately Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Very Strongly Agree</i>
1. The established authorities generally turn out to be right about things, while the radicals and protestors are usually just “loud mouths” showing off their ignorance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2. Women should have to promise to obey their husbands when they get married.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3. Our country desperately needs a mighty leader who will do what has to be done to destroy the radical new ways and sinfulness that are ruining us.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4. Gays and lesbians are just as healthy and moral as anybody else.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
5. It is always better to trust the judgment of the proper authorities in government and religion than to listen to the noisy rabblers in our society who are trying to create doubt in people’s minds.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

6.	Atheists and others who have rebelled against the established religions are no doubt every bit as good and virtuous as those who attend church regularly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
7.	The only way our country can get through the crisis ahead is to get back to our traditional values, put some tough leaders in power, and silence the troublemakers spreading bad ideas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
8.	There is absolutely nothing wrong with nudist camps.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9.	Our country needs free thinkers who will have the courage to defy traditional ways, even if this upsets many people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10.	Our country will be destroyed someday if we do not smash the perversions eating away at our moral fiber and traditional beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
11.	Everyone should have their own life-style, religious beliefs, and sexual preferences, even if it makes them different from everyone else.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
12.	The “old-fashioned ways” and “old-fashioned values” still show the best way to live.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13.	You have to admire those who challenged the law and the majority’s view by protesting for women’s abortion rights, for animal rights, or to abolish school prayer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14. What our country really needs is a strong, determined leader who will crush evil, and take us back to our true path. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 15. Some of the best people in our country are those who are challenging our government, criticising religion, and ignoring the “normal way things are supposed to be done.” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 16. God’s laws about abortion, pornography, and marriage must be strictly followed before it is too late, and those who break them must be strongly punished. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 17. There are many radical, immoral people in our country today, who are trying to ruin it for their own godless purposes, whom the authorities should put out of action | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 18. A “woman’s place” should be wherever she wants to be. The days when women are submissive to their husbands and social conventions belong strictly in the past. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 19. Our country will be great if we honour the ways of our forefathers, do what the authorities tell us to do, and get rid of the “rotten apples” who are ruining everything. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

20. There is no “ONE right way” to live life; everybody has to create their own way.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
21. Homosexuals and feminists should be praised for being brave enough to defy “traditional family values”.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
22. This country would work a lot better if certain groups of troublemakers would just shut up and accept their group’s traditional place in society.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Appendix D: Study 3 Participant Information Sheet

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

PROJECT TITLE: The Experience of Participating in the #MeToo Movement

SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS SUB-COMMITTEE

APPROVAL NUMBER: 19/82

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr Melissa Oxlad

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Chloe Drewett

STUDENT'S DEGREE: PhD

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in the research project described below.

What is the project about?

This research project is gathering information about the experience of people who participated in the MeToo movement. This movement became a worldwide phenomenon on October 16th 2017 and within 24 hours, the hashtag had been used half a million times on Twitter. A lot of media coverage has been dedicated to the people who were accused of sexual harassment and assault and how this movement has affected men and how they interact with women. However, this study is aimed at finding out about the experiences of the individuals who disclosed personal information during the MeToo movement.

Who is undertaking the project?

This project is being conducted by Ms Chloe Drewett. This research will form the basis for the degree of a Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Adelaide under the supervision of Dr Melissa Oxlad and Professor Martha Augoustinos.

Why am I being invited to participate?

You are being invited as you are an adult over the age of 18 years who speaks fluent English and has indicated to us that you participated in the recent #MeToo movement and would be willing to be contacted about an interview to share your experiences.

What am I being invited to do?

You are being invited to participate in interviews designed to explore your experiences of participating in the #MeToo movement. **Please note that you will not be asked any questions regarding your sexual harassment or assault experiences**, only questions regarding your experience participating in the Me Too movement. Interviews will be conducted face-to-face, via Skype or by telephone, whichever is most convenient for you.

How much time will my involvement in the project take?

The interview is estimated to take up to 60 minutes, but may take longer given that the questions are open-ended.

Are there any risks associated with participating in this project?

