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Combatting insecurity in the everyday: the global anti-street harassment movement as everyday security practitioners

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ABSTRACT

Street harassment renders countless women, girls and others insecure in their everyday lives. Over the past two decades a global grassroots movement developed to combat street harassment and its attendant insecurities. But neither phenomenon has excited the attention of Security Studies, critical or otherwise. In this paper, we focus on the global anti-street harassment movement, conceptualising its activists as 'everyday security practitioners' who, like privileged security practitioners in the state or the academy, theorise street harassment and devise and implement strategies to tackle it. In so doing we argue that Security Studies should pay more attention to the everyday, to insecurities like street harassment, and to such 'everyday security practitioners'. To illustrate this argument we first define street harassment. We then consider Security Studies and its exclusion of the everyday. To argue for its inclusion in Security Studies, we explicate the diverse insecurities produced by street harassment, conceptualise 'everyday security practitioners', and provide some illustrations of strategies deployed by the global anti-street harassment movement both to bring street harassment to wider public attention as a pervasive everyday insecurity and to combat it. We conclude with two suggestions for Security Studies.

Introduction

Street harassment – specifically sexual and 'gender-based harassment in public spaces' (SSH 2021c) – is a global phenomenon that renders countless people – mainly female and LGBTQ+— insecure in their daily lives. Over the past two decades, an increasingly active and successful global grassroots movement developed to combat this pervasive everyday insecurity (Desborough 2018, 2020). The activists in this movement, which includes organisations and projects like Stop Street Harassment (SSH) in the U.S., Blank Noise in India, HarassMap in Egypt, the Observatories against Street Harassment in Latin America and Hollaback![1] chapters across the world, have developed and implemented varied and sometimes innovative anti-street harassment strategies. These have had notable successes in creating awareness of street harassment, changing societal attitudes towards it, providing local security for harassment victims/survivors, and sparking policy debates and increasingly policy change.[2]

However, such everyday insecurities, and the activists, movements and everyday security practices deployed to combat them, are generally ignored in Security Studies, critical or otherwise. Although the 'human security' agenda has elevated some mundane threats to 'survival, livelihood

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and dignity' (UNTFHS nd) – such as physical abuse, food insecurity, and social exclusion – to greater prominence, the top-down character of these analyses and their focus on the wellbeing and resilience of populations (Lemanski 2012) means that everyday insecurities remain largely invisible. By ignoring the everyday, and thus effectively leaving it to other disciplines, Security Studies renders itself irrelevant to the theorisation and empirical investigation of both significant insecurities faced by individuals and communities globally and everyday practices to enhance security. We argue, in contrast, that everyday practices like street harassment produce significant everyday insecurities for both individuals and society as a whole, that such insecurities are being combatted by 'everyday in/ security practitioners' (Rowley and Weldes 2012, 6–7) on a local and trans- or international scale, and that these everyday insecurities and the everyday attempts to combat them should be legitimate Security Studies' foci.[3]

The paper is divided into five main sections. After briefly introducing street harassment, the second section accounts for the neglect of 'the everyday' in conventional Security Studies and argues for its inclusion. The third section highlights the diverse and interconnected insecurities produced by street harassment as an 'everyday insecurity'. We introduce the global anti-street harassment movement in the fourth section and explain how its activists function as 'everyday security practitioners'. In the fifth, we discuss several prominent anti-street harassment security strategies. We conclude with two suggestions for Security Studies.

Defining 'street harassment'

Harassment can usefully be defined as 'to trouble persistently or incessantly'.[4] 'Street harassment' is persistent troubling 'on the street' or in other 'public' spaces.[5] Harassment 'on the street' includes persistent troubling based on any identity, disadvantage, or inequality and people are in fact harassed based on any visible or imputable characteristic. The everyday insecurity we examine is specifically sexual and 'gender-based' harassment in public spaces, understood as 'unwanted comments, gestures, and actions forced on a stranger in a public place without their consent and . . . directed at them because of their actual or perceived sex, gender, gender expression, or sexual orientation' (Stop Street Harassment 2021f). Street harassment intersects with other forms of oppression such as racism, classism, disablism, homophobia and transphobia, and the severity and consequences of street harassment vary according to these intersections (see, e.g. Ahmed, Navid Yousaf, and Asif 2021; Fogg-Davis 2006; Mason-Bish and Zempi 2019). Many anti-street harassment activists overtly recognise the intersectionality of gender-based street harassment with other forms of harassment and other structures of oppression (e.g. Hollaback n.d. b; Stop Street Harassment 2021f).

Street harassment is a global phenomenon, with research indicating that 80%–100% of women globally have experienced some form of street harassment (e.g. Beswick 2018; Fahmy et al. 2014; Kearl 2010, 3; UKGEO, UK 2019).This global phenomenon manifests itself in diverse practices. In the West, 'cat calling' and 'wolf whistling' are so common that a Lego licensee produced a sticker for children depicting a Lego construction worker saying, 'Hey Babe'.[6] More ominously, 78% of women in the U.S. have been followed by a man or group of men in a way that made them feel unsafe, and half of all U.S. women have been 'groped' or 'fondled' without their consent (Gay 2015). In South Asia, the euphemism 'Eve teasing' (Ramasubramanian and Oliver 2003) does considerable ideological work legitimating street harassment. Calling it 'teasing' renders the practice innocuous while the invocation of 'Eve' blames the victim, placing responsibility onto women for beguiling men into harassing them. In Latin America, a *piropo* is an allegedly 'flirtatious, admiring compliment' considered by some to be 'an art form' (Vocabat 2012). *Piropos* are so 'ingrained in Cuban popular culture' (Acosta 2005, our translation), for example, that some women consider 'a day without a *piropo*' to be 'a wasted day' (Lundgren 2013, 7).[7] The Japanese term 'chikan' designates both the men who grope women and girls in public and the prevalent practice of 'groping' or 'uninvited sexual touching' (Horii and Burgess 2012, 42). A Japanese survey found that almost two-thirds of

women in their 20s and 30s had been groped on Tokyo's train and subway cars (Fairchild and Rudman 2008, 339).

Despite some cultural variation in how street harassment is depicted and perpetrated, and important differences in how it is experienced by women (and others) (e.g. Fileborn and Vera-Gray 2017, 205), street harassment 'is also a universalising experience – one that virtually all women share. Indeed, its near-universality denotes the extent to which such harassment is simply accepted as normal and thus becomes invisible as a social problem' (Bowman 1993, 517). It simultaneously becomes invisible as a security problem, as do those who seek to combat it, an invisibility exacerbated by the conceptual structure of Security Studies.

The everyday in Security Studies

'Security' is an essentially contested term whose meaning is irrevocably political (e.g. Connolly 1983). A fruitful starting point for the everyday and for street harassment, because it emphasises 'feeling secure' (Wibben 2008, 458), is the terrain of 'human security', defined as 'a set of freedoms that are fundamental to human life: freedom from fear, freedom from want and freedom to live in dignity'[8] (UNTFHS nd). This terrain highlights preventing '[t]hreats to people . . . to their survival (physical abuse, violence, persecution or death), their livelihoods (unemployment, food insecurity, health threats, etc.), and their dignity (lack of human rights, inequality, exclusion, discrimination, etc.)' (Tadjbakhsh 2014). Street harassment is a pervasive security issue, as we demonstrate below, that undermines all three desiderata – survival, livelihood and dignity – and the activists combatting these insecurities are properly security practitioners. In this section, we argue for creating a space within Security Studies for the everyday, 'everyday insecurities' like street harassment and 'everyday security practitioners', after first accounting for their absence.

Excluding 'the everyday'

As feminist and other critical security scholars have shown, Security Studies, like its parent discipline IR, has traditionally been constituted by (at least) three intertwined binaries: the international/domestic, the masculine/feminine, and high/low politics. These determine what is properly Security Studies, constructing a 'hierarchy of credibility' (Carver 2014, 124) that rules out the everyday, everyday insecurities like street harassment, and anti-street harassment activists as interesting, relevant or significant.

The international/domestic binary constitutes 'the international' in opposition to a devalued 'domestic' sphere. Despite some 'widening and deepening' (e.g. Buzan and Hansen 2009), Security Studies reifies the international, retaining the sovereign state as its referent object and national [i.e. state] security as its central preoccupation (e.g. Walt 1991). The attendant assumption of anarchy defines 'the international' as the realm of war and disorder, danger and threats, while the relegated 'domestic' becomes the pacified realm of order that is, by definition, secure. The proper focus of Security Studies, as the *International Security* website explains, is 'the structure of the nation-state system and the sovereignty of its members, with particular emphasis on the use, threat, and control of force' (2017). Everyday insecurities like street harassment are necessarily irrelevant to Security Studies constituted in this way. Privileging 'the international' leaves it fundamentally 'alienated from everyday life' (Davies 2010, 193). Conversely, denaturalising this reified binary, as feminist and other critical scholars have long done (e.g. Biersteker and Weber 1996; Tickner 1992; Walker 1993), creates space to reintegrate 'everyday experiences of violence' (Wibben 2011, 593) and other everyday insecurities into Security Studies' legitimate remit.

The masculine/feminine binary also underpins Security Studies' focus on (amongst other things) military threats and the strategic use of military violence deployed by or against the state. Security Studies has been constructed from, and privileges, masculinist social experiences (e.g. politics, conflict) – which are simultaneously treated as generically human (e.g. Morgenthau 1993) – whilst conventionally female social experiences (e.g. reproductive labour, gender-based violence) are

trivialised and/or rendered invisible as 'domestic' (Tickner 2005, 4, 7). 'Reflection on how social phenomena get defined as problems in need of explanation in the first place' (Harding 1987, 6) reveals the gendered biases of all research questions, which in Security Studies remain 'monotonically masculinised' (Carver 2014, 119). While some gendered insecurities, like sexual violence, are explored when they occur in conflict zones, in the traditionally masculine 'international' (e.g. Alam and Wood 2022; Higate and Henry 2004; Johansson-Nogués 2013), Security Studies continue to ignore insecurities that occur in the feminised everyday. If, with feminist security scholars, we denaturalise the gendered construction of our traditional research questions, we can integrate everyday insecurities into our scholarly remit.