While **we will not be asking you directly about your experience of sexual harassment and/or assault**, we appreciate any conversation related to this topic can be distressing. At any time, if you feel

uncomfortable or distressed, you are able to either take a break, refuse to answer specific questions or withdraw from the study. Additionally, should you feel distressed, you can contact:
Australia: **Lifeline on 13 11 14** or **Beyond Blue on 1300 224 636**, both of which are available 24/7.

US: **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline on 1800 273 8255**, **The Trevor Project on 1-866-488-7386**, **Trans Lifeline on 1-877-330-6366**, or the **Crisis Text Line by Texting HOME to 741 741**, all of which are available 24/7.

UK: **Samaritans on 116 123** or **Victims Supports on 0808 168 9111**, both of which are available 24/7.

What are the potential benefits of the research project?

The #MeToo movement is a monumental example of women coming forward and forcing the world to listen to their stories. We want to document this movement and make sure the stories and experiences of these women are listened to and remembered. This research will not only help us do that, but it will also provide information about movements that occur on social media.

Can I withdraw from the project?

Participation in this project is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate, you can withdraw from the study at any time prior to data analysis. Following the interviews, a transcript of the conversation can be provided to you to review.

What will happen to my information?

The interviews conducted will be recorded and transcribed and these files will be kept on a password-protected computer for a minimum of 5 years, only accessible by the researchers involved in this study. The results will form part of the research for a PhD thesis, which will be written up for publication in a peer-reviewed journal, shared in the media, and potentially presented at research conferences. Participants will not be identified in any publication or presentation, should they be referred to, they will be given a pseudonym. Should you wish to receive a copy of the research findings, you can contact the researchers.

Your information will only be used as described in this Participant Information Sheet and it will only be disclosed according to the consent provided, except as required by law.

Who do I contact if I have questions about the project?

Should you have any questions, you can contact the following people:

Dr Melissa Oxlad
Principal Researcher
melissa.oxlad@adelaide.edu.au
08 8313 6411

Chloe Drewett
Student Researcher
chloe.drewett@adelaide.edu.au

Professor Martha Augoustinos
Co-Researcher
martha.augoustinos@adelaide.edu.au
08 8313 4627

What if I have a complaint or any concerns?

The study has been approved by the School of Psychology Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee at the University of Adelaide (approval number xxx). This research project will be conducted according to the NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 (Updated 2018). If you have questions or problems associated with the practical aspects of your participation in the project, or wish to raise a concern or complaint about the project, then you should consult the Principal Investigator. If you wish to speak with an independent person regarding concerns or a complaint, the University's policy on research involving human participants, or your rights as a participant, please contact the Convenor, School of Psychology Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee on:

Phone: +61 8 8313 4936

Email: paul.delfabbro@adelaide.edu.au

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will be informed of the outcome.

If I want to participate, what do I do?

If you wish to participate in this study, you can email chloe.drewett@adelaide.edu.au to organise either a face-to-face or telephone interview. The attached consent form can either be emailed to chloe.drewett@adelaide.edu.au or brought along, should you chose a face-to-face interview.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Melissa Oxlad, Chloe Drewett, and Professor Martha Augoustinos

Appendix E: Study 3 Consent Form

Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)

CONSENT FORM

1. I have read the attached Information Sheet and agree to take part in the following research project:

Title:	The Experience of Participating in the Me Too Movement
Ethics Approval Number:	19/82

2. I have had the project, so far as it affects me, and the potential risks and burdens fully explained to my satisfaction by the research worker. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions I may have about the project and my participation. My consent is given freely.
3. I have been given the opportunity to have a member of my family or a friend present while the project was explained to me.
4. Although I understand the purpose of the research project, it has also been explained that my involvement may not be of any benefit to me.
5. I agree to participate in the activities outlined in the participant information sheet.
6. I agree to be:
Audio recorded Yes No
7. I wish to receive a copy of:
 My interview transcript
 A summary of the emergent themes
 The final report
8. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time up until data analysis.
9. I have been informed that the information gained in the project may be published in a journal article, thesis, social media post, and conference presentations.
10. I have been informed that while I will not be named in the published materials, it may not be possible to guarantee my anonymity given the nature of the study and/or small number of participants involved.
11. I agree to my information being used for future research purposes as follows:
- Research undertaken by these same researcher(s) Yes No
 - Related research undertaken by any researcher(s) Yes No
 - Any research undertaken by any researcher(s) Yes No

12. I understand my information will only be disclosed according to the consent provided, except where disclosure is required by law.