Finally, the 'high politics' trope, designating the masculinist realm of war and peace, diplomacy and security, is again constituted through the relegation of the domestic – whether the feminised 'political economy' (e.g. Barnett 1990, 531) or the feminised 'private' sphere (e.g. Elshtain 1993) – to a trivialised 'low politics'. An elevated 'high politics' status privileges some actors – notably policy makers, academics and other security professionals – over 'low politics' actors, with the result that 'the views, cultural repertoires of knowledge and testimonies of the political subject of (in)security remain largely invisible' (Vaughan-Willliams and Stevens 2016, 41). Privileging elite [masculinised] actors as proper security experts legitimately concerned with security questions obscures the security theorising and strategising done in the everyday by, amongst others, the [feminised] subjects of everyday insecurity. If, however, we accept the long-standing feminist denaturalisation of the intertwined high/low and public/private dichotomies (e.g. Boyd and Boyd 1997), we need neither elevate traditional security professionals as the only authoritative voices theorising insecurity and security strategies nor exclude the insights brought by everyday security practitioners such as anti-street harassment activists.

Including 'the everyday'

Security Studies' constituent assumptions have alienated it from an everyday abounding in security issues that manifestly threaten 'survival, livelihood and dignity'. While the meaning of 'the everyday' is in some ways self-evident – we know it when we see it – 'the everyday' is a 'multi-accentual sign' (Storey 2014, 122), both contestable and contested.[9] For us, the everyday encompasses those ordinary, mundane practices, spaces, objects, identities, relations and interactions that make up our daily lives but that, crucially, are implicitly or explicitly excluded from Security Studies as 'domestic', 'feminised', and 'low'. More positively, we conceptualise 'the everyday' in two interrelated ways. Epistemologically, it is 'the familiar, taken-for-granted, common sense and trivial – in short, the [disciplinarily] unnoticed' (Jacobsen 2009, 2). Empirically, it is 'what we are first of all, and most often: at work, at leisure, awake, asleep, in the street, in private existence. The everyday, then, is ourselves, ordinarily' (Blanchot and Hanson 1987, 12). 'Everyday insecurities' are insecurities experienced, constituted as such, and sometimes resisted, by people as they are ordinarily. They matter deeply to those people.

This approach to the everyday differs from other recent Security Studies' deployments of 'the everyday' (and cognates) because we seek to highlight the importance of the everyday *on its own terms*. Other recent invocations remain beholden to the 'high politics' we seek to escape. For instance, diverse literatures have, quite properly, drawn attention to

- the everyday of high politics practices and actors, like diplomacy (e.g. Neumann 2012), war (e.g. Christensen 2011) or the Armed Forces (e.g. Basham 2013);
- the 'vernacular' interpretation of national security threats defined by privileged security practitioners (e.g. Vaughan-Williams and Stevens, 2016);
- the 'little security nothings' (Huysmans 2011) that are the 'persavion of counter terrorist policies in everyday life' (Huysmans 2014, 3);
- the everyday of conflict zones as the location in which international interventions 'are realised' (Mitchell 2011);
- the everyday micro-power relations that sustain macro-level political practices and structures (e.g. Enloe 1989, 1996).

Such analyses are hugely valuable, but they start from, or seek to account for, security as practised in the masculinised high politics of the international. While they may be *in* the everyday, at least in part, they remain *of* the state and the international.[10]

While Security Studies maintains a stranglehold on the concept 'security', on processes of academic and other securitisations, and on the flow of resources that accompany its invocation (e.g. Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde 1998), it remains the case that the 'mundane matters' (Enloe 2011, 447). Ordinary people often privilege everyday insecurities over the threats urged on them by sanctioned security professionals. Everyday insecurities – e.g. '... "being jumped or robbed", "having your car stolen", "home security" or just walking the streets' – are often of greater importance than are threats and risks to the state articulated by, say, the UK *National Security Strategy* (Stevens and Vaughan-Williams 2014; Vaughan-Willliams and Stevens 2016, 47). The very existence of a global movement against street harassment demonstrates the widespread salience of this everyday insecurity. The everyday matters on its own terms: people understand themselves to be insecure, and they find ways to secure themselves, in the everyday.

Street harassment and everyday insecurities

Street harassment produces a wide range of overlapping everyday insecurities. These can be psychological, they can undermine safety, livelihood and dignity, they can affect the individual and sometimes the community as a whole. To illuminate the significance of street harassment in security terms, we discuss three interrelated clusters of insecurities arising from street harassment.[11]

Psychological insecurity

Perhaps, the most obvious insecurity produced by harassment is psychological: persistent fear and anxiety from feeling unsafe. These feelings directly contravene the human security desiderata of 'freedom from fear'. Because street harassment resides on a continuum that can culminate in sexual assault, rape and murder (Gardner 1995, 4), any form of street harassment, however putatively 'mild', evokes fear of more extreme sexual assault (Donnelly and Calogero 2018). SSH found that 'more women find street harassment upsetting than men' because of 'the fear of it escalating to sexual assault or rape. The fear of what an aggressor will do next gives any kind of harassment its gut-wrenching power' (2014, 20).

In some cases, harassers intentionally scare women. Laura Bates, founder of the Everyday Sexism Project, related this encounter with two men she passed on the street: 'For a moment, they paused, and one glanced at my breasts before turning nonchalantly to the other. I was expecting the usual. 'Look at the tits on that', or 'I wouldn't say no'. But what he actually said took my breath away: 'I'd hold a knife to that' (2014). Even comments less explicitly threatening may be perceived as such because their sexual content reinforces the fear of sexual assault and rape (Davis 1994, 141). And fears of escalation are not unfounded. Perpetrators of sexual assault often commit 'a long series of offences, which started with the inappropriate touching of women in the street [and] progressed, with ever increasing severity, towards attempted rape' (HMCPS, HMIC 2012, 28). While most harassment incidents do not lead to rape, 'a reasonable woman' cannot determine which incident will escalate to violence and therefore must consider every encounter as potentially dangerous (Bowman 1993, 554).

Dignity insecurity

Freedom from indignity is another fundamental security desiderata. Dignity – grounded in human rights like privacy, equality, inclusion, non-discrimination (Tadjbakhsh 2014, 2) – is undermined by street harassment in numerous ways and with often more severe effects for, say, women of colour in white communities or for lesbians (e.g. Fogg-Davis 2006). Such harassment constitutes an invasion of [generally] women's privacy by treating them as public property. It also objectifies women, reducing their individuality, personality, identity and accomplishments to mere body parts (Davis

1994, 150; Laniya 2005, 106; Tuerkheimer 1997, 184). When women are constantly told to 'Smile!', for example, their bodies, gestures, and emotions are being treated not as their own but as there for the [generally male] harassers' gaze and thus both legitimately to be appraised by and assumed to be at the service of the harasser (Davis 1994, 143; Fazlalizadeh 2020).

By undermining individual dignity, transforming women into readily available sexual objects, street harassment has multiple social effects: it makes women ill at ease in public spaces, it disempowers them, and it consequently undermines political and citizenship equality (e.g. Bowman 1993, 542). Street harassment thus also functions as a form of social control (e.g. Kissling 1991, 454): it 'genderizes the street' (Davis 1994, 142), constituting public spaces as fundamentally unequal and unwelcoming for women and other targets.

Political, economic and social insecurity

The psychological, physical and dignity insecurities produced by street harassment can lead to what Bowman called the 'ghettoization of women', confining them 'to the private sphere of the hearth and home' and correspondingly reducing their access to the public sphere (1993, 157). Curtailing or even eliminating the access of street harassment victims/survivors to political, social, and economic life has broader social consequences. In this sense, street harassment produces second-order political, social and economic insecurities consequent to the coping strategies its targets adopt.

Women and girls change their lives to cope with street harassment: 'We structure our lives to avoid the occurrence of it – by "dressing decently", "coming back home on time", etc., thereby making unwanted rules for ourselves and not recognizing ourselves as citizens' (Blank Noise 2005). A 2015 Australian report found that 93% of women aged 18–24 years and 88% of women aged 25 to 34 years altered their behaviour to prevent harassment or assault: they avoided walking alone at night; they held their keys in their hand as a weapon; they pretended to be having a conversation on their phone (The Australia Institute 2015). Similarly, 97% of women in Brazil 'reported always or sometimes changing their route to avoid harassment and violence' (ActionAid International 2015, 8). Some coping strategies have potentially profound economic implications. In India, for example, girls have been forced to drop out of school, with potentially significant consequences for their life chances, because of the prevalence of sexual harassment on buses on school routes (Deswal 2013).

If women, girls and other targets are too anxious, intimidated, or frightened to access public spaces, they may not be able to search for employment, commute to work, go to school, access public services, vote or otherwise participate in political life. This problem is of course compounded for people with fewer resources who cannot avoid public spaces or public transport (e.g. Abraham et al. 2015, 32). This is a violation of the most basic right to liberty. Street harassment thus not only reduces targets' feelings of safety and dignity in public spaces; it also deprives them of 'liberty and security in the public sphere' (Bowman 1993, 539).