13. I am aware that I should keep a copy of this Consent Form, when completed, and the attached Information Sheet.

Participant to complete:

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher/Witness to complete:

I have described the nature of the research to

(print name of participant)

and in my opinion she/he understood the explanation.

Signature: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

Appendix F: COREQ Checklist for Study 3

Section/Topic	Item No.	Checklist Item	Reported on Page No.
Domain 1: Research Team and Reflexivity			
<i>Personal Characteristics</i>			
<i>Interviewer/facilitator</i>	1	Which author/s conducted the interview or focus group? Interviewer/facilitator	140
<i>Credentials</i>	2	What were the researcher's credentials? e.g. PhD, MD	141
<i>Occupation</i>	3	What was their occupation at the time of the study?	141
<i>Gender</i>	4	Was the researcher male or female?	141
<i>Experience and training</i>	5	What experience or training did the researcher have? Relationship with participants	141
<i>Relationship with Participants</i>			
<i>Relationship established</i>	6	Was a relationship established prior to study commencement?	140
<i>Participant knowledge of the interviewer</i>	7	What did the participants know about the researcher? e.g. personal goals, reasons for doing the research	139
<i>Interviewer characteristics</i>	8	What characteristics were reported about the interviewer/facilitator? e.g. Bias, assumptions, reasons and interests in the research topic	141
Domain 2: Study Design			

Theoretical Framework			
<i>Methodological orientation and Theory</i>	9	What methodological orientation was stated to underpin the study? e.g. grounded theory, discourse analysis, ethnography, phenomenology, content analysis	142
Participant Selection			
<i>Sampling</i>	10	How were participants selected? e.g. purposive, convenience, consecutive, snowball	140
<i>Method of approach</i>	11	How were participants approached? e.g. face-to-face, telephone, mail, email	140
<i>Sample size</i>	12	How many participants were in the study?	142
<i>Non-participation</i>	13	How many people refused to participate or dropped out? Reasons?	140
<i>Setting of data collection</i>	14	Where was the data collected? e.g. home, clinic, workplace	N/A
<i>Presence of non-participants</i>	15	Was anyone else present besides the participants and researchers?	N/A
<i>Description of sample</i>	16	What are the important characteristics of the sample? e.g. demographic data, date	142
Data Collection			
<i>Interview guide</i>	17	Were questions, prompts, guides provided by the authors? Was it pilot tested?	139
<i>Repeat interviews</i>	18	Were repeat interviews carried out? If yes, how many?	N/A

<i>Audio/visual recording</i>	19	Did the research use audio or visual recording to collect the data?	140
<i>Field notes</i>	20	Were field notes made during and/or after the interview or focus group?	N/A
<i>Duration</i>	21	What was the duration of the interviews or focus group?	140
<i>Data saturation</i>	22	Was data saturation discussed?	140
<i>Transcripts returned</i>	23	Were transcripts returned to participants for comment and/or correction?	141/142

Domain 3: Analysis and Findings

Data Analysis

<i>Number of data coders</i>	24	How many data coders coded the data?	142
<i>Description of the coding tree</i>	25	Did authors provide a description of the coding tree?	N/A
<i>Derivation of themes</i>	26	Were themes identified in advance or derived from the data?	142
<i>Software</i>	27	What software, if applicable, was used to manage the data?	142
<i>Participant checking</i>	28	Did participants provide feedback on the findings?	N/A

Reporting

<i>Quotations presented</i>	29	Were participant quotations presented to illustrate the themes / findings? Was each quotation identified? e.g. participant number	143-149
<i>Data and findings consistent</i>	30	Was there consistency between the data presented and the findings?	149-150
<i>Clarity of major themes</i>	31	Were major themes clearly presented in the findings?	143
<i>Clarity of minor themes</i>	32	Is there a description of diverse cases or discussion of minor themes?	N/A