The anti-street harassment movement as everyday security practitioners[12]

'Everyday security practitioners' tackle everyday insecurities in the everyday. These security actors address insecurities like street harassment at least in part because states have abdicated responsibility for them, or sometimes produce them. Sometimes, as with street harassment, states simply do not recognise the issue as an insecurity. Sometimes, as with the retreating neoliberal state, providing security – e.g. elderly care, childcare – is consigned to the private sphere. The everyday security practitioners who take up these insecurities are located outside the state, are 'embedded locally in everyday social relationships', and engage directly with the 'everyday world' (Stammers and Eschle 2005, 60). They seek to understand, analyse and theorise the insecurities in their own and other's everyday lives and devise strategies to ameliorate or overcome them. They thus undertake precisely the same

tasks as do privileged security practitioners. The activists, participants and organisations that comprise the global anti-street harassment movement are such everyday security practitioners.

Actively to challenge street harassment and make visible its attendant overlapping insecurities, a global anti-street harassment movement emerged and developed over the last two decades.[13] Initially, the contemporary movement was largely concentrated in three country 'hubs' of activism:— Egypt, India and the U.S.— but from 2010 the movement expanded rapidly across the globe, peaking between 2014 and 2016, in response to influential social media activity.[14] Anti-street harassment initiatives are active on every continent, except Antarctica (see, e.g. Stop Street Harassment 2021b). This transnational social movement is a loose collaboration, networked through digital technologies, and its aim – the eradication of street harassment – is global (Desborough 2020). The grassroots organisations and activists within the movement are 'everyday security practitioners' confronting the everyday reality of street harassment in the everyday itself.[15]

Out of their everyday experiences of insecurity and the sharing of them, activists have made themselves street harassment experts. Holly Kearl of SSH is a good example, but there are many others. In part out of her own and other's harassment experiences, Kearl wrote an MSc thesis on street harassment, founded SSH as a blog and then as a non-profit organisation, organised the annual International Anti-Street Harassment Week (Stop Street Harassment 2021d), and wrote three books (Kearl 2010, 2013, 2015). She has also testified on street harassment before several U.S. city councils, consulted for UN Women and the Washington DC transit authority, and given countless talks and media interviews (Holly Kearl, personal interview, 24 April 2014; pers. comm., 30 September, 2016).

The expertise of anti-street harassment activists is not based solely on personal experience. It relies as well on extensive grass roots and commissioned research. For instance, movement groups conducted national surveys of street harassment in Peru in 2013 (Vallejo and Rivarola 2013), in the U.S. in 2014 (Stop Street Harassment 2014) and in Chile in 2014 and 2015 (OCAC 2015, 2015b 2015). In collaboration with Cornell University, Hollaback! conducted a global street harassment survey in 2014–15, garnering 16,600 respondents in 42 countries (Livingston, Grillo, and Paulauch 2014). HarassMap in Cairo and initiatives elsewhere, like Safecity in India and HarassTracker in Lebanon, have deployed crowdsourcing to map street harassment to demonstrate its extensiveness. HarassMap also commissioned a report on the effectiveness of crowdsourcing such data as a research methodology (Fahmy et al. 2014).

Based on their everyday experiences and their research, street harassment experts theorise street harassment, including its causes, consequences and possible solutions. As we show below, one of their main arguments is that street harassment is made possible by its normalisation, which, in turn, has prevented it being perceived or addressed as a serious social problem. One of their solutions, and an objective of many campaigns, is to challenge that normalisation and the attendant trivialisation, which means debunking myths about its causes and who is to blame, raising awareness of its negative consequences, and redefining it overtly as a social and security problem that should, and can, be challenged. Through their everyday security practices, this 'harm that has no name' (Davis 1994) is, first and foremost, vigorously being *named*. Grounded in such analyses, HollabackPHILLY, for instance, launched an advertising campaign in Philadelphia's public transport system in 2013 expressly designed to familiarise the public with the term 'street harassment'. Posters explained that 'NICE A** IS NOT A COMPLIMENT. Unwanted comments are street harassment'. The follow-up campaign in 2014 expanded beyond awareness raising to encourage the wider community to take action against street harassment (Rochelle Keyhan, personal interview, 9 April 2014). Their research and theorising have led these everyday security practitioners to devise, implement, evaluate and revise diverse strategies to combat street harassment.

Combatting street harassment: everyday security strategies

Strategies to combat street harassment take many different forms, have different intended audiences, and have evolved over time, while many spread transnationally through the movement. We discuss three types of strategies – the use of websites and social media, harassment mapping and creating safe spaces. These strategies, while only a fraction of what the movement has devised and deployed globally (see Desborough 2020; Kearl 2015), demonstrate the diversity of security practices, while also highlighting several that are prevalent and/or well known. Together they illustrate how anti-street harassment activists have functioned as everyday security practitioners to combat insecurity.

Websites and social media

Digital technologies play an important role in anti-street harassment security practice. Several anti-street harassment initiatives began as storytelling blogs that subsequently expanded into extensive websites. Hollaback!'s website initially developed in New York in 2005 as a local storytelling blog, *HollabackNYC,* and subsequently expanded nationally and then internationally by building its digital platform for sharing stories and mapping incidents of street harassment, and training Hollaback! site leaders. Hollaback! also developed a phone app through which photos and videos of harassers and/or the locations where harassment took place could be uploaded and, more recently, it launched HeartMob to combat online harassment (Hollaback n.d. c). The prominent SSH website developed differently, as both a place for people to share their stories of street harassment and a clearing house for information, resources and global news on street harassment (Holly Kearl, personal interview, 24 April 2014). In 2016, SSH also created a collaborative National Street Harassment Hotline, providing confidential support and a safe space for victims/survivors of street harassment and sexual assault (Stop Street Harassment 2021e).

These websites offer diverse anti-street harassment strategies and online resources to enhance the security of harassment targets. For example, the 'Know Your Rights' campaigns provide legal guides about anti-harassment legislation both on the street and online. In 2013 SSH produced a U.S.-focused 'Know your Rights: Street Harassment and the Law' publication that examined how the laws at U.S. state level apply to different types of street harassment and listing the steps required to report harassment (2013). Hollaback! followed with a global 'Know Your Rights' guide (2014) that 'compiles the latest legal definitions and information on all forms of street harassment across 22 countries and in 12 languages' and 'Know your Rights: Online Harassment' guidance to U.S. internet users explaining online protection through federal law (HeartMob 2020; Hollaback n.d. d). HarassMap's website similarly offers legal resources on sexual harassment. Highlighting that all forms of sexual harassment – verbal, telephone and online – are a crime in Egypt, the website provides a link to the full law and explains 'How to report to the police' (HarassMap, n.d. a). To achieve more reliable and effective enforcement of sexual harassment laws, HarassMap encourages community accountability of reporting and bystander intervention.

Online storytelling was an early, and continues to be a prominent, feature of the Hollaback!, SSH and HarassMap websites and is pursued by, amongst others, Brazil's Chega de Fiu Fiu (Enough with the Cat Calls) campaign, the UK's Everyday Sexism Project and Safecity in India. Thousands of (mostly) women have shared their personal experiences of harassment via the approximately 100 online platforms that exist within the global anti-street harassment movement (Kearl 2015, 21). This strategy is particularly significant because sharing harassment stories helps victims to redefine their insecurity *as* 'street harassment'. Research shows that 'sharing stories shifted participants' cognitive and emotional orientation towards their experience' (Dimond et al. 2013, 477), particularly transferring blame from themselves to the social practice of street harassment and ultimately 'reclaiming power back from the harasser' (483). Sharing stories simultaneously situates the individual in a wider community, reducing feelings of vulnerability and disempowerment, while

validating harassment experiences as legitimate and important, rather than dismissing them as trivial. Sharing stories also 'helped site leaders to diagnose the problem and decide what actions to take' (486), for instance, to create workshops for teenagers or to launch a bystander campaign. The stories themselves thus serve as research data for security practitioners in their efforts both to define the problem and to conceptualise solutions.

Social media have provided additional digital strategies, including Tweet-a-thons and Twitter hashtags. The hashtag #YouOKSis is an interesting example. In 2014, Feminista Jones witnessed a young mother being harassed on a New York street and simply asked her 'Are you ok, sis?' She tweeted this story and encouraged her followers also to intervene when they witnessed harassment, 'but in a way that won't exacerbate the situation' (Jones 2014). This original story, using the hashtag #YouOKSis, 'went viral' as others tweeted their own stories, retweeted the original, and generally entered an animated conversation about the street harassment experiences of Black women and women of colour. Like storytelling, this initially inadvertent strategy redefined and validated the experiences of, in this case, 'the Black women, both cisgender and transgender', whom Feminista Jones identified as 'most vulnerable to the harshest types of street harassment' (in EROC 2017). In addition, it explicitly foregrounded the role that bystanders can play in confronting and curtailing harassment. As one commentator noted, '. . . a stranger can help to restore a sense of security to the victim and let the harasser know that what he did will not go unnoticed' (Springer and Ehrenreich 2014). Through digital technologies, everyday security practitioners have 'named' a security problem, given it widespread visibility, and provided support for its targets.

Harassment mapping

The digital mapping of harassment and assault has become something of a signature practice for the anti-street harassment movement. The crowdsourced mapping done by HarassMap is a now famous example. Most simply, the map plots the locations where instances of harassment and assault are reported anonymously by both harassment victims/survivors and bystanders (HarassMap n.d. b). Reported incidents are mapped as red dots; clicking on them brings up the original incident report. Myths that claim harassment does not happen, that blame women for their harassment, and/or that discourage bystander intervention all contribute to insecurity on the street and other public spaces. The map aims to end 'stereotypes that blame the harassed and make excuses for the harasser', convince people that street harassment is a crime, reshape social attitudes about street harassment and encourage people to 'take action against it' (HarassMap n.d. b).

Prior to the Egyptian state's ongoing crackdown on civil society and activism imposed in 2013 (Younes and Allahoum 2019), this online reporting and mapping strategy was specifically used to support an offline community mobilisation effort to challenge stereotypes and to convince both victims/survivors and bystanders to speak out against harassment. Mobilisation teams made up of both men and women worked 'with individuals and institutions all around Egypt to encourage them to stand up to sexual harassment'. They sought to 'provide customized workshops to support the public to respond to the excuses people make for harassers and to create zero-tolerance to sexual harassment attitudes and behaviors' (HarassMap n.d. c). This security strategy aimed both to transform the social significance of harassment and to mobilise the public to combat this everyday insecurity.

This mapping practice has become well known across the anti-street harassment movement, with the result that HarassMap receives requests from other activist groups around the world for guidance on launching their own mapping programmes. Rebecca Chiao, HarassMap's co-founder, has spoken to over 100 groups and individuals in approximately 40 countries interested in developing their own maps and approximately 15 groups have launched local adaptations based on the HarassMap model (pers. comm., 29 September, 2016, 15 February 2019), including Safecity in India and HarassTracker in Lebanon. Harassment mapping illustrates the successful diffusion of security practices transnationally across the global anti-street harassment movement.

Creating safe spaces

While much anti-street harassment security activity takes place online, a considerable amount also takes place offline (and as just noted, the two are closely linked). A final prominent strategy involves community mobilisation campaigns to create 'safe spaces'. These spaces are 'safe' in that they are places in which harassment is overtly considered unacceptable and in Cairo, before the state crackdown on activism in 2013, they initially also provided shelter for women being harassed.

The HarassMap Safe Areas Programme began in December 2010 after HarassMap activists talked to a Cairo shopkeeper who was keen to promote his shop as a safe space to shelter and support victims of harassment (Rebecca Chiao, pers. comm., 28 August, 2021). 'Safe Areas' was aimed at persuading shop, café and restaurant owners, taxi drivers and others in Cairo (and other Egyptian cities) to offer safe spaces for women and girls in the public sphere. In contrast to the other strategies we have discussed, this one explicitly sought to provide physical security for women and girls being harassed/assaulted or at risk of harassment/assault. At the same time, the strategy's articulated objectives were wider; specifically, HarassMap wanted their community 'partners' to 'become role models' through whom harassment prevention and providing assistance would inspire other local businesses (Abdelmonem 2015, 106). They sought to transform the wider culture, to create a 'zero tolerance' society in Egypt, a wider social 'environment' in which 'sexual harassment is [not] tolerated' (Abdelmonem 2015, 106, 109). In a few years, the Safe Areas programme developed 'from informal agreements and visibility in community shops and street kiosks to full-blown formal anti-harassment policies and enforcement, trainings' and awareness-raising activities in institutions including Cairo University and Uber (Rebecca Chiao, pers. comm., 28 August, 2021).

Initially developed by Hollaback! London, the Good Night Out Campaign has since become an independent campaign. 'Good Night Out' attempts to persuade owners of music and drinking venues, mainly bars, pubs and clubs, where sexual and gendered harassment are endemic, to transform their venue into safe spaces for women and LGBTQ+ customers. Venues that sign up to the Campaign receive specialist training on sexual violence and agree not to tolerate sexual violence on their premises (Good Night Out Campaign 2021b). To date, they have collaborated with and trained 185 nightlife spaces and over 2600 workers 'so that they can better understand, respond to, and prevent sexual harassment and assault in their spaces' (Good Night Out Campaign 2021a). This strategy affords women and others access to everyday spaces and activities that are often dangerous or unpleasant, thus providing security in typically hostile everyday settings. Since its inception in London, the Good Night Out Campaign has spread to several cities across the UK and Ireland, has been adopted by numerous student unions across the UK, and has been taken up outside of the UK, e.g. in Vancouver and Chicago.

Conclusion: Security Studies and the everyday

Significant insecurities facing large numbers of people – like street harassment – reside in the everyday. Simultaneously, people struggle, in that everyday, to find solutions to those insecurities. The fact that these insecurities and the security practitioners combatting them putatively exist in an arbitrarily defined 'domestic' arena of, at best, 'low politics' rather than in a reified 'international' realm of an artificially elevated 'high politics' is a poor excuse for ignoring them.

As feminist and other critical analysts have long argued, the self-definition of Security Studies is theoretically problematic. It results from pervasive ideological labour that has defined Security Studies' remit by theoretical fiat, privileging the international, the masculine and 'high politics' over the domestic, the feminine and the 'low politics' it largely distains. As a result, it determines which, and crucially whose, insecurities do not matter.

We have tried to make two overlapping points in this paper. First, on Security Studies' *own terms*, significant elements of the global fight against street harassment – as an example of the everyday – *do, or should*, fall within the traditional remit of Security Studies. This is a *global* security issue: it relentlessly forces on women and others across the globe a sometimes crippling

insecurity, one that violates the dignity that the United Nations and the global community stipulates they deserve and that *states*, the purveyors of 'security', are meant to protect. It is also being tackled on a *trans- or international scale*, through a global networked movement. Finally, its activists, in their role as 'everyday *security practitioners*', do just those things – e.g. conceptualisation and theorisation, research, policy design, implementation and evaluation, training – that Security Studies' acknowledged security practitioners do. Security Studies should, we suggest, take such insecurities seriously because they already do, or should, fall within its remit.

Ironically, however, the anti-street harassment movement developed precisely because there has been little institutional or ideological state interest in defining street harassment as a 'serious' 'security' issue to begin with and little effort to combat it. This global movement of security practitioners, in other words, has had to emerge precisely because of the exclusion of 'the everyday', and with it street harassment, from the understandings of 'security' held dear by, and definitive of, Security Studies and its states.

Our second point is therefore that Security Studies' 'own terms' are themselves flawed, as many critical commentators have argued before us. If Security Studies cannot recognise, as part of its remit, a pervasive global insecurity, addressed by a global movement composed of international and transnational activists, who engage in proper security practices, then we feel safe in suggesting that it needs to rethink the arbitrarily constructed disciplinary boundaries behind which it has ensconced itself.

Notes

1. Hollaback! changed its name to 'Right To Be' in March 2022.
2. For example, criminalisation is a common strategy in Latin America, though this tactic is rejected by other activists in the global movement (e.g. Hollaback!, n.d. a), who fear that marginalised groups may be targeted.
3. We emphatically do *not* assume that everyday theory and practice is necessarily progressive or a 'good' thing, as the everyday theorising and activities of, e.g. racist activists clearly indicate.
4. The Free Dictionary, online at http://www.thefreedictionary.com/harassment [accessed 7 August 2021].
5. These distinctions are complex, problematic and subject to legal adjudication. Shopping malls illustrate this complexity: while technically private, they are 'the street' in terms of the harassment of shoppers.
6. Lego apologised for this sexist bit of marketing (Ellin 2013).
7. Explaining why women find such behaviours flattering is beyond the scope of this paper. Debates about self-objectification and self-sexualisation are extensive (e.g. Calogero, et al. 2011; Choi and DeLong 2019).
8. This definition, like analyses of biopower, generally replace the state with the population – the collective human subject (Lemanski 2012) – as the referent object of security, focusing in a top-down manner on securing resilient collective subjects (e.g. Chandler 2012). Less attention is devoted to the insecurities of individuals and to grassroots attempts to provide individuals with security. 'Human security' thus does not itself address the everyday.
9. It also means that how 'the everyday' is best defined depends on its intended uses, which vary across disciplines, whether Cultural Studies (e.g. Storey 2014), Sociology (e.g. Jacobsen 2009) or Security Studies (e.g. Lemanski 2012; Mitchell 2011).
10. We of course recognise that many literatures deal with the 'everyday'. For example, Feminist Peace Research deals with 'the everyday' of women and children in conflict zones. We are highlighting a limitation with the conceptualisation of the everyday *within Security Studies*.
11. Police and security forces sometimes compound and exacerbate these insecurities by ignoring complaints, trivialising harassment or becoming perpetrators themselves (Abdelmonem 2015; ActionAid International 2011). Security forces also sometimes intentionally use harassment and sexual assault against women as a political strategy of intimidation, e.g. in Cairo during the Tahrir Square protests in 2011 (Langohr 2013).
12. The empirical part of this section draws on Desborough's PhD research (Desborough 2020) and on a related ESRC-funded project (see 'Funding' below) in which she conducted semi-structured interviews with 33 anti-street harassment activists, based in 11 countries – Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Egypt, Germany, India, Lebanon, Mexico, Peru, the UK and the US – during three interview phases between 2014 and 2019. Key informants within the global anti-street harassment movement were selected for their expertise on anti-street harassment activism. The interviews were transcribed and then coded using NVivo to analyse the data systematically through thematic analysis. The activists quoted have given permission for their words to be used. Both authors

are white, Western, female scholars, based in the UK. Desborough focuses on feminist activism against sexual violence, Weldes on world politics and sometimes on security studies. The positionality of Desborough, who conducted the fieldwork interviews, is discussed in her thesis (2020, pp. 66–68).

13. Street harassment had of course previously been challenged, e.g. by the suffragettes in the early 1900s and by second wave feminism in the 1970s (Kearl 2015, xii-xvi).

14. Our main period of analysis is 2010–2016 when the movement was at its height in terms of activity and global growth.

15. Most anti-street harassment initiatives are self-financed grassroots groups but some have become not-for-profit NGOs, e.g. HarassMap, Hollaback! New York, Safecity and SSH. Those groups in receipt of funding have different funding sources, including from foundations, government financing, individual organisations, and by providing fee-based workshops to businesses and offering training, technology and data support to NGOs (Desborough 2020).

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